

# A VIP as Soon as You Log In

## Prologue: ID information Loaded - -

Mankind was terribly defeated. It was awful and so natural as if it was supposed to be like that from the start.

The dimensional invaders were strong, many, vicious, and cruel. The first gate opened in Merva, the home of mankind. For the first time in 500 years after the Great World War, they faced just a disaster and downfall.

Merva's remaining humans crawled into the underground bunkers, just waiting in silence for the death to come to them. To them, the word hope was unacceptable, profane, and humiliating.

Klang! Klang! Klang!

Despite that, why is he knocking on the ground?

In a world where no hope is left, why does he try to create something new?

One of the last blacksmiths on the planet Merva, though he was puzzled by it himself, held his hammer without ever stopping his hand.

Klang! Klang! Klang!

Five years ago, when he was 50 years old, he was lucky to escape the moving monsters under the command of the invaders and enter an underground bunker with a lot of preserved food.

There was a blacksmith in the bunker and nothing else to do except to wait for death while forgetting about the food.

When I made a weapon, I knew there were no warriors to hold them and fight against the invaders. It was a method of escaping the eventual death.

"With this, it is complete."

For the second time today, I made an unworkable piece. Even when I was just living with a long sword that I owed to myself.

[Sucess in making a masterpiece that will remain in history! Achieved the conditions for connecting to Hero Universe.]

[Welcome, New User! Please name your ID!]

A miracle came to him that he could not dare to call it hope.

“This...?”

The blacksmith was astonished when he saw the words written in the translucent window in front of him.

I heard it faintly. Those who are capable of blowing fire from their hands or wearing swords as their weapons are capable of contacting a mysterious system that the general public cannot see.

But it appeared to him without an ability? How so? When I thought about it, a new text was recorded in the window as if it has read my thoughts.

Hero Universe is a system at the top of the Gaia system! Martial arts, magic, other superpowers, and production, it's a space-class community where access is only given to those with the greatest potential in the universe in the field!

“I am the best in the universe? I'm trapped in this unsightly place while forging and making a sword ...?”

Yes. You are the hope of a new blacksmith in the universe. It is a blessing in the universe to have a blacksmith who deals with spiritual power like you, as countless other worlds forget about the art of the soul and cling to artifacts that utilize magic.

The blacksmith could not understand anything about Lee's identity. Spirituality? He was just knocking on a lump because he had nothing else to do.

[Spirit power is the power to understand the source of the soul and deal with it. It is by no means the power given by anyone. You deserve to be proud. So, go ahead and create an ID.]

“Oh, ID.”

Do you want to id 'Aidirani'?

“No! Now, wait a minute. Who are you? So... would ID mean something like an identification card? “

[I am the system message of Hero Universe. You can also call me an Administrator. You can think of ID as a name to represent you in the Hero Universe.]

“Huh, it represents me. Few people have survived in this world.”

The world he lives in is just a speck of dust in a myriad of universes. The Hero Universe has heroes of all its choice in the myriad universes.

The situation was so chaotic I still couldn't understand anything. Finally, I wondered if I was going crazy and hallucinating.

Moreover, even if this phenomenon is real, it would not have any effect on the future of mankind that was scheduled to be destroyed.

But, nevertheless.

“Anvil... Anvil is good.”

[Do you want to use the ID “Anvil”?]

“Yes.”

If nothing changes, so what. The blacksmith had been fleeing since the start and the new “Hero Universe” in front of him was exactly what he wanted.

Anvil, Welcome to the Hero Universe. In the midst of numerous interactions with heroes, I hope your soul shines more brightly. You'll get 100HP (Hero Point) as your first login bonus! Collect more HP and buy information and goods through community activities!

“I am also pleased.”

[10HP as a bonus to you who is kind to the Administrator! You've had some social life!]

“Ha ha ha ha ha.”

The blacksmith found a new refuge and the refuge welcomed him with open arms. The blacksmith was immersed in a refuge that would make him forget the reality of hell for a moment.

Twenty years later, the blacksmith became a celebrity in the Hero Universe.

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– Janus: Anvil Grandpa, Anvil Grandpa.

– Anvil: What's going on?

The blacksmith, “Anvil” was whispering to a friend who had come to know him through the Hero Universe. Whispering was a messaging feature that allowed you to send and receive messages with people registered as friends in the Hero Universe.

– Anvil: So, what kind of sword do you want?

– Janus: Tell me if you can make it.

– Anvil: I'm taking a rest for now, so I won't be making it right away.

– Janus: Shinsal sword. Any kind is fine, but if you're a king, you use a long sword. [1]

– Anvil: go away.

When I first connected to Hero Universe 20 years ago.

I registered a weapon on the bulletin board, one of Hero Universe's systems, and a lot of people were interested in his weapons. The system was right about his talents.

– Janus: Don't do that and make one.

How do I make something which I can't make? I told him to go away.

When he arrived there, he sold the weapon without any hesitation, and in return, he was able to acquire HP.

This was surprisingly amazing. The food in the bunker would have only lasted for two to three years but if you had HP then you could buy groceries that others put on the billboard.

So, he was able to survive in the bunker much longer than he thought.

– Janus: I have the method. Do you think I'm going to let you go without you making one? It's just like swimming in the ground and making a sword out of the dirt.

Not only that. Countless heroes of the world who were curious about Anvil, who could create weapons with spiritual power. They wanted to talk with him and wanted to be friends. Anvil, of course, did not refuse them.

– Janus: I'll send you the ingredients! If you make it, the rewards will be really astounding!

– Anvil: I have an overflowing amount of money.

– Janus: I know that! Please!

– Anvil: I can't guarantee I can make it.

– Janus: Wow, thank you Anvil! I love you! I really love you!

– Anvil: Wait quietly.

– Janus: Okay! I'll just sit here until the sword is done!

– Anvil: ... Still, eat your food.

Actually, this was not the first time. In the beginning, there were not many metallurgical materials in the underground bunker, and the quality was not so good. Other members of Hero Universe who grasped his situation at once, sent materials from other worlds, and asked him to build the weapons they wanted.

Using the materials of the other worlds to create something was completely new, extremely stimulating, and fun for Anvil. He did not refuse the requests, and those who were satisfied with the finished products gave him a large amount of remuneration (HP) which he did not ask for.

It was his first request to make a weapon that could kill God anyway.

Is this fate, too? In the end, you'll get a huge commission.

[Janus sent a gift. Do you want to check?]

– Anvil: Oh, thank you as always.

[10HP bonus from the Administrator who is impressed by your kind and friendly words.]

“You're kind every time.”

His relationship with the Administrator, who only revealed his presence in the message every time, was very good.

Now, it wasn't for the 10 HP. Anvil wasn't respectful to the Administrator in the first place. He was just grateful to the Administrator who led me to Hero Universe.

“Huh. It's the ingredients of a new sword, and it's full of things I haven't seen in my life. Janus, what is he really doing?”

[Janus is a man who has the talent to play in the Hero universe. He was lead to the Hero Universe because his world became uninhabited.]

The Administrator replied to Anvil's words. Even so, the mentions about Janus on the board increase every day, each one like a bluff more ridiculous than the last. He ripped through a typhoon, prevented a volcano from erupting and killed a dragon or bear.....,

[It's all true.]

“Huh, I want to see his face once.”

[You can if you increase your membership level. It's clear you will become a VIP with this delivery. You are the only one who will reach that membership level in 20 years.]

“... Glory.”

It's probably because he's active on the Trading board and earns a lot of HP but he wasn't very happy being a VIP. Maybe... Surely I will die before I become a VIP.

In fact, he was feeling death slowly approached him these days. He had a feeling he wouldn't last long.

[You can purchase the elixir sold on the bulletin board. You will be young again. As long as you invest all of the collected HP, you can live for as long as you want.]

"Thank you for your concern, Administrator. I'm sorry, but I don't want to live like that."

[...]

The Administrator was silent. Probably reading the Anvil's feelings.

... Ok. Although the escape was longer than he expected, Anvil had no intention of escaping from his impending death. Now he was exhausted.

[Aren't you enjoying Hero Universe?]

After a moment of silence, such a message came to his eyes again. Anvil shook his head with a smile.

"It's fun. It's so much fun. I'm going to forget that I'm living in a destroyed world. That's why it's a problem."

[...]

If he did not feel responsible for this abandoned world then it will be a lie. If his talent had bloomed a little earlier, he would have had no regrets. He felt guilty when he made a mistake.

Even if he used the elixir and got his youth back then moved to another world with the power of Hero Universe. His life would be enjoyable but at the same time, it would be an unforgivable escape for Anvil.

It was enough. He wanted to stay with this world.

[If that's what you want then I will respect you.]

"Thank you for everything."

[10HP bonus from the Administrator who is impressed by your gentleness and moved to tears.]

“Hahahaha, you always give me a bonus.”

But as the Anvil smiled and he whispers flew from his youngest friend headed to him.

-Eunah's: Grandpa, Grandpa.

-Anvil: Yes? What's going on, Eunah.

-Eunah: Actually, I am now 7 years old!

The first genius in history to have access to the Hero Universe and recognized for his genius at a young age of only five. His talent is certainly brilliant, but the child is so young that everyone treats her carefully.

– Anvil: What is it? My Eunah is already seven years old. Then this grandpa should give a wonderful gift.

– Eunah: Really? Really? Will you make something?

– Anvil: Sure, of course.

She may be a child living in another world with her family. The only thing that Anvil knows about her is the gender and the name which he assumes to be real.

However, when Anvil was talking with this child, his little daughter, who left a long time ago, couldn't be remembered.

– Eunah's: I'm very excited, I must boast that my grandfather made it to my friends!

– Anvil: You can't talk about Hero Universe, you know?

– Eunah: Wroong! I'm going to say my favorite piece in the world has been created!

– Anvil: Huh, what a girl.

The Anvil was pouring out great affection on the child without his knowledge, and the child also loved and followed Anvil. One of the most disappointing things about this world is probably that he will be unable to see this child again.



‘Naughty, she’s not your daughter.’

Shortly thereafter, Anvil took over. I’m willing to accept death and am going to embrace it.

But it worked out rather well. Let’s make a birthday present for Eunah. Give your whole heart and let yourself go. That would be right.

“Where is it? Yes, I can take it apart.”

After checking Janus’s recipe, Anvil removed the glittering yellow gemstone from his sack of ingredients and even purchased additional things from the trading board.

– Anvil: Wait a minute, Eunah.

– Eunah: I’ll be a good girl!

– Anvil: Oh, good.

That’s how Anvil set off.

There were two works: Janus’ Sword and Eunah’s hairpin.

– Janus: Grandpa! Quickly!

– Anvil: Noisy, didn’t I tell you to wait quietly? Oh, and there are some gems that you gave me, so I took them and used them for something else.

– Janus: What!? It’s not actually a gem but it’s really precious, but who’ll you give it to?

The process of working was not boring at all. As always, when he’s pounding the iron on the Anvil, his friends who have come to know him through the Hero Universe have been whispering.

– Anvil: I’ll give it to Eunah.

– Janus: Ah, Eunah ... Do you need anything else?

– Anvil: That’s enough.

He was half-naked, regularly knocking down the iron, breathing with it. He didn't care about anything else except to respond to the whispers he received.

– Halo: Anvil is inspired?

– Halo. It's been a long time.

– Halo: Request, is it possible? I need shackles to hold a giant.

– Anvil: I'm sorry. I'm holding onto something now.

– Halo: ...Then I'll ask you next time. I need inspiration.

Perhaps this will be the last task, and it's hard to listen to another friend's request. Anvil was sorry, but he didn't wish to tell the story of his own death. It was unpleasant to tell a friend about his death.

– Tsukuyo: Anvil, I heard that you're not too far away from the VIP status. It's been a thousand years since I've had a day off. I want to see you a little sooner.

– Why do you want to see this the old man's face?

– Tsukuyo: Your soul is so bright and brilliant, who dares to call you old!

– Anvil: Huh, such a peculiar one.

Looking back, I have made a lot of bonds in the past 20 years. Among them, there were pleasant relationships, a somewhat unpleasant relationship, and a strange relationship that was difficult to explain.

But all of them remained as pleasant memories to Anvil. I just hope they don't get too sad when I disappear.

– Eunah: Grandpa, Grandpa it's my birthday today! I've been a really good kid for a while! I've been a really, really good kid!

– Anvil: Oh, I don't know but at the end of the day, I would have made all of your gifts.

– Eunah: Wow! I love you, Grandpa!

– Anvil: I love you; I love you a lot. I'll send you a present now.

How much time has passed... Thank heavens, the work was done before it was too late...

The sword was made of a black metal with a yellow gem imbedded in the hilt.

The hairpin was beautifully finished with a yellow gem in the center of a silver cross.

It was an achievement that could be called the masterpiece of his life.

"It's ok. Then send the gift. Uh-huh!!"

After a successful work, The Anvil sent two items as gifts to the owners. Strangely, exactly at that time, all the power that remained in his body was lost.

No, it would be a more accurate expression to say his body had endured until the work was finished.

You, do you think so?

"Administrator... Will you be with me until the last minute? Thank you."

[...10HP, bonus.]

What would HP mean when he was dead, but Anvil laughed at it. His mind became a little more relaxed.

"In the meantime, I enjoyed it. Thank you."

[The same is true for me.]

The time has come. His whole body was exhausted, and his eyes closed. Feeling the lack of consciousness, Anvil still looked at the message left by the Administrator.

At the last moment, a new message seemed to rise, but he could not read it.

[VIP level. My room function opens, login bonus function opens. ID information is engraved on the soul.]

[We look forward to the day we will meet again in a new place.]

@ @ @

Eighteen years later, the world is different from Merva.

Kang Shin-hyuk, a freshman at the Superhuman Training School in South Korea, that 17-year-old boy, accessed Hero Universe.

[Checking ID. Existing ID exists. Connecting to the Hero Universe with ID [Anvil]. VIP members are welcomed to reconnect!]

[You are logged in from another world! Get 10,000HP as a login bonus for another world! First achievement, 10,000 HP added!]

[Loading ID information. Be prepared to be shocked!]

“... I beg your pardon? Aaaaaaaaaaaaaah! ”

It was the resurrection of the ID Anvil.

Translator and Editor Notes:

and let there be a new novel also this took me like 2 – 3 hours to translate all this ~ McTavish

[1] This may be a reference to the Japanese shinai i think.

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Translator: Mctavish

Editor : MagicFishCat and Asada

Kang Shin-Hyuk was an orphan. He was one of the countless children who have lost their parents to monsters and were taken to orphanages after the catastrophe of the Third Gate Cataclysm.

Like the many other children who lost their parents to the monsters, Kang Shin-hyuk cursed the monsters. He wanted to tear them apart with his hands. Maybe that's why he was happier than anyone else when he woke up at the age of 12 as a man of power.

[Kang Shin-hyuk – G-Rank]

[Trait]

[The Serpent without its Pearl][A-] Instead of dealing with mana, you can quickly and easily master all kinds of martial arts. Strengthen the effect of self-mastered martial arts.

[Physical ability]

Strength – F

Agility – F

Health – F

[Special ability]

-None

[Skill]

Eighteen Techniques (A) – F [1]

However, the moment he laid eyes on his status window (which the adults called the Gaia system), his mind went blank. The reason was because of his Trait.

“It's an A-Ranked trait, so if you just look at the rank, then it's a top trait. Your special skill is also A-Rank as well.”

“Quickly master all kinds of martial arts. If martial arts includes weapon arts, does it apply to guns as well? Although we'll have to see the speed of training...but still.”

“Isn't the penalty too fatal? Having a Trait without being able to handle mana, this is ...”

“You could be a skilled mercenary...but still, a mercenary...”

“You could’ve been a top superhuman. It’s a pity, you’re like a dragon that has lost its pearl.”

The Fake Gold. It was an expression used by all those who came to know about his trait.

Kang Shin-Hyuk understood it. He knew how important mana was to those who fight monsters.

Mana or magic power. The mysterious energy that appeared with the gate throughout the world. Everyone with strong abilities had strong magical powers, and monsters were also stronger the more mana they possessed.

Artifacts with special powers could also be only activated with mana, and the price of the mana stones found inside the special monsters increased with the amount of mana they possessed as well.

‘The world after the opening of the gate is dominated by mana.’

That statement was indeed right. Mana is the power to rule the world.

And ironically, Kang Shin-Hyuk realized this when he awakened his Trait.

You can’t deal with mana.

You can’t be the hero of the world.

\* \* \*

Five years later, Kang Shin-Hyuk turned 17. There were many other options, but he chose to go to a Supernatural Training Academy.

Of course, there were countless restrictions on him because of his body that couldn’t handle mana, but his trait helped him to quickly master all martial arts and enter the world’s best Supernatural Training Academy despite having those fatal limitations.

In other words, that was it.

“Huh, it’s Kang Shin-Hyuk.”

“That guy failed the beginner mana mid-term exams.”

“Can he advance like that?”

“I wish I get him in the next spar training. I also nearly failed...”

“You know, even if you beat him, you probably won’t get many points.”

At the end of the class, he could hear the voices of the people around him while quietly walking down the school corridor. Kang Shin-Hyuk clicked his tongue quietly.

Even if he couldn’t handle the magic, he was confident that he could always win no matter how many times he fought. However, he had to endure it as it is not good to cause a commotion.

“Because I always get all the hate.”

Korea’s supernatural training institution, the Shinyoung Academy.

Boasting a whopping 60% international student rate, Shinyoung was one of the world’s top three elite institutions among super-power facilities and everyone from students to faculty members possessed a strong pride. The pride of being responsible for the future of this generation.

However, there was a student in Shinyoung who couldn’t even deal with Mana. A phenomenon where, as a superhuman with a Trait, he couldn’t control mana. There were even those who considered Kang Shin-Hyuk to be a hindrance just by being in the same room as them.

He was initially able to get through the year with his superb writing and martial arts skills for a while but he didn’t know when he would get kicked out for a minor accident. With the amount of effort he put into entering, he couldn’t afford to be kicked out now.

“It’s a place where free dormitories, free food, and free training facilities are given, and no school fees are required. There’s even a ‘dignity-maintenance fee’ where you get free pocket money.”

Kang Shin-Hyuk tried extremely hard to enter Shinyoung, one of Korea’s best and the world’s top five super-institutes. There was not even a satisfactory training environment for an orphan, but he tried. He really tried.

Passing the entrance exam gave him the opportunity to train in the best environment for three years. He had no time to waste on those who talked behind his back.

‘Suck up everything I can in the school. Take advantage of everything. I have to succeed as a Trait user..’

The body could be trained even without mana. Of course, there were limits, but whining was better left for when he reached those limits.

As he clenched his fist, pledging to himself, a palm quietly rose over his shoulder. A voice that seemed to suck up the tense atmosphere flew in.

“Hey, Shin-Hyuk-ah, let’s go play!”

“...Baek In Ha.”

Kang Shin-Hyuk looked back and sighed. The name of the boy who crept up so quickly that even his trained eye couldn’t notice, Baek In-Ha. He was also a freshman, like him.

Unlike Kang Shin-Hyuk, he possessed a high level of mana, and his S-Rank Trait was also a monster among other S-Rank monsters. Even among the freshmen of the year at Shinyoung, which was renowned for gathering monsters with excellent potential, he was still considered a once-in-a-hundred-years genius.

“Nothing good will come from playing with me.”

“Wow, so edgy! It was just like a line from a novel. Hey, say it again. I’ll record it this time.”

“This little bastard...”

Kang Shin-Hyuk sighed as he watched the appearance of Baek In Ha who turned on the recording function of the popular “Stick”, a high-performance portable terminal similar to a smartphone that was given to all students of Shinyoung. He was in the same class as him, and he was also the first person who approached him during a sparring session.

Kang Shin-Hyuk had been hitting it off with him, and when he tried to distance himself after finding out his Trait, he had stubbornly kept approaching him.



'You're ignoring a real genius' or whatever; his Trait was the only good thing about him. Apart from that, he was just an asshole to him.

However ... he was thankful that he got to know him. He would get picked on less just by staying next to him, and his school life would also be a lot smoother.

'I hate that I'm only calculating benefits like this.'

Even though he knew that it was good to stay close to Baek In-Ha, the reason he acted like this was of this kind of guilt unconsciously appearing in his mind.

"Why do you keep trying to play with me and chase off the other guys that want to hang out with you?"

"I told you, I fell in love with your skills. Kyahh! You ace everything whether it's with a sword, a spear or even a mace!"

"But I have no mana. You know what people call me? Trash Can. It even sounds so...trash."

"Wouldn't something happen when your Trait grow more? Besides, isn't it natural to have fallen for a guy who works hard rather than people just recklessly believing in his abilities? Ah, and."

This is actually important, he said and continued while pushing his face closer to him.

"Your face is really good. You know, to hook up with a girl, you have to be close to a good-looking guy."

"..."

Kang Shin-Hyuk looked at his face at those words.

Although he didn't think his face was bad, it had been a while since he had been told that. It was because everyone had only looked at his Trait since entering Shinyoung.

"You're convinced, signor? So, let's play! Let's hook up with some gorgeous and wonderful noonas and enjoy the night together!"

"... Okay, stop talking that way first."

He would've been a great guy if not for his embarrassing personality. Kang Shin-Hyuk sighed and followed him while telling himself to stop after 2 hours to make space for training.

However, the place where he dragged him to was not a nightlife bar but a shopping street full of battle equipment shops, consumable shops, restaurants and taverns...aka the Seoul superhuman shopping center. A place that required a Superhuman Academy Student ID to enter.

"Weren't you going to flirt with college students or social worker noonas?"

"No, that was a joke and it's your birthday today. I was thinking of buying you a birthday present."

"... What?"

Baek In Ha spoke like it was nothing, but Kang Shin-Hyuk was slightly moved by his words.

Birthday, Who has cared about his birthday? It's early May, so it's only been two months since he got to know him!

"Hey, I'll buy you what you want. Shall we go over there? "

"Are you crazy? That's the brand. I'm done. Bye."

There are grades for superhuman weapons. The shop which In Ha was pointing to was the brand known to the entire world, the superhuman-use weapon brand [Mystic].

Aside from the rare natural products that can be obtained beyond the gate, the place where only the luxury goods of the highest grade are sold!

"It's not as expensive as you think it to be. And with your ability, I have to at least buy you this much."

"Say that again, I'll beat you up."

He had heard the gossip. Talent and looks, the boy who had everything, Baek In Ha, his family was also loaded.

At school, he had just been eating the same meals and the same clothes, so he had just heard of it recently, but it didn't seem to be unfounded.

“Hey, it’s really not a big deal.”

“I’m the one that’s bothered. Go there, to that shop.”

Kang Shin-Hyuk lead the bewildered Beak In Ha to a shabby shop at the entrance to a nearby alleyway. There was a sign calling it a second-hand shop, so it was much cheaper than the Mystic.

“Second-hand!?”

“I know that superhuman weapons are expensive, even used ones. I’m not receiving anything more expensive than that.”

“But the guy who is going to make it big shouldn’t start cheap…”

“Give me something more expensive later. I can do with that for now.”

Kang Shin-Hyuk led In Ha, who sounded like some big conglomerate’s successor and forced him to enter a second-hand store.

Baek In Ha grumbled till the end but gave in in the end at Kang Shin-Hyuk’s endless nagging.

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It was a coincidence that he found a sword covered all in black.

“Over there’s 1.5 million won per piece.”

The shopkeeper said bluntly without any intention to move from the counter. Kang Shin-Hyuk heard his words and stared at the sword again.

The ebony black sword was mixed randomly with other weapons in a large container, which meant that they were the weapons that even the second-hand shop was eager to get rid of.

“There are a lot of things to do, so even if you complain later, you can’t get a refund. It’s useless to use the school’s name, so remember that.”

“Ah, yes, We won’t do that.”

The owner’s gaze was fixed on Shinyoung’s emblem on the left shoulder of the uniform jacket worn by Kang Shin-Hyuk.

Maybe the shopkeeper had been bullied by a senior using Shinyoung's name in the past. If so, then it was understandable that he was irritated at them. Meanwhile, Kang Shin-Hyuk's gaze was still focused on the black sword.

'Now that I think about it, I have a lot of money.'

How long had it gone without being properly managed? Not only was the black blade completely exposed, but there were also fine cracks. Moreover, there was a large hole in the guard-piece. It seemed that the original ornament went missing. IF YOU WANT TO READ MORE CHAPTERS, PLEASE VISIT [N\(o\)VEL\(F\)ire.net](http://N(o)VEL(F)ire.net)

'It's definitely a failed product. No matter how well you manage it, you may not be able to use it many times. Though it's strange that there's no rust. '

But why was he so attracted to this sword?

He wanted to hold this sword. If he wiped the dust and changed the blade of the sword, it seemed like it would shine brilliantly again.

He impulsively reached out to the sword. The shopkeeper then added without faltering,

"If you touch it, you buy it. No refunds."

"Ah, he's being so fussy~ Shin-Hyuk, you go with what you want, I'll pay for it."

1.5 million won. Although he was quite embarrassed at such an expensive gift, it wasn't something he couldn't pay off through the 'dignity-maintenance fee. A day will come when he would get to pay off Baek In Ha.

Baek In Ha approached the shopkeeper proudly showed his card. When the shopkeeper saw the Sakaman card, he flinched briefly, before politely accepting the card.

"W-we can accept refunds. But that sword is really damaged so we don't know when it'll break..."

"Shin-Hyuk, are you okay with that?"

"I'm okay."

As expected, money and power were great. The owner of the store became so polite! Kang Shin-Hyuk took the sword, thanking Baek In Ha for letting him feel this sense of superiority.

At that very moment, a stream of violent pain ran down Kang Shin-Hyuk's whole body.

'Kek!?'

He tried to remove his hand from the sword straight away, but just before that, an image entered Kang Shin-Hyuk's head then into his mind.

The image of the man hammering on a lone piece of iron in a destroyed world that had no more life, where hope was nonexistent.

'Cramped workshop... An old man? He's pounding the iron. For a long time, extremely long...'

He had never seen this man before, but he felt a deep sense of sympathy and empathy towards the lonely figure. Then he was even more surprised at that fact.

Why, what is this man to him, that the feelings conveyed by this man are so vivid to him?

"Shin-Hyuk? What is it? Is there too much damage?"

"No, hey just wait a moment..."

Confused by the sudden rush of images, he tried to back off with his sword, but his body was acting the opposite way of his will. He held the sword tightly as if he would never let it go till his death.

As if he had recovered a treasure that had been lost for a long time.

– Confirmed attempt to connect to the Hero Universe.

It was that moment that a message appeared on his retina. A message that feels a little different from the message of the Gaia system which anyone who awakens an ability can access.

Kang Shin-Hyuk's jaws dropped at the phenomenon that had never been seen before. What surprised him, even more, was that he was confident that he had missed it somewhere in his heart.

-Checking your identity. An existing ID exists. Connecting to the Hero Universe with the ID [Anvil]. VIP guests are welcome to reconnect!

"Hero Universe? Anvil...?"

The messages continued. Kang Shin-Hyuk thought out loud but of course, no one was there to answer his questions.

-You've logged in from a different world! Earn 10,000 HP as other world login bonuses! This is a first-time achievement, 10,000 HP will be added!

It's because of his mood that the plain sentences in his mind seemed so full of emotion...

-Loading ID information. Be prepared as it may be shocking!

"... Come again? Euaaaaaaaaaaaaaack!"

"What is it, Shin-Hyuk!? Shin-Hyuk! Hey man! Shin-Hyuk!"

The shock, skewering his brain struck Kang Shin-Hyuk before he even read the messages.

The record of a world he knew nothing about, the memory of a man who had been left alone in the world and knocked on the iron, was flooded to him. It was a much more terrible pain than when he first awakened his Trait.

Kang Shin-Hyuk struggled with the fragments of sharp memories that repeatedly assaulted his brain, trying to resist with his tough mentality, but finally, when the name "Eunah" came to his mind, he finally let go of his consciousness.

-I'm honored to see you again, dear member.

Of course, he couldn't read the Administrator's message in front of him.

Translator and Editor Notes:

[1] This is a Korean martial arts. I couldn't find any english articles on it but here's a japanese wiki page that you'll need to google translate if you're curious about the martial arts. I didn't put the Korean one because the japanese one makes more sense on MTL. ~Magifishcat

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Translator: Mctavish

Editor : MagicFishCat and Asada

-Eunah: What does Eunah have to do to meet her grandpa?

-Anvil: If Eun-ah is a good girl, I will come and see you.

-Eunah: Really? You will meet me, Grandpa is way better than Mom and Dad! My mom and dad always bully me; they don't let me play with dolls or let me see movies!

-Anvil: Oh my, looks like Grandpa will have to teach a lesson to those kids! Then we're going to play with the dolls and watch movies together.

-Eunah: Really?

-Anvil: Yes, really.

-Eunah's: I love you so much! I'm going to be a good kid every day, so you have to come to see me quickly!

There were countless memories in his head. All were memories of different times, but the place and people remained unchanged.

Kang Shin-Hyuk became a blacksmith who was all alone in the perished world. He was pounding the lump of metal without any rest. He was constantly

quenching metal, exchanging messages with a child who didn't know his face or voice.

-Welcome VIP [Anvil]. All your ID information has loaded, but the difference in ability is large so it will take a while to fully synchronize. The HP that you have earned is locked, and it will be unlocked as the synchronization rate increases.

-Though you are a VIP, the assimilation rate is too low, so it is not possible to properly utilize membership rights. Limited activation of the Login Bonus Feature. VIP benefits, 500HP as a login bonus of the day! Increase your assimilation rate to enhance your login bonus and unlock the My Room function!

How much time had passed since he had fainted after receiving the strange message from the Hero Universe? It was only after the sky was dotted with the peaceful shine of the distant stars, that Kang Shin-Hyuk managed to slowly regain consciousness.

He was in his room. Baek In Ha seemed to have carried him to his room. He thanked him in his mind.

"Hey, uh... why does my head hurt so much?"

His head was spinning from dizziness. He felt similar to the morning when he drank with the orphanage kids after the Shinyoung results were announced. He was currently in a situation where he didn't even know himself and what he was living for.

However, there was a certain thing left in his head and that was the memory of a young girl named [Eunah].

No, there was one more thing. He was a blacksmith and had made a birthday present for her in the past.

"What former life... Is it like that?"

He himself couldn't believe it but the memory felt too fresh and real for it to be a simple dream. That strange sense of unity was hard to accept in a different sense.



An old, shabby blacksmith who hid underground and quietly waited for his death in a world where there was no one left to lean on. And the miracle that came to him...

‘I can’t remember any more. The memories are too random and chaotic.’

He also seemed to have heard something similar to synchronization and VIP when he was unconscious. There was a need to check.

‘The Gaia System’s log function should work...’ he thought. But when he activated the log function, he became even paler.

– The Synchronization operation is in progress. Current sync rate 0.3%...  
1301 days 17 hours 32 minutes, 55 seconds 18...

– Special abilities and Spirit Power are unlocked.

-Under the influence of Spirit Power, your existing Trait [The Serpent without its Pearl] has evolved into [Awakened Fledgling Dragon](A -)! All stats grow drastically!

“No, what is it talking about?”

The talk about VIP and Synchronization was probably related to this Hero Universe. Say he ignored those parts for now, what would he do in the future?

Trait evolution? Metallurgy? Moreover, special ability!? Wasn’t that only for the use of magic?!

“No. Calm down, calm down Kang Shin-Hyuk. This entire thing could be a trap. Maybe it’s a terrible nightmare or hallucination since I wanted mana so much. Let’s check calmly. Okay, calm down.”

Every person who awakens a trait encountered the Gaia system and gained the right to check his or her abilities.

Yes, that was the status window. He was able to see his objective abilities in real-time just as he could see the abilities of the characters in the game. So the moment he said ‘Status window’, a translucent window appeared in front of him.

[Kang Shin-Hyuk – E+ Rank → D- Rank] [1]

[Trait]

Awakened Fledgling Dragon (A- → A+) – Instead of dealing with mana, you can easily and quickly master all kinds of martial arts. It greatly amplifies the effect of self-mastered martial arts and enhances the performance of the weapons in hand.

[Physical Ability]

Strength – E+ → D

Agility – D → C-

Health – E → D-

[Special Ability]

Spirit Power – F (Unlocked)

[Skills]

Eighteen Techniques (A) → Fanged Dragon Dance (S-)

Metallurgy – F

“Haa...”

Kang Shin-Hyuk sighed helplessly as he looked at his status window. His state window couldn't be false. His status has changed greatly since the morning training.

His stats that he had tried to recklessly grow had all grown significantly, and his previous rank of E+ had grown to D. Skipping The D- Rank entirely becoming a pure D Rank.

But compared to other changes in this arrangement, it was nothing worth being surprised about...

Originally, his trait, the Serpent without its Pearl, was that of A-Rank. However, it had become the Awakened Fledgling Dragon and became an A+ Rank, it grew by two stages at once.

Of course, the inability to deal with mana was still a major limitation, but he was now able to greatly amplify the effectiveness of his martial arts and enhance the performance of a weapon he held. If it was this much, then he could become a respectable superhuman even without any mana.

“Even the special ability is S-class now... I got a negative mark, but still, I have my foot in the S-grade class.”

There were remarkable changes to his talent of training with weapons and his Eighteen Techniques had changed to a higher rank Fanged Dragon Dance.

Evolving to a higher rank meant his proficiency would rise by one level, and he was still strong without much proficiency. An S-Rank was even more special. Since it was almost exclusive to Rankers or the Ranker Reserve force.

He almost couldn't believe it, so he pinched his cheek and it hurt like hell. It was not a dream. He also felt that his strength and stamina had really grown.

‘But what's even more amazing than that.’

[Special ability]

Spirit Power – F (Open)

It was a special ability. It was a special ability which he never heard about, called Spirit Power.

No, there had been one before. Spirit Power was what superhumans used to call mana. No special abilities other than mana had been known at that time. At least for the general superhumans, including him.

Mana was the power to strengthen all things and must only be used by the superhumans who faced monsters. Kang Shin-Hyuk was treated as trash because he had no magic. However, there was now another power in place of mana!

“I need to be calm... No, I can't accept the situation just like that.”

There had to be only one or two surprises like this but since massive changes full of multiple surprises had suddenly arrived in his life, he just couldn't calm down. His head felt like exploding.

But he found out that everything had happened because of something called the Hero Universe. What had been the prologue to all this? Yes, it was the black sword from the second-hand store...

“Ha ha.”

He glanced at his right hand holding the sword. He laughed at himself for holding it so tightly as if he never planned to let it go.

I only realized later on that he could barely release his hand from the sword and lay it down.

“Just what is this sword?...”

-This is the sword that you made in your past life.

At that moment, a message appeared in front of him. It wasn't the stiff, emotionless message of the Gaia system but a message that radiated with familiar human warmth. Inside the fragmented memories in his head, Kang Shin-Hyuk managed to recall the source of the message.

“Administrator...?”

-That's the answer! 10HP as a bonus to our dear member who has just remembered the Administrator!

“The bonuses are still as generous as ever... ah.”

His eyes snapped open as he swallowed back the words which he had unwittingly uttered. Words that he couldn't make sense of. Then as if it had guessed his feelings, another message followed right after

-No need to be confused. It's your memory. More exactly, it is the memory of your past life.

“That sort of thing... is real?”

-You're going through it now.

“Maybe this sword forcibly instilled other people's memories and experiences in me...”

-We were able to load memories of your previous life because the souls matched. The evidence is that even with a large amount of information injected in you, no rejection occurred at all. And more than anything.

-You may feel yourself. The fact that you are “Anvil”

“ ... ”

Kang Shin-Hyuk sighed. Because deep inside, he was already nodding to the Administrator.

ID [Anvil]. A man who hid alone in a destroyed world and hammered on the iron till the moment he died.

Although there were only fragmented memories lefts, the Administrator’s words were not wrong. He had already accepted that Anvil was the same as him deep in his mind.

He was curious about it himself, but it felt so...right that Anvil was him, he didn’t even think about resisting the thought.

“Yes, I can.”

-As the synchronization progresses, the more you will assimilate with Anvil, the more you may feel confused.

Kang Shin-Hyuk listened and re-examined the message. There were 1,300 days left until the synchronization was completed.

The moment he saw it, his fear of the changes that would come in the future, and his desire to quickly reclaim what had been lost, soared up like a dragon. It was a strange feeling.

Kang Shin-Hyuk shook his head as if trying to shake off his doubts and changed the subject.

“Then, What’s Spirit Power?”

-That is the power that your past life dealt with. Of course, you can also deal with it since you’re the same soul. It was just that the process was sped up because you managed to reclaim your memories by connecting to the Hero Universe.

“What about my Trait and General rank?”

-The influence of the Spirit Power. It is the power to touch the origin of all things and evolve it. When you awakened your spirit power, the first thing it evolved was your origin.

“...Uh, that’s similar to mana.”

-Yes. Spirit Power is a force that is different from mana and belongs to the higher dimension. If mana is a force that acts from the outside to activate the inside, then Spirit Power is a force that activates the outside from the inside.

“Is it because of that that I can’t control mana?”

-That’s just a penalty of your Talent. Some people can deal with both mana and spirit power.

He thought that there was a special reason why he still couldn’t control mana after his awakening, but in the end, it was just his Talent. He was let down a bit.

But his joy was not completely gone.

Spirit Power. A higher form of energy similar to mana. What that meant was simple. It meant that Kang Shin-Hyuk was not a trash can now. He could grow, become stronger. Forge his own path,

“Spirit Power...”

Kang Shin-Hyuk clenched his fist, muttering the name of his new power. Then he faintly felt something. IF YOU WANT TO READ MORE CHAPTERS, PLEASE VISIT [NOVELFire.net](http://NOVELFire.net)

He didn’t know how to control it yet, but he could clearly feel the energy inside him.

“Administrator-nim.”

Kang Shin-Hyuk, after clearing his mind, calmly asked the Administrator. There were so many things he wanted to ask, but there was one thing that was the most urgent right now.

“What should I do to properly grow and control my spirit power?”

-That's something you have to find out yourself.

The Administrator replied immediately.

-Because you were a blacksmith spirit user.

As a result, the topic reverted back to his origins but compared to the first time, he was able to accept it with a calm mind.

"I got it."

Kang Shin-Hyuk replied with a sigh.

He was determined to face himself in his previous life.

"Then let's try to find out what this Metallurgy Skill is."

Translator and Editor Notes:

[1] this means that his rank is D-Rank, not between E+ and D or anything like that ~Magifishcat.

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Translator: McTavish

Editor: MagicFishCat

Although he said Metallurgy, it was midnight right now. There weren't any blacksmiths whom he knew and he wouldn't be able to get an appointment with one at this hour. [1]

However, he could try a task that fell under metallurgy, and that was sharpening the sword.

“Baek In-ha this bastard, he has some sense.”

A large envelope stood at an angle in one corner of his room, in which there was a large whetstone along with all kinds of medicine, including headache medicine. Maybe he had ripped it off the second-hand weapon store from before. [2]

Kang Shin-hyuk, who had been caressing the whetstone with his fingers, was surprised to find himself thinking that the whetstone was good enough sharpen his new sword. Perhaps this was also the effect of his past memories of the war. A bitter smile came out. Maybe to a bystander, it would look like a beginner was using a veteran's jokes.

“But... is this really a Godslayer sword?”

-That's right. The last sword you made in your past life, the Godslayer Sword.

“But it looks so plain...”

Kang Shin-hyuk shot back, saying that he didn't believe the administrator's words.

The Godslayer Sword. Yes, in his messy mind, he remembered making the sword. The memories just before Anvil's death remained vivid. Yes, he had made it for a man named Janus. He had also removed some of the materials and made it into a small gift to give to a child named Eunah.

But in his memories, the blade wasn't this worn or cracked.

-As a result of falling through a storm of time and space as well as crossing through numerous dimensions, even the Dragon Heart, the core of the sword, was lost. However, since it has returned to the owner's hand, maybe it will be able to regain its original strength someday by reforging it with your Spirit Power.

“A storm of time and space... So, I have to forge it again.”

His skill level of Metallurgy was only F-Rank. It was only natural considering that he had never held a hammer before in his life. But to reforge the sword, which had the words 'Godslayer' in its name, would such a day ever come?



-You don't have to worry. The soul remembers the technique, so if you start training in Metallurgy, your synchronization will accelerate and it won't take long until you recover your past life's state. Your ability to deal with spirit power should also grow together.

"Well, I'm looking forward to it."

Now his priority of action was to develop his new strength, Spirit Power. He had no strong desire to increase the assimilation rate or to restore the memories of the past life. He just thought that he couldn't turn away from it. The link to the origin of this information rests in [NovelFire.net](http://NovelFire.net)

The administrator continued explaining as if he had read his mind. Also, it could be just his current mood, but the administrator sounded as if he was tempting him.

-That's not all. Once fully synced, you'll be able to restore your Hero Universe membership status, upgrade your login bonus and reclaim the massive amount of HP you have stored at the same time. HP is a commodity that can be obtained through outreach and heroic activities in the Hero Universe, so it will have a massive impact on your growth...

"That's...I'm sorry, I want to forget about the hero universe right now."

-I understand.

Of course, he had some memories of my previous life, so he roughly knew how amazing the Hero Universe was. But right now, he was too confused to even evaluate himself, so he couldn't properly think about anything else.

In particular, the community he stayed in during the life that he didn't know about, to rush straight into this topic was like jumping into fire with a bomb for his mind.

"So, I want to start by being able to sense myself to some extent. Connecting to the exterior can come after."

-10HP Bonus for member who is realizing the essence of spirit power!

"Is that so?"

Laughing at the administrator's message, Kang Shin Hyuk started the work to grasp himself, which is sharpening the blade.

Although he never learnt how to properly sharpen a blade, he didn't have the thought of learning how to. Because he already knew the way in his instincts.

He laid a piece of towel on the floor, then set the whetstone down and whetted it with water. Sitting on his knees in front of the whetstone, he raised the Godslayer Sword that had lost its edge. [4]

"..... Hoo."

Why was he trembling at this little stone? Taking deep breaths, he held the blade and set it at an angle on a whetstone. There were no errors in his posture even though it was his first time. The movement that had been carved into the soul, after being repeated for many years came out naturally.

In the blink of an eye, Kang Shin Hyuk was not a student at Shinyoung, but a blacksmith. The transition was so natural that even he laughed.

Shiing. Shiing. Shiing.

Slowly without rushing, with precise movements, making sure there are no faults. He began to sharpen the blade of the sword.

At first, he felt a little awkward, but after mindlessly sharpening a few times, the awkwardness disappeared without a trace.

'Focus on the sword.'

Sharpening the sword is conversing with the sword. That mindset was naturally instilled in his mind as he continued to grind on the whetstone.

That was also probably a memory from his past life. But it still belonged to him. At this moment, the feeling of discomfort about the memories of the previous life disappeared a tiny bit.

Shiing. Shiing. Shiing.

Without stopping, he continued to sharpen his blade. The repetition of such simple movements was infinitely comfortable. The sudden memories about his past life, his discomfort about his new Special Ability, the Hero Universe, disappeared as he sharpened the blade.

His mind calmed down. The other unnecessary thoughts disappeared, and only one sword remained with him in the world.

It resembled the figure of a lone blacksmith who hammered on a lump of metal in a destroyed world.

-Halo : Anvil...? Anvil, right?

At that moment, a message appeared and hindered his concentration. Kang Shin-hyuk cocked his head. What's this?

His body wiped the whetstone and poured water again but suddenly realized while trying to interpret this phenomenon. Among the members of Hero Universe, there was a function to share messages.

'Let's ignore it for now.'

But, unfortunately, it was just the beginning.

-Eunah: Grandpa!?

-Eunah: It's Grandpa! Grandpa, Grandpa!

-Tsukuyo: Anvil, I'm greatly saddened by the fact that you have neglected your wife. But your wife, after finding out that you're alive and well, has shaken off all my sorrow and hate, so please calm your anger and reply.

-Eunah : Grandpa! Where is Grandpa!? Are you well? Are you alive? Please answer me, Grandpa!

-Janus: Anvil old maaaaaan! I thought you were really deaaaaaad!

Janus: Oh, please make me a godslayer sword again! I lost it. Make it red again! Anvil old maaaaaan!

-Eunah: Grandpa, right? .....? Please, Grandpa. Please give me an answer .....!

-Mirang: What a surprise. Are you alive? No, wait ... Is it reincarnation? What a success you've had to connect to Hero Universe in both of your life! No, did you... hmm, is it too unlikely? Please answer as soon as possible. I'll wait.

-Super Ultra Galactic Fist No.1 Best-nim: Wow, it's been a long time old man! How can you not make my gloves and go under for 18 years!

-Eunah: Heuk, Grandpaa.....Answer me.....

"Ah really!"

In the end, Kang Shin-hyuk stood up screaming. He couldn't work at all. In particular, this girl, Eunah, was very burdensome!

"Administrator, please do something about this!"

-You can use the whisper blocking function and the offline camouflage function.

If such things existed, then he should've told them first! Kang Shin-hyuk immediately activated the two functions. The manager did what he asked, adding a word.

-It was processed. However, if you are thinking about future hero universe activities, it is a good idea to read the messages slowly and answer them one by one. The relationship you have made will be a great power.

"..... I know. I just thought it would be ruder for me to respond to them without thinking."

Truthfully, he didn't want to connect to the Hero Universe until the synchronization was completed, but now that this happened, he felt like he had to face the Hero Universe, and the people from Anvil's past properly.

Honestly, it was a burden. Relationships that he built up but didn't know! He couldn't help but sigh when he thought of all the explaining he would have to go through about himself. Kang Shin-Hyuk turned his eyes to the sword that lay in front of his eyes.

"I don't know, let's just keep sharpening."

-As expected, your personality didn't change.

"That's an insult."

-10HP bonus!

“What do you mean? Excuse me? What does that mean?”

After blocking the whispers, he created an environment where he could concentrate.

The current condition of the Godslayer Sword was so messed up that he had to not only sharpen the blade but also shake off the dirt embedded between the chips and dents. And so, after one hour of work, his sword resembled a proper sword somewhat.

-Woo Woo

How quietly he was sharpening his sword? At one point, the sword vibrated. Kang Shin-hyuk's hands stopped. Was he mistaken? No, he wasn't. In addition to the sword vibrating, he was able to detect the distinct will contained within it.

Gladness, longing, joy, sadness. Such complex emotions were flowing from the sword. Kang Shin-hyuk shivered and realized instinctively.

Perhaps this was spirit power. The Spirit Power inherent in him stimulated the Spirit Power in the sword, intertwining their origins into one.

Kang Shin-hyuk felt as if he could communicate to the sword with just his will, just like how it mesmerized him in the weapon store. He chose to go along with his instincts.

‘Did I make you?’

-Woo-woong

The moment Kang Shin-hyuk carefully asked a question while sharpening his blade, the sword glowed as if it were positive. It was definitely a spirit power. The anxiety and faint light shook his heart. He wanted to help this sword.

At that moment, the light that naturally escaped from his body permeated into his sword. The sword seemed to be happy again and made a slight cry.

After seeing it, Shin Hyuk Kang lost his composure very briefly, but he soon realized that his spirit power was absorbed by the sword.

‘Indeed, it is true. Is this the power to deal with it.’

He felt pure joy in his heart. Was it because he figured out a way to control spirit power, a higher form of mana? No, that wasn't the reason. Of course, that was also a good thing, but now he was just happy to be able to help his sword struggle and regain all its strength. It was strange though the past him wouldn't be able to understand.

Shiing. Shiing Shiing.

Kang Shin-hyuk continued to sharpen and talk to the sword. The sword didn't respond as if it was out of energy, but he could still feel that the sword was feeling joy.

At this moment, he was convinced that they were communicating from their origins. Then.

-The GodSlayer Sword's power is restored very slightly by spirit power.

The sword emitted a dazzling light as the message of the Gaia system appeared in his mind. It has recovered its lost origin power very slightly and regained some of its former authority!

-The GodSlayer Sword regains power equal to D-Rank.

-Metallurgy grows to F+ Rank.

-Spirit Power grows to F+ Rank.

-Unlock a portion of the sword's memories.

"..... Eh?"

Kang Shin-Hyuk, who was sharpened the blade stopped his hands, as a feeling of déjà vu came over him.

The flood of memory again hit Kang Shin-hyuk.

This time it was a memory of another person.

Author's Notes:

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- The main character this time...from a lot of different meanings I made a teenager the motif. Also, to talk about the overall theme of this work, it would have to be 'destiny'. If you're looking for a story about a boy forging his own path while encountering karma from his past life, then this is for you.

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- Some of you might be discussing about a harem from now on, but although many female character will appear, I'm planning to add just as many male characters as well! And just because a female character appears, doesn't mean she will be a heroine! Maybe about half of them will be, but it's not decided yet!

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- I can't talk about the other series...but just to say something, it's still a long way to go until the other one is finished. I didn't start a new series because it's nearing the end!

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- Then I will return at 9:40 tomorrow morning![TL: Not us, the author.]

Translator and Editor Notes:

[1] Although I'm not a master of metallurgy, the Metallurgy mentioned here is more on the blacksmithing side, but bit more than just blacksmithing to be called blacksmithing.

[4] Whetstone need to be wet with water before sharpening for those who didn't know.

The schedule for now is 3~4/week. It is subject to change especially with the coronavirus going on, so keep that in mind! This is what happened last week, but it was nothing serious. ~Magicfishcat

Damn forgot the author notes in the previous chapters. ~ Magicfishcat

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Translators: McTavish, MagicFishCat

Editor: Sotheno

-VIP benefits, 500HP as a login bonus of the day! On the third day, you'll get a special sign-in bonus, so look forward to it!

After the onslaught of surprises yesterday, Kang Shin-Hyuk was so tired in the morning that he couldn't even train in the morning, and sleepily walked to school. As soon as the morning roll call was over, Baek In-Ha laughed as he looked down at the figure slumped on desk.

"Is little Shin-Hyuk okay now?"

"Ah... Uh... Yeah. Are you the one who brought me to my room? Thank you."

"Was that sword really okay? No curse or anything like that?"

"It's not that; it's my Trait. Something happened with the sword because of that."

"Oh oh."

Baek In-Ha's eyes twinkled.

"Is your Trait growing or something like that?"

"It's something similar, I'll explain later. Anyway, thank you very much. I'll definitely pay you back for this."

"But the more I think about it, the more I wonder, did the 1.5 million won second-hand sword have some sort of ability that stimulated your Trait? Or is it because your Trait affects weapons in general?"

"Both."

“Hmm really... but you know... There’s more important news than that. You actually lost out a lot yesterday.”

“Huh?”

Baek In-Ha pulled a chair from the desk in front and sat down. The chair originally had a separate owner, but he couldn’t complain outright to Baek InHa, so he had to find another friend to sit with.

“Look at this. I found it while carrying you back.”

“Huh? ...What.”

Kang Shin-Hyuk was astonished to see the figures in the photo, which appear to have been taken by Baek In-Ha himself. He gestured not to make a loud noise, but he was too surprised to stop himself in time...

“This... This is that.”

“The Thunder Empress and the Alchemist.”

“Crazy.”

There were two people captured in the photo, and they were both breathtakingly beautiful women.

With striking golden eyes and beautiful black hair, the Thunder Empress Shin Eun-Ah.

Crimson hair and fiery eyes, and a mole on her lazy smile all excluding a self-indulgent charm with her glamorous body, the Alchemist Claire Boyle.

Both of them were eye-catching beauties, but more importantly, they were ridiculous figures of the current generation who ranked among the top 500 on the international rankings.

“Why are they going to the superhuman commercial street?”

“I have some information that I have obtained from a reliable source.”

“That’s a really suspicious intro.”

“In fact, there’s something they’re looking for in a store. It seems to be some sort of hidden weapon, so they appeared yesterday for that reason. So...”

“They’re going to appear there again today, is that right?”

“Our little Shin-Hyuk is going to come right? We’re going to go hunting for sexy noonas, right?”

Baek Inha faced Kang Shin-Hyuk with a face full of anticipation. I even bought him a birthday present. He won’t reject me! However, Kang Shin-Hyuk responded politely.

“I’m sorry, I’m not going.”

“Ah, come one!”

“I don’t have time to play for a while.”

“The midterms are already over, so why!?”

“For the time being, I have to hold onto the sword you’ve given me.”

“Ahh...”

Baek In-ha’s expression crumbled at Kang Shin-Hyuk’s serious voice. However, what could he do, when it was because his gift was too liked. He had dug his own grave.

“So find another handsome guy and try your hunting together. I’ll watch you deflate in the distance.”

“Did you just say deflate?”

“I need to sleep for a bit.”

Kang Shin-Hyuk then rammed his head on his desk after kicking out Baek In-Ha. Of course, he was also interest in the high rankers who visited Seoul’s commercial street yesterday, but there was currently something more important than that.

‘Spirit power, Godslayer Sword, Hero Universe ... and the sword dance.’

Last night, the moment he succeeded drawing the power of his sword with spirit power, Kang Shin-Hyuk was once again forcefully pulled into another memory.

It was the memory of an unrecognizable human shadow, endlessly dancing under the moon's shadow, whilst beautifully wielding a sword.

It was just a memory, but the short but crystal-clear dance refused to leave his mind.

'It was advanced to the point where I couldn't even understand it...'

It was a memory that could not be shaken out of his head. Just thinking about the possibility of recreating that sword dance made his body shake with excitement.

He knew very well, since he also possessed a relatively advanced sword dance. The fact that the sword dance in the memory was in a realm that was out of his reach.

However, the memory was so real, that just comprehending a little part of the dance helped him immensely. If he could just see more, then it just might be possible to fully recreate the dance.

'Touching the sword's origin with your spirit and accepting everything in the sword, also means accepting everything that the sword has experienced. Spirit power is such a ridiculous ability. Now I just feel stupid for trying to compare it with mana...'

Spirit power. That was the strength that had allowed for him to move through frustration in the past.

After sharpening the Godslayer's blade and stimulating his spirit, he realised that there were countless other ways to use spirit power. That what happened yesterday was only a small part of what spirit power was capable of.

He wanted to delve deeper into spirit power to the point where it was almost unbearable. Just like how the memories within the Godslayer Sword were awakened, could he also awaken something buried deep within him?

...But the opportunity came to him sooner than later, in a way that Kang Shin-Hyuk never would've imagined.

“Today, we will conduct student-to-student duels. You will only use training weapons, but you could be seriously injured if you aren’t careful. Keep your mind straight. Do you understand?”

“”Yep!””

Class 3 [Weapon Training 2]. As one the basic subjects in the Shinyoung Knight Department, it was a necessary and dangerous subject that covered mastery with weapons and even real combat with monsters.

“Then, first is... Do Woo-Jin.”

“Yes.” Google search NOVELFIRE.NET

Dowoojin, an outstanding student in the C-class boasting mana comparable to Baek In-ha. His status window has not been disclosed to others so although they couldn’t be sure, there was a rumour that his mana reached C+ Rank. C+ Rank was higher than the some of the superhumans who had already graduated and was currently active in the field.

“Then, Kang Shin-Hyuk, come out.”

“...Yep.”

Kang Shin-Hyuk responded calmly to the call of the teacher in charge, Gong Jun-Pyo, and walked out. In fact, he expected to some extent that his name would be called. That’s because this teacher didn’t like Kang Shin-Hyuk so much.

In fact, most of the people in Shinyoung didn’t like Kang Shin-Hyuk. It was because they felt that the value of Shinyoung was diminished if a manaless person was one of its students.

However, among them, Gong Jun-Pyo’s hate towards him was particularly strong. He always tried to trample him whenever a chance arose, and a dueling session where he could just pair him an outstanding student and watch him be trampled was a very good chance.

“Do Woo-jin, what weapon?”

“I will use a one-handed sword and shield.”

“Kang Shin-Hyuk.”

“Sword... No, I’d like a spear.”

Kang Shin-Hyuk almost unconsciously answered sword as he recalled the sword dance thoroughly engraved on his mind, however, he soon changed his answer.

The sword dance’s power was not yet reproducible in his hands. He couldn’t even strengthen his body with mana, so having a close-quarters match with Dowoojin, who has C+ Rank mana, was a pointless effort.

‘No, wait a minute... Isn’t it not like that anymore?’

Only after his hands were gripping a spear did he have this thought. Didn’t he awaken the new power of spirit yesterday? Although it was different from mana, he was convinced that it was a power that didn’t lose to mana. He gained that conviction after yesterday night’s ordeal.

‘I haven’t tried it yet, but ...’

Yesterday, he figured out how to breath spirit power into other objects while sharpening the sword. Although he never tried to strengthen himself with spirit power, it didn’t seem that impossible. He even had the thought that it would be easier than touching the origin of another object.

He might be able to win. In the first place, Do Woo-jin wasn’t even a worthy opponent in terms of their techniques. But now that his physical abilities had risen, now that his martial art skills grew dramatically, now that he had gained a new ability called spirit power...!

“Both of you go inside the duelling arena. The fight continues until either side surrenders or is stunned. Just make sure you know that if you surrender too quickly, I’ll have no choice but to deduct your score.”

“Yep.”

He felt strands of ill will pointed towards him as he replied. Kang Shin-Hyuk ended up bursting into laughter as he watched Gong Joon-Pyo and Do-jin quickly exchange gazes.

They really hate him that much, it was really a mystery as to what he did that made the duo hate him with all their might.

“And this guy is somehow a teacher... it hurts my eyes just by watching their unsightly figures.”

Behind him, his only ally, Baek In-ha, was mumbling something with an eerie expression, but as there was no way to prevent an official class duel from happening, he could only grit his teeth and watch the duel.

‘What a good guy.’

Kang Shin-Hyuk bid Baek In-ha farewell, who was outraged for him and entered the specially-crafted sparring arena. The state-of-the-art facilities developed from the peak of magic engineering would absorb all the impact produced from the duel.

“I’ll warn you in advance. You should surrender. I won’t go easy on you.”

Dowoojin, armed with a one-handed sword and shield, declared coldly. He had more pride in Shinyoung than anyone else, so consequently, his hate for the ‘Incompetent’ Kang Shin-Hyuk was also greater than anyone else.

In response, Kang Shin-Hyuk raised his spear and smiled widely, not backing down.

“Hmm? You’ve never went easy on me so far, are you perhaps talking to someone else?”

“Impudent. There’s no way you’ll be able to beat anyone in Shinyoung without any mana.

“Wow, your speech so far has been a real gem among gems. Kind of like a vicious chub? ”

“Watch your mouth...!”

But those kinds of expression will run dry really fast. Does he make them up on the spot?

He wasn’t certain about this match. Even if he had awakened spirit power, his rank was only F+ Rank and the opponent was estimated to be C+ Rank.

‘But I have no choice but to try.’

However, thanks the long session of sharpening the night before, his heart was serene without ripples even before the duel.

Maybe it was the influence of a faint memory of his past life? It was like before the rush of hot blood in battle, an old man's relaxed touch approached him, and calmed his rough breath.

Kang Shin-Hyuk gripped his spear, breathed in deeply, then carefully awakened the spirit power that had been sleeping inside him. He looked upon himself, not the spear, and focused on the himself. At that moment, the teacher exclaimed,

"Duel start!"

"Ha!"

As soon as the teacher's signal dropped, Do Woo-jin rushed in. His body was wrapped in a brilliant blue light, as if proving that his whole body was overflowing with power.

Fast. Overwhelmingly fast. He was rushing in to crush him with all of his power, regardless of whether Kang Shin-Hyuk could handle mana or not.

However, it wasn't a bluff to say that he possessed C+ Rank mana. No matter how strong Shin-Hyuk was in martial arts, there was no way Kang Shin-Hyuk could react to a speed beyond human recognition.

This would've been the case, if it was yesterday.

"Ugh...!"

"He avoided it!?"

Do Woo-Jin, who missed him by a hair's breadth, turned his head and spat out in dismay. Meanwhile Kang Shin-Hyuk, who avoided his rush without much difficulty by only moving one step, was also amazed.

'I could see it. I could react!'

Despite the fact that it was only the first attempt, he had succeeded. He had succeeded in controlling spirit power, stimulating the origin, and temporarily awakening his flesh!



Physical performance was amplified explosively in an instant, and it became possible to read the enemy's movements as well as avoid them quickly. Only.

'Crazy, the speed my spirit power decreases at also exploded!'

His spirit power was still F+ Rank, with its quantity and quality still on the level of a toddler!

What's more, unlike the time when he was calmly controlling his spirit power by slowly sharpening his sword last night, this time, he was ignorantly pouring it into his body without any knowledge on how to control spirit power efficiently!

'It's dangerous, I have to finish this quickly!'

Kang Shin-Hyuk, who knew he would not be able to hold on for more than a few seconds, went straight to the next step. It was of course, to attack.

Only a short time had passed since Do Woo-jin froze in surprise after Kang Shin-Hyuk dodged his attack. If he didn't take advantage of the gaps that were revealed now, the battle would again instantly shift in Do Woo-jin's favor.

'Help me!'

Kang Shin-Hyuk, who could not be satisfied with only strengthening his body, squeezed out the last drop of spirit power in his body and focused all of the divine energy on the training spear in his hands.

In an instant, the image of the spear was engraved on his mind. The spirit power that flowed into the spear had sensed the origin of the spear and was strengthening it. Only.

'It's a lot different from the Godslayer Sword. It is easy to understand the source... but I don't think there's much power to amplify. The will of the weapon itself is too weak.'

Compared to the Godslaying Sword, which currently resided in his own origin, the origin of the spear was too weak, but it was definitely not a failure.

The training spear, with a weak enough will for one to almost believe that it didn't exist, had started to vibrate as it resonated with Kang Sin-Hyuk's own will.

‘Good, now I ask of you...’

The tiny amount of spirit that still remained in his body was concentrated in the spear, and wave of exhaustion came crashing down upon him.

He endured it and took a quick step forward. The target was Do Woo-jin’s stupidly hard abs!

“Hup!”

The spear was thrown forward in a straight line. Within it, contained the might of the S- Rank martial art with a proficiency of C-Rank, the Fanged Dragon Dance.

However, the moment Kang Shin-Hyuk launched an attack; he realized something new. His new S-Rank skill, had a distinctively different feel than the martial arts he was already accustomed to, the Eighteen Techniques (A).

‘It’ has a same motions, but contains more power in the move. As expected, skills are decided by ranks!’

Furthermore, as soon as he struck, he wanted the spear to shine a faint light, and a faint picture was engraved there according to his wish. A picture of a squirming little dragon!

Kang Shin-Hyuk did not realize it himself, but this was the power of his Trait, Awakened Fledgling Dragon. This is the first time that the power of Trait which strengthens the power of weapons in his hands was manifested.

-Bang!

“Kuk!”

The training spears tip squarely landed on Do Woo-jin’s stomach. With his body unbalanced after his charge, Do Woo-jin couldn’t withstand the impact and bounced off like a cartoon character, spewing blood from his mouth, and crashed into the opposite wall of the arena.

He then fainted and didn’t move from his spot.

“ ... ”

“What!?”

“Why did Do Woo-jin suddenly fly off?”

“Kang Shin-Hyuk won? For real?”

Only a few seconds. That was the length of the duel from start to finish. Most of the jaws of those watching ended up dropping to the ground in shock.

“What, did he use magic? Did he have a double awakening?”

“Do Woo-jin definitely rushed in, but he also went flying off by himself as well?”

“What, that’s crazy! Why did Do Woo-jin lose! ”

“I knew Kang Shin-Hyuk was good at martial arts, but still, winning against Do Woo-jin?”

“Do you think Do Woo-jin was anemic?”

The exchange was so fast that no one knew what happened. Except for a few students, the rest were confused to the point where they almost believed that Do Woo-jin had fallen over by himself.

Kang Shin-Hyuk lightly ignored the downpour of questions coming from his classmates and calmly looked at Gong Jun-Pyo. He was hoping for the announcement of the results, but Gong Joon-Pyo instead narrowed his eyes and asked him.

“...Did you use auxiliary magic or any artifacts Kang Shin-Hyuk?”

“If I had done that, the alarm in the arena would’ve been set off. I didn’t use them.”

Gong Jun-Pyo, who grasped both the movements of Do Woo-jin and Kang Shin-Hyuk, was also unable to believe the results.

He could understand why Gong Jun-Pyo was suspicious of the results of the duel, but to ask him these kind of questions... Kang Shin-Hyuk could only smile bitterly.

“But it’s impossible for you to beat Do Woo-Jin without any magic.”

“Then did you make a duel while you were convinced that it was an unfair match? But fortunately, my talents and skills have improved recently, so I’ve been able to win. You know how I got into Shinyoung.”

He didn’t lie. It was true that his Trait had evolved, as well as his skills.

However, although spirit power was added to the equation, there was no need to tell this person. It would be different if he was able to sense spirit power, but it seemed as though he hadn’t, so that was even more of a reason to keep his spirit power hidden.

“I won. Fair and square.”

Kang Shin-Hyuk calmly received the intense gaze of Gong Jun-Pyo. There was no reason to be not calm. Because without his permission, other people had no way of reading his status window.

Eventually, Gong Jun-Pyo nodded. Even if he wanted to nitpick, he couldn’t. He knew best that Kang Shin-Hyuk had won fairly.

“...Yes. You won.”

“Sir, I’m exhausted right now, so can I go to the infirmary?”

“Oh, yes. That must have been tiring. Do whatever you want.”

Gong Joon-Pyo, who realized that he would not be able to properly conduct other duels with Kang Shin-Hyuk here, did not reject his request. No, it was probably because he was shaking from head to toe.

Kang Shin-Hyuk returned the training spear to its original spot and exited the arena.

He ignored his classmates who were still slandering him, and after gesturing to Baek In-Ha, who was looking at him worriedly, stumbled out of Gym No.1.

“I’m going crazy, so hungry...”

He then grabbed his rumbling stomach and headed straight to the bathroom.

He needed the help of the Administrator.

Author’s Notes:

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- Ah, the name of the Thunder Empress..!?

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- Who might've given him the sword dance?

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- In this world, mana and spirit power are different types of energies. No one would react particularly strongly to both terms, but what about the Hero Universe!?

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- The chapter lengths are really rocketing. I guess it's because I really want to share this story with you guys that it's rocketing...

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- If you want anything in the story, like an element, or a weapon, or anything like that, then send me a message!

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- Then I will return at 9:40pm tomorrow!

#### Translator and Editor Notes:

Hi, sorry for not updating for a while, I'm the translator of VIP, and last week I took a week break because I was too busy irl, but then towards the end of the week, I caught the flu! That's why I couldn't upload for a while after that an as Toika said, the chapter lengths are going crazy. Keep in mind, I'm still not fully recovered so expect unstable updates! ~Magicfishcat

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Translator: McTavish, MagicFishCat

Editor: Sotheno

-Growl...

Thunder rumbled inside his stomach. And not just that, his mouth was as dry as a raisin, and a splitting headache was running rampant inside his skull. It felt like the skin on his body was shriveling up. It terrible sense of hunger that he had never felt while growing up in the orphanage.

“This is... Why is this doing this? Administrator, a little explanation... please... “

Kang Shin-Hyuk threw himself in an empty cubicle, then huddled on top of the toilet, muttering like a madman. Fortunately, the Administrator answered right away.

[This is due to the exhaustion of both stamina and spirit power in a short period of time. There is a need to consume nutritious food full of rich spirit power to recover your stamina and spirit power.]

“|-I see... “

[Hero Universe’s trading board sells a large quantity of energy-rich emergency food. The 20,000 HP other world sign-in bonus can be used without worry, so I recommend that you use it to make a purchase.]

Again, the Hero Universe. Kang Shin-hyuk, who wanted to avoid the unfamiliar world for the time being, instinctively made a frown.

“I can just eat Earth food, can’t I?”

-Earth’s food, of course, contains some spirit power, but they only contain a small amount, and they’re also not very pure. You will reach your physical limits before absorbing enough spiritual power. Also, if you eat foods with ample spirit power, your spiritual power will grow faster.

The Administrator was probably talking about the permanent growth of spirit power. However, there was no time to discuss calmly about the efficiency of such a method. He was going crazy with hunger, so it didn’t take long to make his decision.

Kang Shin-hyuk couldn’t die from hunger just to save his HP, which he didn’t even know how to use. So he hurriedly connected to the Hero Universe. No one would’ve expected his decisions yesterday would lead to this situation.

[A recommended item is Item #141,787, Eiren Jelly on the trading board. It has the highest spirit power to nutrient ratio and its pure spirit enables quicker spirit power regeneration, as well as its growth. However, the seller is notified of the buyer's ID.]

“Okay, please just buy it ...”

Sooner or later, the Hero Universe had to be challenged again. And if he were to operate there, then he wouldn't be able to ignore those who had been his friends in his past life.

This wasn't the time to nitpick over the temperature of the water. After all, this was the first time in his life where death by starvation was a serious possibility.

[VIP benefits! Commission fees are exempt! 10% discount due to bulk purchases. Would you like to buy 200 Eiren Jellies for 18,000HP?]

“Just do it!”

Kang Shin-hyuk could not use the HP originally possessed by Anvil's ID, but he was able to purchase the goods with the 'another world bonus' obtained from accessing the Hero Universe on Earth. Of course, most of the HP he had gotten had just been blown away!

[Completed the purchase of 200 Eiren Jellies. You will receive one Eiren Jelly directly. The remaining 199 Eiren Jelly has been sent to the shop inventory. The Shop Inventory is a spatial inventory that allows you to keep items purchased from the Hero Universe's trading board, and you can take goods out from it whenever you want.]

The messages appeared one after another in succession, however, his blurred vision from severe hunger meant that he couldn't spare the attention to read them. However, the sudden appearance of a small stick-shaped object in his hands made him wake up from surprise.

“Heuk.”

Even unwrapping the packaging was painful. He hastily ripped up the packaging, then took a huge bite out of the purple jelly that revealed itself.

But as soon as the purple jelly entered his mouth, the fresh aroma of grapes spilled into his mouth, and the pain mysteriously evaporated away. Kang Shin-hyuk widened his eyes to the limit as he returned to the land of the living. He could see a faint plume of smoke rising from the cross-section of the mysterious jelly.

“This, what...”

[Eiren Jelly is a great emergency food that contains an abundance of compressed spirit and nutrients. Not only does it contain all the calories you need per day, but it also completely refills your spirit power and stores the excess amount in your body for later use. In addition, the taste is excellent.]

“Whoa, crazy. Thanks for the recommendation!”

[10HP bonus for a wonderful member who never forgets to express his gratitude even in a hurry!]

Kang Shin-hyuk originally didn't like jelly very much. But this was an exception. He felt as if he was biting into a freshly picked plum.

He then devoured the remaining amount in a flash and savored the aftertaste. He was still not as full as his well-trained body required more energy than the average person, but at least his hunger was completely sated.

The crisis of his life was over. He sincerely thought so.

“The Hero Universe really is amazing...”

[Of course. If you also actively push your synchronization, you can acquire top-tier items incomparable to this jelly. A more direct approach can be taken once you unlock your My Room function as well.]

It was only one jelly, but it contained an absurd miracle within its small form. A single portion could replenish an enormous amount of calories, restore spirit power, and also be very filling. If there was a version for mana, the entire world would've been turned upside down.

“By the way...”

Kang Shin-hyuk, finally relaxing after the crisis, looked through the logs and realized that he had purchased 200 Eiren Jellies instead of one. Thanks to that, a 10% discount was applied, but ...

“Why did you recommend mass purchases?”

[Of course. Your current spirit power is very small. In the future, you’ll be in a similar situation whenever you use your spiritual power, so it’s essential to have lots of Eiren Jelly at hand.]

“Kng.”

He couldn’t refute that reasoning. This didn’t mean that he wouldn’t use this power in the future, but rather, if he were to train intensely with spirit power, then Eiren Jelly was “essential” in the words of the Administrator.

[Furthermore, as I mentioned earlier, the more you consume quality food, the faster your spirit power can grow. By the time you’ve consumed all 200 jellies, you’ll be able to gain a D-Rank’s power without any difficulty.]

“D-Rank...!”

He didn’t know exactly how powerful D-Rank spirit power was. This was because, in the 1st Grade Knights Department, there weren’t many who had reached D-Rank in mana. It was a rank which even a top institute like Shinyoung couldn’t dismiss easily.

And just as he experienced before, Kang Shin-hyuk had instantly overpowered Do-Woo-jin, who possessed a C+ Rank mana, with his pitiful F+ Rank spirit power. He couldn’t even begin to imagine how powerful he would become if his spirit power was raised to D-Rank.

[Only.]

But the moment Kang Shin-hyuk was about to burst into excited fanfare, the Administrator emphasized another point with an overly bright message.

[Continuous exhaustion of spirit power will have a negative effect on your growth. Your current weak body will be in danger after exhausting your spirit power 10 times per day, and there should also be an ample gap between them]

‘Then you’re telling me to eat these jellies over the course of 20 days.’

[You will reach a point where just one jelly won’t be enough to fully replenish your spirit. I estimate that it’ll take around a fortnight for you to consume all the jellies.]

The excited Kang Shin-hyuk calmed down at the Administrator’s words after realizing that the growth rate of spirit power would slow down the higher its rank was. But after thinking about it calmly, the fact that he could grow his spirit power to D-Rank in 2 weeks was still plenty amazing.

‘It’s an opportunity. No rushing, let’s take it nice and slow. ‘

It took some time to completely calm down. However, when he imagined sharpening the blade of the Godslayer Sword, his mind wondrously started to calm down little by little. His budding blacksmithing skills were supporting his adolescent mind little by little.

[Excellent. You’ve completely calmed down.]

“Thank you.”

[Now, are you ready to talk to your friends in the Hero Universe?]

“... “

That’s right. He had fully consolidated his abilities, planned his growth, and made up his mind to explore the Hero Universe more.

Then the next step would be, of course, a response to his past friends who were beautifully ignored yesterday. However, Anvil’s friends’ list that the Administrator had so kindly brought over was so large that his will deflated at the sight of it. Frankly, he was afraid.

[First of all, it would be better to send a reply to the friends who contacted you yesterday.]

“Yes, that would be better, right...?”

Halo, Eunah, Janus, Tsukuyo, Mirang, Super Ultra Galactic Fist, and so on. It looked like a spy was possibly mixed among them, but it was definite that they were his past friends.

“Especially, this person named Eunah... Um, I think she had a deep relationship with my past life.”

[Probably.]

The Administrator casually affirmed. Also, in the 100+ messages, he received yesterday in that short time, more than half were from Eunah. Moreover, she had also appeared in Anvil’s memories.

“Once they find out that I’m not Anvil... They would be very disappointed.”

[You are right. It was just a reincarnation.]

“But... it’s still different...”

[Yes.]

The Administrator answered honestly.

[If we judged based on the feelings communicated with Eunah-nim, it wouldn’t be exactly the same.]

“Exactly.”

[Nevertheless, you are Anvil. Surely Eunah-nim will be very happy. Moreover...]

“Moreover?”

[...I think it’s better to realize this for yourself.]

It was only a day since he met him, but the Administrator who always coolly answered his questions evaded the answer. Kang Shin-hyuk was worried about the Administrator’s words, but he believed he would find out soon as he was about to talk to Eunah anyway.

“Please release... the message function...”

[Unblocking messages.]

Was it because he had blocked all messages for the day, an overflow of notifications like yesterday didn’t happen this time?

But if he would just repeat yesterday's incidents if he dilly-dallied here. Kang Shin-hyuk firmly prepared himself and wrote a message to send to the person named Eunah.

-Anvil: This is Anvil. It may sound very outlandish, but I was reborn in another world. The memories of my past life aren't complete, so I only have hazy memories of you. I'm really sorry.

Even for him, it looked like such a cheap message, but he couldn't think of a good message in a short amount of time. He could imagine the Administrator's pitiful gaze towards him, but he still tightly shut his eyes and sent the message anyway.

The reply came quickly.

-Eunah: Grandpa!

-Anvil: So I'm not grandpa. The person you know is my past life. I'm now a 17-year-old man, and I only acquired my past life's memories after connecting to the Hero Universe.

-Eunah: Then you'll completely remember one day!?

-Anvil: That's...

Instead of writing a reply, he checked with the Administrator, who affirmed without hesitation. Kang Shin-hyuk replied again. The source of this content is NOVEL\_FIRE.NET

-Anvil: Yes, but I don't know how long it will take. What's more, even if I recover all my memories, I'm still a different person from my past life...

-Eunah: The soul is the same, right? You're getting your memories back, right? Then you're grandpa!

-Anvil: Excuse-no, that's not what I mean-

-Eunah: Grandpa! Grandpa! Grandpa! Grandpa!Grandpa! I missed you! I missed you so much!

Kang Shin-Hyuk fearfully raised his head.

"Hey, I think this person is a bit..."



[I agree. 10HP bonus will be given to you who are in the same mind as your Administrator.]

The Administrator, who he thought would defend Eunah, surprisingly agreed with him and gave him 10 HP.

Kang Shin-hyuk wanted to block the messages from Eunah at that point, but at the same time, he couldn't ignore someone who regarded his past self as someone so important in their life.

And more than anything, if this crazy girl was also a member of the Hero Universe, it meant that she wielded an ability comparable to his spirit power. He couldn't treat her lightly. He replied carefully.f

-Anvil: I'm very sorry anyway. My memory is still very messy and unclear, so I don't know how to talk with Eunah-nim. Can you understand what I mean?

-Eunah: I understand! Then when will you call me Eunah again?

I don't think she understands what I mean... Kang Shin-hyuk pondered for a long time on how to answer her but eventually decided to reply.

-Anvil: Can we start as friends first?

On that day, Kang Shin-hyuk missed the entire afternoon classes greeting his past friends of Hero Universe while squatting on a toilet.

It was the moment when the inexperienced veteran returned to the Hero Universe.

Author's Notes:

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- The Shop Inventory cannot store anything that wasn't bought from the Shop. I'm telling you in advance in case someone is curious.

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- This is the end of the first chapter! From the next chapter, we'll explore more about his friends in the Hero Universe, the properties of spirit power, alchemy etc. So the next chapter's themes will be meeting and growth.

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- From tomorrow onwards, I'll see you at 9:20pm!

Translator and Editor Notes:

And onto chapter 2 ~ McTavish

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Translators: Meg

Editor: Sotheno

The last lecture had already begun when Kang Shin-hyuk left the bathroom. He quickly went to the staffroom and requested permission for early sick leave.

As if they have heard about his ‘barbarism’ during his training period, the teachers looked at him with suspicious eyes, but the permission was granted with ease.

[Baek In-ha]: “You are sure there’s no problem, right?”

[Kang Shin-hyuk]: “It’s just that my muscles are a bit tangled after moving around too abruptly. It’ll get better if I take a break.”

[Bake In-ha]: Well, I guess you’d know best about your own conditions. But I gotta say, you were really cool earlier. I’m pretty sure the bald dude and I were the only witnesses. Throwing your spear with perfect timing while dodging all the attacks with concise movements... Kya! As expected of my best friend.”

[Kang Shin-hyuk]: Anyway, since I got my permission for early leave, you should just hang out with yourself today.

After he walked out of the staffroom and texted Baek In-ha, Kang Shin-hyuk began walking back to his dorm room.

For your information: “the bald dude” was referring to the supervising teacher of session 2 of the martial arts techniques training, Gong Joon-Pyo. There was a saying that even one could hate a human, one must not hate a bald head. Yet, Baek In-ha had been so harsh.

-Tsukuyo: The Anvil that I once loved is already gone. That is my final conclusion. So I'll cut to the chase; I want you to delete his ID.

-Mirang: An inheritance of the memories and knowledge gained from your time in Hero Universe, very interesting. I've never heard of such a case because I've never died before. How's your new life going, Anvil?

-Halo: How is that world?..... Is it very dangerous?

“Ah..... There is no end to this. No end.”

In fact, at this very minute, he was receiving whispers from countless friends, Eunah among them.

If there was Eunah, a person who rather frighteningly accepts all aspects of him, there was also someone who could not come to terms with the existence of a revival system, as well as an adventurous type who was inspired by Anvil's revival to explore the Hero Universe.

“I've had enough for today.”

He sent a message to his friends explaining how he was tired by having just regained his memories and subsequently blocked all of them.

By circling the message around to his friends, he extinguished the fire that needed immediate attention. There were still a couple of problems remaining, but none of them were serious enough to deter him from participating in his community activities.

Even though he eagerly wanted to learn more about the Hero Universe, he wanted to focus on a single issue more than anything.

“Spirit Power.”

He tightly clenched his fists while thinking back to his training earlier. He could still feel the exhilaration he felt after beating down Do Woo-jin.

Even though trait [Awakened Fledgling Dragon] and skill [Fanged Dragon Dance] were already useful enough, the most surprising change was the physical enhancement of his body. Awaken the hidden strength of the weapon, and extract away your hidden potential. With that alone, you could unveil infinite possibilities!

“I instantly became stronger. If I grow my spirit power, I can grow even stronger!”

He was now able to defeat those who wielded mana. The same people who thought little of him and looked down on him!

For someone like Kang Shin-hyuk, who spent his entire life suppressing himself, the experience he had today was equivalent to an upheaval that turned his life upside down. At this point, it would be difficult to suppress his excitement.

[Please don't exhaust yourself.]

“I know. Thank you for worrying about me.”

After hearing the Administrator's message, Kang Shin-hyuk tried to relax. He countlessly murmured to himself that nothing good comes from acting hastily and comforted his ever-growing impatience. And before he knew it, he arrived at his dormitory.

[What will you do about metallurgy?]

“Of course, I would have to train myself. But physical training is also important. I first want to completely master what I learned today and then think about the next step. I want to try the sword dance as soon as possible as well.”

He had instinctively learned from today's battle with Do Woo-jin that the spirit power wielded by blacksmiths is a bit different from the spirit power wielded by warriors.

As the Administrator advised him, while it is important to pursue what you used to be, you must not let go of the current you.

“All right, let's go to the training room.”

The male dormitory of knight majors contained a large training facility of enormous scale. While the individual training facilities are available as long as you sign up for them every day, since Kang shin-hyuk was diligently training each morning and signing up ahead of time, he was practically living at the training facility.

“Actually—let’s get changed and bring the Godslayer sword.”

As he learned during today’s sparring session while infusing spirit power into his training-purpose long spear. If the weapon’s level is low and its origin is insignificant, the effect of spirit power will also be diminished.

While that may change if his abilities are enhanced, now wasn’t the time to figure that out. In order to effectively train his spirit power, it would be most effective to use the Godslayer sword, the weapon with the greatest hidden strength, despite his level being a mere D-rank.

“You’re early, student Kang Shin-hyuk.”

“Hello, Mr. Bolten. I went on sick leave since I wasn’t feeling well after the sparring session.”

“Hm, All right. Since you aren’t the type to skip classes.”

As he changed to comfortable clothes in his room and brought the Godslayer sword with him, Kang Shin-hyuk bumped into the housemaster and bowed his head politely.

Since the housemaster of Shinyoung academy was responsible for resolving conflicts happening between students, the selected person was often incredibly strong. This was especially the case for Emil Bolten, the British housemaster of the knight majors’ male dormitory –the largest dorm of the academy– who, during his prime days, was a superhuman who ranked within the top 300.

Putting that aside, because his looks are that of a good-looking middle-aged Westerner, I always felt something is out of place seeing him speak Korean fluently. Though I would have to eventually get used to that now that I’m attending Shinyoung.

“Hm? That sword... Do you mind if I take a look at it?”

“Of course.”

On top of his superhuman ranking, Emil Bolten was famous for possessing a supernatural prowess of martial arts. Since Bolten was one of the few people who treated Kang Shin-hyuk on equal terms with others despite his deficiency in mana, Kang Shin-hyuk gladly handed over his sword to him.

“Wow.”

Emil Bolten let out an exclamation after carefully studying the sword.

“It certainly is not an artifact containing any special type of capacity, but it certainly was crafted by a skillful blacksmith using quality materials. And if my guess is correct... Did student Kang Shin-hyuk sharpen the edge himself?”

“Yes. I’m still clumsy, but.....”

“I don’t think you’re clumsy at all.”

Bolten was noticeably impressed as he was feeling the sword’s deftly sharpened edge on his hands.

“This is the work of a hand that understands weapons deeply well. People who have gone through serious training are surely different.”

“Thank you very much.”

“A good weapon has gone into the hands of the right person. I look forward to seeing your development.”

Emil Bolten politely handed back his sword and waved him goodbye.

Kang Shin-hyuk headed to the training room while trying to refrain from feeling full of himself for receiving praise by Emil Bolten, a figure revered by most of the students wielding some type of a weapon. But then suddenly, a thought came to his mind.

“Wait, so even someone as strong as Emil Bolten can’t recognize the true worth of this sword?”

[The true form of the Godslayer sword will make its appearance when the user’s spirit power is released. Those who are not able to properly wield their spirit power will not be able to properly recognize the Godslayer sword.]

“I see.....”

After walking while murmuring “spirit power” to himself, he arrived at the training facility without noticing. He entered the individual training room he had reserved for himself and sat comfortably at the center.

“First, let me try to raise my physical stats.”

Although he gained a rather unseemly appearance for rapidly consuming mana, its temporary explosiveness required no mentioning. To avoid showing such an indecent look, he had to grow adept at enhancing his physical stats through spiritual power.

“Still, I have to do better than how I did in my sparring match with Do Woo-jin.”

Back then, Kang Shin-hyuk didn’t have any spare time to think things over. He was so thoroughly captured by his thought to dodge Doo Woo-jin’s mana-powered attack that he forcefully extracted half of his spirit power to enhance his physical abilities. Kang Shin-hyuk well understood that that is not the right way to go.

“Slowly, and calmly. Let me also take out an Eiren Jelly...”

With the help of the Administrator, he opened his inventory and brought one of the 199 Eiren Jellies into the real world. He placed the wrapped jelly besides him so he can reach it at any time, and quietly closed his eyes.

He then focused on his origin.

“Spirit power is the power to help understand one’s own origin. The power to help you perceive every aspect of yourself.”

He learned from his sparring match with Do Woo-jin. The essence of spirit power lay in setting up a deep connection with the wielder and understanding it. The physical enhancement was merely a by-product rather than the primary goal.

Perhaps as the aftermath of training with various kinds of objects, he was luckily able to perceive that fact from the very beginning. Which prevented an endless array of possible trial-and-error developments and instead led him straight to the right path. It was the overwhelming advantage of possessing memories from a past life.



“To be able to see myself as I am. To merely affirm and nothing else...let’s start by first discovering myself.”

Of course, it was not easy. Meditation was an unfamiliar task for someone who normally enjoyed physical training.

After a long time had passed, however, he was able to concentrate on his inner self so intently that he completely blocked out the squawking of crows coming from the training room’s window. It was at that moment:

“Ah.”

The part of himself that was completely hidden in darkness up until that moment was finally emitting some light while he was consuming spirit power.

During his sparring match with Do Woo-jin, the situation was so urgent that he ended up pouring his spirit power into enhancing his physical body, but he was now able to observe his ego without going overboard.

“.....I found it.”

His inner self was like a dark, narrow cave.

It was as if he was seeing the exact manifestation of the unstable heart within him that was the product of constantly ignoring the contemptible stares from others and enduring it all by himself.

But at the center of it, Kang Shin-hyuk was able to find something that was faintly emitting light in its solitude. Weak, but a firmly determined ego of himself.

“HaHa. That looks really shabby compared to the Godslayer sword.”

He couldn’t help but laugh at his faint ego that was shaking in all directions.

It was weak. Too weak. It felt different from when he was looking at his status. It was as if he was standing face-to-face with the true form of the concept of nakedness.

But more than embarrassed, he was satisfied. When you acknowledge the insignificance of yourself, all that’s left to do is to move forward.

As he thought that, the faint light surprisingly grew in brightness in response to him..... At least that's what he felt.

[Synchronization is slightly accelerating. Assimilation rate is 0.4%.]

[Your spirit power has been upgraded to an E- Rank.]

A message popped up in front of him. Not only has his synchronization accelerated, but his spirit power has entered an E- Rank as well!

The sudden brightening of his ego was probably due to that change. At that very moment, he felt that he had made a distinct step forward.

[Eat your jelly!]

"Ah, yes!"

Since he had been in such an enlightened state of mind he hadn't noticed that his spirit power had plummeted. Kang Shin-hyuk thanked the administrator's timely message and swallowed the jelly. As he was engrossed in the unwavering, marvelous scent and taste of the jelly no matter how many times he had eaten it, he felt his spirit power steadily increasing.

Kang Shin-hyuk: "Having upgraded to E- Rank, I can now feel my spirit power more directly."

[Congratulations.]

Ordinarily, one had to devote a superhuman-level of concentration to extract and wield spiritual power, but even at the lowest level, the upgrade to an E rank allowed him to feel and extract his spirit power more naturally than before.

Surely he will be able to wield spirit power even more naturally as he grows further and further. Kang Shin-hyuk let out a bright smile as he physically felt his growth in his body.

"All right, what's next."

After he confirmed the recovery of his spirit power, he gripped the sword and stood. He felt a little nervous. After all, he was about to witness the sword dance through Godslayer sword once again.

“I hope I don’t faint this time.”

He was afraid of a headache, but could no longer hold back. He tightly clenched his teeth and released his spiritual power with the hand firmly gripping the sword. Kang Shin-hyuk intended to more deeply understand and connect to the Godslayer sword by gently infusing his spirit power. IF YOU WANT TO READ MORE CHAPTERS, PLEASE VISIT [novel\(F\)ir\(e\).net](http://novel(F)ir(e).net)

Although the task was not easy since the Godslayer sword wasn’t in the same league as a training-purpose long spear. He remembered back to the moments of sharpening its edge and the sword opened its heart to him in response.

Just like before, the sword dance completely took control of his mind.

“Ah.....Ah ah.”

There was no sound. No change. Only a shadow performing a sword dance with the Godslayer sword gripped in its hand was present in a world covered in white.

Just watching its movements gave him a headache and his body broke out in cold sweat. He felt nauseous, but he endured it all.

“Whooo, Whooooooo.....”

Tightly clenching his teeth to sustain the headache that was on the verge of knocking him out, he slowly moved his body. He began to dance very, very slowly in rhythm to the image that was flowing out of the Godslayer sword.

“Whook, Whoo, Whoooo....”

The spirit power released from Kang Shin-hyuk completely filled the Godslayer sword. In response, the Godslayer sword emitted a stream of light by faintly vibrating.

But no one could describe his movements as beautiful, even as empty words. Unable to obtain knowledge that was beyond his scope, he could not infuse significant meaning in his movements and the tip of the sword began to mellow.

It was at that moment.

[Due to your trait Awakened Fledgling Dragon(A+), you will now be able to more easily accept sword techniques of superhuman territory.]

Kang Shin-hyuk's trait, 'Awakened Fledgling Dragon', was a trait that allowed him to rapidly learn all kinds of martial arts techniques.

Although the difficulty of those martial arts was on a different level from those found on earth, the sword dance infused in the Godslayer sword was also part of the trait's eligible targets!

"Kngggggggg."

But the consequence of carving that knowledge into his body had to be endured by his mind. Because he was absorbing martial arts techniques that were unmatched to his current level.

If he went too overboard, there was a possibility of his mind collapsing, so he paused the process of understanding the martial arts techniques on the verge of leaving permanent damages on his brain. As if to shake off the headache, he frantically continued his sword dance.

At a certain moment, a mark resembling a worm crawling upwards to the tip appeared on the Godslayer sword, but he was so absorbed in the sword dance that it went unnoticed.

"Huk, Huk!"

How much longer did it last? A message appeared in front of Kan Shin-hyuk as he sensed his spiritual power diminish and completely cut off his connection with the Godslayer sword.

[Skill Fanged Dragon Dance(S-)'s level has been upgraded to a C+ Rank.]

The result was splendid, the skill 'Fanged Dragon Dance' had leveled up, it had previously been at C Rank, but now it had been upgraded to C+ Rank!

For your information, 'Fanged Dragon Dance' was an S- rank skill that evolved from 'Eighteen Techniques', a skill Kang Shin-hyuk previously had. The S- rank referred to the skill's rarity and its hidden strength, while the C+ referred to the skill's current proficiency level.

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHH"

After he completely stopped his movements, Kang Shin-hyuk used his free hand to grasp his head as if to tear it apart. He had never felt such an extent of pain before while learning martial arts through his trait.

But that also proved that the sword dance, infused in the Godslayer sword was that exceptional. Despite having only gained a glimpse of it, his understanding of the martial arts allowed him to naturally know its greatness. But it hurt! His head felt so entangled that it seemed as if it were going to explode!

“I can’t do any more of this.”

He felt that to resume understanding of sword dance, he first had to completely master the understanding he already attained. Kang Shin-hyuk instinctively came to that conclusion.

He even felt that by successfully using this opportunity at hand, he might be able to upgrade Fanged Dragon Dance one level further.

[Dear member, if you’re under pain due to a headache, I want to make a suggestion.]

“Is there an effective headache pill listed on the trade board or something?”

[The suggestion is to sharpen the sword’s edge with a whetstone.]

“.....”

He didn’t know how to respond to the administrator’s rather odd message, but after realizing that any attempt to continue training that day would be in vain, he nodded his head.

“I guess I’ll sharpen the edge, then.”

[A 10HP bonus to our dear member for humbly accepting the administrator’s suggestion!]

He returned to his room and began sharpening the Godslayer sword’s edge as instructed. Now relaxed, he was now able to objectively review himself during the day and learn from his mistakes, while having improved on his ability to wield spiritual power.

The warrior who was excited by his new power had now become a blacksmith again.

The days where the current life and the past life would overlap harmoniously still seemed far into the future.

Translator and Editor Notes:

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Translators: Meg

Editor: Sotheno

The sun shone brightly, the breeze was cool. On top of that, there was no gate occurrence in that morning, so she could leisurely enjoy her tea time. She felt happy.

Actually... Even if there was an overcast sky without wind, and an S class gate appeared where she'd have to be dispatched, she would still be happy. NEW NOVEL CHAPTERS ARE PUBLISHED ON NOVELFire.net

"Hm, Hmmm...."

A genius, who was distinguished among the superhumans across the world. One that appeared once every few hundred years, and the pride of all young Korean superhumans who stood at rank 317 in the Worlds Superhuman Ranking.

Renowned not just in Korea, but across the whole world, the Thunder Empress Shin Eunah felt cheerful for the entire day. People who heard her humming coming out of her office were surprised.

"Did something good happen to our Thunder Empress"

"She never scolded me today."

"She's had that smile on her face earlier. My heart almost dropped as I passed her during lunchtime seeing how beautiful it was."

"Don't talk about her looks in front of her. She hates it."

"I'm not crazy."

Shin Eunah had the world's attention from a young age for possessing an SS rank trait [Conqueror of Thunder]. Of course, her beauty resembling that of a bisque stone contributed to her popularity, but compared to her gleaming talent, it was a trivial factor.

Since she was a child, Shin Eunah received the best education to match the expectations of having parents who were among the top 10,000 in the World Superhuman Ranking. When she graduated from elementary school, her skill levels were to the extent that she could easily place within top 1,000 in the World Superhuman Ranking.

"What's the status of the gate forecast for the evening?"

She asked while tossing away the report which she barely read. The secretary replied while withholding her sigh.

"No case of irregulars. All 8 gates of C Rank or above have been acquired successfully."

"There shouldn't be a problem then. I'll get going."

"Will you be spending time today with the Alchemist lady again?"

"Yes. Is there a problem?"

Anybody informed on issues surrounding superhumans knew that the Thunder Empress was friends with the American High Ranker (rank 479) Alchemist Claire Boyle.

But no one knew where that friendship had been formed. Although they were similar in age, their areas of activity were completely different.

"No, sorry, it's nothing. I was just wondering if there's a scouting intention behind that person's approach to you....."

"Her?"

"No, it's nothing! Have a great day, then!"

Just as Shin Eunah was about to respond with a slight frown on her face, her secretary, whose mind had now become completely frozen, spat out her words like a rapid-firing gun and quickly ran out of the office.

Shin Eunah stared at the door for a few seconds with a weirded-out expression, but then stood up after emitting a short sigh.

“I wasn’t going to eat you alive or anything...”

Dark clouds were temporarily cast in her mind which had been fully bright during the day. But she was able to shake it off easily as that sort of thing was a common occurrence.

She no longer cared about what people who didn’t matter to her thought about her. Sometimes there were thoughts that made her depressed and often made her cry, but now she was completely unaffected.

Because Grandpa was back.

Because he spoke to her once again.

“He’s a fraud. I’m sure of it.”

As they met at the Superhuman Market after work, Claire Boyle pouted her lips as if she wasn’t satisfied with something. Her red hair, which was stylishly tied down, bounced around in various directions as if to express her feelings.

“Do you really believe resurrection is possible? There hasn’t been a single case like it in the Hero Universe which is overflowing with absolute geniuses.”

“If souls exist, resurrection should definitely be possible..... And grandpa is a genius. An unmatched genius who built all those artifacts in a world consisting of nothing.”

Though nobody else knew about this, the Thunder Empress and the Alchemist shared one common thing. That was their membership in a secret community in the Hero Universe.

Claire Boyle entered the Hero Universe when she awakened her skills in high school and met Shin Eunah there.

They quickly became close after learning of the coincidence that they shared their homeworld, and with the freedom gained in adulthood, they have been maintaining a solid friendship by occasionally meeting up, disregarding the boundaries between their countries.

“You’re being scammed. It’s just a new user with the same ID.”



“That can’t be it. Grandpa explained it all. Also even though he’s lost his memories, his personality was the same. There’s no way I wouldn’t recognize grandpa.”

“Well, I wouldn’t know that. So? If he’s connected to the Hero Universe, has he awakened a certain skill?”

“I didn’t ask him that. But since it’s grandpa it would probably just be another artifact crafting skill like before.”

Shin Eunah spoke with a bright smile while fiddling with her hairpin in her bangs.

For someone who’d never smile in her life emitting such an innocent smile..... If someone were to see her, they’d mistake her for a girl who’s in love. Claire Boyle let out a deep sigh.

“It’s just a scammer no matter how I think about it. Like I said before, why don’t you just get a boyfriend if you have time to care about some old man? You know that I’ll have to return to New York after this commission is finished. Should we enjoy the nightlife of Seoul before then, hmmm?”

“I hate places like that.”

“Just why? There’s even a superhuman-exclusive club, why won’t you wanna go?”

Superhuman-exclusive club. Just as the words imply, it’s a club where only superhumans can enter. A VIP establishment for superhumans that could only be located in a city like Seoul, a world center of superhumans ever since gates started appearing.

Shin Eunah responded to her friend, who was eager to take her to the club, without hesitation.

“I promised grandpa to stay as a good girl.”

“That geezer again! Kng, forget about it. Let’s just quickly wrap up Janus’ commission. Finding that... Godslayer sword or something.”

Having realized once again that the conversation would not come to a resolution with an issue surrounding “grandpa,” Claire Boyle shifted the topic

while letting out a deep sigh. But unfortunately, the matter here was also related to “grandpa.”

“I definitely felt it around here, but the presence is gone today.”

“Did someone take it already?”

The girls were in an alley that was quite secluded in the Superhuman Market. Having accepted a commission from Janus, a strong associate of theirs in the Hero Universe, they were looking for his Aegean sword that was said to have fallen on earth.

“That’s not possible. Because its presence is tightly sealed, if it can’t be detected by grandpa’s hairpin, you won’t be able to find it.”

“Looking at its picture and how it’s completely covered in black down to the sword’s edge, the sword seemed to contain some sort of meaning behind it..... Ah, let’s try there. It looks like a store that contains lots of weapons with a meaning behind.”

Shin Eunah, who was constantly fiddling with her hairpin, turned towards where her friend was pointing at. It was a small pawnshop located at the mouth of the alley. As it was a place that took security deposits and loans from superhumans, there was an eerie feeling surrounding it.

“All right, let’s check it out.”

“Okay. Mmm, I hope Janus gives us plenty of HP as promised after we find it. There’s this cocktail ingredient that I’ve really wanted to buy, and each root costs over 3 million! Can you believe it? 3 freakin million!”

“Yeah, Yeah.”

“But what does Janus do to have that much HP? What the hell is he?”

“He’s a bit eccentric but incredibly strong. I heard he’s among the top 3 in Hero Universe.”

“Holy crap..... What the hell is up with Anvil then, making a weapon for such a superstar?”

“Our grandpa.”

“Yeah, Yeah.”

Even though Shin Eunah was heading towards the pawnshop while talking to her friend, her thoughts were somewhere else. She wanted to quickly finish the commission and talk to grandpa again as soon as possible.

Grandpa would be so surprised if he knew what I’m currently looking for..... She let out an innocent laugh while thinking that.

Countless people who peeped at her experienced difficulty in breathing, but she was completely unaware of that fact.

[Janus]: “I’m literally gonna go insane. Anvil geezer, do you really not remember me?”

[Kang Shin-hyuk]: “I do..... actually faintly remember having a conversation with you.”

Meanwhile, Kang Shin-hyuk–Shin; Eunah’s “grandpa”–was speaking to Janus with the Godslayer sword gripped in a hand, which the girls were desperately looking for.

Given the size of the message log with Janus, he seemed to have been the closest friend of Anvil just after “Eunah.” Kang Shin-hyuk sent him a message in the evening as well, but Janus didn’t reply until late at night.

[Janus]: “I told you, stop using honorifics with meeee!”

[Kang Shin-hyuk]: “Ah, uhm..... Sorry. I’ll take it easy.”

[Janus]: “Whoo. So you’re telling me the Godslayer sword is in your hands right now?”

[Kang Shin-hyuk]: “Yes sir–I mean yes. It’s all thanks to this that I was able to reconnect to the Hero Universe. But it has significantly weakened. Currently it’s at D rank by the Gaia system’s standards.

[Janus]: “D rank is less than garbage..... Sigh, I don’t even need to look at it to know the Dragon Heart is missing. Am I right?”

[Kang Shin-hyuk]: “So the Dragon Heart was originally embedded.....”

A D rank weapon is a standard weapon in modern monster hunting. A new product would easily surpass 20 million, and even a used product can be sold at 10 million as long as it has been managed carefully.

And he's expressing that as garbage. No, I already recognized the fact when he mentioned a legendary treasure like the Dragon Heart as if it was no big deal, but he was undeniably an inexplicably strong person.

[Janus]: "Forget about it, I don't even know how to repair a dying sword, so you can have it. Instead, make me a new Godslayer sword. There are still a couple left that I need to kill. It'd be nice if it's fire-friendly.

[Kang Shin-hyuk]: "I'm really sorry but my metallurgy level has been reset as well, so....."

[Janus]: "For real—then just quickly restore it. You're still doing a job involving knocking on metals, aren't you?"

[Kang Shin-hyuk]: "Actually I'm not yet."

[Janus]: "Yet?"

[Kang Shin-hyuk]: "No, not yet."

Kang Shin-hyuk laughed while making that response. It was as if everyone related to the Hero Universe, including the Administrator itself, was expecting him to perform metallurgy.

Even though there was no way that the same results would be produced by the current him picking up a hammer.....

"I'd have to do it anyway, though."

To train his spirit power.

To increase his assimilation rate and receive the whole of Hero Universe's VIP benefits.

..... No, those weren't the only reasons.

They were of course included, but separate from the "necessity" seen in those reasons, there was an image of that pursued metallurgy purely for the sake of it.

“I want to knock on metals.

I could not shake off this impulse ever since I saw the back of that lonely man.”

Ever since he received the memories from a past life, and perhaps even more so since sharpening the Godslayer’s sword, he could not help his urge but to uncontrollably want to grab a hammer.

Perhaps the reason he prioritized martial training that day out of all days was an attempt to resist that incredible urge.

[Kang Shin-hyuk] “But I will do it now.”

Having realized his spiritual power, observed his ego and confronted the Godslayer sword, he was finally ready.

Not that it was possible to delay in the first place. He didn’t want to delay, nor was there a reason to.

[Janus]: Yes, of course you will. Anyways if you’re going to make me another Godslayer sword, I’ll bring whatever ingredients are necessary. So I’ll leave it all to you, geezer.”

[Kang Shin-hyuk]: “All right, thanks.”

Kang Shin-hyuk raised his head after finishing the conversation with Janus.

Now firmly determined on what to do, his eyes brightly radiating light like stars.

“I’ll thoroughly search for ways to train blacksmithing.

[A bonus of 100HP from a deeply moved administrator!]

“Wait, why now?!”

Translator and Editor Notes:

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Translator: Meg

Editor: Sotheno

The next day at dawn, Kang Shin-hyuk was greeted with a rather special message when he woke up early.

[For today's login bonus, you will receive a growth rate buff! For two days, the growth rate of your status and skills will increase by 30%!]

"There was something like this, too?"

He knew of course that VIP had the benefit of receiving login bonuses. But until yesterday, he had only received an additional 500HP as a bonus, while the reward he received today was unbelievable in comparison!

He felt a mysterious power wrapping around his entire body. Yesterday, he had been told that the third day would be different, but to think it would be this special!

To think his status and skills would grow faster—such an effect couldn't happen even from a super rare potion found inside a gate.

[The login bonus for a VIP member is special in the Hero Universe. It can provide abilities and effects that are beyond comprehension, you will receive whatever you need most depending on your situation. If you improve your assimilation rate, you will receive login bonuses of a wider variety.]

"You should have told me earlier!"

Kang Shin-hyuk stood up, heading for the training facility. He was finally taking a break after intensely training both his Martial Arts and Spirit Power for two hours.

"Come to think of it, the added growth rate should apply to metallurgy as well. All right, I'll definitely grab a hammer today!"

So he wouldn't waste the growth buff, Kang Shin-hyuk couldn't just doze off for the day. After taking a shower and eating breakfast with Eiren Jelly as dessert, he left the dormitory, heading to the Wyvern Hall located beside Shinyoung's gymnasium of knight majors.

"It's my first time here, and it's..... Super big. An ordinary school could easily fit in here."

The Wyvern Hall was a facility that provided appropriate amenities for the students' individual activities and self-development programs. To put it simply, it was a building that contained various student clubs including the student government and volunteer groups.

Since a student club at a prestigious school like Shinyoung possessed a lot of power, a student could climb a few levels higher in authority simply by being accepted to a renowned student club.

Among the renowned clubs, three—the Student Government, the Wyvern Knights and the Shinyoung Magic Academy—possessed an overwhelming degree of authority. Simply put, if you were a member of these clubs, you had nothing to worry about for your future.

“I have no interest in any of them, though.”

The student government was responsible for several important events like the student festival, annual school trip, and exchange meeting with a sibling school. Because the positions were usually monopolized by the students who came from renowned families, ordinary students couldn't dream of joining the organization.

A bloody warzone where rich students with authority, wealth, as well as physical power try to bite each other off to obtain their seats in the organization.

Baek In-ha criticized them for smelling like a pile of blood-soaked rags, but Kang Shin-hyuk could estimate his wealth just by that one audacious statement.

“The Wyvern Knights club is a group of the knight majors' top elites and the Shinyoung Magic Academy is the equivalent for the magic majors. If I were to join either of them, it would certainly be the Wyvern Knights club.....”

Not only would someone without mana like Kang Shin-hyuk be rejected by a bunch of students who were drunk with privilege, but now Kang Shin-hyuk himself opposed the idea of being a part of them.

Though he had paid a little respect for them when he had first arrived. That wasn't the case anymore, because he clearly understood what he had to do to grow stronger.

“Metallurgy. Isn't there a student club where I can practice metallurgy?”

He smacked his lips and skimmed through the various pamphlets placed at the entrance of the Wyvern Hall.

He hadn't thought much when he had decided to train his metallurgy, but calmly thinking about metallurgy he realized it wasn't something he could just train in a dormitory.

“Not that I can just go and hire a blacksmith in downtown either.”

It was a mystery if there was a workshop nearby that had the right materials and conditions he could use. It was also an issue if he was going to constantly be going in and out of the school; though, most importantly, he lacked money. Although he had plenty of HP, not only was it unable to be converted into gold, but it couldn't even be used freely due to member restrictions.

“That's why I came to the conclusion of joining a student club.....”

Shinyoung Academy, an organization that was willing to use any amount of money to nurture each student as an elite. As part of that commitment, they poured countless resources into establishing and maintaining various types of student clubs, but.....

“Tseup.”

The problem was that no matter how much he looked, he couldn't find any club that was related to metallurgy. But that was to be expected. Even if someone had awakened a trait related to metallurgy, that person would have attended an academy other than Shinyoung.

A significant number of clubs were merely places intended for socializing with fancy names. The majority of knight majors' clubs were under the physical activity category (a pretext for sparring sessions), and the majority of magic majors were under the category of culture (a pretext for magical research).

Occasionally there were a couple of clubs run by people who wished to pursue their respective subjects for their own sake to temporarily escape the harsh academic environment at Shinyoung, but unsurprisingly none of them dealt with metallurgy.

“Then the only remaining solution is.....”



Kang Shin-hyuk thought of one last solution: to establish a new student club. As proven by the hundred-or-so existing student clubs, one did not require complicated qualifications to make a new club.

But still, there were three essential conditions that had to be fulfilled: prospective members, high grades, and lastly a supervising teacher. Three conditions which Kang Shin-hyuk couldn't fulfill at the present moment

"My grades for the entrance exam were already at the bottom due to the written exam..... The midterm was no different. Do I have no choice but to ask for Baek In-ha's help?"

Everything could be resolved if Baek In-ha were to come for help. Who in their right mind would object to a student club being founded by a student possessing an S rank trait of all people?

Countless students would flock toward the club in hopes of joining. He had excellent scores in his written exams, and he could probably amass about a dozen interested teachers. However, Kang Shin-hyuk didn't feel like it, there was a limit to what one could ask from a friend.

"But if there is no other way, I have no choice but to ask for his help. Tseup, I keep owing him more and more."

"Move out of the way."

"Heu-uh!"

Surprised by a sudden female voice from behind, Kang Shin-hyuk frantically turned around. Out of instinct Kang Shin-hyuk reached for his waist, but he was unarmed at the moment.

Fortunately, the person didn't show any hostile intention towards him. She was only gesturing for him to move out of her way with a slightly irritated look on her face. Looking at it now, he had been blocking the path to the Wyvern Hall's front entrance.

"I'm sorry, Sunbae-nim."(1)

"It's ok."

She was absentmindedly nodding her head as if she didn't care in the first place. Kang Shin-hyuk was able to recognize her as his senior due to her tie.

'The magic majors' uniform along with a blue tie—she's a sophomore.'

Shinyoung academy operates 8 Knight and 2 Magic classes, totaling to 10 classes for each year. Since an average class consists of about thirty students, each year consisted of about 300 students, adding up to a total of 900 students.

As an academy that assembled only the elites-among-the-elites while disregarding their country of origin. The total student body of Shinyoung was small compared to that of a typical high school (2). But having attended Shinyoung for only two months, Kang Shin-hyuk still had difficulty recognizing all the faces. But there was still a way to figure out their major and year—through their uniform design and tie.

The Knight majors' uniform exhibited more of active-type design and the Magic majors' uniform was more of a scholarly one. A 1st year's tie was red, a 2nd year's tie was blue, and a 3rd year's tie was black.

'But..... Is she an international student? She's really pretty; even if our majors are different, it's odd that word about her hasn't spread among the 1st-year students.'

More than her uniform, what caught Kang Shin-hyuk's attention was her nicely tanned, brown skin.

As he thought she might have spent some time at a beach in the South, the riddle was solved by her exotic features, starting from a sharp nose too deep eyes.

Attractively tall with long, straight legs and sizable breasts, she had a distinctively Western body. To add to that, the silver hair that slopped around the rim of her neck and her dimly burning eyes, attracted him.

Though her unrealistically sleek hair and the color of her iris should be the effect of her awakening..... Overall, she gave Kang Shin-hyuk a very deep impression.

"I'm not a foreign student. My dad's Korean."

“I’m so sorry.”

Kang Shin-hyuk bowed his head again to his senior who responded before he could ask the question as if she could read his mind.

“Don’t worry, I get asked pretty often. Excuse me, then.”

She passed Kang Shin-hyuk entering the Wyvern Hall.

But just as Kang Shin-hyuk tried to calm himself to survey the student club pamphlets again, the senior student, before walking up the staircase, told him in a soft voice:

“It’s a good thing to pay a debt as soon as possible..... Though, it’s best not to owe one in the first place.”

“Ah, yes.”

He was confused at first, then realized; she had overheard him talking to himself.

As if that was all she wanted to say, she quickly climbed up the stairs and disappeared out of sight.

Thinking that she might be a nicer person than she looked, Kang Shin-hyuk turned back from where he was standing. When he did, a certain object entered his field of vision as if it was destiny.

“Hm?”

A single page of paper was on the floor.

There was a rather bleak headline of “List of student organizations to be disbanded next semester” written at the top. Under it, there were several rows mentioning the different club names; one of them caught Kang Shin-hyuk’s attention.

“Artifact Production Club.”

“Could this be.....?”

His heart skipped a beat. There was definitely a possibility.

The problem was the club was scheduled to be disbanded in the next semester..... But he decided there was no need to worry about that for now.

“All right.”

Let's visit them after school.

Kang Shin-hyuk left the Wyvern Wall with a bright look in his eyes.

@ @ @

Eager to commence his metallurgy training as soon as possible, Kang Shin-hyuk felt that time passed by unnoticeably during the lectures.

Strangely, as if they were wary of him since the previous day's sparring session, nobody had picked on him during the whole day. Kang Shin-hyuk's presence was gradually building up tension for those around him, which Kang Shin-hyuk didn't give much thought about.

“A student club? At this time?”

“Yup, so I'll get going first.”

After the last class ended, Baek In-ha quickly approached Kang Shin-hyuk's seat to chatter about his experience at the Superhuman Market the day before, but Kang Shin-hyuk took the initiative as he was about to speak. Baek In-ha's eyes narrowed in response to form a look of suspicion.

“.....Is our Shinyok-yi hiding something from me?”

“Yup.”

“Yesterday you absolutely dominated in the sparring match and now..... You're hiding something? Hm?”

“Yup. I'll tell you all later.”

“I sense a girl involved..... Shinyok, there's a girl you like at the club, right?!”

It was a hopelessly wrong answer. Kang Shin-hyuk flung a fierce finger flick toward Baek In-ha's forehead which was gradually approaching closer to question him and subsequently headed to the Wyvern Hall.

He located the Artifact Production club's clubroom in a corner of a 3rd-floor hallway after searching for a long time. To be designated a clubroom at such a remote corner, the club had to be very unpopular from the beginning.

"Excuse me..... Ohhh!"

Kang Shin-hyuk was totally captured by the unexpected sight as he opened the door. Unlike its appearance, the clubroom was massive! As expected of an academy that unhesitantly pours an incredible sum of money to fund the physical spaces students need.

But Kang Shin-hyuk didn't pay much attention to the desks standing in a row, the drawings of magic circles placed on the desks, or the props that seemed to be used for a certain craft.

"It's there! It's really there!"

A soundproof wall was segregating the clubroom into two. Beyond that translucent wall, Kang Shin-hyuk could see a room that was equipped to train metallurgy!

To think that they'd have a Blacksmith workshop in a clubroom—this is the quality of the best Superhuman Academy in the nation!

"Hm? Who is it?"

He rejoiced and stepped into the clubroom after confirming the workshop's existence. Soon after he stepped inside, someone called out to him.

Just as Kang Shin-hyuk flinched and stopped moving, he spotted a person sitting on the floor with his back against the wall. At first, Kang Shin-hyuk mistook him for a statue, but that was not the case.

Those wide-open eyes that gazed at him definitely belonged to a human.

'.....An old man?'

There was an old man, who was well over 70 in age with white hair in front of him. Struggling to look unflustered, Kang Shin-hyuk asked him.

".....Are you a teacher? The supervising teacher of the Artifact Production Club?"

“That’s right.”

“Hi! I’m Kang Shin-hyuk, a 1st-year student of Knight major from Class C. I came here today in hopes of enlisting in the Artifact Production Club.”

“There’s no work available for you.”

The old man—or rather, the teacher—flapped his hand back and forth while giving a firm response to Kang Shin-hyuk, who was pulling off a perfect performance of a cheerful freshman.

“The Artifact Production Club is over as of today. I sent the last remaining student earlier. So look for somewhere else.”

“But I need to hammer metals.”

Kang Shin-hyuk’s glare was blatantly pointed towards the workshop. The teacher raised his eyebrow as if to signify his interest in the student’s rather unusual reaction, but his answer hadn’t changed:

“A student club scheduled to be disbanded can’t accept new members. Not that it can be sustained with only one member either. So just leave.”

“But, sir.....”

“Tsk.”

The teacher stood up in annoyance as Kang Shin-hyuk was about to say something as if to indicate that if he doesn’t leave, then he will leave himself.

“This conversation is over. If you’re still here when I return, expect to receive a penalty.”

“Ah.....!”

As the teacher looked around the clubroom while passing Kang Shin-hyuk, he gave a soft glare to the workshop.

But then he shrugged his shoulders and left the room. Only Kang Shin-hyuk remained in the spacious clubroom.

Not knowing what to do, Kang Shin-hyuk shifted his gaze towards the workshop that was left alone in the room like him.

“I put a lot of effort into finding this place.....”

[Dear member, you have to hammer a heated metal at just the right time.] Follow current novels on novel(F)ir(e).net

He knew he shouldn't do what he thought of doing.

But his violent impulse, his firm desire, and his fierce origin were pushing his hesitation back.

“If it's just taking a look, won't it be okay.....?”

[A whole-hearted 10HP bonus from the Administrator!]

He didn't think for long.

Kang Shin-hyuk acted as instinct told him to.

Everyone was waiting for him.

Translator and Editor Notes:

(1) Sunbae-nim” is the equivalent of “senpai”, “senior” or an upperclassman.  
~Meg

(2) The average Korean Highschool holds around 2000 students on average. So 900 is a small number unless compared to the American schools which usually hold 1000 or less. ~Sotheno

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## Chapter 9: The Equation of Growth - 4

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Translator: Meg

Editor: Sotheno

“I shouldn’t be in trouble if I leave before he returns.....”

Though hesitant at first, Kang Shin-hyuk acted decisively, ‘thinking’ he was merely looking around. More than anything, though, his fiercely beating heart wasn’t letting him walk away from the facility.

Kang Shin-hyuk resolutely turned the doorknob and went past the soundproof wall. The facility that was flawlessly equipped with blacksmithing equipment. A huge brazier, a pair of bellows to nourish the fire, a massive anvil, and a hammer so big that he may have trouble properly holding it.....

Weren’t there.

“What the hell.”

There was a small brazier with a fancy magical diagram engraved. State-of-the-art equipment to freely control the fire to any extent with a single press of a button. If you wanted to create a special fire with unique properties, all you had to do was put in the right materials!

“But the bellows.....”

Were nowhere to be found. The anvil wasn’t that big, either. Since it was crafted out of memory alloy, it had a feature of controlling the shape of the constructed product depending on its usage. If you preset the wanted shape of the intended weapon or armor, it would automatically guide the hammer’s movement to turn the desired shape into a physical form.

A circular tube nearby also had a magical diagram engraved at the bottom, which had the feature of cooling an inserted metal to an optimal temperature by spraying water on it. Even a stack of ingots had already been cast.

“This is a lot different from what I imagined.....”



A faint memory of an old blacksmith inside Kang Shin-hyuk roared out of rage. This isn't what I wanted! I wanted a more traditional blacksmith workshop than this high-tech crap!

A practice where you squeeze the handles of the bellows with all your might and solely confront the metal as its shape slowly comes to life.....!

"Of course, I can't pull off something like that without practicing in the first place."

Kang Shin-hyuk slowly calmed himself. Even though the spirit was there, he wasn't the Anvil, he was the clueless amateur named Kang Shin-hyuk, who's never grabbed a hammer in his life.

Trying to carry out his vaguely stored memory would just be fruitless labor; he should be thankful for having a cutting-edge facility before him where he can nourish his dormant skills.

"Excuse me, then."

Breathing slowly to calm himself once again, he slowly approached the hammer placed on top of the anvil and gripped it in his hand.

It was surely different from the hammer that was owned by Anvil. The modern design that was optimized for comfort ironically made Kang Shin-hyuk uncomfortable.

Still, the very fact that he was holding a hammer naturally left a smile on his face.

[Synchronization rate is slightly increasing. Your assimilation rate is now at 0.6%.]

Kang Shin-hyuk did not doubt that he was the reincarnation of Anvil. He naturally accepted it. But until this moment, Kang Shin-hyuk had never fully consciously experienced that fact as reality, something more than an abstract thought stored in his head.

"I am Anvil..... I'm a blacksmith, I might have felt this way even if I weren't aware of the reincarnation."

A deeply embedded instinct guided him forward. He could feel his soul satisfied by the simple act of heating up and pounding the metal.

“I’m almost regretting not looking for a hammer earlier.”

Now there was no need to enter a deep meditative state to confront his origin by squeezing out his spiritual power. The ego that was faintly emitting light at the end of a dark cave was now blazingly lighting up to assert his existence.

[Synchronization rate is slightly increasing. Your assimilation rate is now at 0.65%.]

“Ha, haha..... “

Kang Shin-hyuk had an eerie feeling as he felt an unknown emotion filling up inside of him.

But that wasn’t a bad thing. It’s a part of the process of understanding himself as part of his spiritual power training. Rather than an addition of something that was previously absent, it was a revelation that had been kept hidden.

[Dear member, Is grabbing the hammer all you’re planning to do?]

A message suddenly popped up in front of his retina. Looking at it now, he has been sinking in his sentiment without even putting the hammer to use!

“Well, I didn’t even get permission from the teacher..... After all, he told me to leave before he returns.“

[The Administrator would like to recommend performing as many practices as possible while your growth buff is still in effect.]

“That’s true.....”

He told the Administrator that it was already inappropriate to be holding equipment, much less walking into the workshop without permission. The Administrator gave a firm response to such an obvious statement.

[While I can’t estimate how much points you’ll be deducted, the results you gain from metallurgical training are much more important. Besides, if the teacher has a pair of functioning eyes, he won’t be able to penalize you after seeing what you’re capable of. He might even be inspired by your performance to prevent the Artifact Production Club from being disbanded.“

“That wouldn’t be.....”

[Your talent is capable of making that possible.]

If Kang Shin-hyuk was in the right senses, he would’ve denied the Administrator’s claims all he wanted. How would someone like him, who has never once grabbed a hammer in his life, go through all those troubles as if he could make anything? Rather than taking those risks, it would’ve been much wiser to go back to his dorm and train on his own.

But since Kang Shin-hyuk was in an uncontrollable state after having laid his eyes on the anvil and the hammer, Kang Shin-hyuk was shaken by the Administrators’ obviously perforated logic, like a field of reeds being rushed by the wind.

“Th, then..... Maybe just a little? Just hammering a bit and nothing else.....”

[A 100HP bonus!]

The Administrator eagerly pushed Kang Shin-hyuk. Powered up by the Administrator’s encouragement, he grabbed the metal tong located on the other side of the workshop with a slightly more dexterous movement than when he grabbed the hammer.

With it, he grabbed an ingot that was piled within from the side.

With his lacking intuition, he couldn’t firmly grasp the identity of the object at first sight. But as he grabbed the ingot, a stream of spiritual power escaped Kang Shin-hyuk’s body as naturally as a breadth of air and enveloped the object in whole; the object subtly vibrated in response and subsequently imbued Kang Shin-hyuk with the knowledge relating to itself.

“Hm..... This feeling. I see it’s steel. Of course, even if Shinyoung was flooding in money, they wouldn’t just hand out magical metals to students.”

Although a little bit of him wished for that to be true, having access to magical metals as someone with an F+ Blacksmithing rank was a little too much to expect.

Shaking his head to ward off those unnecessary thoughts, Kang Shin-hyuk began to study the ingot. He wasn’t sure, but it seemed that he could make a

long sword with that one ingot alone. Not an ounce more nor less was needed.

“.....Wait a minute. First I infused my spiritual power into the ingot, and now I know this? How did I know to do all that?”

Kang Shin-hyuk had spent the morning surfing the popular video-sharing website MeTube studying dozens of how-to videos on blacksmithing or a production-related skill of the sort, but that wasn't enough to provide him with the competence he currently seemed to exhibit. At least, it shouldn't have been enough.....

[Synchronization rate is slightly increasing. Your assimilation rate is now at 0.7%.]

“Ha.”

Instinct had taken control of his body at this point. The awkwardness he felt when he first stepped into the forge, was now nowhere to be seen.

They may be differently shaped from his imagination, but all the necessary equipment was there: a pair of bellows, a hammer, a whetstone, everything. The ingredients were all there as well. There was no more need to hesitate.

Kang Shin-hyuk was receiving the guidance of Anvil. The dim connection between him and his past life was gradually transmitting more and more of the knowledge and experience that had hitherto been hidden behind a mist. He felt, once again, that this is what synchronization feels like.

“..... All right. Let's do this.”

Kang Shin-hyuk thought of seeking someone's advice or having a MeTube video playing by his side as his aide at first, but standing directly before the brazier, he didn't want to divide his attention to anywhere else.

If he spent all his time assessing every option, he wouldn't have trespassed into the workshop in the first place.

Even if he was ridiculed for acting recklessly like an ignorant child, it didn't matter to him.

“Whoo.”

He tightly gripped the ingot with the tong and placed it inside the brazier. A burning flame burst into existence, instantly heating the steel ingot to a bright red color.

Surprisingly, the brazier contained a special function that prevented heat from escaping from its interior, so even though Kang Shin-hyuk was standing in front of it, he didn't feel the heat!

"I keep getting disappointed by the strange parts."

But the heat coming from the tong that was extracted from the brazier was greatly satisfying. He heated the metal to soften it just enough and placed it on top of the anvil. Then, he hammered it.

Kang Shin-hyuk's E rank strength far surpassed that of an ordinary human being. He had to be careful not to exert a force that the metal couldn't endure. Though he wouldn't have to worry about that if he just let instinct guide his movements.

Clank!

A satisfying sound came from where the hammer and the metal made contact. A brightly heated metal gradually smoothed out and started to increase in length. A look of delight formed on Kang Shin-hyuk's face.

Bits of embers spattered to his clothes. He only then realized that forging metals in a student uniform is an incredibly stupid idea, but it was too late to realize that now.

"This is a reserve uniform anyway."

Returning to his dorm and changing clothes was definitely an option, but Kang Shin-hyuk didn't want to postpone his practice out of the fear that the teacher may come back at any time. Instead, he merely took off the jacket, threw it on the floor, and continued hammering on the ingot.

Activating Anvil's option would provide him with helpful guidance, but he didn't. All he wanted at this moment was to hammer on the ingot with an empty mind.

Clank! Clank! Clank!

The facility was different, but the sound of a hammer pounding on metal was the same. Actually, it seemed weird to nostalgically reminisce about a faint memory from a past life.

Clank! Clank! Clank!

The hammering sound filled the entire space. With every smack, his awkward stance was getting slightly corrected, and the rather unstable rhythm was steadily gaining its stability.

His stance wasn't the only thing that was changing. With every extraction from the brazier, the metal was also morphing into a different shape, and before he knew it, it was approaching the shape of a longsword.

Clank! Clank! Clank! IF YOU WANT TO READ MORE CHAPTERS, PLEASE VISIT [NovelFire.net](http://NovelFire.net)

The periodic sound of the hammers fall spread across the room. The sound of blazing fire. The sweat coming from the intense heat; everything around him stimulated his spirit.

“.....Good, very good.”

It felt as if only he and the metal that slowly became a sword existed in the whole world. In fact, he hadn't even noticed he was releasing his spirit power.

But that was not a problem. Without draining its supply, the released spiritual power was traveling back and forth between the metal and Kang Shin-hyuk, strengthening their connection further and further.

Unlike when he performed the sword dance and meditation, his blacksmithing technique made use of his spiritual power in a more fine-tuned, gentle way.

Clank! Clank! Clank!

During this endless process of hammering, the memories of a blacksmith slowly flowed into Kang Shin-hyuk. The memories of hammering, tempering, and grinding a countless variety of metals, to craft the best possible artifact those metals were capable of.

Kang Shin-hyuk hammered the metal according to his new memories. Striking his final strike and entering into the tempering stage, the blacksmith's memories continued.

Just as Kang Shin-hyuk was tempering the metal, Anvil was tempering the metal with him. At some point, he had lost his sense of who he really was; or rather..... It no longer mattered to him whether he was Kang Shin-hyuk or Anvil.

“Whooo.....”

An adequately tempered metal becomes sturdy but fragile due to heightened internal stress. Through the process of repeatedly heating and cooling the metal at precise temperatures, a skillful blacksmith can attain the right balance between hardness and resilience to create a solid but tenacious sword.

But even though “heating and cooling at precise temperatures” is impossible for an amateur, Kang Shin-hyuk fiercely yet effortlessly carried out this process. As the sword was adequately tempered, the process entered the grinding stage.

Swish, swish, swish.

A typical person might have trouble without the help of machinery, but Kang Shin-hyuk was a superhuman. He intently concentrated on his task, nearly forgetting to breathe. It was at this point that he noticed his spiritual power flowing into the sword.

[It might be a good idea to consume a jelly at this point.]

“You’re right.”

The Administrator broke its silence, giving timely advice, which Kang Shin-hyuk accepted while nodding his head.

There would be a possibility of draining his supply of spiritual power if he went overboard, but driven by his will to craft the best possible artifact, he decided to feed as much spiritual power as the sword wanted.

“Whew..... Now I can have a breather. I hadn’t even noticed I was hungry.”

Not only was he totally absorbed in his task, but he also couldn't tell how much time had passed since the workshop didn't contain any windows. He threw a jelly in his mouth and looked around the room to find a clock.....

“.....”

“You.....”

Kang Shin-hyuk's eyes met the teachers which were gazing at the exhausted student from the door.

No, actually, the teacher's gaze was subtly pointed lower. He was looking at the sword that Kang Shin-hyuk had crafted.

“That..... You just made that? Here? From scratch?”

“Sir, please, let me explain.”

Kang Shin-hyuk swung his arms around in panic. But the teacher cut him off, got closer and asked him again while looking down at the sword.

“I'm asking you if you crafted this here.”

“Pardon me? Uhm, yes..... I did. I will reimburse you for the materials I used later.....”

“They were going to be scrapped anyway. But this thing.....”

He was going to penalize him! While blaming the Administrator for pushing him and pushing his brain to work through every possible escape plan, the teacher gave an unexpected response:

“Finish it.”

“Pardon me?”

“I said to finish it. You're not quite done yet.”

“Ah, yes, of course!”

[See? I told you. It turned out just as the Administrator said. A 20HP bonus of joy!]



‘Good job!’

Kang Shin-hyuk could sense hope. As the teacher instructed, he began the grinding phase. He was going to prove himself before the teacher’s mind could change!

Swish, swish, swish.

“His use of machinery is clumsy. But those hand movements.....”

Kang Shin-hyuk peeped at the teacher who was murmuring something to himself as he studied his movements but then forgot about his existence as he concentrated on polishing the object to its final form.

“Whew. All right, then.”

As he finished the task using a grinding machine, Kang Shin-hyuk refined the sword’s edge to perfection by polishing it with a whetstone.

The teacher somewhat tilted his head while watching Kang Shin-hyuk use a grinding machine, but watching Kang Shin-hyuk apply the whetstone on the sword’s edge, he sewed his mouth shut and intently watched him perform the rest of his work.

A look of a hard-to-identify expression formed on the teacher’s face.

How long has he been spewing his spiritual power into the sword? Just as he consumed about half of the spirit power, he recovered through eating the jelly, the task came to a conclusion.

‘I’m at my limit. At my current state, I’ve done the best that I could possibly do.’

The sword was complete. It had an incomparably sharp edge, and its sides had no curve or distortion that was out of place. Kang Shin-hyuk let out a bright smile.

Kang Shin-hyuk thought that he did a decent job for an amateur, but a real amateur would have strained his neck to death upon hearing him. Objectively speaking, the sword he made could even be classified as a masterpiece!

[Synchronization rate is increasing. Your assimilation rate is now at 1.1%.]

[You have successfully crafted a sword faintly infused with energy, the 'Bizarre' Long Steel Sword (E+). Your blacksmithing proficiency level will greatly rise!]

[Your blacksmithing proficiency level has instantly risen to E Rank! Due to the increase in your skill's rank, your physical strength's rank will increase to D Rank.]

As he declared the completion of the sword by attaching the prepared handle and polishing the sword's edge one last time, Kang Shin-hyuk was flooded with messages from the Gaia system. Perhaps due to the buff attained as a login bonus, he was awarded incredible rewards.

Kang Shin-hyuk silently watched the messages. Each one of them was surprising enough to leave him shocked, but the most notable message was the one referring to his growth in physical strength.

'It takes about 2 years to raise your physical strength from E- Rank to E Rank by physical training alone.....'

But its rank had risen up by two notches with the level up of a different trait, and now with his blacksmithing proficiency level improved, it had improved by another level to D Rank.

Not knowing that blacksmithing proficiency came with the bonus of stat growth, he felt like he received a surprise gift from someone. But at the same time, he felt empty thinking back to all the effort he put in before awakening his trait. Even the A-Rank skill [Eighteen Techniques] didn't come with a status growth attached as a bonus!

'.....No, I decided not to think too deeply. Let's just be thankful for having the ability to become stronger faster. Instead of using my time to look back, I should be stepping forward.'

As he thought, Kang Shin-hyuk chuckled while looking at the delicately sharpened sword.

Stepping forward instead of looking back? There's a limit to how much of a sentimental statement one could make—he was cringing at his own thoughts.

"All right. It looks to be finished."

”.....Oh.“

As Kang Shin-hyuk turned his head towards the person whose existence he had completely forgotten, he was met with a gaze of intense interest that couldn't be compared to the dull look he witnessed when they first met.

“Shall we continue our conversation, then?”

Translator and Editor Notes:

## Chapter 10: You Got the Wrong Person - 1

### Chapter 10: You Got the Wrong Person - 1

Translator: Meg

Contrary to appearances, the supervising teacher of the Artifact Production Club, Lee Manwoo had a deep interest in Kang Shin-hyuk before leaving the room.

‘Everyone interested in the club so far was interested in the rice given to them more than the prayer.’ (1)

But Kang Shin-hyuk was different. He was jubilated upon entering the clubroom.

Struck by the unprecedented sight, Lee Manwoo had left the room to test the sincerity of his will.

‘But to think that it'd turn out like this.’

At most, he was expecting decent handling of the equipment and basic knowledge of metallurgy.

If he seemed promising, he was going to connect Kang Shin-hyuk to an acquaintance and if he didn't, he was going to let him go with a light penalty. But instead, he had crafted a brand-new sword from scratch.

It was a hard task even for an experienced blacksmith. What's more, the completed sword was emitting a presence of an infused skill.

‘He’s a wielder of metallurgy.’

Of course, one could still make swords without possessing metallurgical skills. Blacksmiths before the advent of the Gaia system were still capable of producing quality weapons and armor.

But one could not fight monsters with those weapons and armors. Only the artifacts crafted by those possessing metallurgical or a related sort of production-based skill were able to land a critical hit on monsters or block an attack from them.

If you didn’t have access to those weapons, the only option you had would be to fight with the artifacts earned from a monster drop or by clearing a gate. That was a natural law!

Looking at it from that perspective, the weapon Kang Shin-hyuk crafted was, without a doubt, a ‘monster hunting’ type of a weapon.

It was not a weapon of the highest caliber, for sure, but Lee Manwoo still had trouble dismantling the true nature of the skill that was infused in the sword.

‘Maybe this guy is..... No, it’s naive to form a conclusion too soon. A premature expectation always ends up in disappointment, but still.....’

Lee Manwoo narrowed his eyes. Countless thoughts cleared from the old man’s head, and a single term of “reserve judgment” remained.

‘In any case, it wouldn’t hurt to observe him for a while.’

Kang Shin-hyuk, having no idea what the old man was thinking, was blankly waiting for him to say something.

“It seems you don’t even notice what’s happening around you while you’re working.”

“I’m sorry, sir.”

“No no, an ability to concentrate to that extent is a God-given talent. It’s not something to apologize for..... Though it is wrong to use a workshop without permission.”

“I give you my sincere apologies again. I couldn’t resist the urge..... But sir, I genuinely wish to enroll in the Artifact Production Club.”

Lee Manwoo's expression turned stiff. Kang Shin-hyuk bowed his head to earnestly request without succumbing to his authority and just going along with whatever decision he made.

Perhaps he would've backed off if he hadn't touched the hammer, but having made a weapon using it, he was going to hold his stance no matter what.

"Huh..... "

The old man kept looking at him with an expressionless face.

He finally broke the silence while emitting a deep sigh.

"Like I told you before. This club is scheduled to be disbanded."

"Yes, I know. But there should still be things we can do to prevent..... "

"I recognize your smithing skills. But producing an artifact is a different matter."

"I may be clumsy since this was my first attempt, but I'm still growing."

Lee Manwoo's stiff expression relaxed at the unexpected response and asked back.

"This was your first attempt?"

"Yes, sir."

"That's not possible. A total novice can't craft a sword of this quality. Even if you've never grabbed a hammer before, you still should have been educated as an apprentice for at least 3 years, no?"

"I have not experienced an apprenticeship..... Yet"

Kang Shin-hyuk, to tell the truth, was taken aback by the man's astonishing claim.

It wasn't wrong to say that Kang Shin-hyuk was an apprentice after gaining Anvil's memories instead of training on his own.

But he had no choice to deny the man's statement, as he couldn't outright talk about reincarnation or the Hero Universe.

“Are you telling me that you awakened your ability yesterday or something?”

“Not an awakening, but I did acquire a blacksmithing skill.”

“Hey, hey..... I know that you have a metallurgy skill by sensing the presence infused in the sword. I’m talking about the experience, not the skill. Whoo..... Can I see the sword again?”

“You know about swords too?”

Lee Manwoo, who took the sword without answering Kang Shin-hyuk’s trivial questions, combed through every part of the sword, from the handle to edge.

With the old man’s sharp eyes wide open, Kang Shin-hyuk feared that every part of him was being read.

“Ha..... This is more than I expected. I can’t tell whether this is a masterpiece made by a beginner or a toothpick made by God.”

How long had he been looking at the sword? Lee Manwoo giggled as he held it out to Kang Shin-hyuk.

“Yes, it’s a mixture of delicacy, violence, impatience, affection, and anger, so it’s like a master wearing a spacesuit while forging a sword.”

“What?!”

Kang Shin-hyuk shuddered. It was a perfect insight into Kang Shin-hyuk’s current situation.

There’s no way he’d know about Kang Shin-hyuk’s reincarnation, but to think that he would say such a thing just by looking at the sword..... What kind of an individual was he?

“Okay, I’ve changed my mind.”

Suddenly, Lee Man-woo said with a big smile while Kang Shin-hyuk was at a loss for words.

“I’ll be watching you for a little bit. I’m admitting you to the club, in other words.”

Kang Shin-hyuk would never have known that he had decided to make this offer to him from the moment he saw Kang Shin-hyuk forging the sword.

However, it was a fact that he had more expectations for Kang Shin-hyuk right after looking at the sword.

“Thank you very much, sir!”

“I’m Lee Manwoo, a teacher for supplemental majors.”

“Supplemental majors.....?”

Only Knight majors and Magic majors should have existed at Shinyoung. What did he mean by the supplemental majors??

To Kang Shin-hyuk, who was tilting his head, Lee Manwoo just said that such a thing existed. He felt bitter that Kang Shin-hyuk didn’t know his name or the existence of a supplementary department, but it was only for a short while.

“Anyway, you don’t have to be so happy. If you don’t make any progress, the club will be closing down this semester without a doubt.”

“Progress.....”

“I’ll let you know about it later. You should go for today. Right..... I will tell you the clubroom’s password, so you can come and practice whenever you want to. Use the ingots as much as you want.”

“Sir!”

Kang Shin-hyuk was thrilled and tried to ask for a handshake from Lee Manwoo, but he cold-heartedly refused Kang Shin-hyuk’s hand.

Kan Shin-hyuk thought Lee Manwoo might be a tsundere that he had only heard in legends, but he just needed time to think alone because of the complicated situation.

“Just get going.”

“Yes, excuse me!”

Now that he’s achieved what he wanted, it was time to go!

But as he turned to close the door, he saw Lee Manwoo picking up one of the ingots piled up on the side by the still-open door of the workshop.

‘Hm.....’

Why did he sense misery at the sight of Lee Manwoo staring at it?

He felt an urge to talk to the old man, but Kang Shin-hyuk suppressed it to gently shut the club room’s door.

‘Well..... I lied a lot today without meaning to.’

Lee Manwoo, who was left alone, stood in the workshop for a while, constantly thinking about something.

About the boy who created an ‘Artifact’ wielding an option on his first attempt.

About the whims of fate that gave him a new relationship on the very day, he decided to abandon everything and leave.

@ @ @

Coming out of the Wyvern Hall, Kang headed for the dormitory with a smile in the night breeze that pleasantly cooled his hot, red cheeks he got while working, but sadly, dinner time was already over.

“You should have come by eight.”

“Is there really no way, ma’am?”

“Even if you drop on the floor and beg while clinging onto me, what’s gone is gone, young man.”

Kang Shin-hyuk pleaded with the restaurant lady, but the bus was already gone. He was yearning for food after working for several hours and couldn’t just eat another Eiren Jelly.

The only answer was to buy dinner outside of school. He put his long sword in his room, took a shower, and came out with only his wallet in his tracksuit.

The dormitory and the main gate of the school were connected by a long hill road. He was definitely happy with the night breeze before, but now he just felt hot and humid. He was glad he was walking on downhill.



‘Crap, I’m gonna have to pay with my dignity maintenance expense.’

He wanted to reserve his dignity maintenance expenses as much as he could and didn’t expect to use it on this occasion. Kang Shin-hyuk was so upset that he was about to cry.

[It’s a small price compared to being able to practice blacksmithing]

“That’s true, but from now on, I’ll have dinner before going to the clubroom. I’ll need to know the closing time of the Wyvern Hall in advance.”

After talking with the Administrator, he left school and was about to enter a nearby convenience store, when he bumped into a woman who was coming out of the store.

“Ah.”

“I’m sorry.”

He might have been so hungry that he couldn’t see her coming. Kang Shin-hyuk stepped back gently, quickly apologizing, and the woman who bumped into him stared at him without coming out of the door.

” ..... Hello?”

” ..... Sigh.”

No, don’t make weird exclamations and just move out of the way. Kang Shin-hyuk faced the woman with such thoughts.

At the same time, he was shocked.

The Alchemist! It was Claire Boyle, the Alchemist who was in Baek In-ha’s photograph!

Why was she here? Is the Thunder Empress nearby? Is the red hair and eyes natural? At that moment, countless thoughts passed through his mind, but the first thought that appeared was.

‘She’s so beautiful.’

He clenched his teeth to gather his spirit that seemed to be sucked into Claire Boyle's beauty. But still, he couldn't help but unconsciously direct his attention to her unbelievable beauty that was leaving a tingling sensation in his spine.

"Ha, so a person can be this beautiful....."

Her white skin, white as porcelain, and her beauty, which was giving a drowsy impression under bright light, gave off a decadent charm.

If Baek In-ha finds out that he ran into the Alchemist at such a close distance, he would be furiously jealous, Kang Shin-hyuk suddenly thought and laughed.

'I thought the sunbae I met at the Wyvern Hall had a mature beauty but, I'd have to revise that assessment. The true charm of an adult was here.....!'

But it'd be foolish to stand in a daze enchanted by her beauty, so Kang Shin-hyuk gathered himself with a superhuman mentality and tried to walk past her to enter the convenience store.

But at that moment, the Alchemist reached out to Kang Shin-hyuk's shoulder, and as soon as he sensed it, he quickly stepped forward, turned his head around, and confronted her.

He was surprised at how fast his body reacted. He felt in his skin that his status and skills have substantially grown.

"H-how can I help you?"

"Oh, you're pretty fast."

The Alchemist was speaking in Korean as naturally as a native speaker. Fortunately, his surprise wasn't great because he had seen others speak fluently before.

"I don't dare offer the Alchemist a business card, but I'm a student at the superhuman training school." (2)

"You know me. Good, that'll make this quick."

The Alchemist said while smiling. It was a dizzying smile.

"And those gym clothes..... You attend Shinyoung, right? I didn't mean to hurt you. I'm probably weaker in physical combat than you anyway."

“Excuse me. I’m just sensitive about someone grabbing me from behind.”

“I know Shinyoung is the best superhuman training school, but I didn’t know they were sticking to a killer’s style. Oh, by the way.”

The Alchemist brought her face close to him just after he had widened their distance. Her red eyes filled his vision. The subtle smell of perfume tickled the tip of his nose. The link to the origin of this information rests in NovelFire(.)net

“Do you have a minute?”

“..... Excuse me?”

Is she asking me out? Kang Shin-hyuk was shocked. He knew his looks weren’t bad, but they weren’t good enough to make someone like the Alchemist fall in love at a glance!

“Oh, no, no, I’m not doing anything suspicious; I just smell something good from you.”

“!!!”

Kang instinctively wrapped himself up and stepped back. The Alchemist added, feeling even more embarrassed when she realized her slip of the tongue.

“I’ll buy you something delicious!”

The Alchemist shouted. It was the most suspicious remark someone’s ever said to him, but at that moment, Kang Shin-hyuk’s tremors stopped.

“Thank you.”

“Uh, uh, uh? Are you sure you’re okay? Do kids these days get tricked by this?”

“But I like chicken if you can buy it for me, and may I have three of them.....”

He was still a growing teenager who was weaker on food than on beauty.

In addition, he was a teenager with a light wallet.

Translator/Editors Notes:

1: This is a reference to Buddhist practice. Means they were interested in an extrinsic more than an intrinsic reason

2: In some of the eastern countries things such as giving someone a business card, is usually for starting a relationship in business settings, Meet and Greets, Social Functions, and similar things. So when he says he dares not give her his business card, then he is essentially saying, he dares not introduce himself to her.

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## Chapter 11: You Got the Wrong Person - 2

### Chapter 11: You Got the Wrong Person - 2

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Translator: Meg

Editor: Sotheno

“It’s quite large.”

“Sit where you’re comfortable. I’m going to take off my jacket for a second.”

“Ah, yes.”

Kang Shin-hyuk took off his coat and watched as Claire Boyle hung her jacket on the hanger, thinking to himself. How did this happen? It was Kang Shin-hyuk himself who said he liked chicken, but still.....

‘Really? Then go to my room. The chicken from the hotel room service that I’m staying in now is delicious.’

‘A hotel room service serves chicken?’

‘There’s nothing you can’t have with money.’

So he was taken to the hotel where she was staying. It was an ultra-high-class hotel that rose to 30 stories in the city center.

He remembered it was obviously the hotel that was set up 10 years ago by Cheonwol corporation, a global company, in commemoration of the monumental 10th World Superhuman Summit in Seoul.

He was brought to the top-floor suite without a hitch, and it was an incredibly spacious and comfortable place. He could see the night view of the city through the window, and the people below it, as if they were little ants.

‘No, wait a minute.’

Kang Shin-hyuk, who was escaping reality, regained his sanity at that moment. Isn’t this a very dangerous situation? Coming into the hotel room with an adult woman! Wasn’t it still at the point where the Alchemist could be arrested if he reported to the police?

“Then I’ll order room service~ Are you really eating three?”

“Ah, yes, I’ll really eat that much.”

Kang Shin-hyuk responded quickly to the sound of chicken, which came after agonizing about his situation. Right after that, he despaired that he had crossed the river by himself, which he could not return to. What a fool!

“Young boys sure do eat a lot..... ‘Ah yes, here—three chickens please. No actually, four. Alcohol too. What do you mean by beer—chicken and soju is the hot combo!’”

While Kang Shin-hyuk cursed her impersonation, Claire Boyle finished the phone call and sat across from the sofa where he was sitting.

When she took off her coat and dressed lighter, her provocative figure was clearly revealed. Her eyes glistened as Kang Shin-hyuk turned his gaze away with a cough.

“Holy crap, that’s so cute.”

“I’m sorry for being cute. I’m still young.”

“No, cherish yourself now. This is the only time you can be so naive and cute. You’ll grow quickly into a more explicit and shallow adult. They don’t even get shamed while looking.”

Claire Boyle said with a slightly embarrassed smile. Looking at the expression, Kang Shin-hyuk felt a little relieved from his senseless agitation.

“That..... Must be distressful. I’m sorry.”

“No, it’s okay because it’s fun in its own way. You can hide it when you don’t want to reveal it. To distinguish between one’s opponent, time and place. It’s basic, isn’t it? Ah, but the ones who are trying to expose me when I’m trying to hide, are taken care of without mercy. You should be careful with women like that, too.”

According to the words, she wanted to reveal something right now, but Kang Shin-hyuk stopped his thoughts there. He didn’t want to think too deeply for now. The Alchemist must have a reason for bringing him to this place. No, rather, he felt at ease thinking there would be.

– Ding-dong

Then, the bell rang. Claire Boyle stood up and went to retrieve the food after telling Kang Shin-hyuk to stay sitting. When he saw her carrying two large silver trays with her slender arms, he thought, ‘a superhuman was a superhuman, after all.’

“Let’s just eat and talk.” This chapter is updated by NOVE(I)FIRE .NET

“Ah, yes!”

Perhaps it was funny to say this himself, but Kang Shin-hyuk really thought he was a fool. Because he was so focused on eating as soon as he saw the chicken in front of a beautiful woman like Claire Boyle.

“You really eat well.”

“I was a little hungry.”

“You’re a Knight major, aren’t you? You seem to like it.”

The Alchemist would have experienced fighting with countless superhumans. She had reacted that way after seeing Kang Shin-hyuk's well-built body. Kang Shin-hyuk nodded and gave a supplementary explanation.

"Yes, but not because of training, but because of the student club."

"A club?"

"Yes, blacksmithing."

As Kang Shin-hyuk said that, he put the whole chicken leg into his mouth. At the mention of the word "blacksmithing," Claire Boyle became slightly stiff while pouring soju into her glass.

"Blacksmithing?"

"Yes, pounding metals to create a sword and stuff like that."

"So it's production-based. Even production-based superhumans attend Shinyoung, huh."

"Well,..... Yeah. Though it's not like I don't have combat capability."

"I'm sure. I saw the movement earlier."

Even though he was eating chicken for free, he didn't need to explain in detail to someone who won't see him again. Kang Shin-hyuk gave a cursory response himself with such an idea, and the alchemist's eyes deepened.

"It's a production type, so maybe what I felt earlier was something common among that class....."

"I'm sorry?"

"No, nothing. Help yourself."

He was told to eat as much as he wanted, so he decided to do as he was told. Kang Shin-hyuk, who finished two of the chickens in an instant, lightly wiped his hands and mouth, and began the third one with less ferocity, enjoying the taste. It was as delicious as she had promised.

"Do all the knight majors eat as well as you?"

“It depends on their traits, but I do because my trait is very physical.”

Moreover, consuming one’s spirit power leads to hunger, so the amount of food he eats would only increase rather than decrease. As he calmly explained while tearing the breast and putting in his mouth, the Alchemist who had emptied her bottle of soju clapped her hands once to commence the business.

“Then I’d like you to start paying for the chicken. Come to think of it, what’s your name?”

”..... I am Kang Shin-hyuk, a 1st-year student of Knight majors at Shinyoung Superhuman Academy.”

Finally—he thought. His heart was palpitating, half suspicious but half excited about what was about to happen. His reason was his instincts telling him something. Kang Shin-hyuk tried hard to calm himself down, recalling the memory of the blacksmith Anvil.

“Well, Kang Shin-hyuk. Okay. You know my name, right? You knew my nickname.”

“Yes, Alchemist. Your name is Claire Boyle.”

“That’s right. Just call me Claire. I’ll also call you Shin-hyuk.”

The distance was quickly narrowed. Kang Shin-hyuk faced the Alchemist..... Or rather Claire with more tension. However, the words that followed confused him.

“I awakened on my way to high school. To combine or process countless things that overflow in the world and create stuff that has never existed. That’s my knack.”

“Well, yes.....”

He didn’t know why she suddenly talked about her past, but one thing was for sure. What Kang Shin-hyuk was worried about—or rather, excited about—to happen wasn’t going to happen.



Frankly, to say he wasn't disappointed would be a lie, but wouldn't it have proved that he's still a young innocent boy if he was more relieved than disappointed?

"A magic bomb, a simplified trap, a potion..... I quickly became famous for making so many things. My abilities got stronger in the process too. I also have the ability to handle things that I make more efficiently."

"That's incredible."

No wonder she's amazing. The Alchemist is a monster among the top 500 in the superhuman ranking.

"Her problem was that she lacked in pure physical strength. If you only considered the things she was able to do with her skills, based on their importance alone, she'd have easily placed among Top 100 of the World Superhuman Ranking."

Kang Shin-hyuk couldn't believe he was sitting face to face with her in this hotel room.

"Shin-hyuk, do you know what I like most of all?"

"Uhm..... I heard it's a potion."

"That's right. It's fun to combine different materials in different ways and eventually make them into a single, mixed liquid. I wanted to be a bartender until I awakened."

Claire said that and pulled out her bag that lay below. It was full of cocktail tools like shakers, jiggers, bar spoons and muddlers.

"Even now, all the potions are made with this. The taste and aroma vary depending on how you mix the same potion. Making the potion as delicious as possible, that's my ground goal."

"That's awesome."

"Right? It's wonderful, isn't it?"

It was a moment when the emotions of an Alchemist and a male high school student were united.

“Cough, I’m sorry I got excited. I’ll get to the point now. I mean, there are times when I feel strange when I make a potion these days.”

“Strange feeling?”

“Yeah. Feels like something’s being sucked from me into the potion. Something separate from magical power.”

Until then, Kang Shin-hyuk’s eyes, which had been listening quietly, narrowed.

Come to think of it, he’s heard something like this before.

“There’s definitely something, but I can’t figure it out. But the potion that I made with that feeling definitely turns out better. It smells good, too. It’s been upgraded by more than one level. But I don’t know how I did it.”

Kang Shin-hyuk was convinced at this point.

This woman was dealing with spiritual power without even knowing it. Though he wasn’t sure why she hadn’t awakened it yet.

“Sometimes I feel that way in the ingredients. There’s..... A black market that sells rare materials and the materials that are made there have a strangely good fragrance. A relaxing scent. If I can get more of them, I’m sure I’ll be able to figure it out for sure.....”

“Then just buy all those. Oh, is the supply limited?”

“No, I’m short of money.”

“Money?”

But didn’t countless superhumans pay hundreds of millions for her potions? As Kang Shin-hyuk put on a puzzled look, Claire shook her head with an awkward expression.

“The dollar and the won aren’t widely accepted in the market, so..... Anyway, there is something like that, and while wandering around, I met you.”

“Me.....”

“Yeah.”

“Yes. You smell like that scent.”

Kang Shin-hyuk picked up his sleeve and smelled it, but there was no scent because he came out of the shower earlier.

Can the Alchemist really smell spirit power? He wanted to ask the Administrator, but he couldn't make a mistake in front of this woman. Just then, the Administrator, who noticed what was in his mind, sent a message.

[Spiritual power is the rarest and most unique ability in the whole universe, and it is also a force that depends on perspective. So everyone has a different way of feeling and handling spiritual power. Their effects are also different.]

Two people in this small space dealt with such rare energy; wasn't that a little strange?

No, it was not so strange to say the Alchemist was attracted to him in the first place due to his spirit power.

[You feel spiritual power is an energy with a distinct heat, and you have the ability to handle it skillfully and reach the origin easily, but in fact, that's an exceptional capability. She still can't feel or handle the spiritual power properly, and can only distinguish them by scent.]

In the ensuing explanation, Kang Shin-hyuk thanked the Administrator in his heart. In other words, Kang Shin-hyuk had a talent no one could imagine when it came to his spirit power.

[A 10HP bonus from the Administrator that sensed your appreciation!]

Now it was ready to give him a bonus even if he didn't say anything.

“That's why I caught hold of you. I couldn't let go of a clue. So..... If possible, please tell me. I'll pay as much as you want.”

Meanwhile, Claire, unaware of the skit that took place between Kang Shin-hyuk and the Administrator, looked at him with a serious gaze, taking a small glass bottle of red liquid out of her arms and shoving it to him.

Kang Shin-hyuk admired the deep spirit power and magical power felt in it. It was an unimaginable treasure for a school student.

If this is the artillery piece made by an Alchemist, its value cannot be measured. He could see how serious she was.

“It’s a small token of appreciation. Will you tell me? Do you know about that power, this scent?”

“I.....”

The anguish didn’t last long. If you’re not a stranger to spirit power, and you’re already half aware of it, you’ll find your way sooner or later, whether I tell you or not.

Then again, the overwhelming benefit is to make a connection with her in return for a little help in finding the way. She’s a person who offers such a valuable potion, saying it as a token of gratitude. There was no harm in becoming closer to her.

– Burrrrr

However, at that very moment, Claire’s phone rang. No, right after that, the whole building vibrated and the sharp sound of sirens filled the city.

“This is.....”

“Yeah, probably...”

Kang Shin-hyuk’s pager in his pocket was also ringing wildly. As soon as he turned on the screen and checked, there was an emergency disaster message saying, “A number of Irregular Gates have occurred.”

‘Irregular gates, are gates that aren’t forecast when and where they occur. One of the worst disasters, where one cannot know whether durable, unique, emissive, or absorbing types of monsters might appear.....”

He shut his eyes tightly. Frankly, this text was meaningless even if you received it. It was always sent out after an incident!

In fact, sirens were still ringing throughout the city. The disaster was spreading in a flash.

”..... Damn it.”

Kang Shin-hyuk instinctively gritted his teeth, recalling the day when his parents died. No matter how much time passed, he could never forget the memory of that day.

The day he vowed to be a superhuman. The day when he first learned the feeling of hate and despair. After that day, the scene of the day dominated his mind and wouldn't let go of him whenever he heard that siren.

"Yes, Eunah? That's right, I hear the sirens. "If it's an attempt to blow up monsters' eardrums and kill them, I think you'd better stop. Before that, my eardrums are going to explode."

Claire was already on the phone beside him. He thought she was receiving a disaster message, but she wasn't.

Her calm voice on the phone also subdued Kang Shin-hyuk's mind. He opened his eyes slightly and looked at the Alchemist. She looked as calm as her voice.

"How many have you got?..... That's a lot. Where are you gonna be? Ah, okay. Any estimates?..... At least A Rank majority? Whoo, I get it. I'll hurry."

The phone call was soon finished. The Alchemist packed her bag, swung it, and broke the outside window.

"Shin-hyuk, there's an Irregular gate occurrence, so you can hide in this room while I go to catch some monsters for a while. Despite how it looks, the hotel security here is awesome."

He was pretty sure she broke some of the security systems just then but decided not to mention it. She must have chosen the quickest means of action to solve the disaster in the city.

"Let's continue talking when I come back. You'll do that for me, right?"

"Yes, I'll do that for you."

Kang Shin-hyuk nodded firmly and said with as much respect as he could to a warrior going to fight against the enemy of mankind.

"So please return safely."

"That's a nice expression. I'm powered up now. All right, I'll be back."

As if she liked Kang Shin-hyuk's reaction, Claire smiled and jumped out of the window. From there, he wondered what she was going to do, but her tightly held bag expanded, quickly turning into a hang glider.

'If I were only two years younger, I would have thought it was really freaking cool.'

As he thought it's probably an artifact, the hang glider glowed brightly and used the wind to disappear into the distance with her in an instant.

Her dream of becoming a bartender had ended up in her becoming an alchemist with her using a hang glider to fly into the city. She was a wonderful noona who was realizing all of a middle school boy's dreams by herself.

If she was that old, she may have been ashamed, but she still seemed to be enjoying her youth.

"Whoo, then I will....."

It is suicide to take to the streets at a time when an Irregular Gate occurred. Like other superhumans, he wanted to take to the streets and fight, but he knew he was still lacking.

He had to hide for now.

Making up his mind, he tried locking himself in the bathroom but grabbed the red potion that was chained to the table. He wasn't sure, but hundreds of millions of won would be traded in an instant for this object, in cash. He couldn't leave it unattended.

[This is a miracle potion that temporarily amplifies all statuses when ingested. As you are proficient in dealing with spirit power, you can expect further increases in your abilities, or even permanent increases.]

"..... I think it'll easily surpass hundreds of millions. No, wait, you don't have to tell me the price. Just don't."

He held it dearly in his arms and turned around. At that very moment.

– Boom!

A roar rang out at a short distance.

Bounced by a terrible shock, Kang Shin-hyuk was worried about the potion even when he flew to the opposite wall and was stuck upside the head, but fortunately, the glass bottle was durable.

Kyah..... Kiyiiiik.

He heard a cry. A strange beast's voice, though curiously it sounded like a laugh.

Kang Shin-hyuk scurried ahead, scaring up his shaggy body. The window that Claire broke earlier was now shattered without a trace.

Something.

Had entered through that window.

Kiiii..... I found it. I found itt!

It was a talking black monster.

A different smell. A special smell!..... A smell of spirit power!

[Go ahead and drink the potion! It's a variant of a Class B monster War Troll; you can't deal with it in your current state!]

The monster stared at Kang Shin-hyuk, hitting its axe on the floor.

It was an axe made with spirit power.

Translator and Editor Notes:

## **Chapter 12: You Got the Wrong Person - 3**

### **Chapter 12: You Got the Wrong Person - 3**

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Translator: Meg

Editor: Sotheno

– Caaaaang!

The sound of a violent collision between two metal weapons spread across the room. Kang Shin-hyuk held his trembling hand, which had been crushed and twisted by the insurmountable force of the monster's strike. But luckily, he was still alive.

Kang Shin-hyuk had blocked the monster's attack with the Godslayer sword, which, for an unknown reason, appeared in his hand before the monster could deal a fatal blow. Had it not been for its sudden appearance, his head would have been torn apart by the axe.

[Godslayer Sword]

[D+ Rank]

[Special Ability Unlocked – Blade Predation]

[Special Ability Unlocked – Regression] (1)

As Kang Shin-hyuk glanced at the sword in his hand, a message was engraved on his retina.

The Godslayer sword's information was expressed through a message with the Gaia system's assistance.

According to the information, the Godslayer sword, which was obviously at the level of a general weapon when it was first obtained, was now a respectable artifact with two special abilities!

‘Blade Predation. Regression.’

In a short moment, Kang Shin-hyuk racked his brain trying to understand what had just happened.

First of all, Kang Shin-hyuk was able to stop the monster's axe due to the Godslayer sword's special ability Regression, which instantly ‘brought’ the Godslayer promptly from his dorm room.

Second, the Godslayer sword had probably leveled up to D+ Rank because the Godslayer sword devoured the E+ Rank longsword containing the feeble amount of spirit power he made today.



It didn't matter if the blade predation ability existed before or after that. The important thing was that thanks to the upgrade, he was able to live.

– Kikik, spirit power. More spirit power!

“Spirit power? This bastard.....”

Most monsters can't speak properly, but the monsters who could speak are dangerous. It was already a widely publicized fact.

Kang Shin-hyuk pretended to play along in its conversation and wondered, “How can I survive in this situation?”

– Spirit power, I have to find it. Spirit power! Find it, eat it!

There were two options: Fight the monster or escape.

But since he didn't think the B Rank monster War Troll variant would be slower than him, it would be practically impossible to escape. If he somehow jumped out of the window..... It would still be impossible.

‘Now, it's dangerous outside. He broke into this hotel straight for me in the first place. That means he might have the ability to track my spirit power. Though it does seem that the spirit power he's wielding comes from the axe, rather than himself.....’

Was it because of the memory of the blacksmith in his previous life, or was it because of his own spirit power? Kang Shin-hyuk instinctively knew the fact just by looking at the axe the troll was holding.

The spirit power flowing within it wasn't that of its own, but that of the axe.

Even so, it was strange. The Administrator had said spirit power is a very rare force, but people from left to right were showing it like there was some sort of a spirit power bargain sale today!

‘Wait, what if my presence with Claire affected the Irregular Gate's breakout.....?’

No, wasn't that hypothesis too far fetched? He put aside the idea for now because it didn't help him to solve the current situation.

‘Anyway, I have to fight now.’

In the end, only that crappy conclusion remained.

Fighting a variant B Rank monster? Nature must have a terrible sense of humor because the current situation was not a joke for him.

Kang Shin-hyuk gritted his teeth and put his hand into his arms.

Kirrrrrryik!

“Crap!”

As soon as the monster lifted its axe, it noticed Kang Shin-hyuk’s suspicious movement, Kang Shin-hyuk threw a sword at it with as much determination and strength as possible with his broken, twisted hands.

Kang Shin-hyuk’s skill Eighteen Techniques..... No, Fanged Wyvern Dance (2), which had now grown into an S- level, was quite useful for this unexpected circumstance, as it also supported throwing techniques.

– Kikik!

However, it was utterly insignificant compared to the power of the War Troll. The sword, which was hit by a lightly swung axe, bounced off helplessly falling to the other side of the room.

Of course, Kang Shin-hyuk didn’t think he could damage the troll with it. It was just an attempt to restrain the troll’s movement for a moment.

As soon as he threw the sword away, he took the cap off the potion he had taken out of his arms and drank it; not paying any attention to the sword’s whereabouts.

– Consuming the Alchemist’s Special Boost Potion (S++).

– All light wounds are fully recovered. Effectiveness has been amplified by the efficient acceptance of the potion’s spirit power. All non-fatal wounds are fully recovered, and the remaining healing power will reside in your body for protection!

– For 10 minutes all your status will be raised by two levels. Effectiveness has been amplified by the efficient acceptance of the potion’s spiritual power. For 15 minutes your status will be amplified by three levels!

– You have succeeded in drawing more than the limits of the potion’s power! The potion’s full effectiveness has grown one step further! For 20 minutes all your status will be amplified by four levels!

[Kang Shin-hyuk – D → C+ Rank]

[Physical Status]

Force – D → C+

Agility – C- → B

Stamina – D → C+

[Special Abilities]

Spirit Power – E- → D

A dramatic change had hit Kang Shin-hyuk. It was a moment when his body temporarily broke its limits and evolved!

But that wasn’t all. The potion, full of spiritual power, was temporarily amplifying his own spiritual power!

His body felt ridiculously light, so much so that he felt he could float to the sky with a light jump. Claire was such an incredible alchemist, he thought. To temporarily, amplify all his statuses by four levels was a God-given power to create miracles!

Even more surprising was the fact that Kang Shin-hyuk’s spirit power combined with the potion’s spirit power to double its effectiveness, but that was something to think about later.

‘With this, I might be able to hold my ground.’

Kang Shin-hyuk’s arm, whose muscles had been torn and whose bones had been twisted, also recovered in an instant.

The troll, who realized that Kang Shin-hyuk had deceived him, kicked the floor in anger, but Kang Shin-hyuk already had the Godslayer sword returned in his hand by using the ‘Regression’ ability. Combining with the awakened Fanged Wyvern’s power, he quickly released his spirit power to strengthen the sword.

“Heup!”

– Kiyooooohhh!

The War Troll leapt towards Kang Shin-hyuk with a groan, and its axe and the Godslayer violently clashed. This time, he was able to read the opponent’s movements properly and react on time!

Kang Shin-hyuk used his competent martial art ability to neutralize the attack’s force as much as possible, but the troll’s strength was so strong that he was overwhelmed mercilessly.

Kuohhhhhhhhhh!

It was impossible to face a troll head-on even with his upgraded physical strength! What a ridiculous monster it was.

However, he was able to grasp the extent of his power with that clash.

– What did you do? spirit power! Spirit power has grown! Give it to me! If you don’t give it to me, I’ll take it!

Once Kang Shin-hyuk managed to withstand the axe’s power and stepped back; the monster leapt forward.

As the axe rose in unison with the troll, Kang Shin-hyuk was able to clearly read the monster’s next move. His eyes, enhanced by the awakened Fanged Wyvern, was reading the movements of his opponent’s muscles in minute detail.

‘Two attacks incoming—a kick and a strike from the axe.’

The monster moved in a way that seemed to be expecting Kang Shin-hyuk to take a step back. If that was the case, he wouldn’t back down. Believing in his amplified agility, he made a quick dash.

Kang Shin-hyuk moved past the axe’s orbit with his sword held straight up as if to grind its legs into a thin line!

– Kiyak!?

Due to his weak status and inability to handle mana, Kang Shin-hyuk was used to fighting those who were stronger than him.

He dodged the troll's kick by a hair's breadth and reached close to the point where he could see its thigh.

The Godslayer sword tore its groin and carved out a wound.

"Crap, it's shallow....."

– Khak!

Kang Shin-hyuk's face was splashed with black blood. It was that moment when the enemy was inflicted with valid damage for the first time.

However, there was no time to be happy as the troll's enormous healing capacity allowed it to quickly recover. In fact, the wounds it had just received up were slowly clogging up.

"But the real attack begins now!!"

He launched a stronger attack at the moment when the enemy was wounded and instinctively slowed down. Kang Shin-hyuk drew his sword with all his strength as it slipped through the monster's groin.

At the very moment of engraving, a deep wound on its body, the dragon emblem on the Godslayer sword shone brighter than ever before. It looked like a dragon was ascending to heaven!

"Wow!"

Kiyakkkkkkkkkkkk!

Black blood poured out of the monster's wounds like a waterfall. He could see the ragged monster's genitalia dripping on the floor.

After he backed off and re-positioned, Kang Shin-hyuk let out a wolfish smile. Even a troll wouldn't be able to regenerate that wound right away!

However, just as he felt happy for dealing a fatal blow to a B-class monster, a shock-wave blasted in from an unknown direction, throwing Kang Shin-hyuk to the opposite wall.

"Kuk!!"

– Kahaaaaaaah!

Kang Shin-hyuk felt an unpleasant and inscrutable sticky feeling. It wasn't magical power, nor spirit power. The shock-wave that attacked Kang Shin-hyuk hit him again from the front.

He was just behind the troll, so how was the situation turned so quickly? However, traits and skills made some situations irrational, making such things possible.

‘Here it comes again..... ‘

Feeling the terrifying force of the shock-wave from a distance, Kang Shin-hyuk hurriedly rolled to the side and avoided it, but just before he got up from his position, the troll's axe blade closed in on him.

– Die! Die!

“Kuk!!”

Even a B rank agility couldn't fully respond to that attack. But thanks to the martial arts that had been engraved onto his body through years of training, he was able to block the attack by raising his sword at the last second.

He flew in the air for a moment due to the attack's force, but he was able to stand up in the nick of time before the troll moved in.

His legs trembled. While spewing blood, Kang Shin-hyuk grabbed his sword and looked straight ahead.

– You hurt me! Ahhhhh! You hurt me!

“Tseup.....”

The real fight was starting now. The War Troll mentally pressured Kang Shin-hyuk with its eyes that were as dark as the blood he spilled out of its groin.

An axe of tremendous weight and a shock-wave rushing in from random directions! If Kang Shin-hyuk's senses were not activated to their limits, he would have been torn to pieces by the combination.

– Try this! Try this! Karhaaaaa!

“Keuk.”

Kang Shin-hyuk was stumbling but somehow managing its attacks. Every attack left a huge burden on his body, but luckily he still had the effect of the potion Claire had given him.

The potion was barely preventing Kang Shin-hyuk's body from breaking apart. But that wasn't going to last long either. The force of the potion was not infinite.

'Can I hold out until Claire gets here?'

He wondered as he withstood the troll's attacks, soon the answer he came to was 'no.'

War trolls were fast, strong, and meticulous. If that was everything, he might have dealt some serious blows to the creature with his amplified status, but there was the problem of the occasional shock wave. He was dodging it as much as he could, but the damage to his body continued accumulating.

'Before I get any more tired. Before I run out of energy.'

He had to throw a winning move.

There was a firm determination in Kang Shin-hyuk's eyes. The strength of the sword rose even higher in his hand.

What came to his mind at this moment was nothing other than the Godslayer sword's 'sword dance.'

He had a hunch that if it was the unparalleled force of the sword dance, he would be able to cut down anything, whether it was the War Toll's axe or the unknown shock-wave.

'If it's now, I may be able to reproduce it to some extent.'

If it's a body that has temporarily reached C+ Rank, it might be able to follow the sword dance's movements by combining with the D rank spiritual power.

No, rather, he had no choice but to follow those movements.

'I have to recreate the images of sword dance that the Godslayer sword holds..... I'll extract the Godslayer sword's origin with my spiritual power and link it to my own origin!'

Kang Shin-hyuk shut his eyes.

The spirit power stretched out from him and dug deep into the Godslayer sword, covering it entirely. In an instant, the images contained in the Godslayer sword covered Kang Shin-hyuk's ego.

As soon as his head complained from the pain, muscles all over his body tightened.

– Mm?

Closing one's eyes with an enemy in front of him was tantamount to suicide.

The troll was flustered at the sight, thinking he was crazy, but it did not slow down in its attacks.

On the contrary, the War Troll thought, it was nice to be able to cut off his neck neatly. New novel chapters are published on [NOVEL\\_FIRE.NET](http://NOVEL_FIRE.NET)

– Give me your neck!

Just as the axe blade was about to cut through Kang Shin-hyuk's neck.....

“Keuk.....!”

Kang Shin-hyuk took a step forward with a gruesome sound of his flesh tearing apart.

Blood spurted from both his legs and arms, even though he had not yet been attacked. By trying to reproduce movements that couldn't be performed with his current abilities, he was leaving incredible strains on his bones and muscles.

Nevertheless, even though the 'sword dance' was incomplete, it was enough to avoid the War Troll's attack. No, what's more.....

– Khak!?

At the moment when the dragon imprinted on the Godslayer sword shone brightly, the entire arm of the troll holding the axe was cut off.



His thick arm fell to the floor with the axe still in hand, spewing blood everywhere. Not understanding what had just happened, the troll was astonished, its black eyes wide open.

– How.....!

The troll was a great warrior. He tried blocking Kang Shin-hyuk's movement by instinctively firing shock waves, despite the sharp pain that came at the moment his arm was cut off.

If Kang Shin-hyuk had not thought of reproducing the sword dance infused in the Godslayer sword at that moment.

If he hadn't thought of linking himself with the sword and reproducing the images of the sword dance.

The Troll would have been able to accomplish his goal safely.

“Heup.”

Again and again, the sword embroidered a fine line of trajectory in the air. (3)

The first slash neutralized the shock wave, followed by a slash that cut the neck of the troll.

“Keuk.....”

He could feel his arm muscles tear to shreds, and his headache had become even worse.

Just as Kang Shin-hyuk was about to have a heart attack, he opened his eyes, enduring a pain so terrible that he gasped.

The neck and eyes of the troll, which hovered in the air for a moment, met his eyes.

“Ha.”

Facing black eyes filled with consternation, Kang Shin-hyuk smiled clearly despite the pain of his whole body being torn apart.

He had succeeded in killing the enemy.

### Translator and Editor Notes:

1: So, I was thinking about changing the abilities name to [Returner], or something else, however, the definition of Regression is 'a return to a former or less developed state.' Pulled from google dictionary. So, I decided to keep it, but add a note instead of changing it.

2: Changed from "Lesser Dragon Dance."

3: It's like that fancy anime slash where the slash remains in the air after the attack, so Fancy!

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## Chapter 13: You Got the Wrong Person - 4

### Chapter 13: You Got the Wrong Person - 4

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Translator: Meg

Editor: Sotheno

[You've overpowered a harmful monster. Your membership tier has upgraded! You've earned an additional 5,000 HP! You've earned a VIP bonus! With an additional HP equivalent to 50% of the reward, you've received a total of 7,500 HP!]

[You've learned something important about spirit power. Your understanding of spirit power has deepened, and the total capacity of your spirit power has been greatly increased. Your spirit power has been upgraded to D Rank in an instant!]

[Your understanding of the fundamentals of martial arts has deepened. The Fanged Wyvern Dance (S-) has leveled up to B- Rank!]

[Your body has realized its limitations during your battle with a B+ Rank monster. The energy of the Alchemist's special boost potion has responded, and your body will begin to change. All physical statuses will upgrade to the next level.]

When the enemy died and Kang Shin-hyuk's victory was confirmed, a list of messages he had never seen before, filled his retina.

Kang Shin-hyuk somewhat expected that if he defeated a monster, he would get additional HP that can be used in Hero Universe, but the more important part was the upgrade in his abilities.

'All I did was drink the potion and defeat the enemy, those were enough to cause an upgrade?'

Moreover, did the growth buffs stored in his body play a significant role? The Fanged Wyvern Dance and his physical statuses have grown by one level, with his spiritual power growing by as many as two levels....."

He thought that having your abilities enhanced mid-battle and becoming stronger after a glorious victory was something only to be seen in a shonen manga, but to think that he would experience it himself.....

It was funny to say it himself, but it was worth risking his life.

Thrilled by the upgrades, Kang Shin-hyuk instinctively clenched his fists.

[You are seriously injured! Failure to tend your wounds quickly may result in permanent damages!]

"Uhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh."

Suddenly, overwhelmed by a surge of delayed pain, Kang Shin-hyuk rolled on the floor.

He felt his entire body's muscles twisting, bones breaking, and skins splitting all at the same time.

Of course, it was an obvious outcome considering that he had challenged a being that was way beyond his current ability. The fact that his body held on during the battle was already respectable enough.

“Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhh.”

[Enter the Hero Universe’s trade board and buy emergency pills! It will prevent permanent damages to the body, and it will mitigate every fatal wound to a moderate degree so as not to raise too much suspicion from the people who find you here.]

“Thanks for the proper advice, but can I afford those?”

[Available for 5,000HP!]

It was a hefty price considering the number of bonus HP he had just received, but Kang Shin-hyuk had no choice. Following the Administrator’s advice, he quickly purchased an emergency pill from the trade board and swallowed it.

He was lucky to have an effective orally administered medicine in a situation where he could not properly rub medicine all over his body manually.

[Your body’s condition is improving. However, if you do not receive proper treatment within a few days, your condition may worsen again.]

His pain subsided immediately after taking the medicine, and he was met with such a message. Kang Shin-hyuk breathed a sigh of relief at the thought of being out of danger for the time being.

There was a limit to how many things could go wrong in a single day; if he had to suffer irreversible damage right after defeating an undefeatable monster, fate would have a very unfair way of treating him.

[There is something else you need to do.]

“I think I know what that is. You’re talking about that axe that’s giving off some sort of..... Dark energy, right? It’d wouldn’t be a good idea to have it spotted by someone.”

[A heartfelt bonus of 100HP to our dear member!] Google search  
no(v)elFire.net

As the pain toned down and he was able to move his body again, Kang Shin-hyuk stood up by balancing himself with the Godslayer sword acting as a cane.

What Kang Shin-hyuk saw in front of him was the dead body of the War Troll whose head and arm have been chopped off, and the black axe held in its fallen arm.

For a moment, Kang Shin-hyuk thought of peeking into the axe's inner structure by infusing his spirit power as he did with the Godslayer sword, but he had no time to spare leisurely meditating in a decimated hotel room. There was no guarantee that another enemy would not appear.

"All right, then..... Do you think you can devour this thing?"

The Godslayer sword slightly buzzed as if to respond "yes." Before Kang Shin-hyuk's victory, the axe had been protected by the War Troll's energy, but having lost its owner, it was instantly devoured in whole by the Godslayer sword.

"Anyway, to think that an axe imbued with spirit power existed..... No, it can't be. Anvil can't be the only person who can make weapons infused with spirit power. But why was I pursued by this monster in particular.....? No—don't think too deeply. Let's think about it later."

There was no time to waste. As if to blow away any remaining bits of hesitation, Kang Shin-hyuk fiercely struck down onto the axe.

In an instant, rays of light emitted from the Godslayer sword encased the axe entirely, absorbing it as it melted like ice cream left on an asphalt road. It was quite a spectacle to witness, Kang Shin-hyuk thought.

[By devouring the axe, your sword will regain some of its strength. However, it will take some time to purify and absorb all the external spirit power. You can shorten the process by supplementing with your own spirit power.]

"Will this be enough?"

[It would be nice if you could dispose of the body of the War Troll variant, but since that's impossible, it'd be best to ask for her help to clean up the mess.]

The Administrator gave a vague response to Kang Shin-hyuk's question. He didn't have to think long to figure out who "her" was referring to. And that's when the alchemist Claire Boyle flew into the broken window.

Putting aside the issue of everyone around him seemingly coming up to the top floor of a hotel as if they're jumping over a fence of a typical residence, Claire had shown herself at a ridiculous timing.

"Shin-hyuk, are you okay!?"

"Claire.....! Ah, I'm not okay. I almost died."

Kang Shin-hyuk collapsed onto the floor as soon as he saw Claire.

Exhausted after having miraculously defeated the War Troll, a reliable ally had appeared in front of him, who was constantly on guard for a possible appearance of a new enemy. It would indeed be strange not to feel relaxed.

"What do you mean you almost died..... This is a War Troll. You beat this all by yourself?"

Claire, having confirmed Kang Shin-hyuk's safety first, was shocked to find the dead body of a War Troll.

War Trolls was one of the most difficult B Rank monsters to deal with. Even a fairly skillful superhuman would refuse to fight a War Troll if given the choice.

But it was clear that he had beaten the War Troll by looking at the monster's neatly cut head and arms, the marks of sword cuts left its groin, and finally the pitch-black sword in Kang Shin-hyuk's hand.

"If you really did, then you've deceived me. You didn't seem to be that skilled."

"It was only thanks to your potion that I managed to win."

"It's a rare potion for sure, but that couldn't have changed anything. There's no way a superhuman academy student can beat a War Troll just by drinking some potion. It may enable you to sustain the fight longer, but winning would be..... Wait a minute."

Claire, who was baffled by the situation and has been spurting out words like a rapid-firing gun, finally took notice of Kang Shin-hyuk's condition.

His clothes were soaked in blood from head to toe, and she could still see blood leaking out from various parts of his body. Frightened, she slowly approached him.

“Why didn’t you tell me you were injured? I’ve been interrogating a wounded man!”

“No, it’s not that serious.....”

“Come here right now.”

She pulled Kang Shin-hyuk to herself and quickly undressed him. Before he knew it, Kang Shin-hyuk was only in his boxers. Claire spoke while looking at his injured body, shivering.

“Woaahh, this is really bad..... But I can see how you won. Your skill is much stronger compared to your physical strengths, right? And you used it without thinking about the strain it’d leave on your body, because you were prioritizing survival more than anything else.”

“Precisely.”

Kang Shin-hyuk was telling the truth—the Fanged Wyvern Dance’s skill level was indeed higher than any of his physical statuses’.

Claire let out a bittersweet smile and looked at his body again. She quietly whistled after noticing his sturdy build that couldn’t be hidden even with the countless injuries, but thinking that this wasn’t the right time, she coughed aloud and took out a potion from her bag.

“Let’s first treat the external injuries. Stay still.”

She poured the potion on her hand and applied it to his wound. He felt the potion permeating his wounds and quickly restoring his skin, muscles, and bones.

The emergency pill from earlier added to its effects to speed up the recovery.

“Wow, your natural recovery rate must be incredible. I guess that’s because your body is so well—bu..... Oh, by the way, this was a purely medical practice, so you can’t call the cops on me, okay?”

“Of course I won’t. Thank you.”

“With this, your external injuries should be fine. The problem is with the internal ones..... Right, I have just the right one.”

Claire pulled a silver-glazed scalpel out of her bag. Kang Shin-hyuk instinctively grabbed his Godslayer sword upon seeing a knife, but Claire’s target was the War Troll rather than himself.

“It’s quite unfortunate that its arms are cut off, but you did a good job neatly cutting off the neck. With the corpse in this condition, the heart inside it should still have plenty of medical potential.”

“I’m sorry?”

“A War Troll heart has the potential to become the best medicine if you remove the poison. On top of that, if the heart is extracted from a recently slain War Troll..... You might even expect to receive a status upgrade.”

Claire gave Kang Shin-hyuk a pleasant smile and..... Poo! She thrust the scalpel into the War Troll’s chest.

After she deftly had peeled off the skin and dug through the flesh, she reached her hands inside pulling the heart right out of the carcass.

Kang Shin-hyuk had goosebumps all over his body while watching her go through the process. He swore to himself to never offend her in any circumstance in the future.

“You just sit and wait; I’ll make you the best drink you’ve ever had.”

Claire smiled brightly as she studied the Troll’s heart. Kang Shin-hyuk shivered as he noticed the dead War Troll’s blood splashed on her cheek.

“Huh? Could this War Troll be a variant? It’s a little different from the War Troll heart that I know. This one contains more energy.”

“Is that so?”

”..... Well, it should do the job anyway. I can worry about it later.”

With the ingredients in her hands, Claire began making her “cocktail.”



Kang Shih-hyuk watched as she infused her mana into the War Troll's heart to compress its size, mix it with various ingredients and sticky liquids in her shaker and draw more blood from the War Troll's dead body.

"Hm, hm hm hmm~~~ Hm hm hmmm~"

She then closed the strainer and the cap to fix it in place and began to shake the shaker while humming cheerfully.

To think that she'd really make a potion like she'd make a cocktail! In this kind of situation! Kang Shin-hyuk thought it ridiculous, but Claire seemed to be greatly enjoying herself.

During the process, Kang Shin-hyuk noticed a faint glow coming off of her body, which soon spread to the shaker enveloping it entirely.

If Kang Shin-hyuk was able to see it clearly, it could only be.....

'Is it spirit power?'

[That is correct. A 10HP bonus!]

But it looked like Claire herself was unaware of that fact. Watching her shake her shaker as if she had totally forgotten about the current situation, Kang Shin-hyuk felt her joy spread across to him.

Shake, shake, the shaker that mixed the ingredients with a pleasant sound, soon came to a stop.

"Oh, it looks like it was a success. Shin-hyuk, you're really lucky."

As if she could tell the outcome of her skill despite being unable to detect her own spirit power, Claire looked surprised as she removed the cap and poured the shaker's content into a glass she had already prepared.

"Troll Heart Cocktail is finished. Non-alcoholic. Here, drink it while it's cold."

"You didn't even put ice in it..... Was the glass kept cold? Or maybe the shaker?"

"Both. Come on, hurry."

Claire's face was filled with excitement. Kang Shin-hyuk held the glass containing the Troll Heart Cocktail with great determination. The drink containing a thoroughly melted heart of a Troll was exhibiting a blood-red color.

After he had given Claire a slight look, Kang Shin-hyuk took a sip and..... Was unexpectedly struck with the sweet taste that stuck to his tongue. What kind of magic could possibly turn a Troll's heart mixed with blood, into something this delicious?

Even more surprising than the taste, however, was the cocktail's healing effects.

[Your recovery rate is blowing up! All your injuries will be instantly healed and for three days starting from today, the 'Increased Blood Flow' buff will be in effect. With your metabolism speeding up, every type of growth will accelerate, which you will need to make up for by eating more food.]

[You will receive the full effectiveness of a War Troll variant potion specially produced with spirit power. Your physical strengths have been upgraded to C-Rank.]

The cocktail that slid down his throat not only amplified his blood circulation but also immediately affected his whole body, making his bones and body more robust. His body had become incomparably stronger as he entered the C Rank territory!

Kang Shin-hyuk was so thrilled that he felt like hugging Claire until she was out of breath. Putting aside the obvious healing and the buff, to think that a potion would upgrade his physical strength one level further to a C Rank.....

"What do you think? It's amazing, right?"

"It's incredible! It's the best!"

Kang Shin-hyuk let out his joy and excitement with no intention of hiding them. Claire gave a satisfied smile at his childlike reaction.

"Great, it was worth all the effort I put in. Then do you mind waiting here for a bit? The truth is, the whole situation is not fully resolved yet. I came here rushing after hearing the report that a B Rank monster had slipped through

our blockade. My heart was pounding when I found out it was heading for this hotel.”

Those words had confirmed his theory. The monster was heading for him from the very beginning. The question was why, and how.....

Countless questions passed through his head, but they were not questions that could be answered immediately. Kang Shin-hyuk tried his best to smile to hide his complex feelings.

“I’ll patiently wait here.”

“Yup, this place should be safe now. I’ll be right back, then!”

“Ah, Claire!”

“Hm?”

Kang Shin-hyuk stopped Claire who was about to jump off the window after confirming his safety and said with great embarrassment.

“I, I’m really sorry, but because I lost so much blood I’m..... A bit hungry. I mean, if you’re busy, it’s okay, but.....”

“Do you have a hole in your stomach as well?”

Claire was dumbfounded, but she promised to buy him more chickens after the job was finished.

Kang Shin-hyuk thought that she’s a really nice person.

Translator and Editor Notes:

## **Chapter 14: You Got the Wrong Person - 5**

### **Chapter 14: You Got the Wrong Person - 5**

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Translator: Meg

Editor: Sotheno

Kang Shin-hyuk noticed he was only wearing his boxers after Claire had already left the hotel room. He took his blood-soaked underwear off and entered a luxurious bathroom that miraculously survived the War Troll's rampage. As he turned on the faucet, he thought he probably wouldn't get another chance to take a shower at such a luxurious hotel's suite room any time soon.

'No, if I train my spiritual power further and graduate Shinyoung with top grades, perhaps.....'

Kang Shin-hyuk had the mindset of a petit bourgeois (1) until a few days ago, but he was now in a completely different circumstance.

The status upgrades he had received today were great enough to make his jaw drop to the floor. Though such a big change only signified how low his status levels were before.....

Neither was the price he paid for those changes trivial. First, there was the unbearable headache caused by his attempt to forcefully insert incomprehensible knowledge into his brain, and second, there was the pain of dragging his body to match his clumsy movements to the Godslayer's sword dance, causing his bones to twist and his muscles to rip apart. It was not a pleasant experience.

He didn't want to go through that experience ever again. If it wasn't for his laser-like concentration that he trained through blacksmithing and spiritual power training, Kang Shin-hyuk would have been the one to drop dead on the floor.

.....It was an incredibly close battle.

"Dear Administrator, could you tell me more about that monster?"

[Its sudden appearance was unexpected.]

The Administrator responded as if it were waiting for Kang Shin-hyuk to ask the question.

[I have already explained that spirit power is an exceedingly rare type of power. Therefore, ordinary beings are unable to detect its presence, let alone track its whereabouts.]

“But that thing.....”

[The Troll is not the issue, but the axe that it was holding.]

The Administrator continued without pausing.

[That weapon was crafted by our dear member before the reincarnation. Because the monster was in possession of the weapon, it was able to track your exact location to this hotel.]

“No way.”

Kang Shin-hyuk had never anticipated his suspicion would turn out to be true. Noticing him emit a deep sigh, the Administrator continued.

[Our dear member has crafted countless artifacts in his past life, and the artifacts have been disseminated to countless other dimensions. But you don't need to worry too much. The majority of those artifacts are owned by someone, and even if some were to be stolen, the chance of an enemy breaking through a gate on this planet with one of those weapons in hand is extraordinarily slim.]

‘So you're telling me that I beat some astronomical odds today.’

Deep in his mind, Kang Shin-hyuk was suspecting that something else was happening—something he could not yet see.

Something even the Administrator didn't know about—or perhaps, didn't want to speak about. But thinking that he'd be unable to accomplish anything without putting his faith in the Administrator, Kang Shin-hyuk decided to trust its words and wait for the time being.

“Nothing like today's event should happen again for a while, right?”

[I guarantee.]

“I see.”

Then there was only one thing left for him to do.

“I should train myself when I have the time.”

[That’s the correct attitude. A 10HP bonus from the Administrator!]

He was now able to reach a territory he couldn’t reach before. He also knew what kind of effort he had to put in. The only thing left to do then, was to spend day and night training himself.

Compared to those days when he had to train like there was no tomorrow to compensate for his lack of mana, Kang Shin-hyuk was in an ideal condition; as long as he put in the effort, there were no bounds to how much he could grow. It was a blessing for someone who yearned to become a superhuman who has succeeded in defeating every monster.

‘Open status.’

[Kang Shin-hyuk: C- Rank]

[Trait]

Awakened Fanged Wyvern (A+): Allows you to rapidly acquire martial arts techniques. Amplifies the effects of martial arts techniques and enhances your weapon’s abilities.

[Physical Stats]

Strength: D+

Agility: C

Stamina: C-

[Special Ability]

Spirit Power: D

[Skill]

Fanged Wyvern Dance (S-): B-

Blacksmithing: E

”.....Great.”

It seemed his previous level up was just a short while ago, and yet he had already leveled up to C- Rank.

As if that wasn't enough, his strength, which used to be at a mere D Rank, have now grown to an extent where he could compete to be one of the top 1st-year students at Shinyoung Academy. All in just a couple of days!

The rapid growth of his spiritual power required no mentioning. With its level at D rank, he could fight on equal terms with Shinyoung's Magic majors.

'By the time I finish all the Eiren Jellies, I may have grown much further than I initially expected.'

His skills have grown just as much as his statuses. While he was happy with the result of obtaining the knowledge to utilize spirit power more efficiently, he was most pleased with the upgraded Fanged Wyvern Dance.

The Fanged Wyvern Dance (S-) was the product of honing the only skill he had for five years, Eighteen Techniques (A). Considering the amount of time, it took for the skill to evolve, the Fanged Wyvern Dance's proficiency level had risen to B- Rank in no time.

'It's all thanks to the life or death battle with the Troll; I'm sure.'

Of course, the skill's growth was significantly influenced by the images of the sword dance that he had received from the Godslayer sword, but he was still deeply satisfied to watch the growth of a skill that has accompanied him since his awakening.

'I want to grow more.'

Kang Shin-hyuk murmured to himself with heavy determination while intently staring at his status menu. He didn't waste too much time indulging in his drastic growth; he was already looking beyond. He had been hungry for greater strength for far too long to be satiated at this point.

"Ah..... I'm hungry."

It had been only a matter of time before his hunger for power was overcome by a hunger for food.

“I shouldn’t just call room service without Claire, right? Wait, come to think of it, why is no one coming up to check despite all the fuzz that was happening?”

It must have been the effect of the “Increased Blood Flow” buff—it was a great buff, for sure, but he was too hungry at the moment.

Kang Shin-hyuk quickly rinsed off the soap bubbles, wrapped a towel around his body, found a nightgown in the closet and wore it. When it came to luxurious hotels, everything was different, he thought.

“I’m here~”

When Kang Shin-hyuk, wearing a gown, glared at the minibar wondering if he could eat the snacks inside, Claire came bursting through the broken window. It was a splendid landing, just like before.

“The whole situation has been resolved, so you can now relax. Oh, did you take a shower? Great, I was just about to tell you to. How are your injuries?”

“I took a look while taking the shower, and they’re gone without a trace. But.....”

He was about to say that she could’ve taken a normal route to the hotel room if the situation was resolved, but the words went right back in as he noticed a few plastic bags full of chickens in her hand.

“May I call you noona from now on?” (2)

“You’re too easy. But I like that.”

Kang Shin-hyuk looked at Claire with teary eyes as he accepted the chicken-filled plastic bag. Although he was still young, Kang Shin-hyuk felt like he had a clear criterion for distinguishing a good and a bad person.

If a person buys you chicken without expecting anything in return, that person was a good person. That natural law was never violated.

The Kang Shin-hyuk she saw a few hours ago, who was having a difficult time keeping his composure in front of her splendid beauty, was no longer at the present moment as he was overwhelmed with gratitude and excitement. Claire missed the previous Kang Shin-hyuk that was struggling to find the right ways to act in front of her.



“Hold on. Let’s clean up the mess first.”

Claire took a piece of paper out of her bag after handing over the plastic bags to Kang Shin-hyuk. The paper was covered in illegible magic symbols.

But when she put the piece of paper in the middle of the wreckage that was caused by the War Troll’s rampage, the broken room began to miraculously return to its previous condition.

Torn curtains were woven back, broken windows were recovered, the broken sofa swallowed back its scattered pieces of foam as if time were being rewound and finally, the leather cover was neatly fixed.

“What in the world.....”

“Paying the compensation for damages may be cheaper, but this way is simpler, and I don’t want to go out in the middle of the night looking for another room.”

Speaking casually as if the spectacle she showed was nothing, Claire flung herself down on the sofa. Then she held out the plastic bags she had piled up on the other side to Kang Shin-hyuk.

“I bought you some clothes. Here.”

“You didn’t have to take care of me this much—thank you, noona.”

“Well, if you think about it, it is my fault that you got into trouble. I’m the one who brought you here from your school, so it’s obvious that I should take care of you.”

His first impression of Claire was just a beautiful woman who often likes to go out for fun, but his image of her has drastically changed in the last couple of hours.

From admiring bartenders to thoughtfully taking care of him..... And buying him chickens! Kang Shin-hyuk had learned again it was foolish to judge a person by their appearance.

“By the way, there won’t be any aftermaths of today’s incident that you’ll need to worry about.”

As Kang Shin-hyuk changed his clothes and left the dressing room, Claire unwrapped the plastic bags containing the chickens and began to explain.

“A lot of events happened today, and it won’t take much work to dispose of a single War Troll’s dead body. Oh, and I won’t forget to share the profits we gain from it. Its most important heart is missing, but if it’s the corpse of a War Troll variant, you can at least expect to receive some pocket money.”

Kang Shin-hyuk quickly snatched a piece of a chicken and put it into his mouth as he listened to her. He felt so energetic as to swallow the whole thing, including the bones.

“Actually I was told to keep the monster’s break-in to this hotel a secret. Your fight with the War Troll did cause a lot of noise, but as you might know.....”

The sirens and the vibrations that filled the entire city had disappeared a little while ago.

“Of course, that’s looking at it from other people’s positions. If you wish to publicize today’s incident, I can help you. As you might expect, a student defeating a B class monster is a big deal—it might even help with your assessment at school.”

“Uhm..... I’m fine.”

“You’re fine with keeping it a secret?”

“Yes.”

Kang Shin-hyuk firmly shook his head to Claire’s offer. He was trying to sound serious, but the chicken in his mouth threw off the cool vibe he was aiming for.

“As I’ve said before, my victory over the War Troll was only due to your potion. Spreading news about something that I didn’t accomplish with my own skills would only lead to more troubles. So I will train myself further and receive an assessment that’s fair and square.”

“I don’t know, like I said, adding my potion to the story doesn’t change how incredible your feat was.....”

“The effects I received from the potion were greatly amplified from the regular amount. Actually, it’d be more correct to say the potion was a good fit for me.”

“What.....?”

Judging the conversation might go on forever without the proper explanation, Kang Shin-hyuk decided to let out the truth.

Kang Shin-hyuk grabbed three pieces of chicken as he continued explaining to the red-haired beauty whose eyes had now widely opened.

“Not long ago, I awakened a power called ‘spirit power’ and the potion you gave me was infused with such power. The cocktail you made earlier was too, if I might add. That’s why I received an effect several times stronger than the default effect.”

“Spirit power?”

Claire looked surprised, as if someone smacked her with a bat from behind. She didn’t seem totally unaware of spirit power’s existence, but she seemed incredulous to hear the word’s mention in the current situation.

“I did overhear them talk about it, but to think that.....”

“It was without a doubt spirit power.”

Kang Shin-hyuk didn’t know who “them” was referring to, but decided to continue the explanation.

“Spirit power is similar to magical power, but they’re applied differently. I was told that spirit power is the power of your soul, but I don’t know the details because I only recently learned to use it myself. But thanks to you, I learned that different people have different ways of sensing it.”

“Different ways of sensing it..... Oh, so you don’t smell its scent?”

“Right.”

As expected of someone who has been already sensing its existence, she understood his explanation without much difficulty. When Kang Shin-hyuk rapidly nodded his head to her words, Claire formed a disconcerted look while scratching her cheek. It was a look mixed with joy and unrest.

“What a shock..... I was just expecting to receive a few clues from you, but to think that I hit the jackpot. It’s so surreal to find the answer out of nowhere like this. Also surprising that you told me without a second thought.”

"I survived and became stronger thanks to your spirit power-fueled potion. I thought it'd be meaningless to hide it from you. After all, am I not the one in the position of having to ask a favor of creating more potions?"

"I like the honesty. Oh, and I don't want the chicken legs, so you can finish them all."

"Wow, you're an angel....."

Claire's 'Kindness level' was upgraded one level further in Kang Shin-hyuk's mind.

A person who shared chicken legs with others was either an angel who never betrayed someone else or a devil with a hundred rattlesnakes in its stomach.  
(3)

"So it was spirit power..... Shin-hyuk, what would I have to do to freely use it?"

"I'm not entirely sure, but I saw your spirit power flowing out of you when you were shaking the shaker. I think that might have been the trigger."

"Really!?"

"Yup."

When Kang Shin-hyuk nodded with confidence, Claire's eyes were filled with joy. IF YOU WANT TO READ MORE CHAPTERS, PLEASE VISIT [NOVELFire.net](http://NOVELFire.net)

Kang Shin-hyuk wasn't sure why she reacted with such excitement, but he was happy for being helpful. But then a second later, Claire dropped a bombshell.

"All right, I've decided. I'm gonna become a bartender."

"..... I'm sorry?"

"I've been thinking about it for some time, but with what you just told me, I've made my decision. Thanks, Shin-hyuk."

"Wait--wait a minute. Excuse me? A bartender? You're going to quit alchemy?"

Claire grabbed a chicken breast and stood up. Kang Shin-hyuk almost fell in love with the confidence she emitted.

"I knew that this was the correct path. After I train my spirit power through bartending and make a name for myself, I'm going to stuff these chicken bones into the mouths of those higher-up bastards that always complained about me wasting time on some stupid hobby instead of alchemy research. Then Eunah will also stop..... Wait."

"Hm?"

Claire narrowed her eyes. After muttering "what if" in her mouth, she looked down at Kang Shin-hyuk and asked quietly.

"Anvil?"

"..... What?"

"Hero Universe."

"..... Huh? Huuhhhhh?"

"So you do know about these."

Kang Shin-hyuk naturally flinched at the unexpected words that were deeply ingrained in his heart. Looking at his reaction, Claire's eyes narrowed even further.

"You're a '17-year-old' who's awakened spirit power, who trains in blacksmithing and knows about Hero Universe..... Come to think of it, that sword."

The Godslayer sword was leaning against the sofa. She hadn't given much thought to it due to the circumstance, but looking at it now, she was certain.

"That's the sword that Janus commissioned us to look for. The Godslayer sword, crafted by Anvil."

"Oh, I didn't know Janus made such a commission. I mean, he told me to just keep it."

At this point, Kang Shin-hyuk couldn't help but realize; Claire was probably a member of the Hero Universe as well!

Kang Shin-hyuk was shocked to find another member in his homeworld, but he'd be lying if he wasn't also happy.

"I didn't know you're also a member. It's great to meet you. I've actually never met another member before..... What's wrong?"

"It was you! The one who was proclaiming to be the reincarnated Anvil was you! The fraud who tricked our innocent Eunah!"

Claire shouted while pointing at Kang Shin-hyuk with her chicken oiled finger.

'Wait, was I the only person who was happy to meet a fellow member? But why is she angry in the first place? Wait..... Eunah? Did she just say "Eunah"?'

"So the Thunder Empress Shin Eunah was that 'Eunah'!? That's crazy..... I mean, the person who sounds like a little child!?"

"Yes, you impostor! That silly girl, who actually believes you to be Anvil, is my friend!"

Kang Shin-hyuk couldn't believe it—despite the same name, he couldn't connect the dots because the images he had of the Thunder Empress and the 'Eunah' of his message log were too different!

How could he have thought that an acquaintance from the Hero Universe, the intersection of countless different worlds, was actually from his home world! Kang Shin-hyuk thought that he discovered the reason the Administrator was saying he might know Enuah.

"Wait—wait a minute, noona! I'm not an impostor; I really am the reincarnated Anvil....."

"I never expected you to be from the same world! You impostor!"

"I'm telling you, I'm not! I've never pretended to be someone else!"

Claire's anger didn't show any sign of cooling down. Well, he thought, if his precious friend suddenly said something weird like "Grandpa is back alive!" He would be angry as well, but still!

"Just ask the Administrator! I'm not an impostor! I really am Anvil!"

“If I could do that, I would’ve done it already! How would I be able to just converse with the Administrator!?”

Only after the Administrator sent a direct message to Claire due to Kang Shin-hyuk’s earnest request, her misunderstanding was resolved.

That day, Kang Shin-hyuk had discovered that the Administrator doesn’t promptly answer every member’s questions.

Translator and Editor Notes:

1: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bourgeoisie>

(2) “Noona” is a word that a guy uses to refer to an older sister/older woman, and the latter usage (to an older, unrelated woman) signifies a close friendship.

(3) I think this is meant to say “a devil who only eats food of demonic attributes to refuse something as precious as chicken legs” or something like that.

The snakes could also refer to someone who is trying to get on your good side with nice stuff, but their goals are malicious.

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## Chapter 15: The Exposed Awl - 1

### Chapter 15: The Exposed Awl - 1

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Translator: Meg

Editor: Sotheno

The next day, Shinyoung Academy was in chaos.

Not just Shinyoung—the entire city of Seoul was talking about last night’s event where monsters broke out of dozens of irregular gates. But the incident hit home for Shinyoung students in particular, who were destined to face those monsters in the near future.

“Fuck, all those gates were A Rank!?”

“They were all irregulars too. I heard there were a lot of casualties.”

“That’s insane, all of the superhumans A Rank or above would’ve been dispatched.”

Humanity’s progressive adaptation to the new world didn’t mean that the gates would cease to be dangerous. Just as with other natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, gates were erratic events that humanity could only prepare to effectively respond to once they occur.

And yesterday, was a test of humanity’s preparation.

“But Seoul has a ton of skilled superhumans, like the Thunder Empress.”

“I’m so thankful the Thunder Empress is part of the association. The top guns of most elite guilds are often dispatched overseas.”

“It also seemed like the Alchemist was still around Seoul. Because of her, I heard, there was practically no one injured, despite the casualties.”

“I freaked out when the sirens suddenly went off last night.”

“A Rank monsters…… I’m freaking curious, though. Don’t you wanna see one?”

“Yes, will the next E+ Rank person please speak.”

Kang Shin-hyuk was silently eating his energy bar in the midst of the chaos in the classroom.

The Troll Heart Cocktail’s buff ‘Increased Blood Flow’ was still in effect.



Kang Shin-hyuk was incredibly thankful for receiving an additional 3-day buff in growth rates on the last day of the login bonus, but on the dark side, he was greatly bothered by the hunger that was constantly plaguing him.

The burden was so great that even after eating seven chickens the night before, two trays of cafeteria food (one tray just for the rice and the other for the side dishes) two times in the morning, he felt hungry again just as the first class had started.

‘I’m so thankful today is Friday.’

The remaining two days of the buff’s effective period were Saturday and Sunday, his days off school. If he could make it through today, he could spend the next two days training himself in his dorm room with a mountain of snacks stacked beside him.

He had already been growing at a rapid rate, but he couldn’t let go of this golden opportunity. While ‘Increased Blood Flow’ was still in effect, he was determined to upgrade his physical strength from D+ to C- Rank.

D+ Rank and C- Rank were just a stage apart, but the difference in strengths was as clear as the change in the letter. His agility and stamina were already C Rank and C- Rank, respectively. With his strength entering C- Rank, all of his stats would enter the C Rank territory!

‘Then I would already have reached the level of a superhuman who was trained at a decent superhuman academy. At Shinyoung, I would surely place among the top 1st-year students. Adding to that, since my weapon proficiency is second to none, if I supplement it with my spirit power, I’d have nothing to be afraid of. If it all works out, I might be able to get superb grades from the upcoming sports day.’

Almost every event hosted by Shinyoung has grabbed a lot of attention from outsiders but along with the school festival, sports day in particular attracted a lot of interest. The reason was simple; outsiders were allowed to enter!

It was an event where students of various talents showcased their skills and scouts from various different guilds and active superhumans came to evaluate them.

In other words, your performance on sports day could greatly impact your future, so it was unwise to consider it as a fun day where you could just slack off.

‘Getting good grades from sports day also improves your academic evaluation. In many ways, it’s a great opportunity to raise my worth; it might even be a good idea to participate in the new students’ competition.’

If he diligently raised his worth this way, he’d be marked as a student of great promise and would receive several sweet offers from various guilds upon graduation. When that happened, it wouldn’t be much of a dream to go back to the hotel he stayed in yesterday.

He could order ten chickens from room service and enjoy the luxury of drinking cup ramen soup after dumping the noodles into the sink (1). Anything would be possible!

Vrrrr

Kang Shin-hyuk’s stick vibrated as he instantly finished the energy bar while trying to relive the moments of eating last night’s chickens. He checked to see new messages that were sent by the kind-hearted noona that bought him chickens at the hotel.

[Bartender noona: I thought about it, but let’s keep our meeting a secret to Eunah]

[Bartender noona: Also, don’t tell anyone that you’re from earth]

[Kang Shin-Hyuk: Okay]

Kang Shin-hyuk had saved her number as “Bartender noona” out of the concern that having her real name listed and spotted by someone may lead to some bothersome trouble.

But the innocent young boy didn’t yet know that a name as vague as “Bartender noona” would also lead to various sorts of troubles.

[Bartender noona: Though with your skills, you’d be exposed to the world pretty soon anyway……. There’s no way you’d go unnoticed by Eunah when you were noticed by me, right?]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Are you acknowledging me as Anvil now?]

[Bartender noona: I don't believe in the reincarnation part. Or rather, I don't want to.]

[Bartender noona: But I think I can believe the part where you obtained Anvil's ID and inherited his memories and knowledge]

[Bartender noona: But if you impersonate 'Grandpa' in front of Eunah, I'm going to kill you]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Like I said, I never did that]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: She'd tell you the same if you ask her. I've been honest from the beginning]

[Bartender noona: (emote)]

Despite his firm denial of her accusations, Claire sent several types of 'suspecting emotes' and 'staring emotes.' She had been like this on the phone since they split apart from yesterday, so Kang Shin-hyuk was already quite used to it.

[Bartender noona: Anyway, I hope you had a good rest last night. I'm about to board my plane, so I'll talk to you later]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Are you returning to America?]

[Bartender noona: Of course. I may be a freelancer, but I can't stay away from home too long]

[Bartender noona: I met everyone I planned to, and the commission from Janus was a total bust.]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: I'm sorry about that.....]

The three of them—Kang Shin-hyuk, Claire, and Janus—had already talked about the matter the night before. The conversation didn't last long, as Janus had already figured out that Anvil was reincarnated in Eunah's world upon hearing of Kang Shin-hyuk's discovery of the Godslayer sword.

Claire was mad at Janus for not telling her earlier, but Janus giggled as if he was wearing a cheeky grin. He still paid her plenty of HP for the efforts she put in, so Claire didn't have much to say.

Oh, by the way, the ID Claire used in Hero Universe was 'Bartender.'

[Bartender noona: If you're sorry, help me out next time.]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: You need my help?]

[Bartender noona: I don't know how to use my spirit power yet, so I want you to help me]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: But I'm not that good at it either]

[Bartender noona: But it'd be better for me to cling onto you midway than to drop head-first to ground level.]

[Bartender noona: I don't think it's a bad deal for you either. I'll give you all the potions I made from my experiments]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Wow, I love you noona (emote)]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: (emote)]

More than 'not being bad for him either,' it was a comically one-sided exchange, being able to receive potions from one of the best potion makers in the world.

Despite the slight awkwardness between them last night due to the trivial misunderstanding, Kang Shin-hyuk was happy he could regularly meet such a good person.

[Bartender noona: Sorry, but I'm not really into younger guys]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Ah sorry, I wasn't talking about you but the potions]

[Bartender noona: You say that when you frantically scanned my whole body when you first saw me]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: I'm very sorry noonim! (2) I made a mistake since you were too attractive!]

[Bartender noona: All right, all forgiven since you're honest]

[Bartender noona: I'll visit you again later with chickens]

She was a really good person, Kang Shin-hyuk thought again.

'Since it came this far, should I specify the chickens' brand as well? No, that's going overboard. But if I'm going to eat them in the first place, they might as well be the best ones.....' Just as Kang Shin-hyuk was painfully agonizing over the question:

[Bartender noona: By the way. Do you know of a teacher....."]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Yes?]

[Bartender noona: Ah, nevermind. Don't worry about it. Let's talk about it later.]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Sure.]

That was the end of their conversation. Kang Shin-hyuk shrugged his shoulders and put his stick back in his pocket.

Baek In-ha was in front of him.

"It's a girl."

"What?"

"100% It's a girl. Our Shinyok-yi didn't even come back to his dorm."

The word "girls" was pretty much glued to his lips, but as the saying goes, even a malfunctioning clock sometimes gets the time right. As he was spot on, Kang Shin-hyuk came up with a random excuse:

"I told you, I went out to buy some dinner, but then went to a nearby evacuation center after the sirens went off."

"No, the smile you let out just now was the smile of a winner. It was a smile of superiority, as if to say 'I'm different from you measly children.' It's a noonim, right! You must have seduced a beautiful noonim last night!"

If Baek In-ha didn't shout such pathetic remarks out loud in the classroom, he would be popular with girls too, Kang Shin-hyuk thought..... Kang Shin-hyuk spoke to Baek In-ha with a look of sincere pity.

"No seduction, but I did get to know a noonim yesterday."

"For real!?"

"She's an Irish American with red hair and red eyes and a good style. Her name's Claire Boyle, she's a famous superhuman."

"Oh..... Did you guys eat dinner together?"

"Yup, we ate chickens. Claire noona bought them for me."

Just as he turned his back to the reality that was too hard to bear, Baek In-ha lightly gave a light tap on Kang Shin-hyuk's shoulder and returned to his seat.

Looking at Baek In-ha's back, Kang Shin-hyuk thought there might have been no need to save Claire's number with a nickname and took out his second energy bar.

@ @ @

The last lecture of the afternoon, 'Monster Ecology,' dealt with the ecology of monsters that appeared on earth; their weaknesses, and detailed counter-strategies against them.

All the writing classes (3) that he had to take to become a great superhuman were as necessary as they were boring, but now he was also hungry due to the 'Increased Blood Flow' buff's effect. While Kang Shin-hyuk was struggling to endure the immense boredom and hunger, a whisper arrived on his message log:

Eunah: >< Grandpaa (4)

It was a whisper from Eunah, a.k.a. the Thunder Empress. Kang Shin-hyuk was used to receiving her messages, since she has been sending them to him whenever she had the time since Kang Shin-hyuk joined the Hero Universe.

Anvil: What's up?

Eunah: My friend went back to Americaaaaa

She must have been talking about Claire Boyle. Then this girl who speaks like a little child like her tongue hasn't been fully developed must be the Thunder Empress..... Follow current novels on [NOVEL\\_FIRE.NET](http://NOVEL_FIRE.NET)

Eunah: We couldn't even find what we were looking forr :((

Anvil: That must be distressful.

Eunah: Yes :(( And a lot of bad beings appeared yesterday so I was really tired fighting them.

Kang Shin-hyuk made a decision. He decided to have Min-seo, the youngest kid (6 years old) at the orphanage, as a reference while talking to Eunah. His conversation partner's mental age must be around there, he thought.

Anvil: You must have worked hard.

Eunah: Tell me I did goodd

Anvil: Great job.

Eunah: Tell me I did goodd

Anvil: Yup, you did good.

Eunah: Yup! ?? I did good, right!

Unable to endure the endless messages, Kang Shin-hyuk felt the ends of his lips convulse as he said whatever she asked him to.

He was able to respond without any issues with the image of a pure innocent child in his mind, but knowing that she's actually the Thunder Empress, he couldn't connect the image of the mighty warrior with someone who was talking like a little child.

"Student Kang Shin-hyuk? Judging by the fact that your pen hasn't been moving, the lecture must be very boring for you."

"Uhm."

"I understand, though it might have been better if you weren't caught. Right?"

It was at that moment. As Kang Shin-hyuk was mentally wriggling about due to his conversation with Eunah, he was pointed out in the classroom.

“Why don’t you then teach us about the weaknesses of the monster Aviole? If you give us a satisfactory answer, you may spend the rest of the class for self-study.”

“Uh.....”

He was screwed. Kang Shin-hyuk was taking a writing class to compensate for his lack of grades in more practical classes, but he was not quite knowledgeable of the Avioles yet. That was expectantly so, because Avioles were C Rank monsters he had never learned about!

He memorized every detail of E Rank monsters that 1st-year students were required to fight against, but it was too much to ask for a 1st-year student in their first semester to be informed of a C Rank monster!

“Nothing?”

“Hold on, please.”

But if he didn’t respond, he’d lose his writing scores. If he lost points in a ruthless point-based system where your scores influenced every aspect of your student life, failure in this moment could even end up impacting his graduation.

Eunah: Grandpa, What’s wrong? Are you busy? I am sorry ??

No, don’t worry about it. But I’ll be right back. I’m in a class, so let’s talk later.

Eunah: What are you learning about?

Avioles

Kang Shin-hyuk revealed the monster’s name without a second thought as he was too agitated by the stares from the teacher and other students. Eunah responded right away.

Eunah: Avioles..... I know a lot about them.

“!”



“Student Kang Shin-hyuk? Do you need more time?”

As the teacher’s stare was about to become even sharper, the Thunder Empress’s messages completely filled Kang Shin-hyuk’s retina like clouds filled the sky in a stormy night.

Eunah: Avioles have two wings, but they’re actually midsize ground monsters. They don’t have a fixed habitat, so they move underground at high speeds, sometimes leading them to break out of gates with monsters belonging to completely different habitats. There was even a case where they broke out from an extremely low ranked gate.

”.....”

Eunah: The feathers on their wings have a ton of small holes in them, and using them, they soak up soil particles which they then emit back out to dig through the ground. If they align their wings about 70 degrees to the ground and howl, it’s a sign they’re about to attack and you have to be on your prepared right away. The soil particles stored in their wings are then discharged at once by infusing mana and that attack is comparable to a C Rank magical power or physical strength.

At this very moment, a vast amount of knowledge stored in the association’s database was flowing into Kang Shin-hyuk’s head!

Eunah: But there is a window of opportunity right after their attack. They have to refill the holes with soil particles, and if you launch water-based magic of C Rank or above, their wings would be rendered useless by absorbing water instead of soil.

Eunah: They actually breathe with their wings, and will only try to breathe with their mouths if the holes in their feathers are blocked. You can easily kill them by stuffing water into their throat when they do. If you don’t have the right magic, you can just attack their butt to block the passage used to discharge the soil. Their throats are actually quite sturdy, so it’s not the most recommended part to target. But if you cut off the tail on top of their heads, they lose their sense of magical power so it becomes easier to fight them.

”..... Avioles are.”

Kang Shin-hyuk didn’t have much choice at this point.

“Hm?”

“Avioles are creatures with two wings but they’re actually midsize ground monsters.”

“And?”

“They use the small holes in their feathers to absorb soil particles, which they use to attack during battle.....”

As Kang Shin-hyuk began talking, the teacher listened to what he had to say. Kang Shin-hyuk merely repeated what Eunah had told him. She had come to his rescue, though if you think about it, it was her fault that he was pointed out by the teacher in the first place!

“..... Thus, if a water attack proves to be fruitless, it’s best to take advantage of the slight gap after it has discharged all soil particles to cut off the tail on top of its head to disturb its sense, and then finish it off by attacking the discharging pathway in its butt. That is all.”

“.....”

The teacher was totally silent when Kang Shin-hyuk finished the lecture that his classmates probably wouldn’t have for another year. Kang Shin-hyuk tried his best to sustain a stiff expression to hide his guilt of having cheated, and most students were slightly tilting their heads because they didn’t know if anything Kang Shin-hyuk had said had any authenticity.

Then, a moment later, the teacher let out a smile and gently applauded.

“Splendid. It was more impressive that your answer wasn’t in the form of a textbook answer. You had grasped the ideal strategy of hunting an Aviole, and more, you’ve meticulously explored the best way to hunt it as a Knight major. It was the perfect answer that could only be formed by having watched and analyzed dozens of videos dealing with Aviole counter-strategies. I could clearly see that you studied hard. You’ve been awarded 3 points.”

“Th..... Thank you.”

“You may use the rest of the class time for self-study. But even if you know all the lecture’s contents, please, try not to look bored in class.”

“I’m sorry! I’ll continue studying as hard as I can.”

Kang Shin-hyuk emitted a deep sigh sinking down into his chair. Baek In-ha, who was sitting near Kang Shin-hyuk, tried to covertly give a thumbs-up to him but ended up as the teacher’s next victim to answer a question.

Kang Shin-hyuk was dazed for a moment and he could hear students whispering to each other.

“Ah, Kang Shin-hyuk was always good at writing courses.”

“But that was just..... Is he backed up by a large guild or something? That strategy he just talked about is something you only see at the front line of a major guild. I’ve never heard of a specific timing to attack.”

“Hey, he also beat Doo Woo-jin a while ago. What if he’s amazing in practical courses too?”

“That was just a coincidence.”

“Yeah~ Just as it’d be a coincidence for you to meet an Aviole at an F Rank dungeon and die while shitting your pants, right?”

“What did you say fucker?”

Until a few days ago, the words around him were filled with shock and suspicion, but the air around him had changed quite drastically. Faintly but distinctly, there was a mood where everyone was now acknowledging Kang Shin-hyuk.

Kang Shin-hyuk slightly smiled. It wasn’t a bad feeling.

‘That just now wasn’t me, though.’

He had never expected he’d receive such help from Eunah.

Despite knowing that she’s a superhuman from the association, it was hard for him to put his trust in her as she always talked like a little child, but now he felt like he could acknowledge her as one of the top superhumans of Korea.

While Kang Shin-hyuk was sitting with a complicated mixture of 1/3 happiness, 1/3 guilt, and 1/3 unrest, a message popped up in front of him:

Eunah: Grandpa, Is there anything else you'd like to know about?

Anvil: Nope, that was the perfect explanation. Thank you. I made it through the situation all thanks to you.

Eunah: Heh.....

Just as Kang Shin-hyuk was happy to finally receive a short message from her.

Eunah: Do you want to know more!?

Eunah: I know about pretty much every single monster up to S Rank! I know a lot about SS Rank monsters too! I'll answer anything Grandpa is curious about! Grandpa, do you know what Medusa is?

Eunah: You know, I thought you don't turn into stone as long as you don't look at its face, but its breadth and mana rays and all these other things can turn you into stone, so I almost died hunting it! And you know—

Uh..... Could you please go through one by one, slowly? When you are free, that is.

Eunah: Anytime!

Like this, Kang Shin-hyuk had officially recruited the girl who was calling him Grandpa as his tutor. It was the moment when a green light turned on his way to receiving a high writing course grade.

Translator and Editor Notes:

(1) A faux pas for commoners

(2) 'Noonim' is the more dignified version of 'noona' and connotes much more respect than the latter.

(3) "Writing courses" really means "knowledge-intensive courses," as opposed to "practical courses."

(4) Korean has a way of sounding cute/adorable by prolonging certain vowels or with certain single/double syllable sounds, but since that seems either impossible or incredibly awkward in English, I'll just use emotes instead, unless the alternative works. (The closest analog that comes to mind in

English is replacing half the letters with w like “The cwosest anawog thwat cwomes to mwind in Wiengwish is.....” But I don’t want to commit that sin.)

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## Chapter 16: The Exposed Awl - 2

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Translator: Meg

Editor: Sotheno

After Kang Shin-hyuk left a deep impression on his fellow classmates, the teacher was about to end the lecture.

“There is an important announcement. Everyone, please be silent.”

The teacher of 1st-year student’s C class, Siara Bertrand. Like others Kang Shin-hyuk had met, she was a Caucasian who could speak fluent Korean, which wouldn’t have been the case if Korea wasn’t a nation known for its supply of talented superhumans.

She was a 40-year-old S Rank superhuman in top 5,000 of the World Superhuman Ranking. She once made a name for herself during her prime in France, afterward of which she moved to Korea to teach at Shinyoung.

She was popular with the students not just for her excellence in teaching, but for her youthful beauty that she was able to maintain by possessing a large quantity of mana.

“You fought yesterday too, right, teacher!?”

“I saw the video of you fighting and it was so freaking cool.”

“Could you also whip me like you did to the mons-.....”

“Quiet!”

After she shut everybody up by lightly slamming on her desk, she calmly turned on the main screen in the classroom. It was an announcement related to sports day.

“These files will be sent to you soon, but please take a look at them right now. The competition will be divided into three sections. There will be a school-wide competition where two teams, consisting of all students from 1st to 3rd grades face off against each other. Then there will be a class competition, where a single class from 1st to 3rd grades will be selected to be the winning team. Lastly, there will be a free-for-all competition where the results are determined by individual evaluations.”

“Holy crap, finally.”

“I’ll sweep the floor with everyone. I’ll be the free-for-all’s MVP.”

“Yes, will the next D Rank person please speak~” (1)

Just as the students began to make a fuss, the teacher slammed her desk again to silence the students and continued.

“Please take each competition seriously. All students have to participate in at least one of the school-wide and class competitions. Participation in the individual competition is voluntary, where each participant will be strictly evaluated starting from the qualifiers, so please beware that joining the competition with insignificant skills could leave a negative impact on your overall academic assessment.”

As expected of Shinyoung, sports day was also a nightmare. Kang Shin-hyuk read through the screen with a bittersweet smile.

The teacher’s explanation continued, but Kang Shin-hyuk was only interested in the individual competition. As implied by the wording, most of them were 1v1 competitions, and they were varied in the types of battles involved.

‘A competition where any major can participate, and major-specific competitions to determine the best Knight and Magic major of the academy.....’

Lastly, the new student competition where only the newly admitted students could participate! For new students, the competition was a bloody warzone that was as competitive as it was accessible. Kang Shin-hyuk’s stick vibrated.

[Baek In-ha: Shinyok, are you gonna participate in the new student competition?]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Yup. You?]

Indeed, if Kang Shin-hyuk participated in the new student competition, there was a chance that he’d have to fight Baek In-ha, a monster among monsters who possessed a S Rank trait and A Rank magic power. Even though he’s been growing rapidly, there was no chance that Kang Shin-hyuk would be able to defeat him.

[Baek In-ha: I’m gonna participate in the school-wide competition. Since you can’t participate in the new student competition while participating in the school-wide one, I guess we won’t be facing off against each other.]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: You’re crazy, school-wide competition.....]

Even though he should have felt relaxed at his answer, Kang Shin-hyuk felt more humiliated than relieved.

The new student competition was meant to tease out the most talented new student. But Baek In-ha was already walking over to the stage of the entire school. His vision was different.

Kang Shin-hyuk gently bit his lips, and continued with a sigh.

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Win the school-wide competition. I’ll win the new student one.]

[Baek In-ha: I’ll win it all. You win it all too Shinyok.]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Yup I’ll win it all too.]

Kang Shin-hyuk was just beginning to learn how to walk, and if he tried to chase down the person running in front of him out of jealousy, he would just end up falling over.

So, he decided to work on standing firmly on the ground for the time being. Running would come after he learned how to stabilize himself. He breathed slowly as he made his new pledge. It relaxed him quite a bit.

“The participation list for the school-wide competition and the class competition will be collected after Monday’s class. Likewise, anyone wishing to participate in the individual competition should come and talk to me before Monday. That is all. Please decide after carefully reading the files sent to your sticks.”

“Teacher! I want to participate in the individual competition!”

“I wanna participate in the school-wide competition! Will you accept my proposal if I dedicate the trophy to you?”

“Bring. The documents. With you.”

Kang Shin-hyuk bit on his last energy bar and stood up as the teacher dealt critical hits on the loud students’ heads with the attendance sheet.

But then a voice flew in from behind.

“Student Kang Shin-hyuk.”

“Yes.”

Siara Bertrand had called him after she handled the clingy students and packed her attendance sheet.

Was it wrong to eat the energy bar at the end of class? I won’t be deducted points for this, right? As numerous thoughts passed by; a faint smile formed on her face. It was a smile he had never seen since he enrolled in Shinyoung two months ago.

“To think that you’d move his heart. I was very impressed. I’ll be looking forward to your development.”

“Huh.....? Ah, yes.”



As he thought, 'Who could it have been?' The answer came right away. She was probably talking about the supervising teacher of the Artifact Production Club, Lee Manwoo. Was he some sort of a special type of person? Did something happen to him?

But the teacher had already left after packing her documents before he could ask such questions. He thought about chasing her to ask, but decided not to, thinking that he'd naturally come to learn about the issue if it turns out to be important.

[Baek In-ha: To think that you'd seduce our teacher..... You're the real killer of older women]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Dude for fuck's sake]

@ @ @

Kang Shin-hyuk entered the Superhuman market with only the Godslayer sword tied to his waist, intending to buy some field rations.

In order to sustain long-term activity in a gate, the food has been developed to be cheap, small, and able to fill as much as ten meals.

They were hardly comparable to Eiren Jelly that was delicious as well as able to replenish spirit power, but since he had little HP remaining, he had to buy whatever he could with his own cash. Especially now, after he had earned the profit of hunting down a War Troll!

[A total of 229,105,550 won has been transferred to your account.]

Kang Shin-hyuk thought there must have been a mistake when he first saw the message. He knew why he received money, but couldn't make himself believe the amount that was displayed. Two hundred twenty nine million won!

Thinking he might have misread the number of digits, he reread the message countless times. But he was right the first time; more than a hundred million had found its home in his bank account!

But still incredulous, he researched about the corpse of a War Troll. He found out that not all War Troll corpses can be sold, and certain kinds of corpses are demanded more than others.

F Rank monsters were barely profitable but the profits became sizable from E Rank. There was a huge variation depending on the type of monster hunted, but the typical price was about a 100,000 won.

D Rank monsters were also greatly dependent on the type, but they cost a minimum of 300,000 won and a maximum of 5 million won.

C Rank monsters cost a minimum of 2 million up to about 30 million.

The concerned B Rank monsters cost at least 10 million up to a grand total of 400 million! On top of that, War Trolls were rare monsters, placing them at the maximum price range!

‘But since we took out its heart, which comprises the majority of its price.....’

The price should have dropped significantly, but because the War Troll was deemed to be a variant, the value of the heartless corpse was high enough to fetch him an unimaginable sum of money.

With that, Kang Shin-hyuk, who had been barely holding on with a few tens of thousand wons in his pocket, had suddenly become a multi-millionaire.

Of course, filthy rich people would snicker at such an amount, however, it was money that he obtained by risking his life, but it still felt surreal to him.

‘This should be enough until I graduate. Now there’s no need to save my dignity maintenance expense.....!’

While ecstatic, he realized why countless people dream of becoming superhumans, why low-rank superhumans worked so hard to raise their ranks.

It was because a boost in rank came with a boost in profits!

‘I don’t want to be obsessed with money, but having a lot of money makes a lot of things easier.’

That was indeed the case right now. Even though field rations were considered to be “cheap,” that was looking at it from the standards of active superhumans; it was still a large sum of money for an average student. But what had happened with an excess amount of money? He had bought them without any hesitation!

Money leads to less time wasted, allows you to tread on more comfortable paths, and gives you better things. In order to become stronger as fast as possible, it was good to have as much money as he could.

[It's more important to have more HP than more money. With HP you can purchase goods that are higher in quality than the ones you can buy with cash. Also, with some of your VIP restrictions lifted, you can directly purchase products that will speed your status's growth.]

Kang Shin-hyuk shrugged his shoulders. He agreed with everything the Administrator said. There was nothing that the trade board of Hero Universe didn't offer. Especially when it came to products that assisted in superhumans' battles and growth, he recently realized, the trade board was teeming with those products.

"I know. Obtaining more HP and lifting my membership tier's restrictions..... In other words, you're telling me to put all my efforts into increasing my synchronization rate, right?"

[That's precisely right. You can obtain more HP and upgrade your membership tier by hunting down monsters, but with you in your current state, that's a bit difficult to do.]

Even though he was a prospective superhuman, he was just that: someone who wasn't yet a superhuman.

It was impossible for a student from a training academy to undertake missions of fighting monsters that broke out of a gate.

Among those, if he wanted to tackle the long-lasting gates that teemed with monsters—commonly called 'dungeons', unless he suddenly happened to walk into one, he had to go through a long and complicated process of obtaining the rights of entry.

"That's why I need the money. Enough money to sustain me until I graduate and officially become a superhuman."

[Indeed, I am convinced. A 10HP bonus by the Administrator who was impressed by your thorough explanation!]

"I thought you'd give it to me by this point. Thank you."

Kang Shin-hyuk wondered if every member regularly received a bonus like him, but decided not to ask. It was more satisfying to think that he was receiving special treatment. Despite the small amount, he liked hearing the bonus message.

“.....All right, now then.”

Kang Shin-hyuk, who had purchased two days worth of food, headed to his dormitory.

He had already applied to reserve an individual training room. A reservation for the whole training room just for himself, starting from Friday night to Sunday.

“Hello student Kang Shin-hyuk. Since you even brought field rations with you, you seem to be ready.”

Emil Bolton was standing in front of the training room. Kang Shin-hyuk had asked a favor to him.

“Yes, Mr. Bolton. I also plan on cutting sleep.”

“I overheard the students’ conversations. It sounded like you had grown noticeably in the past few days, and you’re here to hone those improvements to perfection, am I right?”

“Yes.”

It was to maximize his gain from the effect of his new buff, ‘Increased Blood Flow,’ but there was no need to explain that much.

After all, Emil Bolton wasn’t completely wrong. Kang Shin-hyuk had to adapt to his newly amplified growth rate in a short amount of time.

“Hm. All right. Everything you asked for is in there, so go ahead and check..... Also, when there’s a chance, how about you and I have a friendly sparring match?”

“I’d be honored, sir!”

He’d have to go all in to fight against someone who could still fit into the top sections of the World Superhuman Ranking. Kang Shin-hyuk bowed to Emil Bolton, and entered the training room.

There were fitness equipment on one side of the spacious room and all kinds of training tools on the opposite side. Emil Bolton had prepared everything he asked for.

“..... Good.”

After a light breathing exercise, Kang Shin-hyuk put a pile of the field rations on the floor and ate one of them. It tasted bad, but he endured it and passed it down his throat.

After that, Kang Shin-hyuk gently placed the Godslayer sword against the wall. He could see the sword shivering.

“..... I’m going to train my sword techniques just a bit later.”

Vrrrrr

“Yup, I’m going to train them so much you may get tired of them.”

Vrrr

The Godslayer sword was only faintly shivering, but Kang Shin-hyuk felt like he could understand what it was trying to say. He chuckled and gently swept its edge a few times.

Having awakened spirit power and learning that the sword has a sort of “ego,” he started talking to the Godslayer sword as if to a person, quite often. It was a natural interaction for Kang Shin-hyuk, though it might not be good for someone else to see him talking to the sword. Google search novel Fire.net

“Well, anyway..... I should get started now.”

Kang Shin-hyuk began his physical training right away. Training his martial arts and spirit power was important, but more than anything, he wanted to train his strength to C- as soon as possible!

He began lifting weights that were several dozen kilograms heavier than his usual amount. But he immediately realized that he had made a mistake.

‘This is still light. Come to think of it, my strength must have increased by a great amount by this point.’

He was already overwhelmed by his upgrade to D+, so how would superhumans of C, B and A rank strengths feel about their own power? How strong would they become if they supplemented their strength with mana?

At that point, it would be possible to lift an entire building with their strength. That's why they are called 'superhumans,' or 'beings that transcended humans.' It was a territory he could not conceive before, but he felt in his bones that he'd one day be able to approach it!

'All right..... Let's keep it going.'

He increased the weights until he felt a heavy load on his muscles. Due to their abnormal recovery rate, superhumans that were wielding mana could push the limits of their physical training as much as they wanted without worrying too much about possible damage. Due to such strenuous training, they were able to become stronger at incredible speeds.

For Kang Shin-hyuk in the past, who once had no capacity for mana, it was an unimaginable process to partake. But having the ability to wield spirit power, he was now different.

In fact, right at this moment, his spirit power was circulating through his entire body to assert its existence and calm his mind. With the 'Increased Blood Flow' buff in effect, he had nothing to be afraid of.

Pant, pant.....!

Kang Shin-hyuk began pushing himself to his absolute limit. His barbell was becoming progressively heavy, but he didn't show a sign of wearing out.

The funny thing was, his spirit power began rapidly circulating to stimulate his origin.

'It's painful.'

"I want to rest.'

'My arms hurt.'

'But still, I'm enjoying this.'

'Because the pain is making me grow.'

While his body was actively lifting up the barbell, his mind was calmly observing himself. It was not an act of distracting himself from the exercise.

In fact, he was able to honestly observe himself because he was so intently focused on the exercise.

‘I trained myself for years only to earn ant-sized rewards, so will this be enough to make me grow?’

‘No, it’s different now. Now, I can earn more than I did before. I’m sure of it.’

‘I want to give up.’

‘No, I’m making progress.’

‘I can’t let go of this opportunity.’

‘I just want to pound on metals.’

‘That’s the way to escape.’

Wait. ‘Escape’? Pounding on metals is a way to ‘escape’? More than physical training, wasn’t that the best way to become stronger?

His movement came to a halt and he put the barbell on the floor. His spirit power’s circulation had stopped. He had been observing himself without anyone’s interjection, so the thought he just had must’ve been of his own.

‘But why ‘escape’.....? I’ve never thought of it that way. Which means.....’

..... Was it Anvil’s memory? Kang Shin-hyuk placed his hand on his chest. He tried to reach his spirit power again, but perhaps because he was no longer immersed in his self-observation, he wasn’t able to pull off the intuition like before.

‘Is it because synchronization is active?’

The image of an old man pounding metals in a decimated world kept ringing in his mind.

With mysterious monsters rampaging all over the world, the image of an old man absorbed in blacksmithing to escape from reality.

“Sorry,”

Kang Shin-hyuk spoke quietly to the old man’s back.

“But now things are different.”

Anvil’s world was destroyed, but this world wasn’t.

Blacksmithing was a means to escape for him, but it wasn’t for Kang Shin-hyuk.

Kang Shin-hyuk lived on earth, not Merva.

“So don’t worry. I have no plans to escape from this reality.”

It was probably some sort of a self-consolation for Kang Shin-hyuk, whom Anvil acknowledged as his reincarnation, to try to comfort Anvil.

But this was probably a natural part of the process of synchronizing with Anvil. Kang Shin-hyuk decided to believe so.

‘I don’t step back. I only move forward.’

Anvil obtained his skills by escaping.

But Kang Shin-hyuk decided to use those skills to step forward.

Yup, he still hasn’t escaped his cringy sentimentality. He was fine with it, though.

“Alllll right.”

Kang Shin-hyuk gripped the barbell again after emitting a deep sigh. He added a few more weights and lifted the barbell with as much strength as he could while enduring the pain of his muscles nearly rupturing.

‘Perhaps, one day I’ll go back to Merva—…….’

A thought came to his mind, but it disappeared as Kang Shin-hyuk lifted the barbell again with all his might.



He continued to train hard for the rest of the night. A long night, where the sound of training equipment and the heavy breath of a man filled the whole room.

Translator and Editor Notes:

1: So, from what I can understand about this line is that the superhumans are rated by the Gaia system based off of their stats, so, pretty much none of them would be a full D Rank superhuman. That is at least my guess. Hope it helps a little.

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## Chapter 17: The Exposed Awl - 3

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Translator: Meg

Editor: Sotheno

[You've received an additional bonus of 1,000 HP for today's login!]

At 6 a.m. on Saturday, Kang Shin-hyuk woke up after two hours of sleep and quickly finished two packs of his field rations.

A typical superhuman could get by with only a couple of hours sleep each day thanks to their abnormal recovery rate, but Kang Shin-hyuk had slept even less than his usual sleep schedule due to the effect of the 'Increased Blood Flow' buff.

[Tsukuyo: You're a tough one..... Seems like you still haven't deleted your ID.]

[Halo: Anvil geezer, hope you're well. Wait, I forgot—you're not a geezer anymore.]

[Cicatus: Why didn't you keep in touch? Are you no longer making weapons after being reincarnated or something? I was wishing for you to make a bridle for my Frozen Drake.] Follow current novels on [NovelFire.net](http://NovelFire.net)

[Eunah: Did you sleep well, Grandpa? Eunah just woke up!]

After having skimmed through the mountain of messages sent by his Hero Universe friends, he sent his first reply to Eunah, who seemed to have woken up at a similar time. Then he moved on to the rest of the messages.

'Though I still don't know what this Tsukuyo woman is trying to say.'

What if, Kang Shin-hyuk thought, Anvil was actually closer to Tsukuyo than Eunah, which he didn't know about because his synchronization with Anvil was still incomplete?

But since that was something he had no way of knowing, Kang Shin-hyuk decided to ignore her for now. Tsukuyo had always replied with the same words no matter what he said to her, so ignoring her messages was the only answer.

On the other hand, the notification screen on his substitute communication device—a.k.a. "stick"—was simpler. There were a few trivial friendly messages from Baek In-ha and a text from Claire.

[Bartender noona: Just arrived in New York. Did you get the money?]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: (emote)]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: I'll buy you coffee when you visit Korea again]

Claire immediately replied. Even though it was about to be dawn in Seoul, New York was still sunny.

[Bartender noona: K]

[Bartender noona: I don't drink can coffees]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: I'll buy you a whole freaking cafe lol. By the way, isn't communicating through the Hero Universe's system more convenient?]

They were already listed as friends in their Hero Universe accounts. Claire gave a simple answer to Kang Shin-hyuk's reasonable question.

[Bartender noona: Communicating like that feels like the recipient is at a different world, so I don't like it]

[Bartender noona: Eunah and I usually talk through the phone or texts too.]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: I see.....]

[Bartender noona: Though whispering is more convenient inside a gate, cuz you can't get signals in there.]

[Bartender noona: Not that I have anyone other than Eunah to request for rescue.]

[Bartender noona: I have to go eat now. Don't skip your meals like you did last time.]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Okay]

Truly, there was a large gap between her looks and her personality..... Kang Shin-hyuk ended the conversation with emotes that expressed lots of love and respect.

"All right."

The pleasant conversation had cheered him up. He put his stick back in his pocket, and resumed his intensive training.

As he lifted weights without a break and munched on packs of field rations whenever he was hungry, his spirit power powerfully roamed around in his body like yesterday, raising his self-awareness level to its limit. This time, he wasn't distracted by unnecessary thoughts about wanting to pound metals or escape reality.

He was solely walking towards the goal of becoming stronger without getting sidetracked.

"..... Huuuk."

As he was totally immersed in his training as if his sense of self had vanished from his consciousness, he sometimes felt his supply of spirit power depleting.

When that happened, he replenished the supply by eating an Eiren Jelly. It felt like a special treat compared to the field rations, but because the recovery rate of his spirit power increased along with its total volume, he didn't have to worry too much about draining the supply empty.

[Baek In-ha: Shinyok, are you training right now?]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Yup, I'm at the individual training room]

After he sent a short reply to Baek In-ha while chewing on an Eiren Jelly, Kang Shin-hyuk resumed his training. By the time he ate five more packs of field rations and one more Eiren Jelly, he had finished his weight training.

“Whoo, Whooooo.....”

He dropped the barbell, taking a few moments to catch his breath. His heart told him to keep lifting the barbell until his strength reached C- Rank, but upgrading his status wasn't something he could accomplish in just a few hours. Until recently, he had been thinking about it in terms of years!

There was no need to hurry since there was still quite a bit of time left before the 'Increased Blood Flow' buff expired. After he muttered such thoughts to himself, Kang Shin-hyuk moved on to his second training. It was now time to train his Fanged Wyvern Dance.

“Whoo.”

He picked up a long spear out of the stock of the training-purpose weapons Emil Bolton had prepared for him. He intended to train with not only the long spear but also with the various weapons he had learned to use.

He had two goals he wanted to accomplish while training the Fanged Wyvern Dance.

First, he wanted to transfer the intuition of the Godslayer sword's sword dance that he acquired during his battle against the War Troll to other types of weapons. Kang Shin-hyuk put his faith into his trait 'Awakened Fanged Wyvern,' which allowed him to acquire martial arts techniques at a superhuman speed.

Second, he wanted to learn more about his new ability, Weapon Upgrade, which he obtained when the 'The Serpent without its Pearl (A-)' evolved to 'Fanged Wyvern Dance (A+).' He wanted to learn especially about the feature that 'enhances the performance of weapons held in your hands.'

'As expected, if I grip a weapon with an empty mind, nothing happens.'

Kang Shin-hyuk muttered to himself as he saw no change in the long spear he was holding. He realized that the weapon could only be enhanced if he held it with a clear, sincere will.

'I need to learn to freely use this ability. Even though it always promptly activated when I needed it most, I can't just rely on it to come to my rescue in every dire situation.'

He also wanted to find out the extent to which the weapon could be upgraded. Understanding one's overall stock of capabilities was as important as growing stronger, he thought.

"..... Let's begin."

Kang Shin-hyuk remembered back to when he performed his sword dance and fixed his posture. Even though it'd be impossible to exactly reproduce the movements of that day, the meaning he embedded in his movements was more important than the forms they took.

He closed his eyes gently. As he took a step forward, he slowly thrust the spear toward an imaginary point in the air. At some point, a worm-like pattern appeared on the spear.

@ @ @

In the afternoon, Baek In-ha came to visit Kang Shin-hyuk at the training room. He was dressed casually.

"Woah."

"Why did you come?"

By this point, Kang Shin-hyuk had practiced with a dagger, staff, hammer, whip and dual swords. Even though it was too early for him to try and reproduce the Godslayer Sword Dance—a name, he decided to give it—with

other weapons, he had become quite good at applying his Weapon Upgrade ability.

“Shinyok, can you really lift this up?”

“Yup.”

Kang Shin-hyuk put the whip he was holding on the floor and lifted the barbell. As he did, Baek In-ha checked the weight on the barbell and exclaimed “woah” with an impressed look.

Of course, Baek In-ha himself could lift the barbell with ease, but that was to be expected from someone who’s among the top 1st-year students. Most 1st-year students would have to reinforce their strength with mana to barely lift the barbell.

But the barbell was being lifted by his friend who could not wield magical power!

“Did you eat some ginseng or something? (1) How did you get so strong in such a short time?”

“I told you I grew stronger.”

“At least give me a hint of how you did it.”

Hearing those words, Kang Shin-hyuk grabbed a sword and pointed it at Baek In-ha. Baek In-ha saw a curious pattern engraved on the sword, and a clear sign that the weapon has gone through an upgrade, a product of Kang Shin-hyuk training his new ability for hours.

“Wow.”

Baek In-ha looked as if he had realized something. He was indeed an elite among elites, having accurately discerned the magnitude of the weapon’s enhancement with a single look.

“Is that a skill?”

“No, it’s a trait. I told you my trait was upgraded.”

“Dude, this is not just an upgrade; it’s more like an evolution.”

“It’s similar.”

“Holy crap! That’s insane!”

There have been known cases of a trait going through an evolution, but it was an extremely rare occurrence.

Even so, it was widely believed that traits that were born as strong were weaker than traits that evolved to be strong. In other words, even if two are the same A Rank traits, the one that evolved to be A Rank was stronger.

“So how is it?”

“A+.”

“Holy fuck!”

Baek In-ha cheerfully tried to hug Kang Shin-hyuk, but Kang Shin-hyuk dodged the embrace with blatant disgust. Still, Baek In-ha was smiling with happiness all over his face.

“I knew our Shinyok could do it. At this pace, you might even awaken magical power!”

“Pff.”

It wasn’t magical power he had awakened, it was spirit power, Kang Shin-hyuk thought. He softly scoffed at Baek In-ha’s response, but on the inside, his heart was about to drop.

Kang Shin-hyuk slipped away from him, wary that he might see through his secret. Fortunately, Baek In-ha didn’t notice him retracting because he was nodding in satisfaction to his own thoughts.

“So your status climbed at once when your trait evolved. Come to think of it, if your weapon is enhanced by a trait, you could probably use it to beat the crap out of a monster without using any magical power. Wait, will the enhancement amplify with a stronger weapon?”

“Probably.”

The Awakened Wyvern was the perfect trait to hide his spirit power's existence because there was no way of telling that the upgrade came from a power other than his trait.

After all, the visual effect of the Awakened Wyvern was glamorous, so people's attention would be directed there. Kang Shin-hyuk was confident he could deceive everyone who couldn't detect spirit power.

"I see why you joined the new student competition. Maybe you'll fight against me next year at the school-wide competition."

"I'll probably sweep the floor next year."

"Look at that confidence."

Kang Shin-hyuk seemed too confident to call his statement a bluff. While Baek In-ha suspected that his friend was hiding something, he decided not to pursue his curiosity. Kang Shin-hyuk would tell him when he wanted; he figured.

"Ah, right, Shinyok. I came here cuz I had something to tell you."

"What is it?"

"I heard the Thunder Empress is visiting for sports day!"

"..... Why?"

As Kang Shin-hyuk asked back, wrinkles formed on his forehead. He was worried just by the mention of the name.

"She's coming as the representative of the association. Also, the Thunder Empress is a Shinyoung alumnus."

"Is that so....."

"I'm warning you in advance. The Thunder Empress is mine, so you should give up."

"In-ha."



Kang Shin-hyuk softly called the name of his greatly determined friend whose fists were clenched. Baek In-ha got a little nervous at the kind, gentle voice of Kang Shin-hyuk that he had never heard since knowing him.

“Uh, uh?”

“Good luck.”

Kang Shin-hyuk tapped Baek In-ha on the shoulder with a gentle smile. It was a sincere wish of good luck without a shred of a lie. Baek In-ha looked perplexed but gave him a firm nod.

“Then I’ll seduce the Thunder Empress and become next president of the association!”

“Yeah, yeah.”

Baek In-ha continued talking about sports day but soon got kicked out by Kang Shin-hyuk. He could not waste any more of his precious ‘Increased Blood Flow’ buff’s remaining effective period.

“So the Thunder Empress is coming.....”

Kang Shin-hyuk muttered to himself after kicking Baek In-ha out of the room. Having that information in advance was a gain for him; he could at least emotionally prepare for the impending meeting with her.

‘Claire said that she’d find out in no time, but to think I’ll meet her this soon.....’

Kang Shin-hyuk checked his message log and frowned after seeing the stream of messages coming from Eunah every 30 minutes.

What would happen when she finds out who he really is? He pondered and came to a conclusion.

“Let’s hide it for now.”

Even though having the Thunder Empress on his side could be a huge advantage, he was too focused on developing his newly earned abilities to greater heights, so revealing his identity could only lead to more troubles. She was incredibly bothersome even in this moment, not even knowing they live in the same world!

..... But will he succeed? Claire figured out who he was in a flash—will he be able to hide his identity from a girl who’s been calling him “Grandpa” all this time?

More than anything should he hide his identity? That Thunder Empress of all people was blindly affectionate of him..... Wait, no, no.

“Forget about it—let’s just train.”

Kang Shin-hyuk repeatedly shook his head as if to ward off any thoughts related to Eunah and began to swing his weapon again.

It was too early to fully reproduce the Godslayer Sword Dance with other weapons, but compared to the morning, he had significantly improved. The Awakened Wyvern was an exceptional skill when it came to cultivating his martial arts skills!

He moved from practicing with a whip to practicing with a hammer, then moved onto a sword and back to the spear.

He’d drop the current weapon, use that hand to grab a pack of field rations or an Eiren Jelly and put it in his mouth as he grabbed the next weapon with the other hand.

Whip for 30 minutes, eat, hammer for another 30 minutes, eat, move onto the dagger, eat again..... The process repeated endlessly.

Vrrrr

As he devoted all his attention to fend off the unnecessary thoughts, he had earlier, the weapon in his hand intensely vibrated.

“Hm?”

Kang Shin-hyuk came to his senses. Without knowing, he was holding the Godslayer sword. He could feel his spirit power escaping his body to encase the sword as a whole. It was as if the sword and his spirit power had merged as one. But then.

[The Godslayer sword has successfully consumed the axe’s strengths and will upgrade to C Rank.]

[You are about to view a fraction of the memories residing in the axe.]

“Huh.....?”

As Kang-Shin Hyuk excitedly exclaimed at the timely message,

The image of the axe’s strong origin filled his consciousness.

Translator and Editor Notes:

(1) Ginseng is... considered to be the cure-all/panacea by some Koreans.  
Baek In-ha is saying that as a joke here.

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## Chapter 18: The Exposed Awl - 4

### Chapter 18: The Exposed Awl - 4

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Translator: Meg

Editor: Sotheno

The axe had been crafted in a spacious workshop containing an ever burning brazier infused with a small amount of magical power, a worn anvil, and a blunt hammer. And the workshop was occupied by an old blacksmith.

‘This one’s a failure.’

The blacksmith thought while looking at the completed axe. He had been too distracted while making the weapon.

The blacksmith always tried to commit to his work with an empty mind, but it was sometimes inevitable to be distracted by random unnecessary thoughts. Most of them were quite unpleasant. They included the memories of the end of the world, the sorrow of losing his family, and the rage against the interdimensional invaders that caused all those tragedies.

Sometimes those dark emotions would stir inside him uncontrollably, causing him to make a defective weapon. Although the purpose of a weapon was to harm another living being, a weapon crafted in such a somber state of mind possessed an excessively violent aura.

‘Not that I can kill my own child that had just sprung out into this world.’

The blacksmith registered the weapon in the trade board of Hero Universe while clicking his tongue in dissatisfaction. He hoped the weapon would meet the right owner who’d correct the axe’s unstable aura to its rightful balance.

[Anonymous has purchased your item. You’ve received a total of 176,500HP!]

The axe was sold in no time. It was a common occurrence. The blacksmith had judged the axe to be a failure a moment ago, but his friends of the Hero Universe community always regarded his weapons as top-quality. But.

‘Another anonymous user. They all seem to be the same person, though.’

A user with a hidden identity, who always appeared out of nowhere like a ghost, to buy his products that emitted especially violent auras.

It was a well-known fact that trading anonymously was only possible with a high membership tier for a special type of product, and the blacksmith wasn’t quite happy speculating about the kind of people interested in these products.

‘I should probably not sell these kinds of weapons.....’

The blacksmith thought about it, but didn’t think for long.

Even a weapon possessing an excessive violent aura could transform into a different weapon when wielded by the right owner. The blacksmith was merely the crafter of the weapon; he was not someone responsible for the weapon’s fate.

“I don’t know who you are..... but please take good care of it.”

The blacksmith muttered to himself and closed his eyes to shake off his remaining uneasiness.

As he did, his consciousness began to fade into the void. When he came to his senses, he was standing idly in the middle of the training room.

[Your synchronization rate is increasing. Assimilation rate is now at 1.7%..... 1.8%.]

Kang Shin-hyuk fully came to his senses at the message of his synchronization rate increasing.

He was struck by a mixture of emptiness, rage, doubt, desperation, resignation, vengeance, and countless other feelings, but they all soon evaporated. He had never felt that way before while his synchronization rate was increasing.

Kang Shin-hyuk could sympathize with some of his feelings, but he had no time to waste by clinging onto them. He forcefully shook his head trying to shake off the memories of the blacksmith that was taking over his mind.

‘The Administrator was right—this weapon was crafted by me before the reincarnation.’

Kang Shin-hyuk momentarily felt regretful that he could not directly benefit from having the axe for himself as it was now totally absorbed by the Godslayer sword, but that was an unnecessary feeling. The Godslayer sword had devoured the weapon down to its roots, to its origin.

What that entailed was that the Godslayer sword could be enhanced at a faster rate by possessing the origins of several weapons inside itself. Of course, only the origins of powerful weapons could produce any notable effects.

Kang Shin-hyuk had realized one more thing.

‘The Troll’s manic pursuit of spirit power could have been due to the negative aura residing in the axe..... If that was the case, who bought the weapon, and how did it end up in the Troll’s hand?’

Perhaps because Kang Shin-hyuk was Anvil himself, he could obtain the memories of when the weapon was crafted, but the rest were still kept in the

dark. He could do no better than surmise that it had something to do with Hero Universe.

After all, the Administrator said that Hero Universe was the gathering point of heroes, not the gathering point of good people.

‘If I get attacked like that again..... No—it would be meaningless to worry about it for now.’

Suppose that a new enemy finds him with another of Anvil’s weapons in its hand. How would he predict its occurrence, and in what ways could he prepare for it?

But for Kang Shin-hyuk, the best he could do was to focus on the present, doing his absolute best for each moment. Just like he was training at this moment, putting all his might into the task and nothing else.

But as Kang Shin-hyuk infused his spirit power into the Godslayer sword while having such thoughts, his heart suddenly began to pound rapidly and his entire body’s blood began to boil.

[The origin of the axe residing in the Godslayer sword and the energy within your blood have integrated. With the help of your spirit power and trait, you have awakened a new special ability, ‘Recovery’!]

“Wh-what.....?”

His body was hot as if a dormant organ whose existence he didn’t know about, had just started functioning.

Kang Shin-hyuk tried to understand the change in his body by carefully reading the message in front of him with the feeling that his mind was being lifted, as if he was drunk.

‘Recovery?’

‘The axe’s origin and the energy within my blood have integrated?’ Kang Shin-hyuk immediately knew what that meant—the “Increased Blood Flow” buff! The “energy” within his blood could only come from that buff!

The “Increased Blood Flow” buff was activated by consuming the War Troll’s heart, and the axe that the Godslayer sword absorbed belonged to the same monster.

As the two integrated through his spirit power, the temporary buff of “Increased Blood Flow” had become a permanent special ability.

Kang Shin-hyuk had understood the outcome, but he still had difficulty understanding the process.

‘A “special ability,” rather than a “skill”.....’

He had only known magical power as a special ability before he awakened spirit power by logging into Hero Universe. Superhuman training academies usually didn’t lecture about the topic of “special abilities” either, and there was virtually no external research on “special abilities” other than magical power.

Despite that, Kang Shin-hyuk had just awokenakened his second “special ability,” something other than magical power.

‘This probably isn’t normal.’

He didn’t think it was likely that he was the only person possessing such an ability, but he wasn’t about to spread the word to the world about his new ability to find his fellow comrades.

‘Anyway, it’s called “Recovery,”..... Is it similar to a Troll’s regeneration ability? Though if it is, my regeneration would be nothing compared to that.’

As a matter of fact, Kang Shin-hyuk felt that his body was more energized than before. Perhaps because the new ability was awakened by his spirit power, Kang Shin-hyuk could instinctively understand its power.

It felt like the pinnacle of all living things’ natural healing abilities. Even though both are special abilities, “Recovery” was an absurdly simple power compared to spirit power, which could be applied in many different ways. Still, “simple” was good enough for him.

[Kang Shin-hyuk: C- Rank]

[Special Abilities]

Spirit Power – D

## Recovery – F

As expected, a new column had appeared in his special abilities window.

Because his new ability was at the starting point of F Rank, the most he could expect it to do was to restore his body's condition at a faster rate, but that was still a blessing for a close-range type superhuman who was always physically active, in practice or in active combat.

.....Though he still had no idea how to effectively train this ability!

“All these gains from one glass of Troll Heart cocktail. How do I express my thanks to Claire.....? No—let's think about that later.” NEW NOVEL CHAPTERS ARE PUBLISHED ON NOVEL(F)IRE.NET

While it was true that Claire's more-than-perfect cocktail contributed to his second awakening, his ability to extract the origins of objects played a much greater role.

Moreover, he thought, Claire probably isn't more knowledgeable about regeneration abilities any more than himself. So, Kang Shin-hyuk decided to delay revealing his new ability to her until their friendship became close enough to talk about his abilities in detail.

‘Hm, I hope we become that close.’

Just as Kang Shin-hyuk let out a faint smile while thinking back to his memory of Claire shaking her shaker with a serious look on her face, he came to his senses and slapped his own cheek.

This isn't the time to indulge in stupid daydreams, he thought. He had sworn to himself to grow as much as possible while the “Increased Blood Flow” buff was in effect!

‘I can probably push myself harder with my body being able to recover faster. All right, let's continue training!’

From that point on, Kang Shin-hyuk trained with unprecedented passion. With the regenerative power added to the buff, his movements were like those of a machine, showing no signs of slowing down except during breaks to eat something.



It was not a performance one could pull off with high physical stats alone. Without the support of his strong mind and will, Kang Shin-hyuk wouldn't have been able to engage in such strenuous training.

But those two things were the only notable qualities he had for a long time. So strong, in fact, that he felt even Anvil, who had forged for decades, couldn't surpass the strength of his mind and will.

If that wasn't the case, he couldn't have enrolled into the world's best superhuman training academy as a nobody who had no talent whatsoever in using mana.

@ @ @

[Eunah: Grandpa.....Eunah wants to rest but there's work to do. :(]

[Janus: Hey geezer, is the new Godslayer sword done yet?]

[Bartender noona: Hey Shin-hyuk, did you know that Eunah's coming at your sports day!?!]

[Baek In-ha: I'll hateee training. I'll hateeee training.]

[You've received a login bonus of 500HP!]

Kang Shin-hyuk kept diligently training even after the sunrise. While feeling sorry, he decided to ignore the messages that were coming to his Hero Universe account and to his personal stick.

He kept switching from one weapon to the next to perfect his sword dance techniques while exercising his physical body to death. The field rations piled up on one side of the training room and the Eiren Jellies in his Hero Universe shop inventory quickly diminished in number.

[Your buff "Increased Blood Flow" has expired.]

[Your body has acclimated to high-speed blood flow and 'Recovery' has been upgraded to (F+) Rank.]

The deadline came to greet him even though his Strength level had remained unchanging. Having reached Sunday night, the "Increased Blood Flow" buff, which caused his rapid growth, had ended.

But still, Kang Shin-hyuk didn't stop. Even though "Increased Blood Flow" had expired, "Recovery"—which had now been upgraded to (F+) Rank—was still in effect. He wasn't confident whether he'd have enough strength to stand by morning, but Kang Shin-hyuk decided to not worry about his condition for now.

'I think it'll upgrade if I push just a little more.'

Normally Kang Shin-hyuk didn't place much faith in his own intuition, but now that he was observing his body with the aid of spirit power, he could feel even the slightest of changes in each part of his body with great vividness.

There was a clear sign of growth. Not only for strength, but also for agility.

On top of that, he could feel the blood circulation relieving himself of fatigue and delivering a sense of fresh energy. Spirit power training was a more definite solution to understanding himself than a status window, he thought.

'A little more.'

Kang Shin-hyuk clenched his teeth as he inserted two additional 50kg plates onto the barbell. Although it was a little too much, he decided to bet on his new ability, "Recovery." An acute pain rushed in, but Kang Shin-hyuk still lifted.

'Just a little more.'

After he found his limit, he tempered himself by increasing the weight several times. He felt like passing out, but human beings were the kind of creatures that could surpass its limits with sheer determination.

"Keeeeunng.....!"

Kang Shin-hyuk lifted the barbell with a shriek that he wouldn't want others to hear. The concept of "limit" was already erased in his head. All that was left in him was a simple desire to move forward.

With his teeth clenched, he lifted the damn metal bar on top of him.

"Heeeeuuppp!"

How long had it been? He couldn't count how many times he had lifted the barbell and had already gone beyond and above the limits of his recovery rate. Not being able to lift nor let go of the barbell, he felt like his arms would

be detached by loosening his hand's strengths by the tiniest amount. Just when his mind went completely white.

'I'm moving forward.'

As soon as he instinctively moved his arms to the voice coming from an unknown direction, he miraculously lifted the barbell as if it was a piece of paper. In a moment that felt as long as an eternity, every cell of his body was dramatically enhanced.

He felt his whole body palpitate as if it had become a heart. He then realized that the voice he heard earlier came from none other than himself.

[Your Strength has been upgraded to (C-) Rank.]

[Your Agility has been upgraded to (C+) Rank.]

[You have surpassed your own limit. Your spirit power has been upgraded to (D+) Rank.]

A stream of notifications proving his growth appeared before Kang Shin-hyuk. His strength, agility and spirit power had been upgraded all at once! He felt the upgrades when he lifted the barbell, but he was moved even more by seeing the evidence with his own eyes.

His strong will played a large role, but if he wasn't supported by his spirit power in that last moment, the upgrades would have been impossible.

Through this experience, he had learned more deeply about how to communicate with and strengthen himself, becoming able to use his abilities more efficiently. Now, he thought, he wouldn't get exhausted from a single strike like he did during his fight against Do woojin.

"Ha....."

It was finally over.

Kang Shin-hyuk first calmly put down the barbell. A glimpse of the still dark night sky could be seen out the window. The time on his stick read 4 a.m.

'Then, it should be fine. Well, probably.'

"Whoo."

With a faint smile, Kang Shin-hyuk didn't get up from his spot. Three hours later, if it weren't for Baek In-ha who came to the training room out of concern for his friend, he would've been late to school.

Translator and Editor Notes:

## Chapter 19: The Sports Day's Dark Horse - 1

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Translator: Meg

Editor: Sotheno

[Today's login bonus is one roulette coin. By gathering five coins, you'll earn one attempt to spin the VIP roulette!]

"Shinyok, Are you sure you're okay?"

"It's all right."

It was Monday morning before the start of first class. Kang Shin-hyuk replied with a careless look, pushing Baek In-ha's face away.

In fact, he was in his best physical condition. His status had grown several times, and his new recovery power hasn't been lying around idly. Even though it was still at (F+) Rank, its effect during sleep was top-notch.

"You looked like a real corpse this morning."

"I was just sleeping. I'm totally fine now."

However, Baek In-ha, who did not know about the existence of his new recovery ability, had yet to forget what he saw in the morning. When Kang Shin-hyuk was about to push him again, their classroom teacher came into the class.

"This week is Shinyoung sports day's preparation week. But most classes will still be normally conducted, so don't doze off during your classes."

“Yes, ma’am!”

“Okay, then, make sure you don’t get hurt during today’s classes. Baek In-ha, please follow me for a moment.”

“Well, I’ll be back.”

“Aite.”

They were probably going to talk about the school-wide competition. Baek In-ha was the only student from C class whom one could expect to achieve an excellent performance in the competition.

Kang Shin-hyuk waved his hand to Baek In-ha, who was following Siara Bertrand and took his textbook out of his desk preparing for the first lecture.

“Kang Shin-hyuk.”

“What is it, Do Woojin?”

At the very moment when Baek In-ha left the classroom following his teacher, Kang Shin-hyuk was approached by Do Woojin, who previously lost in a sparring match against him. Come to think of it; he often felt Do Woojin’s stare in the classroom.

Perhaps he doesn’t have any friends either, Kang Shin-hyuk thought at first. But. Looking at the guys behind him that were giggling at Kang Shin-hyuk, he seemed to have good friends.

“Join the rookie competition. I’ll show you my actual skills there. If you don’t participate, I’ll kill you.”

“Don’t worry, I’ll be there.”

Kang Shin-hyuk calmly answered and took out an energy bar from his bag.

The “Increased Blood Flow” buff was already gone—was the frequent hunger due to possessing a minor version of the buff?

When Kang Shin-hyuk tilted his head and opened the wrapping paper of the energy bar, Do Woojin spoke with a sneer.

“Don’t get eliminated in the preliminary round. I’m telling you just in case you’re mistaken, but you’re allowed to bring your own weapons to the rookie competition. If you bring a toy like a training-purpose spear, you’ll be out of the competition before you even see my face.”

“You came here just to tell me that?”

“I know you have hidden skills, but the real strength of a superhuman is brought out by using a befitting weapon. If you get cocky for winning the last match, you’ll fall apart in no time. Be prepared.”

Do Woojin left once he finished, his friends tailing behind. Kang Shin-hyuk paused as he ate another energy bar, thinking blankly as he watched Do Woojin’s back.

As if the days of scolding Kang Shin-hyuk for his lack of mana never existed, he seemed to think that Kang Shin-hyuk was an opponent who he had to defeat by fighting fair.

‘Of course, I already knew all that. You can bring up to two pieces of equipment including the artifacts, if I remember.’

Kang Shin-hyuk didn’t have a shield, but he had a weapon. He had the Godslayer sword, which had recently grown to C Rank after absorbing the axe and its spirit power.

Through its higher rank, its durability and strength had been greatly enhanced. It was unlikely to be pushed back even when clashing against another formidable weapon.

But that was it. There were two special abilities possessed by the Godslayer sword. However, “Regression” was completely useless for the competition and “Blade Predation” could only lead to troublesome situations, so its existence had to be tightly sealed.

‘Will I be able to fight against artifacts containing more than one special ability with such a sword?’

‘No, I’ll have to do well if the sword can’t.’

Kang Shin-hyuk kicked away the anxiety that was crawling up in his mind. The battle was in his hands, not the swords. All the sword had to do was endure without breaking. After all, he was already.....

‘Status Window.’

[Kang Shin Hyuk: C Rank]

[Traits]

Awakened Fanged Wyvern (A+) – Allows you to rapidly acquire martial arts techniques. Amplifies the effects of martial arts techniques and enhances your weapon’s abilities.

[Physical Stats]

Strength: C-

Agility: C+

Stamina: C-

[Special abilities]

Spirit Power: D+

Recovery: F+

[Skills]

Fanged Wyvern Dance (S-): B-

Blacksmithing: E

‘Whoo.’

Kang Shin-hyuk’s eyes filled with satisfaction as he looked at his status window. His strength and stamina were at (C-), and his agility was at (C+). His spirit power had been upgraded to (D+), and he now had ‘Recovery’ added to his special abilities.

But that wasn't all. The Fanged Wyvern Dance, a core skill that strengthened all martial arts techniques, was (B-) Rank. With that added to the calculation, his overall superhuman rank was C Rank.

The rank set directly by the Gaia system was absolute. Kang Shin-hyuk himself was also convinced he now had the ability to do as much as a C Rank. He had grown immensely since fighting Do Jinwoo.

'I can do this.'

He wasn't going to stay content by only beating Do Jinwoo. If possible, he wanted to try to win the rookie competition, or in other words, win the Rookie of the Year award. It was quite thrilling for him to imagine becoming Rookie of the Year after being treated like a loser in the Academy.

For someone who grabbed everybody's attention for his deficiency in mana. If he performed well in the rookie competition, he'd be in the spotlight in a different way.

But he wasn't afraid of that at all. If he was bothered by people's attention, he wouldn't have enrolled at Shinyoung in the first place.

'I'll win. No matter what.'

Kang Shin-hyuk swore to himself again with great determination.

For a moment, the memory of his awakening five years ago flashed back to his mind, but unlike before; it wasn't accompanied with a sense of despair.

@ @ @

After school that day, Kang Shin-hyuk filed his application for the rookie competition. The scene of Kang Shin-hyuk confidently submitting an application to his teacher created another stir in the classroom, but he didn't feel as bad as before.

"There's a rumor that his trait evolved"

"Or skill awakening. After all, it's all thanks to his bullshit skill that he got into Shinyoung. Eighteen Techniques or something?"

"Isn't that what he obtained along with his trait? Then it's gotta be trait evolution."



As soon as Kang Shin-hyuk heard the students whispering on the side of the room, he turned around to look at Baek In-ha, who shook his head firmly.

Kang Shin-hyuk wasn't very surprised, thinking that the commotion was inevitable as the causes of his sudden growth could easily be narrowed down to one or two possibilities.

'Though it's probably not that common to see a trait evolution..... That's the creativity of teenagers' minds for you.'

Of course, it wasn't a big deal for his evolution to be known. That was because he intended to reveal in the first place. Though when it came to his spirit power, it was completely necessary to have it hidden in the farthest corner of the closet.

His indifference for its reveal was the reason for telling Baek In-ha about it without a second thought. He wasn't sure how he would think about it, but he disclosed it, nevertheless, because he thought Baek In-ha knowing about it wouldn't matter much. He felt a little sorry, but it was true.

"Okay, then."

[What are you going to do today, our dear member?]

Kang Shin-hyuk, who had just rushed out of the classroom, received a message from the Administrator. He knew very well why the Administrator sent the message.

A faint smile formed around his mouth. It was funny, but he thought the Administrator was acting a little cute.

"I think I'll go to the workshop. Now that I've achieved my goal from training, it's about time for me to face Anvil."

[A 10HP bonus to our dear member!]

In response to the expected response, Kang Shin-hyuk smiled again. Of course, it wasn't just a decision made to please the Administrator, but a reflex of contemplating his abilities and the positive directions of their growth.

But since his physical stats had just grown over the weekend, a little more training during the day probably wasn't going to make a big difference. The

buff had already expired, so there was no merit in putting his body under strain again.

‘If I push myself too hard, I might get injuries that an (F+) Rank healing ability can’t fix easily.’

On the other hand, blacksmithing was an efficient training method that helped his spirit power grow without putting too much strain on his body, and it was also a means to regain more access to VIP benefits by increasing the synchronization rate.

Moreover, as only a maximum of two pieces of equipment was allowed to be brought into the rookie competition, he intended to make an effective piece of equipment for the competition.

‘I’d better make a shield because I already have the Godslayer sword, and also..... Wait, no.’

‘Isn’t it just that I want to use a hammer?’

Faced with his true intention, Kang Shin-hyuk burst into laughter.

Perhaps he actually sympathized with Anvil in his “Blacksmithing as a means to escape” memory while pretending with himself to disagree with such a sentiment. After all, he was trying to reward himself after having gone through the real-life business of accomplishing his training goal.

It was funny. Everything was the driving force behind his growth, so there was no need to hesitate or feel disturbed. He just had to focus on what his instinct guided him to do.

You become good at what you like to do, he thought. Doing what you like makes you strong. There’s no greater blessing, and that had nothing to do with the previous life, present life, impulse or memory.

[Great decision, our dear member. If you succeed in producing a good weapon with your metallurgical techniques, you can try feeding it to the Godslayer sword to possibly raise its rank by another notch.]

Kang Shin-hyuk’s stream of thoughts was cut off by the Administrator’s timely message. He decided not to worry about metallurgical training anymore and replied with a more relaxed look.

“I’ve thought about it, too, and I wonder how much more I can strengthen a C Rank weapon by feeding it with steel that was handed out for student activities. No matter the effectiveness of “Blade Predation,” it can’t just receive another upgrade by feeding on some scraps.”

[There’s always a possibility. What’s more, we may be able to produce better weapons now that synchronization has progressed.]

“That’s true, too. I’ll think about it once I make a shield.”

[A 100HP gift of joy to our dear member!]

After finishing the conversation with the Administrator, Kang Shin-hyuk made up his mind and headed for the Wyvern Hall.

Except, a problem was waiting for him at the door.

“Hey, you right there. Stop for a second.”

“Huh?”

Kang Shin-hyuk was called by someone as soon as he was about to enter the Wyvern Hall. He first scanned the person’s uniform and tie. A 2nd-year Knight major, wearing..... A red cape.

“Are you that Kang Shin-hyuk or something?”

“Yes, but,..... Who are you?”

“I’m Yoo Min-joon, 2nd-year A-class.”

The cape he was wearing was engraved with a dragon flying into the sky, emitting a transcendent aura that couldn’t be captured by ordinary human beings.

The cape symbolized the Wyvern Knights, one of the three major student organizations of Shinyoung Academy.

Unfortunately, the cape was justifying his arrogant attitude.

“It’s been noisy lately. Apparently, a top 1st-year student was beaten by a piece of garbage who couldn’t even use mana.”

Yoo Min-joon said with a cold look. The top 1st-year student was probably referring to Do Jinwoo. It was true; Do Jinwoo was one of the most notable students among the 1st-year Knight majors.

However, Kang Shin-hyuk didn't know that word about his defeat over Do Jinwoo had already reached 2nd-year students.

"So I remembered his name and face, but what a letdown..... I guess there wasn't much to expect from him."

Yoo Min-joon gave an ice-cold glare at Kang Shin-hyuk. It was a look of disdain, as if he was a bug by his foot. A look that seemed to have figured him out without knowing him. It wasn't very pleasant.

[It's a shame that this waste can't even catch a glimpse of your true strength.]

A somehow angry-sounding message from the Administrator appeared before Kang Shin-hyuk's eyes, but he focused on the person in front of him without answering.

Not that he was about to do anything; he was just wondering how strong such an arrogant person would be.

Then suddenly, a thread of spirit power smoothly stretched out from his body and swam through the air, touching Yoo Min-joon's body for a moment, which Yoo Min-joon didn't notice.

'Oh, I see.'

At that moment, Kang Shin-hyuk contacted Yoo Min-jun's origin and was able to roughly understand his strengths. His spirit power had naturally reacted to his desire to know more about Yoo Min-jun.

It was a very mysterious experience, but quite familiar at the same time. It didn't feel that different from when he extracted the origin of objects. But if those were two-way communications, the current interaction was a one-sided peek into the other person's origin!

'Spirit power surely is a force that can't be compared to mana.'

Kang Shin-hyuk, who thought that connecting to the origin of things and amplifying their potential was everything that spirit power could do, had once again realized his ignorance.

But now that he's deeply realized his misunderstanding, there wouldn't be such a mistake in the future. Once again, he had learned the greatness of spirit power as well as the importance of training.

But, putting that aside, Kang Shin-hyuk thought.

'I might win if I try.'

Compared to his incredibly cocky attitude, the strength of the sunbae in front of him didn't seem so impressive.

His high-level (B-) Rank average physical stats was expected as a member of the Wyvern Knights, but the most important attribute of a skill-wielder, magical power, was a mere D+ Rank. In terms of magical power alone, he was below Do Jinwoo. Even if you considered his overall stats, it was still far behind that of the War Troll that he fought a couple of days ago.

It was worth a try to fight him by using his spirit power and the Fanged Wyvern Dance, which had been upgraded to an unusual degree for a student.

Actually, to put it bluntly, he didn't feel like losing now that he was well aware of the power of the Awakened Fanged Wyvern.

"I don't know what trick you used to beat Do Jinwoo, but your fame won't last long. Without a solid base, you'll soon be exposed."

Without noticing that Kang Shin-hyuk was deep in his thoughts, Yoo Min-joon was still looking at him with a measured look. No longer able to ignore him, Kang Shin-hyuk faced him, clicking his tongue in his mind.

".....You're right, sunbae-nim. I'm going to compete in the rookie competition. I just wanted to make sure that my base was rock-solid."

Although he was ostensibly polite to not turn the most powerful organization of the Knights majors into an enemy, he showed through his confidence that he was not inferior to anyone.

"So please keep an eye on me."

Kang Shin-hyuk answered, looking straight at him. He didn't bother adding "If you have the eyes for it, that is."

"..... Ha."

Perhaps his confident reply was not what Yoo Min-joon had expected.

Yoo Min-joon let out an explicit frown, but what more quarrels could he make with someone who confidently asked to be evaluated? He backed away after clicking his tongue.

"Okay, I'll be looking forward to it. I'll make sure I don't miss out on your games."

Yoo Min-jun, who didn't realize his safety in the current situation was only due to his membership in the Wyvern Knights, pushed Kang Shin-hyuk's shoulder hard with a sulky look on his face.

When he had completely vanished from Kang Shin-hyuk's sight, the Administrator sent a slightly chilly message.

[Should I report him to Hero Universe to put a bounty on his head? He'll disappear like dust in less than a month.]

"No, what are you doing, stop it."

The Administrator seemed angrier than Kang Shin-hyuk.

[If you'd like to take care of him yourself, I'll temporarily open a VIP private store for you. There, you can easily buy an item to erase the existence of that less-than-dust life-form without a trace.]

"You call it "Hero Universe," and are dealing with such hideous items?"

[A true hero must know how to immerse his feet into the dark.]

"I don't think I'll have any time left if I do that kind of thing every time something like this happens."

This was what he has been going through ever since he enrolled in Shinyoung.

Kang Shin-hyuk had forgotten about this feeling for a while after beating Do Woojin and became the center of news in the class, but external assessments had remained the same.

A lightweight without mana, who was purely lucky. A loach that blurred Shinyoung's water.

"But it'll be different now." Google search novel(F)ire.net

This was why he decided to compete in the rookie competition. You can't go to school properly if you get into trouble like this every time.

"All right, let's go do some blacksmithing. I'm going to have to get my spirit power powered up."

Kang Shin-hyuk hurried his way in a calm manner.

However, he decided to keep the name Yoo Min-joon in mind.

A person whom he'd have no trouble overpowering, even though he was forced to back down by considering the power of the group behind him.

If he endured his humiliation now, he'd get a chance one day to repay that humiliation.

..... And that day is probably not that far away.

[Keut (1)..... A 100HP bonus to our dear member!]

"No, why are you giving me a bonus like a middle-aged man ordering another beer at a bar?"

[A 200HP bonus to our dear member!]

Translator and Editor Notes:

(1) Onomatopoeia for a deeply impressed sob.

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## Chapter 20: The Sports Day's Dark Horse - 2

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Translator: Meg

Editor: Sotheno

The workshop which he returned to after a couple of days was as cozy and tranquil as he found it last time.

No matter what sort of disaster happened outside, the room had maintained the same appearance. Looking around the room, he noticed that his temper had cooled down, which was heated by meeting an irritating sunbae. Of course, the irritation hadn't sunk completely.

"Then..... Let's get started."

[A shield would be a good idea.]

The Administrator, who had been talking about whether Yoo Min-joon should live, calmly responded to his cooling temperament.

He turned his eyes to the steel ingots piled up in one corner. Perhaps because his emotions were ahead of his head, his spirit power naturally stretched out and encased the whole pile.

The faint feelings he received from the steel ingots ran head-on against the anger that rumbled inside his heart, wiping out the anger at its roots.

— Vrrr



But there was one feeling that survived inside him. He had a faint but clear anger that was about to fade at any moment. It was coming from the bottom of the pile of ingots.

From the moment it entered the workshop, the ingot was waiting to be reborn as a great weapon, but being constantly buried under the pile, its anger had accumulated to the point of being manifested on its surface.

‘Well, this is.....’

But that wasn’t all; along with those feelings, a faint memory had slipped into Kang Shin-hyuk’s head. It was a memory relating to Lee Manwoo, the supervising teacher of the Artifacts Production Club.

It was a scene of him holding the hammer that Kang Shin-hyuk previously used and pounding on metal placed on top of the anvil. There was another person next to him, but the memory faded into the abyss before he could recognize her face.

[Dear member?]

“Oh, no, it’s nothing. Let’s go with this guy.”

[But..... Okay. After all, metals with distinct emotions are more likely to become artifacts.]

Whatever memory it possessed, the emotions the ingot emitted matched him very well. Though Kang Shin-hyuk didn’t believe that he could make an artifact.

He overheard the message from the Administrator who still highly valued him and picked up the ingot to put it in the brazier. He thought blankly at the sight of the red-hot ingot.

‘If I’m going to create a shield, I’m going to have to melt the ingot more than I did for the weapon.’

He decided to think about exactly what he was going to make after melting it.

Despite that plan, however, Kang Shin-hyuk immediately began hammering as soon as the ingot melted moderately.

He couldn’t wait any longer. He couldn’t stay still any longer.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The hammering itself was much more mature than the first attempt, but there was a blatantly wild feeling involved that could not stay hidden.

It was hard to tell whether he was affected by the emotions of the ingot, or whether it was the externalization of his own anger. From the moment the iron was melted, his spirit power had already covered his body and the ingot, making the distinction impossible to make.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The metal was getting slowly yet consistently elongated as the hammering continued.

It didn't take the form of a shield no matter how you looked at it, but the Administrator decided to keep watching without interrupting the process. This was because it had already predicted this to happen.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Kang Shin-hyuk has been good at hiding his feelings since his childhood.

At a young age, he lost his parents and had to grow up in an orphanage. His newly awakened trait was nothing more than a glittering apricot (1), and he sweated blood for years to be admitted to Shinyoung, only to be treated like a black sheep (2) by everyone else.

He was never in a circumstance where he could express his feelings honestly.

That's why he had to press on. Having gotten used to bottling up his feelings, he had forgotten how to express them.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

However, he could not keep telling lies in front of Anvil. The blacksmithing skills he acquired in his previous life was the practice of revealing everything about himself to what he worked on.

Just as the ingot had emancipated Kang Shin-hyuk of his anger through the connection established by his spirit power, Kang Shin-hyuk was beginning to clear the metal of the anger that had been residing within it for quite a long time.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Kang Shin-hyuk became totally absorbed into the task and pressed on the metal. Even while adding two more ingots into the brazier, his hammering did not stop.

His spirit power started enveloping the whole workshop. The amount of spirit power released would have been unbearable if he tried a couple of days ago, but it became manageable after securing his spirit power level at D+ Rank.

‘I’ve never done anything like this.’

Kang Shin-hyuk thought in his deep concentration.

‘It’s definitely the second time I’ve tried blacksmithing..... But why?’

‘I feel like this is the third time.’

He had a curious sense of deja vu.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Soon after he had the thought, he began to hear the sound of hammering in his head.

A hammering sound different from his.

It was the sound of Anvil’s hammering.

@ @ @

The memory belonged to Anvil’s early days of joining the Hero Universe.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

As Kang Shin-hyuk did from the moment he first entered the clubroom’s workshop, the blacksmith kept working on the iron.

Anvil’s hammering, which had been full of passion at the beginning, now contained the resentment against the fallen world, longing for everything he lost and anger at those who took everything from him.

Just as Kang Shin-hyuk did, he also couldn't hide his feelings while he smithed.

Swoosh, swoosh.....

Although he decided to focus only on shaping the metal in a deeply immersed state of mind, what he faced after he sharpened its tip was a spear infused with so much hate that it could not be held properly.

"This is..... Whoo, I've made a silly mistake."

The blacksmith let out a soft sigh before the failed weapon.

The anger that was seething inside him had to be his own, never to escape his body. He didn't want to put his weapon, which he deemed equally as his child, under the same burden since the moment of its birth.

Even if he tried to forget the feeling, or at least keep his mind straight so as not to have it exposed, whenever he let his mind be guided by his instinct, the shadows he so forcefully tried to suppress rose on their feet to haunt him again.

"This one's a failure. This one's a failure."

He seriously agonized over whether he should list the weapon on the community he recently joined, Hero Universe's trade board.

A place where various items from all sorts of dimensions are gathered, the Hero Universe. It occurred to him that his weapon might bring about an unintended adverse effect by selling it there.

He was crafting alone in a dying world, but the folks in Hero Universe had endless possibilities. In fact, he thought, it was ridiculous to try to mix himself in with such a group.

[That's not really true, dear member.]

The Administrator, who had been positive with him from the moment they've met, sided with him once again.

[Even if the weapon may possess a violent aura, it can be used to protect people. Just as you, with all your anger inside, are making weapons for others.]

“But you’re just talking about the possibility. I’m just concerned if my presence alone might inflict a negative influence on them.]

[Everyone within Hero Universe has the ability to distinguish a good decision from a bad one, at least to an extent. In fact, all of the weapons you’ve already made and registered on the trade board were bought with rave reviews by the buyers.]

[So, I recommend listing your completed weapon on the trade board. Now that you’ve done your part in creating the weapon, you can leave its evaluation to the warriors who will actually wield it.]

“Your words always frighten me. But yes, you’re right. My role is to make weapons, and the role of figuring out their use and evaluating them are left to those who hold them in their hands.”

[A 10HP bonus to our courageous member!]

Although it was a place full of brilliantly shining heroes that could not be compared to his pathetic self,

The presence of those brave souls was the reason why he could entrust his weapons’ fates without too much concern.

The blacksmith plucked up his courage to list the weapon on the trade board. Then he received a message he had never anticipated.

[We have received two messages from prospective buyers. Would you like to check?]

“Hm.....?”

[Looks like they liked the weapon you made. It is highly recommended to establish new friendships with members of Hero Universe, so as the Administrator, I would like to recommend you check the contents of the messages.]

“If you say so, I understand. I’ll check both.”

Messages from two different people soon appeared in front of his eyes.

Janus: Wow, this spear is interesting! Your ID is Anvil? What kind of work do you do? Which world are you from? Would you like to talk?

Tsukuyo: Are you the one who made this weapon? Anvil..... Anvil, is it? I wish to have a conversation with you. Do you have time?

But the spear was sold while he was looking at the messages. Moreover, the buyer had paid 30,000 HP more than the price offered by the blacksmith. It was by someone who didn't identify himself.

Janus: You, you're a real genius. To be able to instill your emotions into a weapon..... It's spirit power, right? That's not a common gift to have even in this Hero Universe.

Tsukuyo: It was, indeed, a beautiful spear. My heart fell when I saw the weapon. Yes, I've fallen in love. I'm dying to know what allowed you to create a spear like this.

"Huh....."

The blacksmith was perplexed by the members' reactions but was willing to reply to them.

He was trapped in his own space forging weapons, and having another person talk to was something he had longed for for a long time.

That was the beginning of the blacksmith's connection to the members of Hero Universe.

@ @ @

[Synchronization rate is increasing. Your assimilation rate is now at 2.9%.]

"..... Ah."

When he came to his senses, Kang Shin-hyuk was in the clubroom. He had lost consciousness when the spear was completed.

He had been intending to make a shield that he could use for the rookie competition, but he couldn't figure out how he ended up with a spear in his hand.

[You have successfully crafted the 'poisonous' steel spear (D) possessing a small amount of spirit power. The proficiency of your blacksmithing techniques has greatly increased.]

[Your blacksmithing skill has grown to (E+) Rank. You are now able to handle a hammer more efficiently and have gained a minor resistance to heat.]

“That was.....”

For the first time, he has created a D Rank weapon and raised the rank of his blacksmithing skill, but Kang Shin-hyuk wasn't pleased.

The countless memories disturbed him that he recalled in those short moments and the deep emotions accompanying them.

It was different from the previous memory of Anvil that he absorbed. The previous memory only contained faint memories of Anvil that was implanted on the axe's origin, but Kang Shin-hyuk had now directly extracted Anvil's memory in every detail.

The memory was incredibly vivid; the sense of his unity with Anvil, the authenticity of the memories that came to his mind and the sense of hammering that was still left in his body—everything was as clear as if he had experienced them himself. The source of this content is NOVE(l)Fire .NET

[Our dear member has created a similar weapon in the past. That action must have increased the synchronization rate. A 100HP bonus for achieving nostalgic achievements!]

“In the past..... I see, so that feeling was referring to then.”

He looked down at his spear and reflected back on Anvil's memory that filled his mind.

In his memory, Anvil could not suppress the negative emotions that were seething inside him and eventually transmitted them to his own weapon.

He deemed the weapon as a failure, but his friend Janus found it interesting. Tsukuyo, who apparently fell in love with Anvil due to his weapon, said it was beautiful.

It was also the first time he made a “failure,” and the moment his friendship with other members of Hero Universe began.

“Ha.....”

Then why had he acquired this memory at this timing? It was needless to ponder; Kang Shin-hyuk already knew the answer.

Kang Shin-hyuk failed to control the irritation and anger caused by Yoo Min-joon, turning the metal, which was supposed to become a defensive tool, into a sharp weapon.

The bottom line was that he had repeated a mistake from his past life.

“That was a common occurrence, though..... It was routine even before I got to know about Hero Universe.”

[It's not like your feelings disappear by trying to suppress them. But you did a great job. Anger can sometimes become the driving force. In fact, the weapon you've just created possesses the power to slay monsters.]

There was a saying that a weapon starts at D Rank. It was meant to express that a hunter must be given at least a D Rank weapon to fight properly in a battle.

In fact, for any rank below D, the weapon could not overpower monsters that were strong in terms of durability and ability.

“I definitely wasn't trying to 'escape'..... But I guess this one's still a failure, huh?”

“What a joke.”

“Hut!?”

It was then. Someone next to him answered back. When Kang Shin-hyuk turned around with a startled look, Lee Manwoo, the teacher in charge of the Artifact Production Club, stood there.

‘Why does this person always appear out of nowhere? No, maybe I didn't notice him because I was too involved in my work.’

“Sir?”

“You've made an artifact with bare steel containing no magical power without the help of an enchanter and are calling it a 'failure'? That's an insult to countless people who can't reach that level even after spending all their lives.”



“I didn’t mean it that way……. Wait, artifact? Is this an artifact?”

“You’ve gotta be kidding me. You made it yourself, and you can’t even recognize what it is? Even I could tell what power it contains at a single glance.”

Kang Shin-hyuk flinched at those words and instinctively grabbed the spear. At that moment, a small glimpse of information appeared before his eyes, just as when he touched the Godslayer sword.

[Poisonous Steel Spear]

[D Rank]

[Special ability – Poison Injection]

It was true. There was a special ability attached to the weapon he made. What a terrifying special ability! Lee Manwoo laughed bitterly at Kang Shin-hyuk, who let go of the spear out of astonishment.

“I’m glad you noticed at last……. But I have to say, this one’s unique. I can’t feel any magical power on its surface.”

How did this old man find out that a weapon that wasn’t emitting a sense of magical power was in fact an artifact?

As Kang Shin-hyuk stared at him, Lee Manwoo came close and lightly grabbed the spear.

“Anyhow, well done. This could become a good justification for preventing the club’s shutdown.”

“By justification, you mean…….”

“In late July, the World Rookies Creator Artifact Contest will be hosted in Seoul. If you win a prize there, you won’t be told to close this club anymore.”

“At the end of July……. I see.”

It was clear that the “progress” Lee Manwoo mentioned at the time of Kang Shin-hyuk’s enrollment into the club meant winning this contest.

As Kang Shin-hyuk nodded in understanding, Lee Manwoo raised a corner of his mouth and said with a mischievous smile.

“Maybe it’s possible. But to think that you could make an artifact so quickly.....It’s getting more and more fun. Besides, I see why you called it a failure. You didn’t intentionally capture your emotions to transfer them to the weapon; you just let them out in a clumsy way because you couldn’t control them, right?”

“.....Yes, you’re right.”

“Try to control them in the future. Don’t try to force them out of your mind, just try to control them. Being able to capture your emotions into your weapon is an invaluable talent. There’s nothing you can’t make in the world if you can transfer your emotions as much as you want, at any time, whenever you want.”

It was easy to say, Kang Shin-hyuk thought, but how many trials and errors did he have to go through to actually be able to do so? Lee Manwoo noticed his stiff expression and said after clicking his tongue.

“The attempts alone will keep expanding your horizon, so try as hard as you can without complaining. If I like what you do, I’ll help you out a little.”

“.....Yes, sir.”

“Okay, then I’ll take this. I’ll have it in my possession while I register for the contest.....”

“No.”

Kang Shin-hyuk stopped Lee Manwoo, who was reaching out to the spear. When Lee Manwoo thinly opened his eyes, Kang Shin-hyuk looked straight at him and answered back.

“This one’s merely a byproduct of my emotions. I’ll make an artifact that shines brightly of my self-directed will, so please wait until then.”

“..... Ha. That’s quite the arrogance.”

Lee Manwoo’s mouth was sealed. But, unlike his words, he looked satisfied.

“Okay, I’ll wait. You’ll at least have to bring something that’s not as ugly as this one.”

“I’ll make sure to do that.”

Kang collected the completed spear and turned around after bowing to Lee Manwoo.

Every few days since then, he practiced his smithing whenever he had time, but Kang Shin-hyuk was unable to produce defensive artifacts.

The Godslayer sword had not eaten the steel spear.

Translator and Editor Notes:

(1) i.e. A fruit that looks good but tastes bad. A slang term for having a good appearance but having a bad substance/content.

(2) A slang term for “a member of a family or group who is regarded as a disgrace to them.”

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## Chapter 21: The Sports Day’s Dark Horse - 3

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Translator: Meg

Editor: Sotheno

While Kang Shin-hyuk was having a hard time training, the preparation week for the sports day was underway.

As outsiders were free to enter the school during the event, the faculty and staff were busy trying to establish firm security measures and polishing the school's appearance. While the students were fiercely training under the enormous pressure to produce good results on sports day.

The 1st-year's C-class was no exception, of course, and they gathered to immerse themselves in practice whether it was practice period during class, lunch period, or after school.

"Dude, if I'm paired with another guy in the three-legged race, I'd win so easily. Can we allow a male pair, please?"

"Yeah right, you're slower than me."

"Hey, do we have to come all the way to this elite superhuman training academy to do a fucking three-legged race? Really?"

"I heard the sight of those guys and girls in typical schools participating in traditional sports games is quite pleasant to look at....."

"That's right. The school and the outsiders just want to see us, the future superhumans, playing around like clowns, doing what we're told to do. That's quite an abominable taste, isn't it?"

Sports day was divided into superhuman and non-superhuman competitions, where non-superhuman competitions consisted of games where superhumans as well as non-superhumans could participate—three-legged race, tug-of-war, ball-rolling, cheerleading, and so on. The use of mana was prohibited. They were no different from the games that were played on an ordinary high schools' sports days.

On the other hand, the superhuman-exclusive games set little to no restrictions on the types of abilities that one could use, and their designs were consistent with the educational goal of a superhuman training academy, prompting their students to freely use their learned knowledge and skills in many different types of demanding situations. From monster hunting, group maneuver, and maze escape to terrain strategizing, performing arts contest, horse riding, and finally—the most popular event of Shinyoung Sports Day—

relay race, one could expect to see quite a spectacle of the students' diverse talents.

Even if some games of the “superhuman” category resembled those of the non-superhuman counterpart, the difference could be clearly seen when the game started. It was impossible not to notice a difference.

“We’re forming the pairs! Everyone who wishes to participate, please gather here!”

“Hey, wanna team up?”

“Sure~”

“Hey, you, come here.”

“Dude, I swear this guy likes me. Aah!”

Guys and girls began to pair up at every corner as soon as the class president’s words got out. Except Kang Shin-hyuk, who was distant from his classmates, everyone seemed to be getting along pretty well.

‘Before I attended Shinyoung, I was popular too.....’

Just as Kang Shin-hyuk was feeling slightly discouraged.

“Would you like to pair up with me?”

A shy-looking girl had approached him. Feeling grateful that somebody approached him, he was about to nod his head. But then.

“Hey, you’re a slowpoke. I’d be the better partner.”

“What do you mean—you’re worse.....”

“Get lost, you two. Kang Shin-hyuk, team up with me. I think you, and I would be a good match. My agility’s B Rank—you know that, right?”

Before he knew it, two more girls had approached him. He had never talked to any of them before, but he knew who the last girl (the one boasting about her B Rank agility) was.

She was Karen Stringfield, a British student who was said to possess a sensory-type trait. If there was a list of “most promising 1st-year students,” her name would surely appear at the top section of the list.

“St-Stringfield.....”

“Wow, that’s incredible.”

“Are you kidding—Kang Shin-hyuk’s stock has skyrocketed.” (1)

Kang Shin-hyuk tilted his head as he faced Karen Stringfield’s green eyes staring at him.

He couldn’t make out her intentions. If she was looking for a hotshot, there was the unreachable Baek In-ha, but she chose to ask him instead.

“You’re gonna pair up with me, right?”

“Uhm, sure.”

Overwhelmed by Karen’s pressure, the other two girls had already gone somewhere else, and he could probably earn some additional points by participating in the three-legged race with her, so there was no reason to refuse.

But when he came back after receiving a knot from the class president, Karen Stringfield said to him in a soft voice, as she took the knot to tie their ankles together:

“You know, the Wyvern Knights have their eyes on you.”

“Oh, that’s right. There was this one guy talking about my base being too weak or whatever.”

“They were actually looking to recruit Do Woojin as a new member, but you ended up humiliating him in front of the whole class, so.....”

With those words, Kang Shin-hyuk finally understood Yoo Min-joon’s motive for suddenly starting a quarrel with him that day.

He was wondering why an incident relating to Do Woojin had provoked him so much, but knowing that Do Woojin was a prospective member of the Wyvern Knights, he could see the confrontation from a different perspective. Yoo Min-

joon was trying to repay the humiliation of his fellow comrade. They were indeed a mature group centered around camaraderie.

“I’m not bragging, but I’m one of the new members of Wyvern Knights. That’s how I found out.”

“I see. Thanks for letting me know.”

“Don’t mention it. Honestly, it’s not even funny. Why would you doubt and bear a grudge against someone who won in a fair match? Instead of using the opportunity to reevaluate your abilities? You know what I mean?”

“Oh, I see.”

Kang Shin-hyuk asked, looking down at the back of Karen Stringfield’s head as she checked the knot’s firmness.

“So your role is to reevaluate my abilities?”

“Yup. There are quite a few people in the Wyvern Knights with the same thought. Though there are a lot more who oppose the idea of reconsidering you.”

“I know that.”

“I’m glad you know. I was going to tell you to be careful, but..... I guess that wasn’t necessary. Should we get started, then?”

Karen Stringfield said with a grin after raising her head. Kang Shin-hyuk smiled back at her. He didn’t hate the type of person who spoke frankly.

Kang Shin-hyuk and Karen’s pair performed well in the three-legged race. Baek In-ha sent him a desperate look pleading for him to change his running partner, which he ignored.

@ @ @

Kang Shin-hyuk continued to perform outstandingly in the ensuing practice matches. How could he have not, having upgraded his body’s physical stats—the only asset that allowed him to survive in Shinyoung due to his lack of magical power—to be on par with the best 1st-year students?

In particular, his performances in non-superhuman games (where the use of mana was prohibited) were nearly equal to those of Baek In-ha and Karen Stringfield. He had pulled off quite notable results in superhuman games as well, where he didn't refrain from using his spirit power. After all, winning the rookie competition after performing poorly in these matches could raise a lot of suspicion.

"Then Kang Shin-hyuk should participate in the maze escape, right?" (2)

"Of course he should, even if he ran with the speed he showed with his ankle tied to Karen's."

"Then we'll have Baek In-ha participate in the relay race, and..... What about the performing arts contest? Isn't there anyone who can do some flashy stuff?"

"I can juggle pretty well if I can get help from two people."

"As expected of Karen!"

"Hm..... Kang Shin-hyuk, you wanna try the performing arts contest too? Wouldn't we get a high score if he did some fancy weapon techniques?"

"Huh? Uhm, okay."

"Okay then, it's decided."

Did he perform a little too well? Kang Shin-hyuk was quickly confirmed to represent the class in three competitions. Of course, the more he participated, the more likely he was to receive additional points in his academic assessment, so he couldn't let go of the opportunities.

Having drawn a lot of attention for his victory over Do Woojin, his classmates were feeling quite distant from him. Though it was better than being laughed at, it didn't change the fact that he felt like an outsider to the class.

"Okay, then let's move onto the CvC games! (3) Let's practice group maneuver first! We're going to practice with D class!"

"Where do we borrow the equipment?"

"Hey, I heard Magic majors use psychokinesis to disturb other classes' coordinations. Is that true?"



“We have Magic majors on our side too, so there’s no need to worry. We can just leave it up to them.”

“Wow, Kang Shin-hyuk has a great sense of balance!”

It was now time to practice for the game where everybody was forced to work together.

For Kang Shin-hyuk’s classmates, the practice sessions were a great opportunity to reevaluate his skills and improve their friendship with him.

Kang Shin-hyuk also accepted their suggestions without a second thought because he wanted to get a good evaluation on sports day.

As a result, it looked like he was well mixed into his class, at least on the surface.

‘I guess this is how it looks.’

Kang Shin-hyuk thought blankly while practicing with his classmates.

Most of them didn’t have particularly malicious intent for casting Kang Shin-hyuk aside. They were just afraid that their academic assessments would be lowered by associating with someone who didn’t have the capacity to wield mana.

It was much easier for them to crush him to the ground and stand on top of him than to accept him and suffer by his side.

They all had the pride that was carried by the name ‘Shinyoung’ in their heart. In their mind, the people who could swallow that pride and dare to befriend Kang Shin-hyuk were so strong that their perceived worth wouldn’t diminish no matter who they associated with. Someone like Baek In-ha, that is.

“Kang Shin-hyuk, you’re really fast. Your stamina is amazing too.”

“I’m really counting on you on sports day!”

“Yup, let’s do well together.”

“Uh, yeah. Let’s do well.”

But now, things had changed. Even if he lacked mana, Kang Shin-hyuk proved that he was capable of defeating a top student with his ability alone.

A proof of his value that was effective enough to remove the labeling of 'failure' that had always been attached to him.

Knowing that, there was no more need for his classmates to be afraid of getting close to him, because no one could look down on Kang Shin-hyuk anymore. It was an exceedingly simple line of logic, with no room for the question of good or evil to intervene.

It was precisely because Kang Shin-hyuk understood that logic that he didn't complain to his classmates, "You've isolated me all this time and now you're pretending to be friends?"

'But still..... I probably wouldn't open my heart to any of them, ever.'

It wasn't that his classmates were at fault, but the time, place, and the way things had played out were less than ideal.

Even though he knew very well that they were flawed humans like everyone else and that the people he'll meet in the future would be no different.....

A heart that was once split apart was scarred for life, no matter how hard you tried to stitch it back up.

"Hey..... We're definitely gonna win!"

"At this pace, we're gonna win the MVP award!" New novel chapters are published on [novel\(F\)ire.net](http://novel(F)ire.net)

"We can do it! 1st-year C-class, fighting!"

"Fighting!"

After school, the students were hyped up after finishing their practice for sports day (though they couldn't practice monster hunting since they couldn't obtain monsters) strengthening each other's spirits with great passion.

While Kang Shin-hyuk blankly watched that scene, his eyes met Do Woojin's, who quickly gave him a look of dismissal and turned away. He didn't have to act like a supporting cast every damn time, Kang Shin-hyuk thought. (4)

“Good for you, Shinyok-yi.”

“Huh? What is?”

Before he could notice, Baek In-ha was next to him. Kang Shin-hyuk uninterestingly replied while wiping the sweat off his forehead. But just as he was worried that Baek In-ha had figured out what he had been thinking about during the day.....

“Karen Stringfield. She’s definitely into you. Don’t you think?”

“I was a fool to take you seriously. No, it wasn’t like that, you idiot.”

Kang Shin-hyuk sighed, pushing Baek In-ha’s face. He didn’t expect him to only talk about Karen Stringfield.

“Why, she’s pretty, she’s got a great personality, her trait’s awesome..... Though if you judge from my standards, she’d be perfect if she’s a little more mature.”

“If pairing up for a three-legged race made you a couple, nobody at school would be single. I’m telling you, this is why you don’t have a girlfriend.”

“What–what’s the problem?”

Without answering his question, Kang Shin-hyuk pointed around the classroom. The girls in the class were glaring at Baek In-ha in unison. Despite his S Rank trait, they didn’t want to associate with a guy who only knew how to say such things.

Kang Shin-hyuk covertly widened the distance from him so as not to be regarded in the same way. Of course, he was thankful for Baek In-ha for always being by his side when all the others isolated him, but he didn’t want to be labeled as a pervert by being next to him either.

“Uh..... Guys, it’s not what you think. What I’m saying was a sort of a general observation..... Shinyok-yi likes older girls too, right?”

“Who the hell are you?”

“Traitor! Traitorrrr!”

He did, in fact, like older girls, but he also knew that if he nodded to Baek In-ha's question, an unmanageable disaster would ensue, so Kang Shin-hyuk decided to treat Baek In-ha as a stranger for a while.

@ @ @

[You've received a low-rank spirit power potion for today's login!]

[You've received a bonus of 1,000 HP for today's login!]

[You've received one roulette coin for today's login. By gathering five coins, you'll earn one attempt to spin the VIP roulette!]

[You've received a buff for your special ability 'Recovery.' For 24 hours, your recovery rate will increase by 30%!]

For a week since then, Kang Shin-hyuk devoted himself to practicing for sports day as a student of C-class.

He prepared for the performing arts contest by practicing the rough choreography he sketched while making sure to not skip out on his personal training.

Even if his stats had remained the same, it was a warrior's duty to prevent his skills from becoming rusty.

But then.

[If you start your blacksmithing training right now, you'll be awarded 10HP!]

"Your messages are starting to sound like insurance advertisements. I'll do it, though."

[A 20HP bonus!]

"Though I think your bonuses are too generous to make any profits."

Whenever his body and mind were tired after practice, he'd walk through the night breeze to the clubroom's workshop.

He had already given up on making a defensive artifact, but he couldn't escape from the joy of pounding metal that visited his mind now and then.

Cicatus: Is the bridle done yet, Anvil geezer?

Anvil: I told you, I'm not good enough yet.

Mirang: There's a pile of things that people would like you to do. Get your access to the My Room function as soon as possible, Anvil. Then maybe we can make some progress.

Halo: I want to see your weapon. I'll be waiting.

Anvil: I'm hammering whenever I have the time, so please wait patiently.

Eunah: Grandpa, you can do it!

As Anvil in his previous life did, Kang Shin-hyuk hammered while responding to the endless messages coming from his friends from the Hero Universe. That was all he needed in the moment.

His blacksmithing skills and synchronization rate was growing slowly yet steadily, and he became increasingly more adept at adding blacksmithing to his daily routine.

[You've received one roulette coin for today's login. By gathering five coins, you'll earn one attempt to spin the VIP roulette!]

"I've been meaning to ask, but what's this VIP roulette thingy?"

[I'll tell you when you've gathered all five coins. Login bonuses will become more diverse as synchronization progresses, so please look forward to them!]

A few days later, Wednesday came.

It was the day when the preliminary rounds for various competitions began. Because all the matches couldn't be packed into a single day, the preliminary rounds were meant to be finished before the day of the main event.

Although 1st-year's C-class did drop out of a few competitions, they passed most of the preliminary rounds, and.....

Kang Shin-hyuk successfully passed the preliminary for the rookie competition and advanced to the round of 16.

He had proved his qualification to become one of the 16 most notable rookies in the school.

Translator and Editor Notes:

(1) A phrase used in gambling (among others), meaning that you've won a lot of money. It's used here to express that Kang Shin-hyuk is getting all the girls, presumably by a guy who's watching from the side.

(2) They're practicing for the class competitions, where a student(s) is selected for each game to represent the class. (Unless it's a game where the whole class participates.)

(3) Class v Class, where the whole class participates.

(4) Fourth wall break!

## Chapter 22: The Sports Day's Dark Horse - 4

### Chapter 22: The Sports Day's Dark Horse - 4

[Bartender Noona: So what are you going to do?]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: I've decided to leave it up to you and fate.]

[Bartender sister: Wow, you really threw the whole thing away]

After a hectic week, Monday finally came when sports day was held.

To be exact, sports day spanned two days, where the majority of the school-wide competition (divided into Blue Team and White Team) took place in Monday and several big games, the individual competitions, and the announcement for MVP took place in the following Tuesday.

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Of course I'll try not to get caught, but I can't just stay hidden in sports day. I have to achieve scores.]

[Bartender Noona: How many matches are you gonna participate in?]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: If you include the school-wide competition, I think they add up to six. Also, I'm going to be competing in the Rookie of the Year competition.]

[Bartender noona: Seems like you have no intention of hiding at all.]

Since Monday morning, they have been talking about keeping Kang Shin-hyuk's identity hidden from the Thunder Empress Shin Eunah, who was planning to visit sports day.

[Bartender noona: At least the very least, don't reveal your Godslayer sword.]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Claire noonim..... I..... wish to be the Rookie of the Year.]

[Bartender: Ah, I don't care anymore!]

Claire seemed to have decided to stop thinking at that point. It was a wise choice.

[Bartender noona: Anyway, don't act like you know her when you see her at school.]

[Bartender noona: And I'll meet you when I have the chance, so don't get upset.]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Yep!]

Perhaps expectantly, Claire had caught a flight to Korea as soon as she learned of Eunah's visit to Shinyoung to mark Eunah by her side as much as possible!

Fortunately, participating in the Shinyoung sports day didn't seem that strange for a high-ranker, so she was able to leave the U.S. without any troubles and had already arrived in Seoul.

Eunah: Grandpa, I'm going to visit a sports day today!!

That sounds like fun.

As soon as he sent a reply to Claire and put the stick into his arms, a whisper flew in from Eunah.

How could a message be received at such an appropriate time? Was she eavesdropping on him? Kang Shin-hyuk opened his eyes thinly and answered back immediately.

Eunah: It would have been great to have grandpa with me!

I'll look shabby next to you.

Eunah: Grandpa is much cooler than me.

What a blatant lie when she hasn't even seen my face, Kang Shin-hyuk thought. No, he had to hide his existence from her at school anyway, so he decided to run along with it.

The students in sports day were told to wear gym clothes and gather at the playground rather than in the classroom. Each class was designated to either Blue Team or White Team regardless of their major, and Kang Shin-hyuk's class, 1st-year's C class, was part of the Blue Team.

"Shinyok-yi!"

"Hey."

The sports day of Shinyoung Academy was different from that of the ordinary school in terms of scale. The first and second gymnasium, the small playground, and the large playground were all mobilized, with the opening ceremony held at the large playground.

The large playground felt big before, but having removed all the miscellaneous things occupying the space, it became an incredibly capacious area. So capacious, indeed, that two or three schools could easily fit in.

More than that, however, it was quite a spectacle to witness all the current students of Shinyoung, whether they were Knight or Magic major, gathered in one area.

"I guess the guests haven't arrived yet."

"I heard they're rehearsing the opening ceremony. Doesn't it feel nice to be doing things like a high school?"

"We've never attended a high school, so how should we know about that?"



The educational structure of Shinyoung was closer to that of a college than high school, with the students declaring their major in their first year and allowing them to take electives from their second grade, but you could see the traces of a typical high school by looking at the school's events, such as sports day and the annual school trip.

For prospective superhumans, who could not experience a high school or college, that kind of balance provided the perfect environment.

"Wow, food trucks are starting to come in over that hill. I heard all the quality foods made it to the cafeterias this time. I guess one cafe wasn't enough for the outsiders."

"Yes, we're definitely not a high school..... Wait, our school had a cafe?"

"Hey, right there."

As soon as Kang Shin-hyuk arrived, Baek In-ha, who had been dragging him and snooping around, shouted excitedly, pointing to the stand where the Magic majors gathered. The source of this content is [NovelFire.net](http://NovelFire.net)

"There's Lee Na-hee sunbae! Right there!"

"Who's that?"

"Dude, you serious? You don't know the prettiest lady from our school?"

"No, but your expression of 'lady' is creeping me out, so stop it."

"Just look at her for now."

Where Baek In-ha was pointing at, Kang Shin-hyuk saw a group of students from the White Team's Magic majors.

There she was, a brown-skinned Latin beauty with a drowsy look. Her face looked familiar. Kang Shin-hyuk tilted his head, digging into his memories to see if they had ever met before.

"Out-of-this-world pretty, right?"

"I guess, yeah."

Shinyoung's Major majors were famous for having many pretty girls, but Lee Na-hee was by far the most prominent among them.

"I heard that she was number one in the popularity vote at last year's school festival."

"Was there a popular vote at my school?" What a weird thing to do at a superhuman training academy."

"I heard it's a voluntary vote. The Thunder Empress was famous for winning first place for three consecutive years while she was here and there's a rumor that Lee Na-hee will be the successor of that achievement."

"Is that so."

That rumor was believable, Kang Shin-hyuk thought, as she had the beauty of a top celebrity, let alone the most popular girl at an academy. He nodded in agreement.

Then he remembered. Indeed, she was the sunbae he encountered at the Wyvern Hall's entrance. He remembered her describing herself as half-Korean.

"Why do you look so sour? She's a real beauty, isn't she?"

"I know she's pretty, but we don't have any connections. It just feels like looking at a piece of art, like a celebrity on TV."

"What do you mean by no connection—no one knows what'll happen in the future. Someday you and that beauty might have a fateful encounter,....."

While the two were engaging in such a pathetic conversation, Lee Na-hee, having felt a gaze coming from their direction, looked up and turned her head towards them.

Somehow, her eyes seemed to have grown slightly larger after spotting them.

"Wow—she's got a crush on me! Here! Sunbae! I'm Baek In-ha from 1st-year C class.....!"

Baek In-ha frantically waved at her, but she turned her head again, ignoring him completely.

Kang Shin-hyuk grabbed Baek In-ha, who was frenziedly trying to grab her attention. It was almost time for the attendance call.

@ @ @

The rehearsal ended without much trouble, and the school opened right away. The feast of luxury cars ascending the school hill made him dizzy. If Shinyoung's entire parking lot was somehow flipped upside down today, the damage would cost hundreds of billions of won.

[The opening ceremony will be held soon. Please stay in your seats quietly.]

One by one, celebrities who occupied the front pages of newspapers, popular channels of TV, and famous MeTube videos have begun to take their seats.

When it came to an academy as prestigious as Shinyoung, the parents of the students and the academy's associate were not typically ordinary people. While traits are not hereditary, the probability of awakening a strong trait was higher for children born to strong superhumans.

As a prime example, the Thunder Empress Shin Eunah was born to parents who ranked within the top 10,000 of the World Superhuman Ranking. Cases like the Alchemist Claire Boyle, who was born into an ordinary family but nevertheless became one of the top 500 superhumans of the world, were quite rare to be seen.

"Look over there, it's the White Sheep Guild. (1) I think it's their scout."

"Fuck, it's the Cursed Sword Guild!"

"Amatsuki Guild is here too."

"Uh..... there! It's the Vanguard Guild! Vanguard is here too! That's the real Vanguard's division 1 leader, I saw on the news!"

Whenever the guest room was filled, voices of cheers and astonishment rang out high among the students. Just as there was a rank for every superhuman, guilds had a rank as well, and more than half of the guilds in the top 100 seemed to have attended the academy's event.

From the 97th-ranked White Sheep Guild to the world's number one Vanguard!

“This is Shinyoung Academy for you.....”

Kang Shin-hyuk already knew that Shinyoung’s sports day wasn’t a children’s talent show like a normal school, but he still couldn’t believe the sight of these ridiculous celebrities crowded in one place.

He felt like he was about to suffocate. Why did he think of entering a school like this while not being able to handle mana in the first place? The reckless self of his past felt like a fool.

‘..... But now that I’m here, I have the opportunity to show the world what I’m made of. Yeah, that’s enough.’

He took a deep breath and clenched his fists. The opening ceremony soon began and the school anthem began to play.

“Kang Shin Hyuk.”

“Uh.”

Suddenly, somebody tapped on his shoulder from behind. It was Karen Stringfield, who he paired up with for the three-legged race.

“I’ll look forward to your matches today.”

“Okay.....”

Come to think of it, she had said that her role this day was to reevaluate Kang Shin-hyuk’s strengths. And that if they turn out to be eye-catching, he’d be dragged into the Wyvern Knights.....

It was quite an unruly attitude, he thought. Who were they to judge him and drag into their group? He laughed off her remark.

“Don’t be surprised.”

“Wow, cringe. Feels like butter.”

“Because I’m serious.”

When Karen twisted her body and folded her arms around her waist at his cringing words, Kang Shin-hyuk replied with excitement and faint laughter,

turning his head around. But then by coincidence, he saw Claire and Eunah standing side by side in the guest room.

Claire spotted him at about the same time and let out a mischievous smile. Kang Shin-hyuk was dumbfounded to see such a reaction coming from the very person who proposed his identity to be hidden.

Fortunately, no one else seemed to have noticed the two's nonverbal interaction. Karen Stringfield threw one last remark at him.

"Hey, if you do well today, I'll talk to you then."

"Then my worth is going to get a lot more expensive. Say whatever when you have the chance."

"So full of yourself too."

She chuckled merrily. Did she learn while practicing three-legged race with him that he wasn't simply bluffing?

Then out of nowhere, an unexpected whisper from the Hero Universe system flew in. Not from Eunah, but from Bartender..... or Claire.

[Bartender: What, you got a girlfriend? She's quite pretty!]

[I didn't expect your first whisper to be something like this. And no, she's not my girlfriend. It's an enemy spy.]

[Bartender: High schoolers are playing it really hard these days.]

[I'll explain in detail later what kind of play it is.]

While he was unintentionally caught between the two women, the opening ceremony had concluded and the sports day had commenced.

Even the easiest games on Shinyoung's sports day led to students sweating blood, so the heat quickly hit the ceiling.

"Blue Team will advance to the Relay's Final Round!"

"Those who wish to participate in Maze Escape, please hurry up and gather here!"

“Let’s keep this pace and win in group maneuver!”

“Woahhhhh!”

As the game was played by students who have already surpassed the limits of mankind, they were full of excitement for everything, especially when it came to group maneuver!

It was a big scuffle in which two floors with unstable footing went up on a large stage, and the opponents threw rubber balls specially designed to push people away.

As the stage shook uncontrollably throughout the game, it was an extremely unpleasant game where you could easily lose your cool, though it was greatly entertaining from the perspective of those watching it.

“Oh, come on, the White Team is holding out by sprinkling the floor with lime!”

“Were items approved in this game!?”

“Yup, they didn’t ban them!”

“Oh, they’re falling! They’re falling!”

With the start of group maneuvers, all games were being played with all kinds of ingenious items and abilities, which was an important element of the fun of watching the games of Shinyoung’s sports day.

With such flashy matches all around, an ordinary person could feel like they’ve entered a new world, where games using supernatural abilities and items, as opposed to traditional sports, were the norm.

“The three-legged race is about to begin! The participants of three-legged race, please gather here!

“Let’s go, Kang Shin-hyuk.”

“Okay.”

And finally, the moment has come for Kang Shin-hyuk to shine. The three-legged race where the White Team and Blue Team face off each other.

Surprisingly, Kang Shin-hyuk was paired with Karen Stringfield for the race. As he was waiting before the finish line by tying his ankle to Karen's, Claire sent a whisper to him.

Bartender: So she's your girlfriend

I told you, she's a spy approaching me in this kind of way.

Bartender: Wow, look at that all effort you're putting in to tie the knot.

So how's the thing with Eunah?

Bartender: She doesn't know. Though I think she's about to.

Then the message was cut off. As expected of Shinyoung's superhuman trainee, who could easily outperform Olympic athletes with their physical abilities alone, the two teams' pairs were already approaching the line of their final runners.

"Oh, I think your team's losing."

"We can turn it around."

"You're not gonna be full of yourself just by winning this race, are you?"

"No way, this is only a start."

Shortly after saying that, the rival team's final pair took over the baton first and set off.

The next moment, Kang Shin-hyuk and Karen Stringfield also took over the blue baton, but the difference of one second was critical for superhumans who were not bounded by the scale of seconds. In fact, many spectators thought they had already lost.

"Can I use my trait a bit?"

"As long as you don't use your magical power, it should be fine."

"That's not what I'm asking—I'm asking if you can keep up."

"Don't worry. Just go all out."

Kang Shin-hyuk answered back while emitting his spirit power. When he checked to see where it was headed, it was permeating through Karen's sneakers.

With that he began to understand and commune with the object, taking advantage of his recent enlightenment.

He could clearly understand her movements, down to the smallest detail. Armed with that knowledge, Kang Shin-hyuk said in a confident voice:

"I'll try to match your movements."

As soon as he spoke the sentence, both of them set their foot at the same time. Two feet symmetrically opposed to each other, perfectly coordinated.

Kang Shin-hyuk and Karen let out a smile at the same time.

"Heh, not bad."

"Let's go."

"..... All right, let's go!"

Many of the spectators tilted their heads at the sight of the pair seemingly facing each other through a mirror. But then a moment later, the two began to run with explosive momentum!

"Wow!"

"Woahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!"

"The Blue Team is the best! Catch them up!"

"How on earth is that three-legged race?"

The two of them sprinted along the playground. Rather than a mere three-legged race, the two of them were running at the speed of a single superhuman at his highest speed.

Some shouted, "Aren't they using mana?" but the magic circles that were drawn all over the playground was proving in real-time that they were innocent.



Naturally, the pair caught up with the White Team and crossed the finish line without slowing down.

“Blue Team wins!”

“Wooooahhhh!”

“Good job, rookie!”

“They’re so cool!”

“Wait—they can stop, right?”

Of course, there was no need to worry. The two, who had crossed the finish line, slowed down as if they had planned the movement for that exact second and came to a halt just before rushing to the stands installed at the end of the field.

“Karen, marry me!”

“Kang Shin Hyuk is so cool!”

“You two should become a couple!”

Kang Shin-hyuk calmly untied the knot that tied their ankles. Several teachers were approaching them, and he found the greatly flustered looks on their faces funny.

But as he turned around, he realized that Karen Stringfield was wearing the same expression.

“You really kept up. How?”

“That’s a secret. But well, like I said before”

Kang Shin-hyuk tied the blue band to his head and smirked. The horse race was about to begin.

“This is just a beginning.”

From now to its end, sports day will be his stage.

(1) There are two possible translations of this guild's name, either White Sheep or Yellow Iron Tree. I'll use the former translation for the time being, and I'll revise it if it happens to be wrong.

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As he had sworn to himself, Kang Shin-hyuk performed better than he did in practice for all the matches. He especially shined in shoulder wars where he joined forces with Baek In-ha.

Unlike normal highschools, Shinyoung's shoulder wars consisted of only one "horse" along with the "flag bearer." (1) Baek In-ha took the role of the horse due to his high speed and Kang Shin-hyuk, who was probably among the best at Shinyoung for his hand techniques, took the role of the flag bearer.

Their combination was truly terrifying.

"What, when did they pass!"

"Hey, he stole your headband!"

"Catch that bastard! Use your magic to stop his movements!"

"Dude, what kind of trait does Baek In-ha have? He won't slow down!"

"Took yours as well, moron. You're out!"

The Baek In-ha and Kang Shin-hyuk duo bravely dashed through the group of countless Shinyoung students to knock them over or steal their headbands to disqualify them from the competition.

Because the two were a threat in everyone's eyes since the beginning of the competition, they were the center of focus of magic attacks from the White Team's Magic majors, but they weren't enough to stop the formidable duo.

“Shinyok, we’re going faster!

“All right!”

They could have woven a t-shirt out of the threads of all the headbands that they had collected, but the two did not stop. Baek In-ha continued to run, and Kang Shin-hyuk continued to knock over or snatch the headband from any unfortunate pair that happened to be in their vicinity.

The duo would not have lasted long if they had lacked even a minuscule portion of Baek In-ha’s speed or Kang Shin-hyuk’s deft hand movements, but they were persistently surviving by working together in perfect unison, plunging their opponents’ determination to the bottom.

“Hey, drive them in! Drive them in!”

“Wow, they’re calling for reinforcements!

“What’s our team doing?”

“We’re protecting the captain’s headband!”

But Shinyoung Academy, like Gira stars, was a place that brimmed with exceptional talents. (2) No one could deal with the duo for a short while, but now that they were surrounded by the majority of the remaining White Team who were slowly closing in, Baek In-ha had no way to escape.

“You’ve held out so far. Especially you, Kang Shin-hyuk. You’re not as I expected.”

“I guess the rumor was true that you’ve awakened mana. Did it come with the ability to hide your mana as well?”

“You should’ve made the report as soon as you awakened it. You ended up confusing me.”

The Knight majors of White Team said as they slowly narrowed the distance. Given their rude manner of speaking, they seemed to be mixed with several sunbaes who belonged to the Wyvern Knights.

Kang Shin-hyuk, however, was indifferent to their comments and was solely focused on figuring out the best way to drag his opponents to hell. But then Baek In-ha said to him.

“Shin-hyuk.”

When Baek In-ha straight-up called his name without joking around, it was a sign that he was either being completely serious or playing a ridiculous prank.

“Yeah.”

“I’m jumping.”

“Uuahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!”

At that moment, Baek In-ha jumped high. So high that you couldn’t believe he was cast under movement-constriction magic.

As soon as they soared into the air by a few dozen meters, Kang Shin-hyuk smiled. He felt relaxed by the fresh air.

“Let’s get the captain.”

“Hey look, they’re shooting their magic skills at us. Looks like they’re setting off some sort of fireworks.”

“They’re not allowed to directly attack us anyway, and I should be free of the nerf soon.”

The magic handled by Magic majors was divided into two broad categories, offensive and defensive types of magic.

Among the defensive types, there were magical skills that nerfed the opponents’ movement in various ways, such as slowing their speed or disrupting their muscle coordination, which could only be prevented by special artifacts, skills or abundant magical power.

Since the use of artifacts was prohibited in the competition, it was obvious that Baek In-ha possessed a special ability or an enormous amount of magical power, or perhaps both.

“I found the captain’s headband. We’re going down.”

“Dude.”

At that moment, Baek In-ha kicked the air, shooting himself and Kang Shin-hyuk to the ground. If they were to bump into anyone, it'd end up as a fatal accident. A tiny mistake could disqualify them!

But even under such pressure, Baek In-ha made a surprisingly good landing at an inch behind the White Team's captain. It was so fast that nearly everyone had to take a second to understand what was going on.

But the captain of the White Team was different. He quickly turned around and stared straight into Kang Shin-hyuk's eyes.

"Seems like a ridiculous rookie had enrolled this year....."

"Sorry, but it's over."

Before anyone realized, the captain's headband was already in the possession of Kang Shin-hyuk's hand.

The captain's unit of the White Team was totally silent with their mouth wide open. The Fanged Wyvern Dance, a technique that was as smooth as water flow, was a skill that could also be used as a bare-handed martial art.

"Blue Team wins!"

"We won again!"

"Baek In-ha is going on a rampage!"

"Those 1st-years toyed with the 3rd-years! Crazy!"

"Kang Shin-hyuk, I knew you'd do it!"

"Baek In-ha! Baek In-ha!"

Kang Shin-hyuk gently got off Baek In-ha's back and gave him a high five. It was the moment when the names of Kang Shin-hyuk and Baek In-ha were clearly ingrained in the minds of people.

"Dude, that was Baek In-ha's carry, though."

"Yeah, like you could do the same as Kang Shin-hyuk. You think a porter can become a warrior just by sitting on the dragon's back?"

“Honestly, I couldn’t even see his hands. Is it really true that he can’t use mana?”

“No way, he must have awakened it last time. His mana must have awakened when his trait evolved.”

“But I can’t feel his mana at all.....”

“I don’t know, but..... Something. Something’s happening.”

Amid growing confusion among people over Kang Shin-hyuk’s unordinary performance, the cheers of his name became even louder and more abundant during his last match of the morning, the performing arts contest, where he lit the stage by performing the Fanged Wyvern Dance with various kinds of weapons.

People were particularly struck by the scene where he smashed his axe on the floor, took out the double pistol from his waist, and shot every one of the dozens of fragments that bounced into the air.

He had put a lot of thoughts into the choreography, and he was happy to contribute to the class by getting a high score.

“Waaah! How many martial arts has he mastered?”

“I think I’ve heard. It was said that his trait was his ability to handle all kinds of weapons. But since he couldn’t handle mana, he was more like a serpent without its pearl.....”

At this point, the audience and scouts from the large guilds began to pay attention to Kang Shin-hyuk.

Baek In-ha had played a large role in their victory in shoulder wars, but performing arts contest was his solo performance, so they could no longer doubt his skills.

“His ability was quite spectacular, no?”

“He’s grown quite a lot, I’m sure. Shinyoung must have taught a thing or two to him.”

“Seems like there’s one more name I should remember.....”

“There should be an interesting spectacle at the end of sports day.”

Kang Shin-hyuk left the stage, receiving the cheers of Shinyoung’s students as well as the attention of the outside audience.

That was the end of the morning game. It was now lunchtime.

Thanks to his ‘Recovery,’ he was able to perform all the games in perfect condition, but the side effect had kicked in and he was now ravenously hungry.

But as Kang Shin-hyuk was walking to join Baek In-ha while grabbing his stomach, his stick suddenly rang.

[Bartender Noona: You were pretty cool in shoulder wars. But the problem was that you were too cool. Eunah was staring at you as if she was trying to punch a hole with her stare.]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Honestly, I’ve given up on that matter. My score is more important than Ms. Shin Eunah.]

[Bartender Noona: Even when you compare to the troubles you’d have to bear with your identity revealed?]

Objectively speaking, Kang Shin-hyuk’s performance today was enough to draw a lot of attention. New novel chapters are published on [novel\(F\)ire.net](http://novel(F)ire.net)

Of course, many students in other competitions pulled off striking performances of their own, but he was confident that if someone made a list of ten 1st-year students who stood out the most that day, he would be included.

After hesitating for a moment to reply, Kang Shin-hyuk asked her a question.

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Uh, did she notice I’m Anvil?]

[Bartender Noona: I don’t think she’s noticed that yet, fortunately.]

[[Kang Shin-hyuk: So she doesn’t wield spirit power either.]

[Bartender Noona: What, you used your spirit energy!?!]

[[Kang Shin-hyuk: If you didn’t notice, you have a lot more to practice.]

[Bartender sister: This bastard.....]

Clearly, Claire was a powerhouse who belonged to Top 500 of the World Superhuman Ranking, but she was far below Kang Shin-hyuk in the field of spiritual power. He had a lot to teach her.

Kang Shin-hyuk laughed as he imagined Claire's shaking face beyond the screen and suddenly realized that a girl was looking at him.

"Stringfield?"

"Hey, just call me Karen. By the way, was that your girlfriend?"

"No, I just know her."

Kang Shin-hyuk hurriedly turned off the hologram that rose above the stick. Karen's eyes became thinner.

"Hm..... Suspicious, the way you were smiling and all..... I didn't expect that you'd find a girlfriend from outside, leaving the elite Shinyoung Academy alone."

"She's not my girlfriend. Though it's true that I don't intend to find one at Shinyoung."

"Oh..... Hm."

Considering her subtly shifting expression, she seemed to have properly understood the meaning behind that sentence.

"I thought I'd talk to you about that."

"About what?"

"You know."

Of course, she could have let those words fly by, but Karen, after hesitating for a moment, shrugged her shoulders and continued.

"You know..... Could you understand, at least a little? Everyone, including me, was very proud of themselves for belonging to an elite organization such as Shinyoung. The fact that it was so hard to get into the school encouraged our



sense of entitlement..... But then when we came to Shinyoung, we found out that there was a student who couldn't use mana."

Kang Shin-hyuk raised his eyebrows.

"That's right, so I tried harder than you guys to get in. As such, even though I was weaker than everyone else and couldn't handle mana, I was still a student who passed Shinyoung's cut-off score."

"No, no, of course, I have no intention of disparaging your efforts. It's true that we were naive. I just think we failed to understand or accept it—you know, the actual value of your trait. Or maybe it's more correct to say that we didn't even try to understand.]

Kang Shin-hyuk knew very well that Karen was choosing her words in her favor.

Still, he didn't bother to tackle her further. Karen finished with a slightly relieved look as he shrugged.

"Well, in the end, you proved that everyone who disregarded you was a fool. In a single day, to add."

"Does that include you?"

"Of course. Uhm, if I apologize, will you accept it?"

"No, I don't think an apology will do the job."

"I guess there's a long way to go, then."

Karen sighed again at Kang Shin-hyuk's decisive response. It was a somewhat expected outcome, but she couldn't help feeling disappointed.

Not to Kang Shin-hyuk who closed his heart, but to herself for her ugly behavior in the past.

"Let's eat together at least. I bought a lot from the food truck, and it'd be a waste to throw them away."

"..... Sure, why not."

A person could be guilty, but food was never in the wrong. Seeing the American hot dogs, takoyaki, cube steaks, and chicken skewers in her plastic bags—she had apparently swept the food truck’s entire menu—his stomach began to growl again, so he accepted Karen’s offer straight away.

“Shall we sit over there?”

“Okay.”

Needless to say, the total area of Shinyoung was enormous.

Most of the area except for the school and dormitory buildings were occupied by playgrounds or labs and a small forest named “Blackwood,” with the others occupied by well-decorated parks and walkways.

Kang Shin-hyuk and Karen began eating on a bench near the forest.

“Looking at that forest reminded me of a question.”

“What is it?”

Kang Shin-hyuk said with an uncertain tone while biting into the hotdog. Karen, who wanted to become friends with him, took his words with a curious expression.

“There’s a separate training facility for the Wyvern Knights in the woods, right?”

“The Blackwood Training Center? That’s a special facility given to the Wyvern Knights. What about it?”

“Is it true that they raise a wyvern there?”

“Yup.”

“Oh, my.....”

Kang Shin-hyuk picked up three takoyaki at once, put them in his mouth, and mumbled while feeling impressed.

In fact, the story has been around before. The story of how Wyvern Knights became Wyvern Knights.

This was the story shortly after Shinyoung was established. A student from Shinyoung had coincidentally succeeded in capturing a wyvern and tamed it while attending school.

To everyone's surprise, the student declared that he would hand over the wyvern to the one who beat him in a duel, and those who wanted the wyvern along with the glory of victory gathered and challenged him for a match.

They were all defeated, and the Wyvern Knights was founded by the group that had the wyvern's owner as the leader. Kang Shin-hyuk didn't believe the story as it sounded like a plot that'd only occur in a comic book, but if the Wyvern Knights actually possessed a wyvern, the credibility of the story would increase.

"I've heard that a wyvern is at least a (B) rank, so it wouldn't be possible to tame it without a special trait or a skill suitable for the job, right?"

"Well, there's a special artifact that's handed out to the club's captain that allows you to tame the wyvern. That's why if you become the captain of the Wyvern Knights, you can be the owner of the wyvern while you attend the school. He can't take it to the school's dungeon practice, but during the 2nd/3rd year, there's a self-study assignment called Gate Expedition, where they're allowed to use the wyvern because the mark for the assignment is purely based on the results rather than the methods. It's almost like a cheat key."

"..... Hey, then the captains shouldn't want to graduate."

"That's how I think too."

Karen grinned and ate her share of the cup salad. Kang Shin-hyuk put the stick of the finished chicken skewer in a plastic bag while thinking to himself that the amount of food wasn't enough for a Knight major.

"So what's this thing you wanted to talk about?"

Next was the cube steak. Since a steak had to be finished before it got cold, he had to throw it whole in his mouth and ask the questions while chewing.

On the surface, it looked no different from the cube steak sold at a food truck along the Han River, but it was different in terms of how juicy it tasted. It was definitely a A++ quality stripoli.

“Huh?”

While Kang Shin-hyuk was waiting for the answer, savoring the aroma and taste of the meat, Karen tilted her head with a cherry tomato in her mouth. Kang Shin-hyuk smiled and asked her again.

“What you were originally going to talk to me about. You didn’t want to come out here just to eat.”

“Oh, was it obvious?”

“Yup.”

Karen scraped her cheek with her hand that was holding a fork, realizing that Kang Shin-hyuk had read her mind. In the meantime, Kang Shin-hyuk was taking off the hamburger wrapper after cleaning up the plate that previously contained the steak.

“Not a big deal, but something related to the Wyvern Knights. You told me before that I should talk to you when I have the chance. I saw from your performances today that your worth is indeed going to be increased, so I’m taking the chance to get close to you as much as I can.”

“Those performances were not that superb, though.”

“No way, everyone was shocked. To put it bluntly, our vice-captain has a lot of interest in you. She said that on top of your great physical stats, there are a lot of potentials in your fighting techniques.”

Who was the vice-captain of the Wyvern Knights? Kang Shin-hyuk wondered while munching the hamburger. Karen put a bottle of coke in his hand, which he drank in one shot after finishing the hamburger in a single gulp.

“I’m afraid I can’t remember who the vice-captain is. Was she in 2nd-year?”

“Yeah. She’s famous as Shinyoung’s strongest Lancer.”

“Oh, yeah. I think I saw her at the entrance ceremony.”

Karen drooped her shoulders as if discouraged by Kang Shin-hyuk’s lukewarm response. The exaggerated body movements of a Westerner felt fresh and pleasant to Kang Shin-hyuk.

“Phew,..... Anyway, our vice-captain wants to meet you, and if possible, she wants you to join the Wyvern Knights.”

“I’m not really interested, actually.”

“But think about it. If you join the Wyvern Knights, you’d become a great force for our vice-captain faction.”

Kang Shin-hyuk felt a poignant sensation in his ears from the words “vice-captain faction.” He asked after taking a Liege waffle from his mouth.

“Is that tiny club divided into two factions?”

“I’m afraid so. The captain doesn’t like our vice-captain. But we can’t just use force against the captain because the captain is.....”

“No, no, don’t share an internal affair with an outsider like me.”

Kang Shin-hyuk cut her off, concerned that he might become involved in the situation by learning about their internal conflicts. Karen took out her stick with a disappointed look.

“In commemoration of our friendship, let’s at least exchange numbers.”

“You’re not intending to text me about the inside story, are you?”

“I can’t talk about it through text, so relax.”

Only after hearing her reassurance that he would never be forced to enroll into their club, Kang Shin-hyuk took out his stick. But while he was busy eating and talking, three text messages had been sent to his stick.

“Hold on.”

“Girlfriend?”

“Like I said, no.”

Kang Shin-hyuk checked the text message. One came from Baek In-ha and the other two from Claire.

But their contents were.....

[Baek In-ha: I, Baek In-ha, will never forgive a traitor like you.]

[Bartender Noona: You denied it all this time, but I can see you on a date~~.

[Bartender Noona: Wait. Oh god.]

Kang Shin-hyuk raised his head at that very moment.

About five meters away from him stood the Thunder Empress Shin Eunah.

She was staring at him with an indescribable, queer look.

Editor/Translator Notes:

(1) In the usual sports day's shoulder wars, there are four people supporting the flag bearer. This game also seems to be the version where each team consists of many units (pairs, in this case), and one unit is designated the "captain" headband. So a team wins either by stealing as many headbands from the opposite team as possible or by simply stealing the captain's headband.

(2) A slang term for "exceptional people." "Gira" is the Japanese word for "shiny" and so "Gira stars" literally translates to "a night sky brimming with stars," meant to say "full of exceptional people."

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## Chapter 24: Breaking out of the Egg - 2

### Chapter 24: Breaking out of the Egg - 2

In the relay race, which began right after lunchtime in the afternoon, Baek In-ha was definitely in the spotlight more than anyone else.

He was usually a prankster, but no one could deny his talents. As soon as his turn came, he chased down the sunbae ahead of him in no time to his team's victory. In response to his glamorous performances, people began to speculate, "When it comes to speed, isn't he the best?"

Baek In-ha seemed to enjoy the attention he was getting. The innocent-looking boy smiled and waved his hands briskly, and those who didn't know him applauded in response.

"Oh, so that's the boy....."

"What will happen to Korea's superhuman industry in the future?"

"I'm looking forward to it in many ways, yes."

After the relay race, which showed a glimpse of the students' talents, the remaining superhuman matches were held one after another.

The most eye-catching of them was monster hunting, a CvC battle where students fought real monsters captured from the gates. Even though psyche magic had been cast on the monsters to prevent them from dealing fatal wounds to the students, there was a high chance that a very dangerous situation could unfold.

But the experience of fighting real monsters was an indispensable part of their training, and more importantly, the match was a great opportunity for the school to show the outside world of the quality of their education.

"I didn't expect them to bring a B rank monster....."

"Everyone will tackle the monsters in groups as we practiced! There's no monster we can't catch!"

"You all read the counter-strategy plan, right? Spread out!"

"Two at three o'clock! Five at seven! Respond!"

The seniors of 2nd and 3rd-year students, who had been through countless assignments such as monster practice, dungeon practice and independent assignments, calmly and stably competed in the match.

As they knew that their performances this day would affect their job search after graduation, they needed to emphasize their strengths and ability to

cooperate with their teammates even at the risk of looking like clowns, being played by the school for spectator sports.

“We can kill this one! Push!”

“You fool, that one’s still full of strengths! Watch out, it’s about to shoot its scales!”

“When a shell wolf is struck on the top of its head, it peels off its scales to fire them! Did you even read the counter-strategy plan!?”

Meanwhile, the inexperienced 1st-year students made a series of mistakes as they were not able to calm down in front of monsters that they’ve never faced in their life.

A lot of them were already dropped out of the match, and one of them even turned pale and rolled on the floor after letting go of his weapon against a monster. The superhuman spectators would either laugh out loud at those scenes or shout out a big lecture at them.

“Hey, the formation at 11 o’clock is falling apart! Wait—they’re changing to an offensive formation!”

“Still, Shinyoung is Shinyoung, after all. No one has run away from the monsters yet.”

“They have the pride of being prospective elites, so they wouldn’t just turn their backs on those monsters. You can do it; I believe in you!”

“There! Hey, you can’t just let a monster perform a summoning magic!”

“This year’s sports day is fun too!”

Of course, the spectators made such commentary for their own fun; no one had actually expected these 1st-year students, who had been enrolled in the Academy for only two months, to calmly handle real monsters.

It didn’t matter that the students had natural talents. They were still immature, inexperienced.

No matter how much they practiced their formation and prepared for the monsters that were likely to appear in the competition, the fear of the actual experience was not something to be taken lightly.



Moreover, it was all the more so because unlike the previous monster practice, students were dealing with numerous monsters concentrated in a small area without the help of their teacher.

“Stay calm and stand in line!”

“Tsk, you guys just watch from behind. Heup!”

“Great—you can lure the monsters for us. Everyone else, stay where you are!”

Of course, the weight carried by the name “Shinyoung” wasn’t light, so there were quite a few 1st-years who stood out and bought the interest of many spectators. Of course, that included Kang Shin-hyuk.

‘I felt it during the battle against the War Troll, too.’

— Owwww!

Kang Shin-hyuk thought while striking the nose of the D rank shelf wolf with the training-purpose knuckle given to 1st-year’s C-class. READ LATEST CHAPTERS AT NOVE(l)FIRE .NET

‘I think I’m pretty strong in actual battles.’

During his encounter with the War Troll, the warning of likely death prompted him to take action before he could be frozen by fear. His head was constantly coming up with a counter-strategy plan, and his body was constantly always in motion.

‘Why was that? Was it because of spirit power, the faint memory of Anvil, or maybe my natural talent?’

‘..... It doesn’t matter, actually.’

He kicked the body of a shelf wolf that was rushing towards him while striking another one that flanked him from the side with his knuckle and pushed it away.

Instead of obsessing over killing as many as possible, he focused on kicking and pushing away the monsters that were trying to break into his class’s formation.

Kang Shin-hyuk took the role of a guard of his team's formation for his ability to handle multiple enemies at the same time due to his high physical stats and impressive skills in martial arts. The role of dealing final blows to the monsters was handed to two other students.

"Damn Shinyok, your lower body's tough! Gotta thank your girlfriend, am I right!?"

"Shut the fuck up, you dumbass!"

"Why is Baek In-ha so disgusting while having such a normal face?"

"That I wonder, too."

The role of finishing the monsters was given to Baek In-ha, known to have the highest quality speed-type trait, and Karen Stringfield, who, despite being generally slower than Baek In-ha, could temporarily boost her agility to an extreme level by strengthening her nerves.

The two were speeding through the battlefield where weakened monsters were present to deal their final blow. High speed was an incredibly handy ability, and the D rank monsters couldn't respond to the two appearing out of nowhere and attacking their vital points.

– Clang!

"Whoo!"

"You take care of that side!"

"Okay!"

Although the situation seemed to be worsening on the surface, it was actually stabilizing for the student's favor.

Without Kang Shin-hyuk, Baek In-ha and Karen would have lacked the manpower to protect their vulnerable teammates who didn't know what to do, but Kang Shin-hyuk was practically doing as much as three tanks by knocking out the wolves attacking from every direction.

No, if you considered the students who weren't doing their best, he was probably filling the duty of as many as seven people.

“Kang Shin-hyuk..... He’s amazing.”

“I think he has an eye on his back, too. How the hell do you do all that?”

“He’s not using mana, is he? Also, why is the sound coming from his fist so terrifying?”

“Hey, are we going to let him take all the spotlight? Don’t be so pathetic and let’s fight!”

Perhaps thanks to the presence of Kang Shin-hyuk, the 1st-year C-Class was able to regain its sanity faster than other classes and achieve a comparably high result.

Baek In-ha took it easy for the whole match as he thought it was meaningless to go on a rampage alone in such a team competition, so it was Karen Stringfield who broke the neck of the last remaining wolf.

“With this, it’s over!”

As she raised her hand with her trampling on the wolf’s neck, the buzzer rang right away and the record of the first grade C-Class was engraved on the electronic display. It wasn’t an all-time high score, though it was incredibly high.

“We finished faster than expected! Were we the fastest among 1st-years?”

“No, we’re behind Magic majors’ I-Class. Didn’t those bastards cheat?”

Since I-Class was brimming with notable talents, Kang Shin-hyuk’s C-Class was unable to annihilate the monsters at the fastest pace among 1st-year students, though they were the fastest among Knight majors.

It wasn’t a surprising outcome. I-Class had planned every step; they pulled a series of defensive and offensive magics in perfect coordination and whipped out 80% of the monsters before they had direct contact. They probably didn’t have much opportunity to experience the tension of real battle.

“But I think people would notice that their teamwork is countered by their lack of individual strengths. It’s not just a matter of finishing the match quickly.”

“Anyway, well done, everybody!”

“Wow, I’m tired. Is anyone hurt badly? The medics are coming soon, so raise your hand if you are.”

“Baek In-ha looked pretty cool earlier. He would be perfect if he doesn’t open his mouth.....”

“Karen was the best. I almost confessed by mistake earlier.”

While the class was excitedly chatting about their high score, Kang Shin-hyuk let out a deep sigh after confirming that he wasn’t hurt. Baek In-ha approached him.

“You were awesome, Shinyok. You were flying around.”

“Are you talking about yourself?”

“No, Kang Shin-hyuk, I’m serious. You were incredible. Our formation didn’t collapse in the middle of the battle thanks to you, and..... I hate to say it, but, Do Woojin.”

When Kang Shin-hyuk shook his head with a grin at Baek In-ha’s words, Karen approached him and complimented him, perhaps having heard their conversation. When the aces of the competition stood side by side and praised his performance, Kang Shin-hyuk finally made a proud expression and shrugged his shoulders.

Kang Shin-hyuk’s sophisticated movements and meticulous techniques had shone on one-on-one battles, but they shined just as brightly in a team battle.

But since the wolves were weaker than him in physical stats, he could take on as many of them as possible without retreating. So he just stood his ground and fought them, which seemed to have generated a deep impression on the people around him.

‘And well, about Do Woojin..... I’m sure he performed well with his abundant mana.’

Do woojin was originally famous for having the equivalent of a C+ rank mana. His trait was in fact higher in rank, but he had only been using his weaker skills because using his trait would have led to a penalty.

In other words, the other members of the C-Class showed worse results than Kang Shin-hyuk, who they had been ignoring for his inability to use mana, and Do Woojin wasn't at his full strengths.

"I wish everyone had just pulled themselves together and gotten a higher score."

"They've never been in such a team-oriented battle before, so they couldn't help it. The real issue was you; why were you so good, Shinyok? You were almost like an experienced active superhuman."

"Yeah right, all I did was knocking down monsters jumping at me."

".....Shinyok?"

"Hey, this guy's just calling me whatever he likes, so don't look at me with that weird look." (1)

Kang Shin-hyuk cut Karen off before she could say any further. She mischievously smiled and asked him.

"If you tell me what you were talking about with the Thunder Empress earlier, I'll pretend I didn't hear that nickname, Shinyok."

"The Thunder Empress? You met the Thunder Empress, too!?"

"Ha....."

This time, Baek In-ha bit the bait. Kang Shin-hyuk pushed him away as he was closing in with his eyes wide open as if to eat him alive.

"We didn't talk about much. She just told me she enjoyed the game."

"Really? The international celebrity Thunder Empress approached you and no one else and that's all she said?"

"Yeah, that was all. Look, they're calling for us. Let's go."

"Suspicious....."

"I'm not lying."

Kang Shin-hyuk pushed Karen and Baek In-ha's backs towards where their class was gathered while thinking back to the conversation he had with her at lunchtime.

'I was freaked out at first that she found out.'

The Thunder Empress Shin Eunah appeared out of nowhere to stare at him for a few moments and asked him to have a private conversation.

Karen lost her mind at the sight of a Top 500 superhuman and Kang Shin-hyuk had no choice to follow her while shivering at the idea of his identity being found out.

'I saw the morning game.'

'Kang Shin-hyuk..... I'll remember you.'

'I'll look forward to the remaining games.'

She said those three sentences and left coolly, saying, "See you next time." That was all!!

'If that was the case, was it necessary to have a private conversation or stare at me so intently?'

'Fortunately though, I don't think she noticed I'm Anvil. If she did, she wouldn't have had that look on her face.'

Recalling the facial expression of the Thunder Empress, which was ice-cold during the whole encounter, Kang Shin-hyuk sighed in his mind.

A stiff expression with a stiff manner of speaking. He wondered if she really was the "Eunah" who called him "Grandpa" like a child in the Hero Universe messages.

If she didn't think of him as Anvil, why would she approach him in the first place? Was she capable of detecting spirit power like Claire? As a member of the same Hero Universe, the possibility was there.

"Shinyok, what's wrong. Is it because of the rookie competition tomorrow?"

"Huh? No..... I mean, yeah. I'm worried about that."

Seeing Kang Shin-hyuk's look of unrest, Baek In-ha patted him on the shoulder and talked to him. Kang Shin-hyuk knew very well that mentioning the Thunder Empress one more time would be self-destruction, so he merely nodded.

At that moment, his stick vibrated. When he took it out and checked, he found that the schedule for tomorrow's rookie competition was sent. His opponent for the round of 16 was..... Do Woojin.

“Ha.....”

When he looked up, he could see Do Woojin giving him a heated look. Thinking that he was unnecessarily too heated, Kang Shin-hyuk shook his head.

The first day of the turbulent Shinyoung sports day was coming to an end.

Editor/Translator Notes:

(1) Since “Shinyok” is a nickname connoting a very close connection, Karen is (jokingly) suspecting that they Baek In-ha is his boyfriend.

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## Chapter 25: Breaking out of the Egg - 3

### Chapter 25: Breaking out of the Egg - 3

[You've received one roulette coin for today's login. With five coins now in stock, you can spin the VIP roulette once! Would you like to spin it now?]

It was the morning of the second day of the Shinyoung Sports Day, when the rookie competition was going to be held. Welcoming Kang Shin-hyuk in the morning, was the message that he had been expecting to receive recently.

“I thought the coins were stacking up, but I collected all five faster than I thought.”

[The VIP roulette is one of Hero Universe’s finest services that only VIP members can enjoy! Please enjoy the roulette where you have the chance to win invaluable items from the countless dimensions!]

The Administrator took the chance to enthusiastically explain, but Kang Shin-hyuk wasn’t really into it.

Whether it was roulette or card flipping, he learned very well from growing up in Korea, the heaven of gambling games, that the factor of luck was not reliable.

[Our VIP roulette doesn’t have blank draws. What’s more, the roulette will more than likely end up upgrading your stats, so the more active you are in the Hero Universe and the more you devote your efforts to your self-development, the more rewards you will get!]

“But since my synchronization rate is low, my upgrades won’t have much effect. Doesn’t that mean the roulette’s rewards will be lower in quality?”

[It’s all right. VIP roulette has rewards that go beyond stat upgrades, so you can expect to receive great rewards!]

“Then can you reveal the probability of winning certain things or something? I would be satisfied even if there’s a 3% chance of winning a good reward.....”

[I’m sorry, I cannot do that.]

As expected, it was simply a game where you draw lots and leave it all up to fate. Kang Shin-hyuk threw away all expectations at that point.

But the login bonus was a gift from Hero Universe, so he had no reason to complain. If something was free of charge, even if it was something as trivial as mint chocolate frappuccino, Kang Shin-hyuk would gladly accept it.

“Then I’ll spin it right away.”



[We're about to spin the VIP roulette. Please throw the dart at any time you want!]

He thought it would be over with a simple command and the result would be decided right away, but that wasn't the case. A hologram-looking translucent giant disk had appeared on the other side of his bed!

It began to turn furiously as soon as it appeared, and he was holding a small dart in his hand before he could notice.

[Throw it!]

"What happens if I miss?"

[Throw well so you won't miss!]

Kang Shin-hyuk felt slightly disappointed as he thought that the Administrator's personality seemed to have changed a little these days. But since a free opportunity was present before him, he decided to empty his mind and throw the dart.

'It'd be best if I can get a defensive artifact, but..... Wait, my hand is moving!'

Of course, Kang Shin-hyuk couldn't miss, as his throwing ability was also considerably enhanced by his trait and skill.

The moment the dart hit somewhere on the roulette, the speed at which the roulette turned slowed down and quickly stopped. Where the dart was hit, it said 'Lestia's hatching item' was written in Korean.

[Lestia is a world that blesses the birth of all living things. This is a special item that borrows the power to speed hatching from that world.]

"I see. So I guess I was pretty unlucky."

Kang Shin-hyuk was fluent in martial arts but he didn't have the ability to lay eggs. However, the Administrator seemed oddly pleased with the reward he drew.

[Do you really think so? I have already told you that the reward will likely end up helping with your stats' upgrades.]

"Well, should I ask the cafeteria if I could borrow some eggs or something?"

[The hatching egg doesn't have the ability to turn an unfertilized egg into a fertilized one!]

Of course, Kang Shin-hyuk was grumbling only on the surface; he wasn't actually that disappointed. He knew well that nothing related to the Hero Universe was ordinary.

He decided to keep the item, believing that it may become useful one day. Fortunately, it was possible to store the roulette's reward in his inventory.

"Shinyok, are you ready?" THIS CHAPTER IS UPDATE BY NOVEL\_Fire.net

"Maybe? What about you..... Nevermind, I guess there's no need to ask."

On the morning of the second day, Baek In-ha seemed particularly energetic at the large stadium.

The first day of sports day wasn't quite challenging for Baek In-ha, who had already transcended other 1st-year students, but the school-wide competition of the event's second day included the 2nd-year and 3rd-year seniors, so it wasn't surprising that he was hyped up.

"You really only brought that sword. I should've prepared a proper defensive artifact for you."

The adjective "proper" didn't go with "artifact," Kang Shin-hyuk thought. If an item had the word "artifact" attached to it, it was worth at least hundreds of millions! Kang Shin-hyuk smiled bitterly at Baek In-ha's words and tapped into the bag. He invested some of the money he earned from the War Troll's corpse and bought a suitable defensive tool.

"Nevermind that it's not an artifact, that's just a D rank defensive tool....."

"This should do the job."

Many of the students who went to school today wore heavy equipment as they were allowed to own personal equipment for the individual competitions.

Baek In-ha was wearing thorny gaiters on his knees and an unusually blue pair of metal shoes. Kang Shin-hyuk had already known, but he witnessed yet another evidence of how stupendously rich Baek In-ha was.

Many people naturally paid their attention to Baek In-ha, though Kang Shin-hyuk, who was wearing nothing but a sword on his waist, also bought the interest of a lot of people different way.

“Ah, I guess that’s the difference of family. I was looking forward to him since yesterday’s games.”

“You idiot, he might hear you. He didn’t do anything wrong to you—why the fuck you gotta be like that?”

“But it’s true. The individual competitions are the best place to raise your reputation, so if you lose you might not even get sponsored.”

“That’s his problem, nothing for you to worry about.”

Thanks to Kang Shin-hyuk’s constant care and the axe it had absorbed, the Godslayer now had a fairly appealing black gloss, but to others, it looked like an insignificant weapon that was D rank at best.

Since the Godslayer sword doesn’t contain mana and its appearance didn’t show a sign of possessing a notable trait, people’s judgment was destined to be ill-informed. They would surely be surprised by learning that the sword is a C rank weapon.

‘Adding to that, the real strengths of the Godslayer sword is not a meager C rank. My memory isn’t that clear, but I’m the one who built this weapon, so I know better than anyone else. Even if it’s lacking a dragon heart, it’s not going to fall behind some artifacts that the students will bring.’

Kang Shin-hyuk had sworn to himself to not pay attention to other people’s thoughts of him, and he wasn’t about to fail that vow by indulging in people’s dismissal of his sword.

But of course, there were some people who thought differently.

“Hey, Kang Shin-hyuk. You should have brought the right weapon even if it meant taking out loans and putting yourself under a debt. Are you planning to make an excuse when you lose against me?”

As soon as the attendance call at the playground was over, Do Woojin ran to Kang Shin-hyuk and said to him with frustration.

“Don’t you know how important this competition is? People whom you would never meet in your life are gathered here to see our cute actions. It’s a place where we have to show our abilities and potential as much as we can. You should have prepared a proper weapon even if it meant selling your organs to buy one.”

“..... You.”

If it had not been for the existence of the Godslayer sword, every word he spoke would be spot-on. In other words, Do Woojin was sincerely disappointed, rather than feeling a sense of dismissal.

Do Woojin is really hard to understand, Kang Shin-hyuk thought. How did things turn out this way? One day, he completely ignored him, and on the other, he’s feeling sorry for him. They were the same age, but Kang Shin-hyuk really couldn’t understand the minds of his peers!

“Thanks for your concern, Doo Woojin.”

“..... What? Who said I’m worried!”

“But this is a really good weapon, so don’t worry. I’ll prove it to you.”

“.....”

Do Woojin shut his mouth, thinking that his confidence didn’t seem to be a bluff. And then he turned around with a light chuckle, which Kang Shin-hyuk laughed at.

After all, they were little kids. Their minds and attitude constantly changed depending on their emotion and the circumstance they were trapped in. It wasn’t their fault, though, it was the fault of the system that was designed to prompt such a volatile state of mind.’

Kang Shin-hyuk himself was no exception to being young. But, unlike others of his age, he had the ability to objectively observe himself, which was largely due to the presence of the old man in his memory.

[Bartender noona: Hey, popular guy, big news.]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: I’m not popular. But what’s the news?]

Clare's text message brought Kang Shin-hyuk back to reality. He waited for her answer, pushing the face of Baek In-ha constantly trying to steal a glimpse of his stick.

[Bartender noonar: Eunah wants to sponsor you via the association.]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Me? The Thunder Empress? Did she notice?]

[Bartender noona: No, I don't think so. But she does seem to have laid her eyes on you. She even approached you herself yesterday, so.....]

He would probably get more attention from her today by carrying the Godslayer sword. And one wrong word could lead to a full revelation of his identity.

Kang Shin-hyuk felt as if he had become a death-row convict watching the executioner get closer to him step by step as he waited with his head on the executioner's stand.

[Kang Shin-hyuk: By the way, did the association sponsor students?]

[Bartender noona: Of course it's not like the wild sponsorships that large guilds hand out. The association likes to sponsor students of poor background who are nevertheless exceptionally talented—people like you, that is.]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Hm, sponsorship..... I don't intend to decide where I want to join at this moment, but thank you for telling me.]

[Bartender noona: Of course, it all depends on your performance in the individual competitions today.]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: I know. Aren't you going to cheer for me?]

[Bartender noona: Mmm. Your noona will buy you chicken.]

[Kang Shin-hyuk: Okay.]

Though he didn't express it in his text messages, he was incredibly fired up to pull off an impressive performance at the prospect of free chickens.

He hesitated to text her if he could give her a kiss after the victory, but he regained his sanity just before tapping the send button.

“Game’s about to start, Shinyok. Let’s wrap this up quickly and move onto the next game!”

“Okay. But if you don’t want to be disqualified, take that artifact off.”

“Oh, right, I was only thinking about the individual match.....”

On the second day of sports day, there were more games to show off their superhuman abilities. In particular, Magic majors had various traits that stood out, but many Knight majors were also under the spotlight for their unusual traits.

“Oh, that one’s interesting..... But I wonder if that will be effective in a real battle.”

“B rank trait? That one? Well, there’s still a lot we don’t know about the rank calculations of the Gaia system. Still, I guess it means that one has potential.”

While the students were fiercely competing in their matches, the scouts of each guild calmly assessed their potentials.

“Well, that one’s a no for me. Where’s the list of promising students you kept yesterday? Let me see it.”

“The individual competitions are about to start. So let’s go to our seats.”

“Whoo, it seems like the Thunder Empress and the Alchemist will be watching the rookie competition.”

Although Shinyoung’s name was very highly regarded, the scout of every visiting guild was also an alumnus of Shinyoung or an equally prestigious training academy.

The spots for the guild’s ace were limited and the competition was fierce. The competition to determine the students’ future paths had begun now.

[Shinyoung Sports Day’s individual competition will be held soon! All the players who have advanced to the round of 16, please gather at the venue! I repeated, the Shinyoung Sports Day’s individual competitions will be held soon!]

By the end of lunchtime, a broadcast finally rang out throughout the school marking the start of the individual competition.

“See you later.”

“Later.”

Everyone excitedly stood up from their seats with a look of “the time has finally come” for the main event of the second day. Kang Shin-hyuk gave Baek In-ha a fist bump and turned around to head to gymnasium 2 where the rookie competition was held.

[Fresh sprouts of Shinyoung, a contest of infinite possibilities for 1st-year students! Welcome to Shinyoung’s rookie competition. This year’s students are also attracting a lot of interest with their sparkling potential.]

“Hurry up and get started!”

[Haha, president of the Sivie Guild, please be patient for just a little longer. We still have time before the competition begins!]

The gymnasium was already crowded with the voice of the host covering the noisy auditorium. But just as Kang Shin Hyuk found his waiting room.

[All students who participate in this rookie competition will earn extra points in their academic assessment, and those who make it to the semifinals will be eligible to participate at the 15th World Superhuman Conference in Paris, France, as a guest representing the academy this fall. Furthermore, the winner and runner-up will be given special rewards!]

“Rewards?”

Kang Shin-hyuk, who was weak when it came to rewards, raised his head at the words mentioned. Two items in a transparent box were seen on display at the podium of the gym, where the host was standing.

[These are highly invaluable items that had been collected by various schoolmasters with great trouble. The first item is an artifact that was recently unearthed in a dungeon! As a mask-type artifact, it has the ability to speed up the flow of mana when worn.]

Shinyoung was indeed an incredibly rich school, but to think that a B rank item worth billions of won was offered as a reward! This year’s rewards didn’t seem to be ordinary compared to the previous years’, as indicated by the fuss in the audience.

But the item that caught Kang Shin-hyuk's eyes was not the mask, but the other reward.

[And the second reward is an unnamed spherical OOPArt that was found in a(A rank gate!)](1)

“A sphere.....”

[Although mana cannot be detected, its surprising firmness is indicative of the infinite possibilities that are suitable for our rookies. The winner of the competition will get to choose the desired reward, while the runner-up will receive the remaining reward. To make sure you get the prize you want, you better win!]

The host was making it sound all impressive, but in short, it was just a hard ball whose use was so far unknown.

‘But that one, that one could perhaps be.....’

Kang Shin-hyuk raised his head and stared at the gray sphere on the platform.

Kang Shin-hyuk could see a faint beating of certain energy inside the object, as if something was alive inside. It was none other than spirit power.

Looking at it more closely, the object looked like an egg.

[Didn't I tell you?]

“Yes, the Administrator is the best.”

[A 100HP bonus from the Administrator for the kind words!]

The Administrator said with a swagger. He hated the “I-told-you-so” attitude, but he had to admit it. Kang Shin-hyuk smiled and nodded.

“I wonder what'd come out of that egg, but I guess I have to win to find out.”

Five minutes later, the round of 16 match between Kang Shin-hyuk and Do Woojin began.

Editor/Translator Notes:



(1) “An out-of-place artifact (OOPArt) is an artifact of historical, archaeological, or paleontological interest found in an unusual context” (Wikipedia)

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## Chapter 26: Breaking out of the Egg - 4

### Chapter 26: Breaking out of the Egg - 4

[The first match of the round of 16 has begun! Surprisingly, it's a clash between two Knight major classmates! I'm sure you've all heard that a lot of notable talents have enrolled in Shinyoung this year, and the students of C-class have especially been in the spotlight.]

A 2nd-year student from the student government was in charge of the commentary for the rookie competition.

A member of the student government could not be someone that could be taken lightly, but Kang Shin-hyuk and Do Woojin couldn't help but frown at the overly dramatic tone of the commentary.

[Can you believe it? A total of three students from C-class had entered the round of 16! It's almost as if the rest of the classes have been slacking off all year. What's more, there's an even more shocking secret involved in this matter, which you can find out while spectating the academy competition at gymnasium 1!]

The secret was obviously implied by the hint that you could find out while watching the academy competition, which meant that the host didn't have much interest in hyping up Kang Shin-hyuk and Do Woojin.

Kang Shin-hyuk decided to ignore the host and stood with his fighting posture fixed. As if sharing the same thought, Do Woojin gripped his sword tightly with his eyes fixated on him.

He had a gray stone sword that had a coarse appearance and a stylish belt that sparkled on his waist. Those seemed to be the only two artifacts he had prepared.

[All right ladies and gentlemen, it seems that both players are ready. As a reminder, both contestants have a shock-absorbing sensor attached to their body, and if the impact exceeds a certain amount, the buzzer will vibrate and the contestant would be disqualified. Of course, striking the vital spots will lead to harder impacts, so you can expect safe but real-like battles!]

As the host said, Kang Shin-hyuk and Do Woojin were both wearing choker-shaped equipment on their arms, legs, and necks.

They were a shock-absorbing sensor created by the armor-manufacturing brand Mystic, having the ability to absorb a certain amount of shock and protect the wearer while measuring the magnitude of the impact.

The most impressive feature of the equipment was that its measurement was adjusted by the defensive abilities that the wearer was using, so if the wearer had a trait to harden his body or some sort of a defensive skill, the measurement would be lowered to accurately assess the damage inflicted on him.

Therefore, it was a defensive artifact that had the auxiliary purpose of measuring the wearer's defensive capabilities while protecting him from external attacks.

[On one side we have Do Woojin, who is known to have one of the most exceptional magical power among 1st- year students. Then we have Kang Shin-hyuk on the other side, who has polished his fighting techniques more than anyone else to compensate for his lack of magical power. Then, without further ado, let the match begin!]

A teacher from the sideline raised his hand at the host's signal. As soon as his hand was lowered Kang Shin-hyuk leaped forward to Do Woojin, who backed away in response and thrust his sword into the ring.

That was the trigger. His body was swarming with mana!

[Ahhh, contestant Do Woojin is infusing his magical power! His belt is releasing its own magical power in line with him—it seems that his belt is a supplementary artifact that helps activate his trait!]

The fact that Do Woojin was born with strong magical power was a testament to his strong trait. And that gave him the excuse to scold Kang Shin-hyuk's highly ranked (A-) trait.

The stronger the trait, the stronger the magical power! That was an unwritten law in the world of superhumans. Follow current novels on [novelFire.net](http://novelfire.net)

'I've never seen you activate it fully before because there are so many restrictions on the activation of traits.'

If you attended the academy, it was inevitable to have the identity of your trait discovered by others in one way or another, but without the ability to read the status window, it was impossible for others to infer the nature of your trait in great detail.

Moreover, since Do Woojin had never activated his trait in class, Kang Shin-hyuk suspected that the conditions for its activation were severely restricted. True to that expectation, he seemed to possess a ridiculously powerful trait that could only be activated with the aid of an artifact.

'Though the use of an artifact also depends on the individual's skill. So? What is his trait?'

Kang Shin-hyuk opened his eyes wide, correcting his balance so that he couldn't be swept away by the raging magical power storm. Naturally, his spirit power flowed into his eyes to strengthen his vision.

He could see Do Woojin's body swelling in the midst of the storm.

[Ahhhhhhhhhhh! That is amazing! What an incredible trait that is matched by his powerful magical power!]

The host, who had noticed the identity of Do Woojin's skill almost simultaneously with Kang Shin-hyuk, lavished praises on him. The host was wary of aiding a contestant by revealing the identity of his opponent's trait, but Kang Shin-hyuk seemed to have already caught onto the matter, so he didn't hesitate to make the remark.

“Whoa!”

It was just then. The mana that covered the entire ring instantly converged into Do Woojin’s body, revealing his transformation into a giant nearly three meters tall.

“Huh!”

“Amazing..... That’s amazing!

“Transformation! It’s not common to see a transformation that is solely focused on size and pure power.”

Gigantification. Actually, given the fact that his sword had also grown bigger, the term “enlargement” might have been more apt.

As he grew in size, his power had also increased, and the air around him gave off the vibe of a monster rather than a human being. If he nurtures his trait further, he could well end up becoming a top-tier tank.

But despite the terrifying pressure, Kang Shin-hyuk let out a faint smile.

“Ah..... Hm.”

“If you won’t come, I will!”

Do Woojin rushed to him, seemingly having become more militant by becoming a giant. With the increase in size, the width of his stride was broadened, and his speed was faster with the added muscles. So fast, indeed, that ordinary people had a hard time tracking his movement.

“Whoo.”

Kang Shin-hyuk took a step forward. He drew a circle with the Godslayer sword in the air and firmly gripped it. He recalled the previous experiences he had with the sword.

The battle at the top-quality hotel where he confronted a monster whose size, weapon, and aggression were bigger than the gigantified Do Woojin.

‘Of course, I’m a bit weaker than I was when I drank the potion.....’

He was weaker than during the incident at the hotel, but Do Woojin was also weaker than the Troll. On top of that, Do Woojin didn't have the ability to create a shockwave. Most importantly, however, his current understanding of the Godslayer sword was incomparably deeper than when he fought against the monster.

Moreover, whenever he practiced sword dance techniques, he simulated re-matches against the Troll in his head countless times. Although the imaginary simulation didn't count as an actual battle, after a couple of practices he was able to pull off an 80% win rate.

Therefore, victory against an opponent weaker than the War Troll was inevitable. His certainty in the outcome of the battle was the reason for his vague facial expression. If 'enlargement' was the only trump card that Do Woojin had up his sleeve.....

"Sorry, Do Woojin."

As if he heard Kang Shin-hyuk muttering to himself, Do Woojin's eyes narrowed to a slit. He opened his mouth as if to answer something back.

But Kang Shin-hyuk leaned over and charged in without waiting for the answer. His hard-trained spirit power soared like wildfire. The Godslayer sword made a pleasant cry as if to resonate with the flow of his spirit power.

The giant struck down his sword, but Kang Shin-hyuk lifted his Godslayer sword and let it slip away. The giant tried to punch him, but it didn't reach him. The giant tried to kick him with his foot as a last resort, but.

Kang Shin-hyuk's sword had already reached its destination.

"Kahak!"

The Godslayer sword, which was incomparably more elegant, potent and free the violent aura than during the incident at the hotel, struck a vital spot of Do Woojin.

The trajectory of the sword drawn in the air was slow enough for his eyes to catch, but Do Woojin could not stop the attack.

[Oh, my God!..... What an unexpected turn-out! Contestant Kang Shin-hyuk is overwhelming contestant Do Woojin! I'm sure you have heard that contestant

Kang Shin-hyuk isn't capable of using mana but..... What are those movements? Contestant Do Woojin is fast and strong, but he cannot reach contestant Kang Shin-hyuk!]

The sight of Do Woojin swinging his long-sword in every direction after being slain by the Godslayer sword resembled a fish that had escaped water.

On the other hand, Kang Shin-hyuk moved his body swiftly like a butterfly, avoiding every attack and rushing into the gaps of his movements to strike his vital points. His counter-attacks were perfectly timed, as if the two had planned those movements before the match began.

“Wow.....”

“Is it a side effect of gigantification? No—actually, that kid is very strong right now. You can tell by just reading his momentum. If so.....”

“What was that kid's trait? The report at the time of his awakening.”

“It was high proficiency of martial arts at the cost of the ability to use mana.”

“But his power is effective enough to deal damages to a superhuman. He's completely overwhelming him with his movements! To add to that..... I don't think I can dodge those sword attacks myself.”

The people sitting in the audience stood up almost in unison. People who only focused their attention on Do Woojin for his gigantification felt like they had been hit by cold water.

“You fools, look at the sword that the boy is holding.”

Then a scout from Vanguard, one of the world's most powerful guilds, said mockingly to those who were surprised. Only then did others find that the sword in Kang Shin-hyuk's hand had a distinct dragon pattern engraved on it.

“I still can't feel mana from it, but it's gotten stronger. That pattern wasn't there before.”

“Then the artifact was activated under some special condition, or.....”

“It's the power of that boy's trait.”

It didn't matter which way. If he could fight a giant without backing down, and deal damages that were effective against a giant, it was proof that he was a skilled superhuman, whether he was capable of mana or not.

It was impossible to deny it. It was no coincidence that a boy without mana had enrolled in the world's top superhuman training academy, where he was now evidently one of the greatest potentials!

– Beep!

When the nearly one-sided battle came to a conclusion after very little time had passed, the buzzer rang. Do Woojin himself had felt that he was at his limit.

“Crrrrr.....”

Just as Kang Shin-hyuk pulled his sword, Do Woojin knelt on the ground helplessly as he dropped his sword. His body began to shrink into its original form like wind blowing out of a balloon.

After he wore the Godslayer sword on his waist, Kang Shin-hyuk agonized over whether he should reach out his hand to him. Out of sympathy, he decided to do so.

Fortunately, Do Woojin, who had completely returned to his original form, did not reject his hand.

“You son of a bitch.”

Do Woojin, who stood up holding his hand, suddenly cursed at him. His tone, however, signified a sense of relief.

“Why did you pretend to be weak all this time?”

“I was, in fact, weak, but I got stronger.”

“Fuck.....”

With that one word of despair, Kang Shin-hyuk started laughing. Do Woojin frowned.

“My eyes were fucking useless.”

“Yup.”

“I’m madder that Baek In-ha knew about your true strength all along.”

“Well, now you know.”

“Yeah, fuck. You’re fucking strong.”

Do Woojin spat out curse words again and let go of his hand. He stepped back from the ring and gave him one last remark in a quiet voice.

“Congrats on making the quarterfinals.”

The matches continued on.

Karen Stringfield, who was also participating in the competition, had advanced to the quarterfinals like Kang Shin-hyuk, but he faced a Magic major whom he easily defeated by throwing his Godslayer sword.

The contestant, who mistook his throw as a simple threat, laughed at Kang Shin-hyuk for abandoning his weapon and tried to defend himself with an instantly activated defense magic, but sadly, the sword thrown by him contained as much spirit energy as he could muddle at the moment, and his throwing technique was enhanced by the Fanged Wyvern Dance.

In the end, that single throw greatly exceeded the maximum amount of impact and the contestant instantly passed out. It was a concise yet pathetic battle.

“Did you just see that?”

“That attack should work on monsters too, don’t you think.....? I’ve learned quite an interesting throwing skill.”

“Apparently, he’s good at all martial arts techniques, and throwing technique is just one of them.”

“Huh.”

His opponent for the semifinals was a Knight major male student from 1st-year F-Class, who was considered a strong contender for the trophy. Karen said that he was a talent whose entry into the Wyvern Knights was secured, just like her and Do Woojin.



He was the master of a versatile trait that could generate flames around his weapon and around himself for protection, but sadly, the flames weren't powerful enough to pierce through the Godslayer sword.

[Your synchronization rate is slightly increasing. Assimilation rate is now at 3.9%.]

He felt sorry for his opponent, but he was very familiar with flames.

The memory of the blacksmith, who had been accompanied by flames throughout his life, was whispering to him. You don't deserve to be called a blacksmith if you get scared off by such petty flame.

Kang Shin-hyuk slashed through the raging flames coming from all sides and stepped forward. The heat resistance effect he got from blacksmithing was activated during the battle, whose effect was—to his surprise—amplified by spirit power. The damage accumulated on his sensor was consequently minor.

"You, what the hell is that weapon!"

"It's an artifact, a very precious one."

His opponent seemed to have thought that the reason for his flames' ineffectiveness was due to the Godslayer sword. Of course, it was true that the (C) rank sword could not be affected by that kind of flame, so it wasn't a false assumption.

"You're weaker than Do Woojin."

"Don't make me laugh, it's not over yet..... Kuhuk!"

With his worthless trait, his only means of taking down Kang Shin-hyuk was through his sword skills. But that was an area where Kang Shin-hyuk couldn't lose to anyone.

After clashing blades with him several times, Kang Shin-hyuk realized that there was nothing left to learn from him, so he knocked the sword out of his hand and dealt multiple damages to his vital points, prompting his buzzer to ring.

That was the end. It was a less exciting ending than Kang Shin-hyuk's match against Do Woojin.

[Ah, what an incredible finish! The boy who no one had paid attention to had just become the dark horse of the competition..... Ah, I apologize—was that expression too cliché? But it is undeniably a dramatic turn-out! Kang Shin-hyuk is going to the finals! His opponent is.....]

Kang Shin-hyuk gently closed his eyes and opened them shortly after.

His opponent who had advanced to the finals by defeating Karen Stringfield was a talented student who was considered to be the next king of the Magic majors.

– The final will be held after an hour's break! Get your popcorns ready, everyone!

It was a head-to-head confrontation between a Knight major and a Magic major.

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## Chapter 27 Breaking out of the Egg - 5

### Chapter 27 Breaking out of the Egg - 5

“He was unbelievably fast. I thought my speed was second only to Baek In-ha, but his magical attacks caught up to me.”

An hour's intermission was given before the finals. Karen visited Kang Shin-hyuk who was waiting in his own waiting room and started talking about various things.

He would've kicked her out if she came empty-handed, but she brought a mango smoothie with her to wish him good luck, so he decided to listen while drinking it.

"And there were plenty. He incanted some sort of magic and created ten fire arrows to shoot at me. That bastard certainly has at least two abilities: one to create multiple arrows and another to fire them at high speed. He's purely a magic type."

"Do Magic majors mostly have those kinds of traits?"

"No, only a few are armed with incantation traits or skills. The traits and skills of Magic majors are usually ones that modify their brain structure to become capable of certain magical skills, create magical circles or modify their magical power. If you're really unlucky, you'd just be given an ability to create a fireball or something like that. Though anyone with that kind of low-tier magic wouldn't have made it to Shinyoung."

Kang Shin-hyuk smiled back at her, took his mouth off the smoothie, and responded.

"You never know. Maybe there's someone like me among Magic majors. Someone who's really good at handling fireballs."

"Oh..... Anyway! He'll use incantation magic to create multiple high-speed weapons. So you shouldn't throw away your weapon like you did in the quarterfinals. Rather, think of it as fighting against a warrior who throws a lot of weapons, and be careful."

"You came to tell me that, didn't you?"

Karen came to cheer for Kang Shin-hyuk in her own way by informing him of his opponent's abilities. When Kang Shin-hyuk smiled softly, Karen shrugged her shoulders and laughed.

"We're partners. You've got to avenge me."

"Three-legged race partners."

"I'll cheer for you. Now you're the only one who can build the honor of our class."

“Hm?”

Just as Kang Shin-hyuk narrowed his eyes to a slit out of suspicion that she had something in her mind, Baek In-ha came bursting into the room in tears.

“Shinyok!”

“Oh, I know what you’re about to say, so go over there and cry alone.”

“Shinyokkkkkkk!!!!!!”

“Get the fuck off me, you idiot!”

Five minutes ago, Baek In-ha had been defeated in the semifinals of the Battle for the Crown of Martial Arts. (1) His opponent was Natan Bodin, a third-year French student who was the current Crown of Wizards. (2)

It was a competitive match, but it was a loss all the same. Karen had already heard the news and had shared it with Kang Shin-hyuk before Baek In-ha came bursting into the waiting room.

“You’ve made a record as a 1-st year student to make it to the semifinals of the battle for the Crown of Martial Arts. Someone made it to the quarterfinals last year, but you’re the first to make it to semifinals after the Thunder Empress four years ago.”

“The Thunder Empress took the title of the Crown of Wizards as well as the Crown of Martial Arts in her first year!”

“Wow, you were actually thinking of beating the Thunder Empress.....”

Karen laughed in disbelief at Baek In-ha, who seemed like he was about to disintegrate and die. The Thunder Empress was already a legend at the time of her admission to Shinyoung. As evidence, despite her young age in mid-20s, she’s currently ranked 317th in the World Superhuman Ranking.

Some people who knew a little about her even claim that she had never shown her full power. To make that claim more authentic, she had never failed in conquering a gate, so there was no opportunity for anyone to accurately assess her full strengths.

“Ahhhhh! If I were a little faster, I would have won! If my magical power rank had a +, I would’ve totally owned her!”

“Calm down, dude. Anyway, you did a great job.”

“Actually, Baek In-ha is a real nuisance. He beat the Crown of Knights in the quarterfinals, so it all ended up as if a Knight major had lost to a Magic major.

The Crown of Knights of Shinyoung was Douglas Paine, a third-year American student studying abroad who was currently the captain of the Wyvern Knights.

Having secured his title as the Crown of Knights this year, he entered the Battle for the Crown of Martial Arts to secure that title, only to be defeated by a first-year student in the quarterfinals before even getting the chance to face the Crown of Wizards.

It would have been better if Baek In-ha went on to become the Crown of Martial Arts, but he was defeated by the Crown of Wizards while having beat the Crown of Knights!

“You’re truly a nuisance.....”

“He was weaker than me! What do you want me to do!?”

Baek In-ha rolled on the floor, saying, “I don’t give a damn about that dude.” Kang Shin-hyuk wondered what it would have been like if he had gone out to the Battle for the Crown of Knights and won the title, but the train had already left, which couldn’t be helped.

“Karen, are there any Knight majors left in the Battle for the Crown of Martial Arts?”

“Our vice-captain made it to the finals. Of course, if it’s her, I think she can beat the Crown of Wizards, but.....”

“Then is your vice-captain stronger than the captain?..... Ah, forget it. Don’t tell me. Hey, I said don’t tell me.”

“Tsk, you’re too quick-witted.”

“.....”

As soon as the vice-captain was mentioned, Karen tried to take the chance to let Kang Shin-hyuk into the loop, but stepped down while smacking her palate

as Kang Shin-hyuk quickly deterred her. Baek In-ha glanced at the two and narrowed his eyes to a slit.

“As expected, you two are dating.”

“Yes, so is today our first day as a couple?”

“No.”

“Kang Shin-hyuk, you traitorrrrrrr!”

Kang Shin-hyuk finished off his smoothie, leaving Baek In-ha alone as he flustered over Karen’s mischievous jokes. Karen threw away her empty cup and finished what she came to say.

“Anyway, everything will be fine if you win. I even bought smoothies, so you have to win.” THIS CHAPTER IS UPDATE BY NOVELFIRE.NET

“I drank it without knowing it was prepaid.”

“Oh, well, I’m going to buy you a proper artifact this time, so make sure you win, Shinyok.”

“That’s quite a burden, you know.”

Kang Shin-hyuk rose from his seat while pushing back Baek In-ha away. It was surprisingly fun to talk to them, but he didn’t have time to relax anymore. The final match was about to begin.

But when he opened the waiting room’s door, Do Woojin was standing in front of him.

“Do Woojin?”

“.....”

Do Woojin slightly flinched when he saw Baek In-ha and Karen Stringfield in the waiting room, but soon gave something to Kang Shin-hyuk.

It was the belt he was wearing when he faced him in the round of 16.

“I don’t think there’s a rule against renting an artifact. Use this.”

“What.....?”

Kang Shin-hyuk looked at Doo Woojin with a shocked look. Do Woojin clicked his tongue and avoided eye contact.

Baek In-ha, who was watching from the side, shouted with his eyes wide open.

“Oh, you’re right! Doo Woojin, you’re so smart! Wait a minute, Shinyok, I’ll lend you the artifact I brought.....”

“Huh? What?”

Karen clapped her hands as Kang Shin-hyuk was embarrassed by Do Woojin offering his belt to him and Baek In-ha who was about to take off his artifact.

“You fought so well that I thought you had everything, but I see, you didn’t use an artifact.”

“This sword of mine is an artifact.”

“But that’s the only artifact you have, right? It’s a good thing we noticed before you got up to the ring. Your final opponent is equipped with two artifacts, both of which are B rank or higher. I know for sure because I fought him myself. If you’re going to fight someone like that, you’re going to have to be well-equipped.”

“Hm.....”

Kang Shin-hyuk responded to her reasonable words in a low voice. He hadn’t been expecting this to happen.

Why did he burn so much enthusiasm for the rookie competition in the first place? Of course, he purely wanted to achieve good grades, but he also wanted to prove his strengths to Yoo Min-joon of the Wyvern Knights who started a quarrel with him.

“But the one who made me confront Yoo Min-joon and was defeated by me in the round of 16 is trying to lend me his artifact.”

It was a very difficult situation to understand. Even if he took his offer, Do Woojin was going to be seen as weird.

‘What is he thinking?’

Kang Shin-hyuk looked at Do Woojin with an indescribable look. But Do Woojin was still sticking out his belt at him with a wistful face.

“Don’t worry about useless things and just take it, you bastard. I just don’t want to see you beat me and lose in the finals just because your opponent had better items.”

“I mean, I can take mine? I don’t need yours.”

“That’s funny, what Baek In-ha’s offering you only works well for certain users.”

That was true. Of course, in terms of rank alone, the Baek In-ha’s artifact would be higher in quality than Do Woojin’s belt. But more importantly, Baek In-ha’s artifact was specialized equipment.

Baek In-ha has the highest-quality trait associated with speed, and his artifacts have the ability to enhance that quality of him. Even if Kang Shin-hyuk were to wear it, he wouldn’t receive any dramatic effect, since his agility was only a little bit high.

‘But that belt.....’

Kang Shin-hyuk thought while looking at the belt in Do Woojin’s hand. That belt had the ability to trigger the activation of the user’s trait. For someone like Kang Shin-hyuk who had exclusively relied on his trait until his awakening of spirit power, it was an invaluable treasure.

“Whoo. Okay, then I’ll borrow it for now.”

“Of course you should.”

Eventually, Kang Shin-hyuk accepted the belt from Do Woojin. He decided to push useless concerns aside and borrow the artifact only for the duration of the competition.

In the first place, it was not pleasant imagining his opponent to be armed with artifacts of B rank or higher while waiting for him, and he didn’t want to refuse the item that Do Woojin had given out with a good intention. Thus, it was not time to say, “I will win the match with this one sword!”



“Thanks, Do Woojin. I’ll definitely win.”

“It’s expensive, so don’t scratch it.”

“No, why, my artifact is much better even if it’s not a good match to your trait!”

“You’re looking down on my trait. I’ll show you what it’s made of, so keep an eye on it.”

As Kang Shin-hyuk looked at the belt in his hand while Baek In-ha was rolling on the floor from a sense of unfairness and indignation, a message from the Gaia system popped up in front of his eyes.

[Enhanced Power Belt of Delampe]

[C+]

[Special ability: Weakly triggers the activation of a trait and enhances a trait with low probability]

It was just as expected, or perhaps more. Kang Shin-hyuk took off the armor he was wearing and wore the belt. Then, as if it was waiting for the right moment, the broadcast announcing the final match rang out.

[The long-awaited final match of the Shinyoung rookie competition will begin! The contestants will now enter the stage!]

“Whoo……”

After a short deep breath, he looked back for the last time.

For an unknown reason, the sight of Baek In-ha and Do Woojin looking at him with the same sulky expression made him smile. They weren’t adults yet, he thought.

“Good luck, Shin-hyuk!”

Bartender: Winner Winner Chicken Dinner!

Karen voiced her support while the boys were staring at each other. At the same time, Claire’s cheering message popped up in front of his retina.

Kang Shin-hyuk nodded firmly and turned his head again to move forward. A myriad of spectators gathered at the second gymnasium looked at him.

Among them was a familiar face: Yoo Min-joon, the sunbae who had promised to watch his matches. He seemed shocked to find Do Woojin's belt on Kang Shin-hyuk's waist.

Kang Shin-hyuk was expecting such a reaction from him, but it was more entertaining to see it with his own eyes. He didn't accept Do Woojin's good-willed offer to provoke such a reaction from him, but he couldn't help but enjoy.

[Oh, contestant Kang Shin-hyuk! He's wearing the belt that contestant Do Woojin wore in his last match! They've exchanged their artifact for the final match, and according to the rules..... There's no problem! How nice of him to lend his artifact to the opponent who beat him!]

On the stage, his opponent with a conical hat holding an elegant staff looked straight at him. Rather than an out-dated fashion, they were powerful artifacts that were at least B ranks, as Karen had told him.

[On one side we have a genius who has been the fan-favorite from the start, and on the other, we have a dark horse who popped out of nowhere. What an exciting match this is! A battle of pride between a Knight and a Wizard; the loser will carry home the humiliation of losing to their rival as the representative of their major. Both contestants must put out everything they have!]

Kang Shin-hyuk stepped up to the ring and looked at his opponent.

On the surface, he didn't seem nervous at all. Kang Shin-hyuk could understand the look of arrogance; he was the Wizard equivalent of Baek In-ha, whom every Magic major unanimously acknowledged as the strongest.

'If I hadn't borrowed Do Woojin's belt, I would have been finished after swinging my sword once or twice.'

But somehow, it never occurred to him that he was going to lose.

It wasn't because of his friends' sincere and heartfelt support; he was just fully confident in himself.

“Whoo.....”

Kang Shin-hyuk pulled out his sword and fixed his fighting posture.

The judge raised his hand and struck it down.

“Fight!”

The Godslayer shone brightly and Kang Shin-hyuk rushed to his opponent.

The final match of the rookie competition has begun.

Editor/Translator Notes:

(1) Fixed a translation error; the previous “academy competition” was modified to “Battle for the Martial Arts Crown.”

(2) Changed from the previous “King of Magic majors”

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## Chapter 28 - Breaking out of the Egg – 6

### Chapter 28 - Breaking out of the Egg – 6

“Ha.”

Kang Shin-hyuk’s opponent was Yuta Mitsui, a Japanese international student and a freshman in the Magic Department. Yuta laughed at Shin-hyuk, who charged at him as soon as the game started.

‘I was nervous because he is the best in Shinyoung with his skill, but there’s nothing to see here.’

The British woman that fought in the semi-finals lost rather quickly, and he didn't think this would be any different. With his normal eyesight, he wouldn't be able to follow the movements of Shin-hyuk at all, but he was currently using an artifact that increased his vision and reaction speed. Right now, it was as if Shin-hyuk was running slowly, and was easy for Yuta to hit with his magic. Even though he was running at his best, he was caught in those eyes reinforced by artifacts.

'Not that I was expecting much from the knights.' Yuta laughed and lifted his staff; it was an artifact that increased his casting speed and guided his magic projectiles. With that staff and his characteristics that allowed him to use high-speed chanting and multiply, there was no-one among Shinyoung's freshmen that could surpass him.

"Now!" Colorful petals bloomed from the end of the staff as nearly twenty fire arrows immediately formed to seek out Kang Shin-hyuk.

"Hm?" Surprisingly, Shin-hyuk didn't make any attempt to avoid it. He whisked his sword around as he lifted it. The weak wind propelled by the blade was enough to redirect some of the flame arrows' trajectories slightly. Shin-hyuk continued to run along the path he created, right across the small arena. Fighting against a wizard was a game of taking advantage of the gaps in each other's defenses. In avoiding this preemptive attack, the edge was definitely on Kang Shin-Hyuk's side.

'He turned the arrows' direction with the wind from his sword? That's no martial art! But it doesn't matter!' A small smile crossed Yuta's lips as the flame arrows that missed Shin-hyuk turned in the air began to pursue him. But he had already narrowed the distance between himself and his opponent, and it didn't matter if an arrow hit him if he could defeat Yuta right away.

"It's over!" Yuta exclaimed, dozens of flame arrows blooming once again from the staff right in front of Shin-hyuk. A wave of magic approached him from both sides; it was clear to see why Yuta was already the strongest in the magic department. Anyone would be hard-pressed to find someone who could match his firepower at his age, even when you considered the support he had from his artifacts.

"Hm..." In this situation where the game seemed to be over already, Kang Shin-hyuk still drew his sword forward. At that moment, everyone watching immediately recognized it as a skill. All of the flame arrows in the way the sword cut through were extinguished.

-Oh my! Those arrows contain quite the punch, but they were cut off in an instant by Kang Shin-hyuk's sword! A skill that destroys magic is the most desired one for close combat, but who knew Kang Shin-hyuk had it!

"He didn't divide them; he destroyed them. It was possible because it was low-leveled magic. If he can grow that skill, it would be worth having."

"I thought I could use that card too, but it wasn't worth using in the quarterfinals!"

The auditorium was heating up due to the words of the moderator. Kang Shin-hyuk, however, had no real idea of what he had just done. He swung the sword because his intuition had told him it would be best to cleave through the arrows with his sword.

'Well, I suppose it's a skill incorporated into my sword dance now.' Perhaps it was due to the spiritual force that moved according to the sword's trajectory, but he knew now wasn't the time to consider the reasons. Now was the best chance to push his attack. He thrust his sword forward, aiming at his opponent's head, but something blocked him.

"Hot!" Yuta had done everything he could to block the sword, sending flame arrows from all directions at him immediately after. Even with that, though, he would probably get hit before they landed.

"Khhh...!"

"Shield!" Kang Shin-hyuk swung his sword again and rolled back to create some space. Instead of chasing after him, the fire arrows stopped in place as Yuta began to chant defensive magic once more.

-The tides have turned again! There were some sharp movements from Kang Shin-hyuk, but Yuta Mitsu has created an enormous number of magic arrows! It's incredible how quickly he can chant his defensive magic while managing all of them!

Yes, that was the problem Kang Shin-hyuk faced. He breathed in deep, gripping his sword tightly. A wizard that could control dozens of magic arrows, and even summon a shield to protect them. They were a frustrating foe to fight; even a master swordsman would have been easier. It was an uphill battle for a martial artist like Shin-hyuk, but he knew it was pointless to bemoan that fact.

'If I were a little stronger, I would've finished it already. Still, it's not over yet. Let's try again.' If he gave him any more time, he would use that to summon more magic arrows or hinder him with secondary magic. He hit the floor and rushed back towards his opponent, done with thinking. His spiritual power swirled around his body, and through his sword, a figure of a dragon clearly formed on it for anyone to confirm.

-Just like the previous matches, a dragon has appeared on Kang Shin-hyuk's sword! Is that an ability of the artifact, or his skill?!

A magic arrow rushed to meet Kang Shin-hyuk as he fiercely charged. He didn't avoid it, cutting the magic at once. He had concluded that the amount of spiritual power he consumed doing so was manageable.

"Huh."

He kept sprinting forward, his sword cutting down the magic arrows flying at him. At least one vanished each time his sword flashed out in his beautiful dance. The sword flew through the air like a swallow, much faster and lighter than before.

-Wham! Bang! Kablam! Bam!

Kang Shin-hyuk, who was pushing himself to the max, had no blind spots at that moment. The magic arrows gave off too much energy to be able to sneak around him. The belt around his waist shone brilliantly, enhancing his abilities. The sight of him running around and cutting through the magic arrows as they closed in on him from every side was dazzling. However, as he cut through about half of the arrows, and his feet hit the floor...

-Kablaaaaaam!

"Kh...!"

The remaining magic arrows exploded all at once.

-Kang Shin-hyuk was caught off guard! He didn't know that the magic arrows could remotely detonate!

Kang Shin-hyuk broke through the explosion, his body gliding briefly through the air as he rushed at Yuta. His clothes were slightly singed, but the sensor hadn't gone off; it wasn't a clean hit. The answer to how he avoided it was in

his sword, the engraving of a dragon wrapped around it. It had grown only larger.

“Hold!” Yuta had already prepared himself for that not being the finishing blow, activating his restraint magic that he had been preparing to tie Shin-hyuk in place. But that was what Shin-hyuk had been waiting for.

“Kh...!” The moment his feet stopped, Kang Shin-hyuk stood firm, twisting his waist to put all of his strength into his upper body. He threw his sword forward, letting it sail toward Yuta.

-There it is! The throwing technique that finished off his opponent in the quarterfinals! But Mitsui Yuta was already prepared for it with a stone wall!

With a terrible crashing noise, the stone wall Yuta summoned collapsed to the ground; Yuta himself was unharmed. Kang Shin-hyuk ground his teeth but could tell the power of the magic shackles was loosening. Yuta couldn't maintain concentration on that many defensive spells. Shin-hyuk didn't miss the opportunity, rolling his feet forward violently to break through the shackles. He attempted to summon his sword to hand as he charged once more, but it did not return to him.

“Urgh?!”

“Artifacts with a retrieval function aren't common, but I expected as much. “Shin-hyuk's sword was entangled at the base of the ring, bound by Yuta's magic. At the same time he had been defending, he had chanted a spell to neutralize the sword as well. [READ LATEST CHAPTERS AT NovelFire.net](http://NovelFire.net)

“You wouldn't throw it if you didn't have a way to get it back, after all. But if I do this, you can't get it back.”

“...” Amid the battle, such a thought had occurred to him, and he had sealed the sword with his magic, proving that it wasn't just his artifacts that made him such a dangerous foe. Shin-hyuk couldn't call back his sword without tearing up the entire floor.

“I was worried about your ability to cut through my magic, but if I just nullify your artifact, then it doesn't matter.” He was trying to talk calmly, but it was easy to see Yuta was anxious. The sword that was stuck to the floor was still trying to break free from its restraint. He knew he couldn't afford to wait any longer, chanting attack magic to finish the fight.

“Go!”

At that moment, Kang Shin-hyuk instinctively stretched his arm forward, thinking he had to stop the attack. But that didn't mean he was able to snatch away his opponent's staff or block the magic attack.

-Woowooong.

The belt about his waist began to vibrate. While the simple explanation was that the belt's power assisted in activating a trait, it would be more accurate to say; it stimulated the very core of a capable user. And so, it was perhaps thanks to that...

“Ah...!”

Deep inside of him, a dragon was sleeping in the depths of Kang Shin-hyuk's consciousness. One he had yet to reach. But just a little... a little bit... it began to open its eyes.

-Know yourself.

Golden eyes flashed awake, a weak part of a much greater power flowing out.

“What...what is this?” Yuta, who had been trying to fire his magic, began to tremble as if he was shocked. His mana wasn't cooperating with him at all. A terrifying presence wrapped around his staff, forcibly breaking his synchronization with the artifact.

“I broke his connection with the artifact...that'll be a useful skill.” Kang Shin-hyuk muttered to himself. He was beginning to realize that the power of his trait, which he had been applying only to himself and his own weapon, could affect the weapons of others.

‘The moment I listened to Yuta, I thought I could do it. I tried it on a whim, but...it actually worked. I didn't think I could seal the artifact away, but thanks to this belt...’

“Now, this seems fair.”

“You...!” Yuta cleared his confusion and began to chant again, forming a new attack.

-Bang!



“Wow!”

Kang Shin-hyuk hit him with a solid kick backed by all of his might, breaking straight through his defense magic.

-Kang Shin-hyuk, how did you do it?! Preventing the opponent from using their magic, and then breaking through their defenses with a kick! I heard you were good at all martial arts, but this is insane! Oh, another jab landed! A one-two punch!

The easiest way to mess with a wizard's magic chant was to apply constant physical and mental pressure to prevent them from focusing. Kang Shin-hyuk knew this well and was putting that knowledge to good use.

“Ow! Stop, ah!”

“Let's keep going.”

-Bang!

His right fist, containing a part of the spiritual power he had been using to amplify his sword, slammed into the enemy's face. The shock knocked Yuta down, his sensor ringing out, announcing that the battle was finally over.

-Kang Shin-hyuk sent Mitsui Yuta flying with a right straight! The final of the Rookie's Game has ended with a punch! The winner is Kang Shin-hyuk, the Rookie King from the Knight's Department! That must hurt for the Magic Department!

Kang Shin-hyuk raised an arm, calling the sword back to his hand, now that it was free from its magical restraints. The hall around him immediately filled with cheers and applause.

“Wow!”

“He really did it! He broke through that magic fire and beat that wizard up with his fists!”

“Looks like we have a new magic killer. How fun.”

“Kang Shin-hyuk! Kang Shin-hyuk! Kang Shin-hyuk!”

“I bet Vanguard wants him.”

“...This is insane.”

Kang Shin-hyuk felt like the main character in some TV show. He stood there blankly, thinking that this all might be a dream when two lines of text formed in his retina.

—Talent [Awakened Wyrms (A+)] has satisfied one condition for growth. As soon as the other conditions are met, the trait will grow.

—A 100HP bonus from a manager who is impressed with your proud appearance!

‘Oh, so it’s not a dream.’ Kang Shin-hyuk smiled and raised his arms even higher in victory for the growing cheers of the crowd and the countless eyes upon him. Kang Shin-hyuk looked around for Yoo Minjoon, who had already been shocked by the belt he wore.

“Yeah...!”

“Ha.” Yoo Minjoon looked as if he couldn’t believe his eyes, grinding his teeth as soon as he made eye contact with Kang Shin-hyuk. He turned away and left in a hurry, the sight of which made Shin-hyuk feel a little relieved.

‘Hopefully, Do Woojin is alright. Though, he was probably already prepared for this.’

A mixture of feelings was present in the crowd. Some were astonished and admired him; some were wary. Some were happy or surprised, and some were angry. But one thing was for sure.

Kang Shin-hyuk’s fate at Shinyoung academy had changed entirely.

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## Chapter 29 - Breaking out of the Egg – 7

### Chapter 29 - Breaking out of the Egg – 7

The awards ceremony was held later that afternoon, accompanied by the announcement of the results of the athletic meet and the selection of the MVP. The Qing team had successfully beaten the Baek team and not just thanks to the struggle between Kang Shin-hyuk and Yuta. As Karen Stringfield had predicted, the Vice-Captain of the Wyvern Knights defeated the Crown of Wizards in the finals, taking the Crown of Two Kings. When the Crown of Knights had lost in the quarterfinals, there had been some worry whether the Crown of Magic would claim the victory for the Magic Department. The Knight Department had claimed victory in the end, however, and strengthened their position this year.

“There are so many interesting characters at Shinyoung this year.”

“Did you see that second-grade kid, Eleanor R. Alger? I don’t remember seeing much of them last year.”

“Who was that first grader who defeated the Crown of Knights? Baek In-ha?”

“Shinyoung is still Shinyoung, after all. I’m looking forward to next year already.”

The results of the athletic meet were announced first, followed by the MVP class and individual awards. Following that, the Crown of Knights, of Magic, and of Two Kings were summoned forward and presented. Usually, one of the two Crowns occupied the position of Two Kings, but this year was different. Kang Shin-hyuk took this opportunity to see the Vice Commander of the Wyvern Knights that Karen Stringfield praised so generously in person.

‘Are they British? Did Karen follow them because they’re from the same country? I wonder if the Wyvern Knights and the Magic Society have all been taken over by international students...is she really eighteen-years old?’ Kang Shin-hyuk was focused on the English girl with long black hair and clear purple eyes. He wondered idly if her eyes were a result of some trait she had but couldn’t deny that they added to her noble image. The most surprising thing to him, however, was how short she was. She couldn’t have been more than 155 centimeters tall, with a slight stature that was unfavorable for close

combat. No one would dare make fun of her for her height, however, as her presence there as the Crown of Two Kings proved her ability. Kang Shin-hyuk was filled with admiration for her as he watched her calmly accept the gaze of everyone around her.

-Next is the certificate award for the winner of the Rookie Game.

For the first time that day, Kang Shin-hyuk was face to face with the principal of Shinyoung, Shin Yoonhak. Like many others who worked at the academy, the principal was also a person who had made a name for himself as one of the top heroes in the world before working there

“Kang Shin-hyuk...I had a lot of expectations for you since the start.” That was the first thing the principal said as he greeted Kang Shin-hyuk for the award ceremony.

“Haha...thank you.” Kang Shin-hyuk replied with an ambiguous smile, not buying the words he was hearing.

“You have met my expectations wonderfully. To help students like you with unique and wonderful traits find the right path and grow up- that is the duty of our school.”

“Thank you. I will try my best going forward.” Kang Shin-hyuk almost couldn’t stop himself from laughing at the words unique and wonderful. Shinyoung would fall from grace if they really cared for kids with such characteristics, but in the first place, it was just a pretense, so he decided not to bother with it. People in this country didn’t water seeds to make them grow; they looked for the sprouts that had grown on their own in a dry land. He thought it was stupid, but he knew he couldn’t help that the world ran like that. At that moment, Kang Shin-hyuk had broken through the hard ground and sprouted. He proved he deserved water.

“More than that, you saved face for the Korean students. I look forward to your success in the future. Especially in France.”

“Yes.” France. It took a second for Kang Shin-hyuk to recall what he was talking about, as he had forgotten all about it while preparing for the games. The finalists of each individual exhibition, including the rookie one, would participate as school guests at the 15th World Superman Conference held in Paris. He couldn’t help but be excited about a free overseas trip.

"This red badge will be evidence of your victory today. Always wear it on your school uniform." The principal presented him with a certificate and then attached the badge directly to the left side of his uniform.

"Okay." Similar badges had been given to the other victors.

"That will be all."

"There was the prize as well, Principal."

"Ah, yes. There were two options. Which one did you want, Kang Shin-hyuk?"

"I'll take the spherical object." He responded without hesitation. The principal lifted an eyebrow at this boy who would dare take the unknown object over the excellent B-class artifact.

"Very well. May I ask why?"

"It feels like the correct choice. Besides that, I can't even use mana so the other one is useless to me."

"Haha, of course. That it is." The principal burst into laughter and waved a nearby faculty member to hand Kang Shin-hyuk his prize, a box with the spherical egg inside.

"Maybe you can awaken the possibilities it holds."

"Maybe." Kang Shin-hyuk took the box and hugged it to his chest, responding with a firm voice. The principal shook his hand with a smile. At the moment, Shin-hyuk could feel energy secretly emanating from the principal, trying to explore him. He almost reactively used his spiritual power to protect himself, but before he could, a message from the administrator arrived.

-Spiritual power isn't the type of thing he can sense, so don't worry. Stay still.

'What about my regenerative power?'

-If you don't open the status window yourself, he won't see that either.

Thanks to the administrator's advice, Kang Shin-hyuk was able to avoid rousing the principal's suspicion by activating his spiritual power in response to the principal's search ability.

“Well, yes.” Seemingly satisfied to learn just about the Awakened Wyrms ability, the principal nodded with a smile upon his lips. Kang Shin-hyuk shook off his thoughts and bowed his head, pretending not to notice a thing. Though he had to bite his tongue to keep it that way.

‘From the beginning, I was suspicious.’ There was no one in this world to trust. As Kang Shin-hyuk went down from the platform, recalling that fundamental truth, all of the first-year C class members were waiting for him, with Baek In-ha at the front.

“He’s here, everyone get out of the way!”

“Rookie of the Year is coming through!”

“From now on, I will sing his achievements! Principal, give me a beat!”

They all crowded around him, pretending as if they had always been best buddies. However, he didn’t try to push them away or rebuke them. He decided it was wiser to not waste his energy with the past, and instead focus on what would happen from then on. Maybe he could make a new relationship with all of them. It would have been impossible for him to consider it before, but now, he had been able to shake away that negative mindset at least a little bit.

“Ah, Woojin Do.” Woojin Do was off by himself, but he made eye contact with Kang Shin-hyuk. Even though he won the championship with his own power, he was thankful for his help.

“Thank you. It’s thanks to you that I won.”

“Thanks to the belt?”

“Yeah. I made sure to use it properly.”

“Okay.” Woojin Do gave him a small smile, which Shin-hyuk returned as he handed him back the belt.

“Hey, Woojin Do lent him that?”

“When did they get so close?”

“How kind of him.”

“Woojin Do, right hand of the Rookie King!”

As soon as they heard the conversation between the two, his classmates began to swarm Woojin Do as well. The awkward atmosphere between the two had entirely disappeared now.

“Well done.”

“Ha.” Baek In-ha showed up to the side of Shin-hyuk. Instead of asking Baek what he had done well, he instead brushed him off, the red badge swaying from his chest. Baek In-ha’s eyes shook as he looked at the badge.

“Jealous?”

“Just you wait. Next year, you will call me brother.”

“Okay then, I’ll listen to you next year when you win. Until then, call me brother.”

“If that’s the case, I have no choice but to take the throne now!”

\*\*\*

The athletic competition, as tumultuous as it had been, ended in success. New stars had emerged. Those were Kang Shin-hyuk and Baek In-ha, of course, but Woojin Do, who had shown off his strength despite losing, was also receiving attention. Scouts were fiercely competing for the prospective talents they found. Kang Shin-hyuk was receiving messages from several people as well, but for the time being, he put them all on hold. He thought he was still too weak to properly respond to them. Two of them, however, couldn’t be ignored. The first was the guild that made Korea the world’s top superhuman power- Vanguard, the guild at the top of the world rankings.

“I’m Hoon Lim, team leader of Vanguard One.”

“I’m Kang Shin-hyuk, a freshman in the Knight Department.”

“Why not just introduce yourself as the Rookie King?”

“That’s a bit embarrassing for me to say...” Later in the evening, long after the closing ceremony for the athletic meet, Kang Shin-hyuk was sitting across from Hoon Lim in a café near the school. Hoon Lim tried to offer to take him to the campus café for a drink, but Shin-hyuk refused. He didn’t want to draw the

attention of the other students for no reason, and he had never been to the campus café before.

“It’s been a while since I’ve seen a Korean student occupy the position of Rookie King. I’m proud both as a Korean and as an alumnus of Shinyoung.” The man didn’t touch the iced americano that he had ordered, but Shin-hyuk wasted no time in trying his mocha latte with extra whipped cream.

“Shinyoung is a place where talented people from all over the world come together. In terms of ability, though, Baek In-ha is much better than I am.” Shin-hyuk’s response was exceedingly polite as he put down his mocha. Hoon Lim suppressed a smile and shook his head in response.

“That boy was defeated after choosing to go after the Crown of Two Kings. Choosing your battles wisely is a valuable ability as well. You made a great choice and proved your abilities, which is why we’re contacting you.”

“Is that so...”

“Of course, that’s not the only reason. I hope you’ll excuse me, but I went ahead and looked at your admission records. You barely made it through the entrance exam, correct?” Kang Shin-hyuk nodded while making his way through the whipped cream. It wasn’t really a secret, after all. Nearly everyone knew about it.

“Despite that, in the two months since you arrived you went on to win the title of Rookie King. We are looking forward to your frankly amazing speed of development and the potential you will show in the future.”

“It is an honor.”

“What a polite young man. Right...let’s go ahead and take a look.” He took out a contract and handed it to Shin-hyuk. It was unexpected to Shin-hyuk that they would be so blunt about it, and Hoon Lim let out a laugh as if he could see right through him.

“This is Vanguard’s policies. We are the best in the world, we don’t need to waste any time in recruiting someone.”

“I like that way of approaching things.”



"Yes, I thought you might." While Hoon Lin stopped to enjoy his americano, Kang Shin-hyuk finished off his own drink as he checked out the contract.

-There are no clauses that are specifically detrimental to you, and quite a few of the provisions are beneficial.

'Oh, thank you.'

In the end, he didn't even have to read it through because the administrator checked it for him. Did he really have nothing else to do? This chapter is updated by [NOVELFIRE.NET](http://novelfire.net)

-In fact, I like that Artifact Support is a big part of this contract. Although you will be able to create the best artifacts on the planet.

'Vanguard is the world's number one guild. It's ridiculous for me to sit face to face with the leader of Team One like this.'

-However, you are one of the most notable being in the Hero Universe, where countless worlds gather. You don't need to dwell on being number one in this world right now.

Sometimes the administrator's words were so grandiose that they caught Kang Shin-hyuk off guard. He couldn't say they were completely wrong, though.

'I haven't even shown everything I can do yet.'

From his previous life as Anvil to his metallurgy and spiritual power, even his characteristics that were beginning to develop...Hoon Lim had said he was surprised by his growth, but to Kang Shin-hyuk, he was just now on the starting line. He could tell that now he had been using spiritual power, he could be sure he had endless potential. Now he could be in a position to choose rather than be chosen.

"Vanguard is a great guild."

"Of course, we are the best. In fact, we're making you an offer that you can't refuse because there will be no better place than in Vanguard." The world's best guild had contacted this first-year after seeing what he could do for just one day. If he passed it up now, there might never be another chance like it. But...

“But for now, I want to continue to grow by myself.”

“Hm?” Hoon Lim’s eyebrows raised as high as they could. He didn’t seem upset or mad, simply confused.

“I can’t openly do guild activities while in school anyway, right? There’ll be plenty of time for you to reconsider me joining before I graduate.”

“Of course, it is mostly in name, but even while you are still in school our guild can provide you many benefits such as renting artifacts. You could even take the Crown of Two Kings next year with our help.”

-It would be better to make your own artifacts. Ones meant for mana users won’t be suitable for you.

Kang Shin-hyuk wasn’t as sure as the administrator sounded, but he knew it was as attractive of an offer to him as it would be to other students. Besides, he had something else in mind.

“I want to solve that by myself. When you were a student, you didn’t need artifacts so desperately, did you?”

“Hmm...you’re right, of course. All right. We will wait as much as we can.” Hoon Lim nodded, full of confidence. The response had been crystal clear.

“Maybe the contract we offer you next time will be a little different.”

“Haha, was it because of my answer?”

“No.” The contract that Vanguard had brought him was extremely beneficial, written with the consideration of his potential for growth. Just looking at the contract was enough for Kang Shin-hyuk to realize how they were able to become the number one guild in the world.

“I’ll be showing you more than just what I have so far.”

“Hahaha! It should be expected that a Rookie King would have this much spirit. Alright, make me come back with an even better contract.” In the end, Hoon Lim burst into laughter. Kang Shin-hyuk responded with a smile and shook his hand, glad that the meeting had gone so well.

He had set his mind on not belonging to this guild, but he hoped he could maintain a good relationship with them going forward.

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## Chapter 30 - Breaking out of the Egg – 8

### Chapter 30 - Breaking out of the Egg – 8

After a pleasant meeting with the Vanguard representative, Kang Shin-hyuk returned to his room. On one side of the room, which wasn't very spacious to start, he had the Godslayer sword, the steel spear he had made, and a box wrapped in cloth.

"Alright, then."

-I've been waiting for this moment.

Kang Shin-hyuk wanted to hatch the egg as soon as he had received it, which is why he hurried back to check on it after the meeting with Vanguard.

"It's time to hatch it." After changing his clothes, Kang Shin-hyuk opened up the box and took out the egg. He thought to just toss the box away, but after he realized that it was made out of a material found beyond the gate, he decided to hold on to it.

-You can trust in the power of Lestia.

"I haven't seen it myself...no, I do. I trust in it." Shin-hyuk made sure his door was locked before he took out the hatching accelerator from the world of Lestia from the shop inventory. It took the form of an ampoule full of nutrients that you would place on the egg.

"This is..."

"Believe in it."

“Well, if even you believe it will work...” He had no choice but to pretend to be deceived by it. Fortunately, it was intuitive enough to use. He emptied the ampoule onto the egg; the shell quickly absorbed the liquid.

“Huh?” The egg began to vibrate immediately, like a Digimon egg that was about to hatch. Kang Shin-hyuk was confused, unsure of what to do, but he quickly decided to pick up the egg. It continued to shake but showed no sign of actually hatching. Thinking about what he could do, he did the only thing he could think of. He stretched out his spiritual power and wrapped it around the egg.

-Woowhoom.

What he did was instinctive, but it appeared to work. The vibration of the egg decreased as it received his spiritual power. He could feel a faint beat resonating from it, the sound of a heart. Thinking that the administrator would stop him before he did something bad, he continued to exude spiritual power into the egg, feeding it. He wasn't sure if it was working, but he was at least confident that the egg didn't hate it. He could feel the vivid emotions of the egg and could tell that they were connected through his spiritual power.

‘Wow...this is a weird new experience.’ Shin-hyuk was used to utilizing his spirit to stop his opponents’ weapons and read their abilities. This was the first time he had tried to interact with a living thing with just his pure spiritual power. Spiritual power was the energy at one’s core, which meant that right now, Kang Shin-hyuk and this egg were facing the core of each other’s existence. It felt unfamiliar to him, but it wasn’t unpleasant.

‘You have yet to hatch, yet I can tell your will is ridiculously strong. No, wait. Are you about to hatch?’ Even though they weren’t talking, he could read all of the egg’s intentions. The life that was about to be born was weak, extremely so, but it had a strong will. In interacting with Kang Shin-hyuk’s spiritual power, the energy exuded by the egg began to grow slowly, becoming clearer and firmer. Just as Kang Shin-hyuk had been able to awaken his spiritual power through attaining the memories of Anvil, this egg was receiving the information needed to be hatched in such a way.

-I didn't need to tell you a thing. After all, you are...

“The accelerator wasn't enough by itself.”

-That's right; it needed you. This means that maybe this creature was destined to meet you.

The egg of some ancient creature that already lost any hope of awakening as it was abandoned to time. To wake it up, it needed not only energy but also the presence of someone who would take up the mantle as its parent. Kang Shin-hyuk had just found it, yet as a result, its shell was already beginning to crack. He put it down on the floor carefully, watching it hatch. The administrator was already excited, however.

-What is this egg? Perhaps it wandered through the storm of time and space with no hint of what it was. There are some living organisms whose appearance and abilities vary significantly depending on the parent, its environment, the ability of its breeder...

The administrator rambled on as the egg completely cracked open, a small creature emerging from within. It resembled a rat, covered in black fur except around the face, which had small little tufts of white. It was immediately clear to Shin-hyuk that it wasn't such a simple creature, as he noticed the small but sharp strands of hair protruding from its back.

"Wait a minute, this is..."

-It is a hedgehog.

The administrator answered correctly, and Kang Shin-hyuk's mind went blank as he heard it spoken aloud.

"Why is a mammal coming out of an egg?"

-It resembles a hedgehog, but at its core is a life with a completely different structure. In the first place, normal animals aren't born with fur like that.

"He is..."

-Wow.

The hedgehog looked up at Kang Shin-hyuk, wriggling as it let out a small, cute cry. When he reached out his hand to it, it immediately crawled up and bit at the tip of his finger. It didn't hurt him, however.

-It seems that it recognizes your spirit. However, ingesting spiritual power isn't enough to fix its physical hunger. It must be starving.

"...It's pretty cute." There was a saying that all young animals were cute, and it was hard not to feel your heart warm at the sight of such an adorable little creature. It was looking straight at Kang Shin-hyuk, its eyes shining as it rubbed its head against his palm.

"I guess it's definitely not a hedgehog. What would be a good name be...pointed...dense..."

-Can I name it?

The administrator requested immediately, unable to withstand Shin-hyuk's horrible sense of naming. He nodded.

-Hedge would be nice

"Isn't that just short for hedgehog?"

-.....

Shin-hyuk recognized he touched a nerve as the administrator refused to send a response to his words. After a moment of silence, the administrator continued as if he hadn't said a thing.

-How about Spina? Or Spike...

"I should just name it myself then. I've decided, Doosik."

-Not that name!

-No, how about...

As the administrator and Kang Shin-hyuk continued to argue over its name, the hedgehog bit at his finger a few more times before wandering off somewhere. By the time Shin-hyuk realized it had disappeared from his sight, it was already in front of the steel spear he made the other day.

"Hey, that's dangerous! Don't touch it!"

-No!

Kang Shin-hyuk tried to scoop him but, but the creature was surprisingly agile despite just being born. It quickly avoided his hand and ran into the steel spear.

“Uh...?”

There was an odd sound as the little creature started to bite into the spear and eat it.

“It’s eating it?!”

-It has been biting at your finger because it was hungry.

The administrator retorted sharply at Shin-hyuk, who was making a silly noise. While he stood there looking blankly in amazement, the hedgehog began to eat at a faster rate. A tenth of the steel spear was already absorbed into its small body, and it only kept eating faster as it went.

“Haha...” Initially, Kang Shin-hyuk had been wondering if he should sell that spear on the trading board of the Hero Universe. He knew that it was of poor quality compared to what Anvil had made before and that it was a failure since it carried the emotions he had while forging it, but he still thought it would be the best way to show who he was. There would be those who would be disappointed in him or some who would not be convinced that he was reincarnated. But there would also be those who would be convinced, those who would accept him now. At least, that would have been the case if the possibilities weren’t being devoured before him. The source of this content is novel FIRE.NET

-Are you okay?

“It ate it all. My opportunity is dead.”

-Sure, that perspective is valid for you too. 10HP bonus from an administrator who learned something good!

His words were sincere; the core of the spiritual power forming the spear was already eaten by the hedgehog. He wouldn’t be able to repair it back to the state it had been. Kang Shin-hyuk decided to worry about punishing the hedgehog later and, for now, waited for him to finish his meal.

“Still...” As he watched the creature, Shin-hyuk realized something. The way it ate the metal...

“It looks more like a starfish than a hedgehog.”

-Then, how about we call it Tedro...

“I’ve decided. I’ll call it Onyx.” A dark body with a white face and dark, sparkling eyes that reminded him of jewels. It was the perfect name.

-You have met the conditions and successfully formed a pet contract. Unless his loyalty dips down to the negatives, Onyx will follow you unconditionally. Currently, his loyalty is at 50.

He had acquired a pet that could typically only be handled by tamers. Being the one that hatched him, fed him, and named him seemed to be what Shin-hyuk needed to do to meet the conditions.

“Did you know that?”

-Of course, that’s why picking a name was very important. Onyx...not bad. A 10HP bonus for your good naming sense!

It was a name that had nothing to do with either hedgehogs or starfish, but the manager appeared to be satisfied with it. While the two reached this compromise, Onyx increased his momentum in eating the remainder of the steel spear. After watching for a few minutes, the creature had devoured the entire spear and let out a cute little burp.

-Kyu-oh-oh....

It promptly fell asleep after its meal.

“This child...”

-It is young.

Even if he bowed his head and spent the rest of his life apologizing, Kang Shin-hyuk knew he would never live it down if he fell asleep so neatly after a meal. As the administrator had said, however, Onyx was still just a child. Kang Shin-hyuk struggled to dismiss his rising anger as he lifted the child up and placed him on a blanket. As he swept the remains of the egg that Onyx broke off from, he could feel them begin to vibrate and resonate with him.



“Hm...?” Kang Shin-hyuk narrowed his eyes and watched them. He didn’t think they would hurt him. Dazzling light began to pour out from them as they melted together and flew toward his hand, seeping into his skin.

“This...”

-It will not harm you, don’t worry.

He already knew without the administrator telling him. He could feel the intense energy of life emanating from the shell, resonating with his own spiritual power. The results were astounding.

-By absorbing powerful soul energy, your spiritual power has grown to C-rank.

-The power to energize and strengthen life. By growing in your understanding of this, your regenerative power has grown to E-rank.

“Huh...” Just by absorbing the eggshell was enough to produce such an outcome. Kang Shin-hyuk felt dizzy as the strong spiritual power welled up in his body. It was the simultaneous growth of two of his special abilities, which more than made up for the steel spear he lost.

“No way...you anticipated all of this...?”

...Of course. I can count from one to ten.

Kang Shin-hyuk’s eyes narrowed as he read the administrator’s message, which arrived after a pause. It was a bald-faced lie, made in an attempt to surprise him.

“Okay...thank you.”

-10HP Bonus for friendly members!

In this way, Kang Shin-hyuk took this starfish-like hedgehog as a pet. He didn’t know how it would grow up, but he knew it wouldn’t be ordinary.

...Once he woke up, Kang Shin-hyuk vowed not to let him eat the Godslayer sword.

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-Klang! Klang! Klang!

The blacksmith was shaping the metal on the anvil even today. Since he had been able to obtain metals from other worlds through the trading board of the Hero Universe, he had been studying the various metals he could purchase there. The most update novels are published on NovelFire.net

-Klang! Klang! Klang!

Immersing himself in his work, all of his useless thoughts disappeared to give way only to the desires and expectations of creation. Even his anger, which seemed as if it would never subside, could be blown away. The blacksmith thought of this work not only as his escape but also as the rest that was allowed for him.

-Mirang: Anvil, why do you want to sell these precious weapons at a bargain price?

How many hours had he been in a trance? Suddenly a question from a friend brought him out of it, and he responded with a bit of surprise.

-I'm gradually raising the price, though I still think that price is too high. I have to cover the material costs, though.

-Mirang: I think it's rude to devalue your work as such, but that's just my advice. It should be traded at a price it deserves; otherwise, people who won't be able to use them properly will buy them.

-I don't know enough, so it may be embarrassing for me to ask, but aren't all members of the Hero Universe geniuses whose talents are universally recognized?

-Mirang: You only know a couple, Anvil. Of course, each member has an exceptional talent, but their personalities can't be guaranteed.

-But that's not something I can fix.

-Mirang: What would happen if such people bought your work at this bargain price and told others about it? That would be a problem.

The blacksmith hadn't thought about it before, but as he looked down at what he was making, his expression hardened. It was a nice shield, massive in size. It made him think of a wonderful warrior, the very image of a hero. But what if it were to fall into the hands of someone who didn't know how to respect it properly? What if not a guardian, but one with ill-intent, acquired it?

-That is indeed, a problem.

-Mirang: Of course, there is no need for you to personally take responsibility for the things you craft; you are just a producer. But considering the balance of power and proper distribution, I think you need to set a higher price for your items.

-Your sight is very far.

-Mirang: What?

No one could hear his voice, but it was the voice of a man bursting with laughter.

-Mirang: I was just bothered by such quality goods being sold so cheaply.

\*\*\*

Sunlight was pouring in through the window, waking up Kang Shin-hyuk a little later than usual.

-Sync has been accelerated. Assimilation rate of 4.5%

Kang Shin-hyuk sat up, looking back at the memory of Anvil. It had been brighter than the other ones he had acquired, still vivid in his mind. The memory of an old man who had succeeded in controlling some of his emotions to find a bit of calm. As that feeling settled in his heart, Shin-hyuk felt strange that he had been so excited the day before. It wasn't a bad mood, but rather one that naturally accepted what was ahead. He noticed that the synchronization had accelerated, and he was acquiring more of Anvil's memories. He wondered if he did something, but nothing came to mind.

-It's because your spiritual power has grown.

The administrator, who had been observing Kang Shin-hyuk sit on the side of his bed, responded as if he could see right through him.

-You have achieved dramatic growth by using your spiritual power in different ways. It is the power at your core, the power of the soul. As it has grown, the memories sleeping deep within your soul have awakened.

"Oh, so that's why." Now that he understood spiritual power a little bit better, he was able to naturally accept the administrator's explanation.

-Kyu...

"It's because of this guy." He muttered with satisfaction while watching the sleeping Onyx, slumbering on a futon made of cushions and a jacket. Now that the steel spear had been devoured whole, he felt like he wanted to make something new. He also needed to gather a meal for the creature.

"...Should I head to the club room for some iron bars?"

-When the synchronization rate reaches 5%, you will be able to access the My Room function. All the metal that little creature can eat will be available to you.

"How much time will that take, I wonder...I think the club room's closed today." It was a Wednesday, but the school had designated it a holiday since the athletic meet had been the day before. But before that...Kang Shin-hyuk smiled bitterly as he picked up his stick, looking at the text message that had just arrived.

[Shin Eunah: 11 AM, at the designated place.]

[Shin Eunah: (Link)]

Before all of that, this meeting had to be resolved. The second force that approached him yesterday couldn't be ignored; he had to meet with the superhuman association.

'It's nice to meet with the association, but why did they send her...?' Fortunately, she didn't seem to notice he was Anvil, but it wasn't good to attract too much attention. Kang Shin-hyuk was firmly determined not to get caught by her, as well as to get the support of the association if he could. That

was the real reason he had agreed to meet them today. The fact he had a meeting with them was one of the reasons he rejected Vanguard as well.

‘I talked to the administrator yesterday, but it’s true that the artifacts Vanguard could lend me aren’t useful to me. The rest are things the association can also take care of.’ There was a merit that only the association had as the superhumans of Korea. They held tight to any and everything related to the gate. If he could gain support from them, he could get rid of some of the restrictions he faced as a student. For him, the place called Shinyoung was both a training facility and a prison.

“Alright, let’s go now.” After a quick bath and choosing a decent set of casual clothes, Kang Shin-hyuk strapped a training sword to his waist then checked on the sleeping Onyx before he left. He was anxious about whether it would be alright to leave him alone in the room but decided it would be fine now that he had the Pet system to aid him. The meeting place Eunah chose wasn’t far from Shinyoung, anyway. It was a familiar street to him, a shopping district for supers that he had been to several times before.

‘It’s still weird every time I come here.’ This was the place where most superhumans gathered in Seoul, where everything was meant for superhumans. It was joked that even if the government fell to the monsters, the Choin Shopping Center would be safe. Kang Shin-hyuk found the café he was looking for in a side alley, hidden away off the main street. Not many people were around, and he could tell a special type of barrier was erected to protect it.

“Welcome.” As soon as he entered the shop, he was greeted by a young clerk with a neutral expression at the counter. The soft sound of a violin being played tickled his ears. The inside of the store was quite narrow, with several antique decorations hanging all over and a staircase going up to one side. It had quite an odd atmosphere.

“Do you have an appointment?”

“Yes, here.” Kang Shin-hyuk opened the link Eunah sent him on his stick, a holographic pattern forming above it. The clerk picked up something that resembled a high-tech barcode reader to scan it, nodding at what he saw. The words [2F Room 09] appeared on his stick, the reader sending a signal to it as soon as it had confirmed he had permission. He felt briefly upset at the idea of it accessing his messages.

“Is this place always like this?”

“This is the first time, actually.” The clerk smiled and straightened up, leaning close to Shin-hyuk as if he were sharing some secret.

“It’s just because everyone wants to return here.”

“I see.” Kang Shin-hyuk exchanged a smile with the clerk and went straight upstairs after placing an order. He found his room quickly, knocking on the door. The stick vibrated again as he knocked, the door opening automatically in response.

“Ah...” Shin Eunah was already inside, drinking black tea alone. He had been hoping Claire would be with her, but it appeared that wasn’t the case.

“Hello.” She put down the teacup and greeted him after confirming it was who she expected. She was like a statue made of ice, a cool and perfect beauty. He could find no flaws in her ebony-like hair, and the golden hairpin that decorated her bangs gave her a charming impression. Her golden eyes shone brilliantly as she looked at him, making his heart beat faster. He pushed the thoughts away, recalling Claire’s face to help him in doing so.

“Hello.”

“I said I would see you again.”

“Yeah.” Her expression was unreadable. To Kang Shin-hyuk, who had a secret he wished to keep from her, he couldn’t help but almost flinch with every word she said.

“I thought you had great potential...but I didn’t know it would manifest the next day.”

“It was thanks to the artifacts I had.”

“In the decades since Shinyoung was founded, every victor of the rookie games had better artifacts than you.” Her expression remained unchanged as she spoke, pointing across the table with her hand. Kang Shin-hyuk obeyed wordlessly, sitting down across from her.

“I will talk plainly. You are strong and will only become stronger. I wish to support you going forward.”

"I guess most people here like to cut to the chase."

"Vanguard?"

"Yeah."

"Hmph." She responded immediately to the words he said in an attempt to lighten the atmosphere. By the way she clicked her tongue, he could tell she didn't like Vanguard very much.

"Did you agree to them?"

"No."

"Ah..." She let out a sigh of relief. Immediately following it, as if she caught herself doing something she shouldn't, she raised her hand to cover her mouth. At the moment, a knock sounded on the door. The clerk arrived with Kang Shin-hyuk's drink order, a mocha with extra whipped cream.

"Enjoy your stay." The clerk regarded the scene without raising an eyebrow and left.

"Hmm." Shin Eunah coughed as the clerk left. While her expression had hardly changed, he could tell by the way she fiddled with her hairpin that she was embarrassed.

"Pardon me; I don't usually act like this. It's strange, but you...well, it feels comfortable to talk to you."

"I'm glad that is the case." In fact, he wasn't happy about it at all. The hand which Kang Shin-hyuk held his coffee with was trembling slightly with agitation. He couldn't help but wonder if that meant she could instinctively sense that he was Anvil.

"Alright...let us continue." Fortunately, she didn't appear to notice as she took out a piece of paper.

"I want to make it clear first that we don't want to force you to be a part of the association after you graduate."

"Then, what do you want..."

"We have two conditions. You will not join another guild until you graduate, and you will not change nationalities."

"...That's all?"

"Yes. You will be working with our support if you agree, so organize your thoughts about the association and judge it for yourself." She beckoned for him to check the paper. It was precisely what he had wanted. A monthly subsidy would be issued under the name of the association, and artifacts ranged from C to C+ could be rented. Vanguard had offered up to B level, but that didn't really matter to him. In addition, if he could obtain permission from the superintendent of the association, he could explore gates. He would even have permission to access E-class documents held by the association. It was ridiculously favorable.

"To give such a benefit to someone not technically a part of the association..."

"Compared to the support of a large guild, it's not all that great. They all take students into gates to train and explore."

"What if I take this deal and then join a guild when I graduate?"

"I won't blame you. You can do whatever you like. But you are the one who decided to come here today." She said it with a small smile between sips of tea.

"I judged that you were a talent the association wanted and that the association was what you were interested in. If I was wrong about that, I have no one to blame but myself."

"I see." She had told him to judge the association for himself, so this was probably a test for him. He wouldn't be able to join the association just because he had the abilities, so she was planning on watching over him for the next three years to decide if he would be suitable. However, Kang Shin-hyuk saw this as a positive. If he did an excellent job, he would receive attention in the future. Not only the association, but many guilds and various people would be watching his growth. When it came to it, the association was a strong force to rely upon.

"If I may tell you one more thing." Shin Eunah, unaware that Kang Shin-hyuk had already made his decision, continued.



“If you want to get by using your own strength, the association is the best option.” Her expression and tone were ones of absolute conviction, not a hint of doubt in her body. The Eunah, who seemed like a child obsessed with her grandpa, and the Shin Eunah now in front of him were completely different people. Perhaps it was due to the large gap between the way they acted that Kang Shin-hyuk could mentally differentiate them as two separate people.

“Yes, I agree.” He nodded at her words. From the beginning, he had been planning exactly that. From the day his parents were lost when he had been saved by a superhuman from the association.

‘Those who have to face the most dangerous situations and fight more battles than any other guild...this is exactly what I wanted.’ Kang Shin-hyuk had never forgotten the fundamental reason he had for wanting to become stronger. An emotion that he shared with Anvil. Absolute hate for monsters. That was why he trained, the wealth and honor were only byproducts.

“Thank you very much.”

“...It’s alright if you just call me your senior in the future.” Shin Eunah responded immediately and shook hands with him.

Contrary to his initial impression of her, her hands were soft and warm.

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