

Gourmet 111

Chapter 111: The Birth of the Fast Eater Religion

Chronicle's mind went blank. Her head was only filled with white at that very moment. My god! ? She was a noble existence. The Eivelis Empire even worshiped her, the Phoenix Lord. she was a king that commanded more than fifty phoenixes, but Minhyuk was using her body's fire to grill hotbars?! Her anger suddenly boiled over. Just a few days ago, she had seen him plowing the fields day and night to grow the seeds quickly. Then she realized, 'Ah, wait. I'm grateful towards this human! He worked hard to save the monsters here! And I'm truly grateful for that.'

"I thought you were better than the Food God of the past... but it seems like you're not."

The sinner, Minhyuk, took two steps back and bowed his head as if he was admitting his mistakes and waiting for his punishment, although he was trying to stuff the well-grilled hotbars in his mouth at the same time.

"You!"

Screech!

Minhyuk's hands, which were bringing the skewer of hotbars in his mouth, stopped.

"I'm very grateful that you have worked hard day and night for these monsters."

"...?"

Minhyuk looked at Chronicle in confusion. What did she mean for the monsters? Minhyuk could not keep up with her thoughts.

"But, I can't believe that you're wasting your time grilling food and eating it!"

"I... Um... I'm taking a break because I'm almost done filling the fullness bar..."

Minhyuk said.

Chronicle felt that what he said was completely absurd. The time given for her request was only two weeks! Two weeks alone was not enough time for Minhyuk to do all the work needed to feed these monsters by himself. To think that the human in front of her was lying to avoid the situation?! She shouted, "What a disappointment! I thought you were much better than the previous Food God Allen! I can't believe you're lying to me just to avoid this situation!"

"But it's the truth!"

Chronicle snorted. She said, "The truth?! If what you're saying is the truth then I won't be a Phoenix from now on! I will be a chicken! A chicken!"

"But it's the truth..."

"You're still not repenting even when we've talked up to this point. I will check the egg myself."

The growth of the egg was solely dependent on how much Minhyuk had fed the monsters in the Monster's Paradise. The Phoenix Lord, Chronicle, looked at it angrily. She would not let Minhyuk go if the fullness was less than 50%. She thought, 'His lies have gone too far.'

She immediately checked the monster egg that was floating in the middle of the monster's paradise.

(Monster Egg)

Rank: Legend

Race: Pet

Description: The fullness bar is almost full and the egg has evolved into a huge pet-bearing egg.

"...!"

Chronicle was dumbfounded. She blinked blankly at the egg and Minhyuk.

"Cluck, cluck?" Minhyuk clucked. He timidly hinted about the 'I will be a chicken' statement that Chronicle had told him earlier. Chronicle stubbornly double checked the information. She thought that she was just mistaken and needed to look at it again.

(Monster Egg)

Rank: Legend

Race: Pet

Description: The fullness bar is almost full and the egg has evolved into a huge pet-bearing egg.

Of course, the content of the information did not change. Chronicle turned silent for a moment. Then, she once again heard Minhyuk's voice.

"Cluck, cluck, cluck...?"

Chronicle kept her mouth shut and silently looked at her surroundings. She finally realized the situation after looking around. The monsters had also gone strange. The Twin-Headed Ogre was leading the ogres and digging at the cliff.

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

"Grrr. Just a bit more and we can eat delicious food!"

"Grrr, grrr!"

Even the orcs.

"Chwiiiiik! Chwiiiiik! Just a bit more and we can eat delicious raw meat! Chwiiiiik, chwiiiiik!"

All of the monsters in the Monster's Paradise were working hard. They looked very tired but Minhyuk could whip them up in shape every time. Minhyuk always painted a story for them,

‘Sigh... At this rate, I won’t be able to fill the fullness by 100%, I’m really sorry... You’re all working hard but I still won’t have time to cook...’

The monsters worked hard day and night after hearing this. They even went as far as not sleeping. They were literally working to eat!

“...I don’t think I look like a chicken,” Chronicle said as she hummed at Minhyuk.

Minhyuk’s eyes sparkled brightly. He said, “Then, you should pretend that you didn’t know...”

He quickly hinted at the skewers in his hands. Chronicle understood what he was trying to say, she shook her head in defeat. Minhyuk peeked around quietly, before proceeding to grill another set of skewered hotbars using Chronicle’s body fire! She looked at the grilling hotbars and sighed unconsciously. After he finished grilling the hotbars, Minhyuk ate them deliciously.

“Chronicle’s fire-grilled hotbar tastes similar to charcoal-grilled hotbar!”

“Ho, hoho,” Chronicle just laughed at his words.

[Guild Master Genie: I’ll be right back~]

[Guild Chat | Khan: Take care. Don’t follow strangers even if they offer you candy.]

[Guild Master Genie: ? Huh? Did you finally lose your screws?]

Khan grinned at her message. Genie went alone to meet with Boroto, the former Chef Tower’s Tower Master, to take on the quest with the excellent buffed dish as a reward. Originally, the three of them would take it together, but Khan and Locke were in the midst of leveling up.

The gap between rankers was not as wide as what everyone believed. Just a day off of hunting would immediately change the ranker’s ranking in Athenae. They did not have the leeway to relax nor rest since they needed to maintain and improve their current rankings. In Genie’s case, the gap was too wide from the other rankers, so she could take the time to handle the quest alone.

“Shall we go hunting now?”

Khan and Locke stood together. They had decided to use the Tower of the Arrogant One as their hunting grounds. However, it would take a while for them to clear it. Once they entered the place, they would be devoid of any messaging tool including GC, party chat, and whisper. However, this place was the perfect hunting ground to silently increase their levels.

Khan chuckled heartily as they walked. He said, “But, what if... Really, just what if?”

“What is it?” Locke asked in confusion.

“What if... Genie and Minhyuk met, you know?”

Locke grinned at his words. He said, “No... I vote for ‘I don’t recognize you.’”

“That’s what you’d expect, right?” Khan said as he shook his head in laughter.

Genie had been 100 kilograms when she was younger, she would even proudly announce her weight every day. However, she was now less than 50 kilograms in weight. In fact, they were also

surprised at one point. The ‘General Wild Boar’ that they used to call back in school was now a great beauty.

“I will add one vote to that too,” Khan said in agreement.

The fullness was at 95%! Minhyuk looked around and watched all the monsters eat. Right now, there was only one monster left! The only monster left was the king of this place, Chronicle.

Minhyuk had told her that he would cook for her once he finished eating his delicious hotbar. As for Chronicle, in her case, she maintained that she would eat only after all of the monsters had been fed. He felt that there was a system in this place and that she was like the boss mob. After all, one would usually have to first hunt all of the small mobs in the dungeon before hunting the boss mob! Finally, he handed the huge amount of dishes that he cooked over to Chronicle.

The first one was the delicious rump sashimi!

“It doesn’t suit my taste!”

Then, the perfectly grilled ribeye steak!

“I don’t want to eat that!”

Braised chicken!

“...Boy, how am I supposed to eat this poor child?”

“Even a water purifier isn’t this picky and tight...”

“What did you just say?”

“N...nothing...”

The boss mob, Chronicle, was an extremely picky eater! Even Chronicle herself said that she did not know what she wanted to eat right now. Minhyuk almost went crazy as he jumped up in frustration. He could meet the subordinate of the Food God once he fed and satisfied Chronicle, but she was being very fussy at the moment.

Minhyuk pondered deeply.?’Looking at Chronicle...’

She was a bird. Even if she was a Phoenix Lord, she was still a bird! What he meant was simple.

‘Birds usually eat worms, caterpillars and larvae... right?’

They were creatures that definitely liked those wiggly creatures. Minhyuk rubbed his chin in thought. The monsters here could only eat food that has been harvested in the Salov Land. So, Minhyuk went to Athenae’s official website and searched for it.

[Salov Land. Caterpillars.]

To his surprise, a related article came up.

“Oh?”

[A picture of proof of a silkworm in a cave in Salov Land.

cadad414: Oh. That black haired ax thing, is that the silkworm? It looks disgusting!

DoctorInsect: It's me you f*cker!

cadad414: OMG... I couldn't tell which was which because you look like a bug... Sry, sry. But you really look like an insect... Yeah. It's a compliment.

gfasfdd84: 2222

OnlyCarlo: 33333333

kvueu2h4: 44444444

Koongie'sDad: 55555555

MamaLucy: The resemblance is uncanny. Hehehehehehe]

Minhyuk smiled slightly at the unity of the commenters. The picture was showing the scene of silkworms making white cocoons for themselves. The silkworms were as big as an adult male's head. The silkworm's thread was not broken once it started to make its cocoon. It seemed like there were about 1,500 meters of silk thread that spouted out of the silkworm just to make such a seamless cocoon. The cocoon was made to act like an egg shell to protect the silkworm as it went through the process of growth to become a moth. The silkworm's thread was the raw material needed to make silk clothes and...

"Silkworm ramen..."

An idea passed through Minhyuk's head. He thought that if he was tasked to feed them at least once then he should feed them the most delicious food that he could feed them. Since he had found a hint, he quickly moved to find the silkworm cocoons in Salov Land.

Chronicle had not yet filled her stomach, however, she took the chance to look around. The previously thin and bony monsters were now plump and chubby, and they were even overflowing with strength and vigor!

Thud!

"Grrrr. This guy fainted!"

"It's because he's been digging in the cliffs day and night without a rest...?gulp..."

They were clearly overflowing with strength that they ended up overworking themselves.

'If I eat too...'

It was something that was virtually impossible.

Chronicle looked at the egg and felt the powerful force emitting from it. The power was already comparable to her own power! However, she knew that the egg would become even more powerful once Minhyuk fed her. He would even acquire the armor that the Food God had worn before! Of course, it was a very difficult task. Chronicle was an extremely picky eater. Even Allen, the previous Food God, had a hard time trying to satisfy her tastes!

In comparison, the current Food God was still unskilled and immature. Right? Just when she was thinking of him, Minhyuk finally came back. He was holding a mysterious round, white and dry thing that looked like it was wrapped with thread. It was as big as his fist. And once she looked at it closely, she could see that it was a pupa.

“Ho?” Chronicle said. She looked a bit intrigued. It was because they looked like they were caterpillars. Then, she saw Minhyuk pull out the frying pan from his back and drop all of the caterpillar-like things on it. After placing all of it, he proceeded to boil them down.

Blub, blub, blub!

Then, he added some kelp, garlic, onions and leeks before letting it continue to boil. He seasoned it with salt and waited for the water that he was boiling to go down. Once he finished cooking, Minhyuk took his portion out of the huge frying pan, smiled and handed the rest over to Chronicle. The pupae were black and steaming. And Minhyuk...

“Beondegi, beondegi, beonbeon, degidegi. One beondegi, two beondegi, three beondegi!”

...Muttered something completely incomprehensible.

Minhyuk smiled contentedly at Chronicle after he had made the savory and flavorful pupae. He looked at Chronicle and wondered if she would say that it was not delicious after tasting it. Those were literally pupae.

In the past, back when Minhyuk was in elementary or middle school, whenever he joined a sports competition, he would see the uncles outside with their trucks and selling their wares. On some of these trucks, it would say, ‘Beondegi, 1,000 won!’

Then, Minhyuk and his friends would go in front of the truck and would smile at the old man and say, ‘Uncle, please give me 1,000 won worth of beondegi!’?after looking at the steaming, hot paper cup filled with pupae. The uncle would give them a paper cup filled with beondegi together with a toothpick. However, they would not use any toothpick and would just pour them into their mouths little by little. This was beondegi! Minhyuk was able to make a memorable meal by accident! The ingredient that he used to make this beondegi was the silkworm’s pupa!

Chronicle hesitantly tapped her beak on the frying pan filled with beondegi.

“Uhhh...” She hummed as she opened her beak and bit on one.

One bite immediately brought the savory flavor of the dish to her mouth. The more she chewed, the deeper and more savory the flavor became. Chronicle’s breath hitched as she looked at Minhyuk in surprise. She said, “De...delicious.”

“Hohohohoho...!” Minhyuk laughed as he took a piece of beondegi and ate the one that was almost as big as his head.

It’s the taste in my memories!

Chronicle quickly finished all of the beondegi in the frying pan. Then, a series of notifications rang loudly...

[You have fed the Phoenix Lord.]

[The Phoenix Lord is really satisfied with the meal. You will receive better rewards.]

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[You have acquired 34,132,132 gold.]

[You have acquired the Phoenix Lord's Feathers.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[...leveled up.]

The leveling up notifications rang out continuously in Minhyuk's ears! Reaching the 95% fullness for the egg had increased his level to Level 190. However, after feeding the Phoenix Lord, his level increased by 31 levels at one go. It was truly an incredible bombing through of levels! In other words, just by feeding the Phoenix Lord, Minhyuk was able to raise his level to Level 221. This meant that he could now finally head to the beach and eat flatfish and rockfish. He smiled happily at the thought. However, he realized that something was strange. The Phoenix Lord had an extremely ridiculous picky appetite, but when she ate her fill, there were no artifacts that dropped.

At that moment, Chronicle spoke out, as if to explain, "He will give you the remaining rewards."

He! The subordinate of the Food God!

Chronicle smiled at Minhyuk. Minhyuk was able to feed all of the monsters in the Monster's Paradise until they felt full! Even though he did an atrocious act like grilling hotbars on the fire from her body, she was still extremely grateful to him. The skinny Chronicle had now become plump and energetic, and along with that, the flames on her body had intensified.

Crackle, crackle, fwoosh!

“Kkiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii!” The Phoenix Lord screeched loudly as a blazing fire shot out towards the sky like a firework. The flames that fell from the aftermath of such a huge pillar of fire fell to the ground and did not extinguish. Then, at that moment...

Crackle, crackle!

A man walked out of the blazing flames.

[Crackle, crackle!]

Flames blazed brightly as they shot high up in the sky! The members of the Special Players Management Team all fell silent as a man came out of the blazing flames! The man had a head full of bright red hair and was wearing an armor plate made with dragon bones. This man was someone that was supposedly already dead. He was one of the myths of the game.

[Player Minhyuk has met Balzarc, one of the Seven Myths.]

[Player Minhyuk has gained 100 REP.]

[Player Minhyuk has received the title: The One that Approached the Myths.]

“The subordinates of the Food God were heroes who shook the world...”

“And Taming Lord Balzarc is one of them,” Lee Minhwa said, her heart pounding wildly.

The Seven Myths of the continent! They were heroes that once saved the continent that was shrouded in darkness. Balzarc’s character was considered to be the idol and king of all of the Tamers in the world of Athenae. He even had temples all around the world with Tamers serving in them.

The door of the Special Players Management Team banged open as people rushed inside. Lee Seokhoon, the Development Team Leader, along with some members of the Customer Center Team entered the room. Even the president, Kang Taehoon, came along with them.

“President!”

“Don’t mind me, just continue monitoring.”

President Kang Taehoon was the number one contributor of Athenae of today! He was the person that was largely involved in creating the Athenae world, its folklore and background. A laugh spilled out of Kang Taehoon’s lips. He said, “So, that’s the Player Minhyuk who has been giving the Special Players Management Team and the Development Team a hard time?”

“Yes.”

Kang Taehoon narrowed his eyes as he looked at the monitor with amazement. He said, “Amazing...”

“Yes?” Team Leader Park asked in confusion.

“Did he really finish feeding all of the monsters in the Monster’s Paradise...? How in the world did he do it...”

“He tempted the monsters with food.”

“...Hmm?”

“After he cooked for them once, he offered to cook again for the monsters who were enamored with the taste of his cooking. In return, they have to help him perform tasks.”

“....He has a good head on his shoulders, right?” President Kang Taehoon remarked with a grin.

This was why? Athenae? players were fun and interesting. They kept on playing the game in a completely unexpected way!

“If he’s able to feed the Phoenix Lord, he would be able to receive a legendary artifact. That player already has one. He’s going to receive a second one? How happy that player must be,” President Kang Taehoon exclaimed, his hands sweating in excitement. It was the highest grade that everyone wanted and admired.?

Legendary!? However, the members of the Special Players Management Team, together with Team Leader Park and Lee Minhwa, all fell silent when they heard his words.

“...”

“...”

“What’s wrong?”

“That.... President, didn’t you see our report?”

“I saw.”

It was Player Minhyuk’s playstyle! The Special Player Management Team had compiled a report and sent it over to the president.

“It’s a legendary artifact though... Is food more important than that?” President Kang Taehoon said.

However, Team Leader Park and Lee Minhwa were at a loss for words. Then, not long after, they saw Balzarc give something to Minhyuk.

‘It’s not a frying pan, but a real legendary artifact!’ Team Leader Park thought.

The artifact that Balzarc handed over was an armor. The armor that was worn by the previous Food God! The armor looked shabby and a bit?worn?out since it was shaped like a loose animal bone, but it was still the bone of the Black Dragon.

“Show me the armor’s information.”

Then, the information was displayed on the monitor for everyone to see.

(Armor of Immortality)

Class: Legendary

Requirements: Food God

Durability: 30,000 / 30,000

Defense: 1,148

Special Abilities:

?All stats will increase by +12%.

?Magical Defense +50

?HP and MP can be recovered instantly to 100% once per day.

?Passive Skill: Physical Damage Reflection

Description: This is the Armor of Immortality. It boasts an extremely enormous defense. This was made by the Legendary Dwarf, Golden Hammer, with the bones of the Black Dragon, the breath of Cerberus and many more.

“Kgghk...”

“Wow...”

“OMG... It’s really awesome...!”

All of the people who looked at the information hissed in surprise. Then, Team Leader Park clicked on the passive skill, Physical Damage Reflection.

(Physical Damage Reflection)

Artifact Skill

Level: None

Mana Required: 50

Cooldown: None

Effects: There is a 10-30% chance of returning physical damage received by the owner. In addition, the returned damage will be twice the original damage that the owner had received. The player that equipped the item will not receive any harm once the skill has been triggered.

“Wow... It literally reflects the damage, right?”

“And the returned damage is even twice of the received damage?”

It was an incredible skill to be attached to an artifact. What was more surprising was its defense.

“Its defense is 1,148.....”

Currently, Minhyuk's frying pan already had a defense of 800. This defense was something that only worked when the frying pan was used to block. However, for an armor, it would be able to protect almost all of the parts of the body, with the exception of the head. This meant that almost all parts of Minhyuk's body had a 1,148 defense. And the reason for that would be the Armor of Immortality!

"There's even a 100% HP and MP recovery once a day..."

None of these abilities had appeared in the country yet! It was so great that everyone was left speechless in their awe and admiration.

On the other hand, Kang Taehoon tilted his head and asked, "Why doesn't Player Minhyuk check his item's information?"

Lee Minhwa hesitated as she looked at Team Leader Park, who laughed helplessly and said, "He's not that interested."

Minhyuk was filled with excitement and anticipation. God's Dish! He would be able to get the hint about where one out of the five dishes was. He was actually a bit calm when he met Balzarc. The only thing that gave him a bit of a surprise was the 100 REP that he received. Then, the handsome red-haired Balzarc approached Minhyuk and handed him armor.

[You have acquired the Armor of Immortality.]

"I can't believe that you were able to satisfy and feed Chronicle. I'm grateful," Balzarc said with a grin.

In fact, Balzarc was completely surprised when he saw Minhyuk. He thought, 'I didn't expect that someone would really succeed and receive the legacy of the Food God.'

Balzarc was the one that was closest to the Food God! He personally saw and interacted with the Food God himself. For him, the Food God was an exceptionally good and kind man except for one thing...

'That bastard was really crazy about food!'

However, the person in front of Balzarc was like that Food God? He thought that Minhyuk looked better than the previous Food God. On the other hand, Minhyuk's heart was thumping wildly.

"Does Mr. Balzarc know about God's Dishes?!"

"Ah. Of course I know. He left one to me. But boy, aren't you going to check that armor?"

"I can do that later! Is that important?! Food is more important."

.

"Hmm?" Balzarc hummed. He was taken aback.

'That's the Armor of Immortality. It has an enormous power! What do you mean by doing that later? And what else? Food is more important?!'

Then, Minhyuk with his face full of expectations, said, “You have a God’s Dish? Come to think of it, Mr. Balzarc looks really handsome, no? Wow. Your red hair looks so out of this world! That reminds me, that armor is made out of bones... it looks like it would be delicious to boil... no, no. It looks really tough and sturdy!”

“...”

Balzarc was flustered. What did he mean by boiling? Balzarc’s expression at the moment was really the personification of dumbfoundedness. He thought, ‘What the hell?! This guy is much worse than Allen!’

Minhyuk’s expression was practically begging Balzarc to hurry up and give him something to eat. One could even tell from his eyes, that he was thinking, ‘I don’t care if you’re a Taming Lord or whatever, I’ll fight you if you don’t give it to me.’

Balzarc shook his head and said, “There are orders for these things.”

“...The order will naturally be followed!”

“If you don’t settle down, then I won’t give you anything.”

Minhyuk became as quiet as a mouse when he heard Balzarc’s threat. He looked like he was determined enough to not squeak or speak a word for the rest of his life. Looking at him, Balzarc thought that he was such a cute kid. He said, “You’re amazing. I don’t know how you did it but...”

Swoooooosh—

As soon as Balzarc waved his hand, the monster egg that was suspended in the middle of the Monster’s Paradise quickly flew to where they were.

“Aren’t you going to check it?”

“No.”

“Check it.”

“Yes!” Minhyuk answered. It seemed like Minhyuk listened to him well.

(Monster Egg)

Rank: ???

Race: Pet

Description: You have filled the fullness bar to 100%. You can confirm the details about the ??? with Balzarc.

“It was legendary earlier, why did it?become???? so suddenly?”

“Because you can choose right now.”

“Eh?”

You can choose.

For a moment, Minhyuk did not understand what he meant by those words.

“Boy, I’ll send you to another Monster’s Paradise. There, you will be able to see many rare and powerful monsters. You can watch them carefully and closely for a day, choose one from them and place them in the egg.”

“Oh. Just like in a food court. Choose what you want to eat...”

At that moment, Balzarc could not believe his ears. He looked at Minhyuk dumbfoundedly. How could he compare such a great opportunity to something like that... Others would have jumped up and down and told him? ‘Oh my god, thank you so much.’? if they ever heard that they would be able to choose whatever monster they wanted for their pet. But what about this punk? He was thinking of eating his pet! This was the first time that Balzarc had heard someone in this world wanting to eat a pet!

“It’s a pity, but you can’t eat pets.”

“...How come?”

“Pets exist to give you strength and support you.”

“...”

Minhyuk was a bit disappointed. However, he also knew that he was still not qualified to eat higher leveled monsters at his current level.

‘I wonder what dragon meat tastes like? What about the king of the seas, the Kraken?’

Minhyuk was extremely curious about their taste, but unfortunately, pets could not be eaten.

“You should first pick a monster and come back. Once you’re back, I’ll give you the God’s Dish that my friend has left to me.”

“Is it possible to know what dish it is?”

“It’s the Pork Trotter Set.”

“...!”

Minhyuk gasped in surprise when he heard those words.

Pork Trotter?? What kind of existence was this dish? It was a dish that tasted light and chewy once you placed it in your mouth. And if you placed a thinly sliced pork trotter on top of a piece of lettuce, with a bit of some spicy pepper, spicy dipping sauce and garlic together with the crispy kimchi and pickled radish it would be very delicious! And if you ate radish water kimchi after taking a big bite out of that wrap, then you would definitely taste a refreshing flavor in your mouth. It would be even more perfect if there was a tray beside you that had black bean noodles and *tangsuyuk* !

“Don’t think of it as your normal, run-off-the-mill pork trotter,” Balzarc warned. The first time Balzarc heard about the origins of this dish, he shook in fright. Even now, after all this time, he could still feel a shiver run down his spine.

“Boy, you know about the story of the Golden Pig. Right?”

“No.”

“The Golden Pig in the legend was said to have lived an immortal life without killing anyone. The Food God Allen, spent half a year just to find this Golden Pig. The moment he found this golden pig, he quickly cooked it to eat for himself. He even used the lava from Valkan to cook the pork trotter and make it more delicious.”

“Lava?”

“Yes. Artifacts that can’t be melted, would melt in that lava.”

“Wow...”

Minhyuk was in awe. The Food God did his best to make the dish taste the same as his mom’s cooking! He was very thankful for his hard work and at the same time, he was also looking forward to its taste.

“Please hurry and send me there!” Minhyuk said. Minhyuk thought that the faster he chose the monster for his monster egg, the faster he would be able to taste the first God’s Dish!

“I understand. Ah. There might be a lot of monsters in there, but you only have two opportunities to check for the monster’s status and strength. No matter how strong a monster is inside that place, it would be a different story if you fail to cultivate them properly or make them go sick. Choose carefully.”

Minhyuk soon disappeared in a flash of light. Once he felt that the glaring light was gone, he opened his eyes slowly and carefully. A set of notifications rang as soon as he opened his eyes.

[You have entered the legendary ‘Paradise of All Monsters.’]

[You are the 35th player who has stepped foot in this legendary place.]

[You have 24 hours before this area closes.]

[Number of Legendary Dungeons found: 2]

[You have gained 50 REP.]

[You have been temporarily summoned to this place by Balzarc. You will not be able to get any rewards when you see legendary and mythical monsters.]

[EXP rate increase and item drop rate increase are not applied here.]

Chapter 113: I Choose You!

This was the second time that Minhyuk had entered a legendary dungeon. Whenever one entered a hidden dungeon, hidden field, a new city, a new frontier, or a legendary area, they would naturally receive rewards. However, in Minhyuk’s case, he was just temporarily sent here by Balzarc to

choose his monster. That was why his reward ended at the 50 REP increase. Even so, the 50 REP was already a huge benefit since this was the average REP that Level 100 players have.

Minhyuk looked around his surroundings. He said, “Oh. It seems like there are a lot of delicious-looking kids in here.”

He was in awe. There was a monster that was silently floating in the air above him. It was none other than a giant monkfish. Minhyuk licked his lips. He was already thinking about spicy steamed monkfish! Whenever he went to a restaurant that served this dish, he would always order it.

‘Should I eat the monkfish or the bean sprouts first?’

If he ordered a spicy steamed monkfish, there would definitely be a heaping amount of bean sprouts in the serving. However, such a dish was extremely expensive. Even so, Minhyuk believed that such a dish was worthy of its price. The monkfish would definitely be plump and juicy, just like chicken meat. If he added some of the spicy sauce together with the crunchy bean sprouts, the taste would definitely blow his mind away.

Minhyuk could not tell what kind of monster the giant monkfish was. To eat something delicious, he had brushed up his knowledge and studied about different monsters, but there had been no information about such a monster at all. In other words, this was an undiscovered monster. As for whether he would choose it as his pet... Minhyuk shook his head.

‘I can only check the information twice!’

Looking around, he was able to see plenty of monsters that he had never seen before. This meant that most of the monsters residing in this place were undiscovered monsters. Just by taking a look at the most common monsters in this place... it seemed like they were almost all at least of the epic and legendary ranks. Minhyuk quickly moved in search of his pet.

The moon shone brightly over the forest as crickets chirped loudly.

“Huff, huff.”

“Haaa, haaa.”

Rough exhales rang loudly in the clearing as the player named Root sighed in relief. He looked behind him and thought, ‘I think they finally left us alone. Phew...’

Root was a pretty high-leveled player. Even though he was not at the top, he could still say that he was part of the list of top rankers with his Level 365 character. He was an archer, the character with a bow behind their back.

Root looked at the man standing next to him. He said, “Your Highness, I think we’ve lost them for now.”

Root hurriedly bowed his head to avoid the man’s gaze. He was currently tasked to escort and deliver this man to safety by someone. The man next to him nodded. This man was none other than Varen, King of the Northern Continent’s Valkyrie Kingdom.

The Valkyrie Kingdom in the Northern Continent! The Northern Continent was still an unexplored land swarming with monsters. It was a land that had not yet been pioneered at all. This land was located between the Eivelis Empire and Collodis Empire.

Currently, both empires were giving their all to enter and carve out a place for themselves in the Northern Continent. In that process, they discovered an amazing kingdom in the Northern Continent. That kingdom was none other than the Valkyrie Kingdom, a kingdom that was blessed by the God, Juis, protecting them from the monsters that swarmed all over their territory. Because of that, they were able to stand firmly and resolutely despite vicious monsters teeming around them.

However, not too long ago, the soldiers of the Valkyrie Kingdom encountered the subjugation forces that were sent by the Eivelis Empire while they were patrolling outside. The Sword Emperor Ellie was greatly amazed by the fact that a kingdom existed in the Northern Continent. Varen realized that his kingdom would be facing the danger of collapsing even if God Juis protected and blessed his people, so he decided to reach out to the Eivelis Empire and went out with his troops. However, the moment they entered the borders of the Eivelis Empire, they were suddenly ambushed! After the ambush, only Root and Varen, the king and a member of the royal court, were left!

‘Ah. We’re f*cked,’ Root thought with a frown. Even if they were left alone for now, they would still be cornered once their enemies continued their siege.

“I’m parched.”

“Here, have some water. Your Highness,” Root said, handing over a water bottle to Varen.

‘Damn. I’m sure that the players from the other empire have also received these quests.’

Perhaps they were players from the Collodis Empire, the enemy of the Eivelis Empire. There were a large number of players in that ambush. It may be because they did not want the Eivelis Empire and the Valkyrie Kingdom to join hands. In any case, one thing was for sure, they wanted to capture King Varen alive!

King Varen was a master when it came to the geography and topography of the Northern Continent! In addition, the exact location of the Valkyrie Kingdom was still unknown, therefore they would definitely capture him alive and try to get huge rewards from him.

Right now, Root was looking at his quest window.

[Kingdom Quest: Bring Varen, the Valkyrie Kingdom’s king, to the place where he is supposed to meet with the Imperial Army of the Eivelis Empire!]

Rank: S

Requirements: Varen’s Favor.

Rewards: Receive the title of a Baron, a territory, and a chance to go to Varen’s Treasure House.

Penalty for Failure: Favor with everyone in the Valkyrie Kingdom will fall. You will also be banned from the North Continent, never allowed to set foot in their land again.

Description: Run away with King Varen and meet with the Eivelis Empire's Imperial Army safely! You will be able to increase your favor with King Varen!

During the Quest's Progress: The player will not get a Temporary Chaotic or Chaotic State even if you PKed other players.

Originally, his quest was not like this. It had just been a general quest where he would accompany the king and he would be able to receive plenty of EXP and gold. However, the quest suddenly changed and the rewards had become enormous.

'A nobleman's title! And even a territory!'

This much reward was enough to make one's eye grow the size of saucers. The tax that anyone could collect in just a small town was simply enormous. In addition, with the title of a Baron, Root would be able to receive plenty of support. He would also be able to use Varen's treasure house once he increased his favor with the king! With the Northern Continent still not yet pioneered, the territory itself was worth a fortune.

Root bit his lips. This time, the quest even had a special entry that showed 'During the Quest's Progress'. The words written under it said that the player will not get a temporary chaotic state or become a chaotic player even if they PK-ed others. This meant that the usual penalty that would be imposed on the player originally would not be imposed whether you kill others or not. This also meant that they were expecting plenty of players to attack them in the course of the quest.

'I won't be able to do this by myself...!' Root thought as he sighed to himself.

He was originally someone who was bad at making friends in reality. People like him who only liked to play games and had no friends were usually called game addicts! Root did not even join any guild and only played the game solo. However, he also could not just post this information on the official website and say 'Is there anyone out there who can help me?!'. If he did that, then his rewards would definitely be divided up. No, it might also be possible for people to kill him and take the quest away.

'But, if I share it with just one or two people... Are there any strong men out there?'

Just as Root was thinking about that...

"Root."

"Yes, Your Highness?"

.

"Where did you say the village we were supposed to go to was?"

"It's Raven, the Chef's village."

"Chef's Village..." Varen said, smiling bitterly.

"I should try and find some foreigners there."

"Foreigners? I'd rather ask for help from the village's vigilantes..."

“The vigilantes in this neighborhood will be of no help to us, they are too noisy and hard to deal with. On the contrary, the foreigners are stronger and much easier to deal with.”

“...Is that the case?”

They would definitely be easy to handle. Once he said, ‘This is a Kingdom Quest!’ most of them would jump up and say ‘Me! Me! Me!’. He would bet that people would line up just to help him. To put it simply, Kingdom Quests were so rare that it was like striking the lottery. It was extremely difficult to obtain quests like these that they had to rely on luck just to get a glimpse of it. Furthermore, the current quest was on another level, since a king’s life depended on it.

“I’ll lend you this sword for a moment.”

“Yes. Your Highness!”

Root felt that the king was now truly in a hurry. The sword that he lent him was the sword that was used for the knighthood ceremony. It was a sword that only the King had and could wield. Root knew that this sword could determine the player’s “reputation”. With this, he would be able to find strong players. After all, high-leveled players usually have high REP.

“I’ll get us a carriage once we arrive at Raven. Although it’s a bit shabby for you, please stay in the inn for a while, Your Highness. Then, I’ll try and pick out the foreigners that could help us at that time.”

“Yes,” Varen said. He nodded his head as the two of them hastened their steps to reach Raven faster.

Minhyuk looked at the monsters. This place was teeming with monsters just like the first Monster’s Paradise. All of them were high-ranking monsters. Minhyuk picked one among these monsters. The monster was curled up and growling. And he could tell just by looking at it...

‘A Hatchling!’

The greatest existence in the world, a dragon! However, this was not a fully grown dragon and would not leave its growth stage. Minhyuk thought that it would be easier for him to eat delicious food if he took a dragon as his pet. They were naturally strong, so the dragon would definitely help his journey in eating delicious food in the near future.

(Hatchling)

Rank: Legendary

Race: Pet

Unable to evolve.

Attack: 3,135

Defense: 3,367

Special Abilities:

?All stats +20%.

?Fire Resistance +80%

?Skill: Hatchling's Breath

?Can use Fourth Tier Fire Magic

Potential: None

The race of the Hatchling was written as a pet. Usually, the attack and defense of the monster would be shown every time someone summoned a monster. However, pets were different. Although they were huge, most of them would become small upon summoning. From what Minhyuk remembered, potential was extremely important for pets. The higher the potential, the more likely that the pet would grow. The potential dictated how much its level would increase, as well as its abilities and skills.

In the case of a Hatchling, evolution was not possible since it had already achieved its full growth. Even though it was not yet a fully grown dragon, such a pet could not be ignored easily, since its attack and defense were overwhelmingly high. In addition, the skill Hatchling Breath could melt away opponents and deal a high amount of damage. Together with the ability to use Fourth Tier Fire Magic, these skills and abilities would exert great power for the player. Furthermore, there was even an owner buff effect.

However, contrary to everyone's expectations, Minhyuk's thoughts were still very consistent. He said, "I want to try and eat it."

Screech!

The Hatchling woke up from its sleep and tilted his head to look at Minhyuk. Then it snorted and glared at him. Minhyuk walked away and pondered. He only had one chance left. He continuously kept an eye on all of the monsters that he had encountered. This way, he would be able to at least know a bit about them. As he kept on walking, Minhyuk suddenly saw an animal.

"A pig?"

It was literally a pig. A little baby piggy that was as big as his fist! The little white pig sniffed around, picked something out and ate it. Then, it smiled happily as it bent and stretched its knees as if it was dancing to a rhythm.

"Oink, oink!"

It looked like it was saying? 'Delicious food is the best! Oink!'

Minhyuk looked at it strangely. He muttered, "What's this? Why am I so happy to see it?"

This was strange. Why was he feeling so happy just by looking at the pig? Then, Minhyuk smiled softly and...

"What the hell... I'm smiling like a dad...?gasp!"

Was he perhaps feeling a sense of kinship with the pig? Minhyuk quickly denied the reality in front of him.

“I’m not fat anymore, I’m just chubby? Why can I feel a deep sense of camaraderie with a pig?!”

This was the new Minhyuk, who firmly believed that he was already in the chubby category since he went from 170 kilograms to 160 kilograms!

He turned his head away without any hesitation and quickly walked away. He continued to travel as he laughed happily and took out food from his inventory since he was hungry. It was a hotdog with ketchup and mayonnaise on it!

“Delicious!”

It was a combination of crispy bread with sausage hidden in it and sweet fry sauce! Minhyuk opened his mouth wide and bit on it. At that moment...

“Oooink?”

“...?”

Minhyuk was quite taken aback. He had decided to increase his speed by using Ellie’s Swordsmanship to look at the monsters since his time was limited. He even used Step to cover a large distance. However, the baby piggy was also extremely quick. Despite Minhyuk covering that huge distance, it was still able to arrive in front of him. Right now, it was looking up at him with large, bright eyes. It cried, “Oink...?”

The baby piggy looked at Minhyuk pitifully as it blinked its eyes at him. It was like it was telling him, “Please give me just one bite. Oink...? Just like that.”

Minhyuk grinned. He said, “What a cunning piggy! I won’t give you food just because of that!”

The baby piggy might not know it but Minhyuk really would not easily give his food just because it was cute. Soon, the pig looked a bit sullen and depressed. It bowed its head and cried sadly, “Oooooiiink...”

Minhyuk’s heart shook for a moment. This was because he understood a hungry man’s heart more than anybody else! However, he laughed and said, “My god! A baby piggy is trying to hook the world’s greatest pig Kang Minhyuk into giving him food!”

In the end, Minhyuk still admitted to being a pig. He said, “I won’t give you!”

Then, he bit on the hotdog until there was only half left. At that moment, the pig that was a bit sullen suddenly stood up. The tears that were making its eyes shine had suddenly disappeared.

Twitch!

It glared at Minhyuk as it cracked its neck sideways, as if loosening it. Its expression was also telling him, “So this doesn’t work, huh? Oink.”

“...”

Chapter 114: I Choose You!

‘S...so you were just acting earlier?!’Minhyuk thought. He had never seen such an existence before. Was this a being that would do anything for food?

‘My goodness! It would resort to scamming and cheating, just to get something to eat?!’

This was Minhyuk’s first time being on the receiving end of such a clever act played out just for the sake of food.

The baby piggy looked at Minhyuk seriously. Suddenly, it went near Minhyuk’s legs and tapped it with its little head. It looked like it had thought of something and wanted to let Minhyuk know about it.

“Oink, oink!”

It seemed like it was signaling for Minhyuk to follow it. The baby piggy was giving off a cool aura. It was a bit absurd, but Minhyuk still stood up to follow it. If there had to be a reason, it was probably because the little piggy looked extremely confident. The little piggy sniffed for a while before it continued to move forward.

‘Is it following the smell?’

Minhyuk wondered if pigs also had an acute sense of smell. The small question floated in his head as the little piggy stopped in front of a blade of grass and tapped its head on it. It was as if it was telling him that this was it.

“You want me to check it?”

Minhyuk did not know why he followed the little piggy but he decided to check the unknown grass first before pondering over it deeply.

(Five-leaf Barbed Grass)

Material Grade: B

Special Abilities:

?Magical Defense +1.

?Magical Attack +1.

Description: This is a barbed grass that tastes like spinach. It looks a bit like a four leaf clover and tastes good. However, this five leaf barbed grass is a special barbed grass. It’s a one out of a hundred existence.

“...Huh?”

Minhyuk was quite surprised. He harvested the grass, but there was no notification about collecting a ‘special’ item from his Intermediate Farming skill. This only meant one thing... This barbed grass was something that was not collected through the Intermediate Farming skill. It truly was a five-leaf barbed grass! Not long after, the little piggy protested with an?oink!..?It seemed like it wanted to exchange the five-leaf barbed grass with a hotdog.

‘Wait a minute. Right now, I need to experiment.’

Minhyuk realized that the little piggy was much more special than he initially thought. When the pig realized that he still would not give it anything, it grumbled to itself and started moving quickly towards somewhere. When it sensed that Minhyuk was not following, it looked back at him and jerked its head, as if to encourage him to follow.

Twitch!

It was as if it was saying that it was not a pushover and it would find him something better. The little piggy guided Minhyuk to another place. It pointed him towards a fruit that looked extremely appetizing.

“Oink, oink!”

The little piggy pointed its nose towards the fruit. Minhyuk also checked the information of the fruit.

(Hatchling’s Apple)

Medicine

Special Abilities: +50 WIS

Description: An extremely delicious apple that has grown after absorbing the?mana?from a Hatchling’s body.

“...!”

Minhyuk was surprised. Then, he heard the pig squeal in laughter. He was more surprised when he realized that the pig was laughing at him.

‘Don’t tell me?!’

An idea brewed in Minhyuk’s mind as he looked at the pig intently.

‘Does it have the ability to find ingredients and materials like medicine?’

Obviously, there were plenty of monsters here with varying classes and species. There were even rare ones that no one had ever laid their eyes on yet. It was for this reason that Minhyuk believed that it was possible. Minhyuk quickly picked up the Hatchling’s Apple and ate it all at once.

Crunch, crunch!

The Hatchling’s Apple tasted extremely delicious. Minhyuk felt that apples were much better for him compared to salads. When he ate an apple, he would not need to cook or mix, but he would still be able to eat something delicious.

[You have eaten a Hatchling’s Apple.]

[You have gained +50 WIS.]

Minhyuk nodded his head happily. While he was enjoying the taste of the apple, something snapped at him.

“Oink?” The pig oinked and looked at him sadly, reminding him that he had forgotten about something. Minhyuk cut a piece off of the hotdog and handed it over to the little piggy.

Give and take!

Then, the little piggy took a bite and its eyes widened in surprise. Its little tail wiggled and it jumped up and down as it squealed. The little piggy suddenly jived according to its own rhythm. Just like what he saw earlier, the little piggy liked to do a little jig in its own rhythm once it tasted delicious food.

It looked back at Minhyuk once again.

Smileeeee—

The little piggy smiled in delight. That was the start of the strange relationship between Minhyuk and the little piggy.

Minhyuk continued to observe the pig since he did not know where it came from. It was then that he found out that even though the little piggy was not able to find any medicine like the one from before, it was still able to sniff out precious and special ingredients. In the end, taking a bet to be on the safe side, Minhyuk used the last chance that he got to check the information of the little piggy.

(Baby Pig)

Rank: ????

Race: Pet

Level: 1

Attack: 102

Defense: 163

Summoning Duration per Day: 1 hour

Summoning Cooldown Time: 23 hours

Special Abilities: Can find delicious ingredients and sometimes rare, excellent medicine.

Condition for Growth: The more delicious the food the owner eats, the higher the EXP and the higher the level it could evolve.

Potential: 184

Experience Value: 0% / 100%

“...What’s this, so unusual?”

Unusual, just like that word, this monster was unusual. Furthermore, its rank had ‘???’ written on it. Its special ability was the same as what Minhyuk had expected it to be: find delicious ingredients.? This was by no means a common special ability. When Minhyuk was observing the little piggy, it even found a medicine. There were even some special ingredients that it found. Of course, half of it was because this place was filled with special ingredients, but nonetheless, it was still a difficult

task to find delicious ingredients and special medicine even in a place like this. In addition, it also had a potential of 184.

“What’s with the 184 in its potential?”

The potential of a pet had a huge effect on them. It would play an important role and determine how much more it would grow and evolve. Generally, if the pet had a higher potential then it would have a higher growth rate which would mean that the pet would become better as it leveled up.

‘The highest potential that I know of is probably at... around 101?’

The gap was much bigger than he had thought. Just what in the world was this pig? However, he still liked it very much.

“Find delicious ingredients...”

The potential upside was extremely huge. What was more surprising was the fact that its level, abilities, and EXP would increase if the owner ate something delicious. In other words, whenever it leveled up, then it would gain more abilities compared to right now. That was not all. What if it found some medicine? Minhyuk’s concerns were not that deep. He decided to choose the baby pig.

He chose the baby pig not only because it could find delicious ingredients. The hatchling was obviously much more powerful right now; perhaps, he could even fight toe to toe with other rankers right now if he had it by his side. However, the rankers would eventually level up and grow up.

What if they reached Level 600 in the future? By that time, the hatchling would not pose any threat to them at all especially since it was not able to evolve any further. In contrast, the potential of the baby pig was tremendous. He did not know what it would evolve into in the future. The most important thing was that it could find him delicious ingredients. Compared to a hatchling, the potential was endless.

Minhyuk did not know if choosing the hatchling would allow him to speed up the process of him finding delicious ingredients, but it would definitely not allow him to find delicious ingredients right away. In comparison, the baby pig had the chance to evolve even if he did not know what it would grow into. Besides, although he was not sure, there was a chance...

‘What if it grew up and one of its special abilities would say ‘It has grown up well, you can now eat it?’ Fufufufu.’

Minhyuk was just so simple. He would choose anything as long as it was related to food. In other words, he might not know the result right now, but it was possible that he would be able to eat the baby pig later.

[Do you wish to select the Baby Pig?]

“Yes.”

[The Baby Pig belongs to the Pet race.]

[Would you like to rename the Baby Pig?]

A name change. Minhyuk thought hard about it. He said, “Little Piggy?”

[The Baby Pig hates it.]

“...”

Minhyuk looked at the baby pig with a puzzled expression. The little guy stood up on its two feet and climbed on top of his shoulder. It was not that heavy since it was just the size of a fist.

“Hmm. What do we have??Your color?is slightly pink so... Pink Piggy?”

That was right. Minhyuk had the worst naming sense out of everyone!

[The Baby Pig hates it.]

Of course, the baby pig would hate it. Minhyuk said, “If you don’t like these names then I’m sure you will also hate Oinky...”

[The Baby Pig hates it.]

“Hmm...” Minhyuk hummed. He thought deeply before saying, “Of course you shouldn’t be named Fatty... then, Beanie? Ah, Beanie is a dog’s name...”

[The Baby Pig is pleased.]

“...?”

Minhyuk thought that the baby piggy had a bad naming sense. However, it liked the name so what could Minhyuk do?

“I, I choose Beanie as its name.”

[You have chosen the name Beanie for the Baby Pig.]

[Beanie is in a good mood.]

“Ooiink~” Beanie cried happily before falling asleep on Minhyuk’s shoulder.

‘I can summon it for an hour every day.’

Minhyuk believed that this duration would increase as it grew more.

[The Pet Selection has been done. You will now return to where you were originally summoned from.]

Flash!

A bright light covered his eyes.

When Minhyuk opened his eyes, he realized that Phoenix Lord Chronicle was gone and Balzarc was the only one that was waiting for him. Balzarc looked closely at Beanie, the pet that Minhyuk chose.

“Why, what’s wrong?”

“No. Out of all the monsters, why did you choose a pig?”

“Well, the potential was high and...” Minhyuk explained to him his reasons as to why he chose this pet. Finding delicious ingredients, it was different compared to others, and finally the most important reason!

“You know what?”

“...What is it?”

“This pig grows up whenever I eat something delicious.”

Balzarc nodded.

“Why do people raise pigs and cows?”

“...To eat them?”

Balzarc nodded again.

“That’s right. Then, later...”

Whisper, whisper—

“I might be able to eat it.”

In fact, none of the monsters were shining a black light. Of course, Beanie was not shining with a black light either but with its high potential, it might be able to change later.

“Emergency food.”

“Em, emergency food... uhm...!” Balzarc shouted as he looked at Minhyuk in utter bewilderment.

“Then, you should now give me what you promised!” Minhyuk said, extremely excited.

Balzarc nodded and waved his hand in the air. As soon as he waved his hand, the first God’s Dish that was left behind by the Food God appeared. The Pork Trotter Set appeared in the air.

“Wow...”

Minhyuk was in awe. The meat in the pork trotters was sliced thinly and laid on top of the bones with plump and juicy meat underneath! There was also some spicy dipping sauce, lettuce, garlic, kimchi, pickled radish, radish water kimchi, and finally... noodles.

“Hahaha!” Minhyuk laughed heartily as he picked up a piece of pork trotter meat. He placed it in his mouth and savored the taste. The meat was chewy and light. He did not know if it tasted special because it was cooked in lava, but it was really delicious. He swallowed the meat and...

“Wow...”

...He could not stop himself from letting out a gasp of surprise. He felt like his mind went blank for a moment. It was really really delicious. Of course, Minhyuk never had

the chance to eat pork trotters so he would find it extremely delicious. Whenever he was hungry at night and someone said... 'How about some late night snack? Pork trotter, call?' he would be the first one to shout... 'Pork trotter!'. However, while it was a food that was common for others, it was not for someone like Minhyuk. He could not believe that the pork trotter that he did not have in a long while would taste so delicious. Just then, Minhyuk turned his head...

"Huh?"

...and saw Beanie on the floor eating some pork trotter too.

"...?"

"Oink?"

Chapter 115: I Choose You!

"How dare you take my pork trotter...!" Minhyuk shouted. He almost flew in a rage but thankfully, he realized that the pork trotter in front of Beanie was not his pork trotter.

'What's this...?' Minhyuk thought. It seemed like the same Pork Trotter Set was placed in front of Beanie.

'Ah, maybe it's that!'

It was probably the? 'The more delicious the food the owner eats, the higher the EXP and the higher the level it could evolve.'? In other words, it meant that whatever delicious food he ate would also be reflected, and be in front of Beanie.

"Oink, oink, oink!"

[Beanie is happy.]

Minhyuk watched Beanie eat deliciously before he focused on his own pork trotter again. He dipped a piece of pork trotter in spicy dipping sauce, placing it on top of a lettuce together with some garlic, spicy pepper and kimchi, before wrapping it together and placing it in his mouth.

Crunch, crunch—

The crunch was fantastic. Every time Minhyuk chewed, he could feel the crunchy lettuce and kimchi. At the end of each bite, the light taste of pork trotter and the savory spicy dipping sauce would mix together and form great harmony. As Minhyuk chewed on his wrap, he picked the bowl of noodles up and mixed it thoroughly.

"Slurp!"

.

The spicy and sour tray noodles could easily wash away the greasy taste of the pork trotter.

"Chew, chew,?delicious!"

Minhyuk smiled pleasantly as he savored the aftertaste of the food. When he turned around to look at Beanie... He saw Beanie imitating the pose of someone holding a cup with its small paws. Then, Beanie gulped as if it was drinking something refreshing as he 'Kyaa!'ed.

"Ah. That's right, good!" Minhyuk said as he hurriedly pulled out some cola from his inventory and he poured some over a cup filled with ice. Since Beanie could also share what its owner ate, a cup of cola also appeared in front of it. Then, Beanie suddenly stopped.

'What's this? How does Beanie know what a cola is?'

What a strange little piggy. Then, Minhyuk and Beanie picked their cups up in tandem. Beanie suddenly...

Clink!

"Oink!"

"Cheers!"

Gulp, gulp, gulp, gulp—

"Kyaa!"

Balzarc watched the two of them and mumbled, "Is this a baby pig together with his daddy pig...?"

Once Minhyuk finished eating all of the pork trotters in God's Dish, a series of notifications rang in his head.

[You have eaten the first God's Dish, the Pork Trotter Set.]

[You have received an invincible body. Your body will now be able to resist all types of poisons and abnormal conditions and status.]

[You have gained 30 REP.]

[You can now level up Food God's Cooking Skill.]

[Food God's Cooking Skill has leveled up.]

[You can now level up the Ingredient Tracking skill.]

[Ingredient Tracking has leveled up.]

[You have learned the skill: The Joy of Eating Together.]

[The Class Quest: To Have a Feast with Other People has been created.]

'As expected...!'

Minhyuk's predictions had been correct. His skills related to the Food God class were usually impossible to level up! He quickly checked the information on his skills.

(Food God's Cooking Skills)

Passive Skill

Level: 2

Effects:

?You can apply a buff that is much more outstanding than any other chef's buff.

?The shelf life and preservation times of your dishes will be much longer compared to other chefs.

?Your buff capacity is higher than other chefs.

?You can confirm and check the recipe that another person wants.

Minhyuk's mind went blank, the only thing that he thought of was 'Eh?'. He was expecting an effect that would make the food more delicious but instead, he got an effect that would allow him to check the recipe of a dish that another person would want. He clicked on the detailed description as he pondered over it deeply.

[If you use Food God's Cooking Skill to recreate and make the dish from the recipe of the dish the other person desires, your chances of achieving a higher grade of dish will be doubled.]

It was literally making a dish from the recipe acquired from a dish that another person wanted to eat.

'I'm already busy eating as it is though?'

Then, he checked the Ingredient Tracking Skill.

(Ingredient Tracking)

Passive Skill

Level: 2

Penalty on Use: ?You will be unable to use Food God's True Worth for the day.

Effects:

?Once the skill has been triggered, the system will search for the ingredient that will correspond to the type of effect and cuisine that you have chosen. The search will search in a ten-kilometer radius. The skill will also suggest recipes according to the buff effect + ingredients + cuisine and will also suggest alternative ingredients for the dish.

?It can only be used 5 times

?Additional number of uses can be acquired once the skill has leveled up.

?Current available number of uses: 5/5

The changes in Ingredient Tracking was quite satisfactory. The initial one-kilometer radius search had increased to a ten-kilometer radius. In addition, the previous three uses had increased to five uses and the number of uses had also been reset.

'If I knew that this would happen, I should have used my last chance!'

Minhyuk blamed himself for being a bit dull in that regard. However, he was also feeling a bit sullen and shocked. He thought, 'Food God, why are you so mean!'

How could he give him such a skill? He did not like the name of the skill at all. Nevertheless, Minhyuk still checked the details of his newly acquired skill. Of course, with a frown on his face.

(The Joy of Eating Together)

Passive Skill

Level: None

Effects: Whenever the Food God cooks for someone else, the dish with the same taste and flavor would appear in front of him.

“Oh...”

Minhyuk promptly swallowed back the curses that he thought about the Food God. This was a simply broken skill! For example, if he made a dish with an excellent buff, even though he wanted to eat it, it would be the others that would benefit from it, right? Something like this was practically unthinkable for Minhyuk. However, with this skill, if he cooked for others, he would still be able to taste the same dishes even though he would not be able to receive the buff.

‘I suddenly feel like the Food God has always been thinking about me and my well-being. Thank you, Food God!’

Minhyuk had actually never used his buff ability since he would rather eat and drink by himself, instead of feeding others. However, this passive skill changed things entirely. It would allow him to feed others delicious food while he himself could also eat the same. And in return for cooking them something delicious...

‘I can ask them to buy me ingredients!’

Minhyuk smiled happily, albeit with a shameless expression. Then, he finally checked the class quest, ‘To Have a Feast with Other People’.

[Class Quest: To Have a Feast with Other People.]

Rank: ????

Requirement: Eat the first God’s Dish.

Rewards: The Second God’s Dish: Restaurant Course Meal, Food God’s Personal Artifact.

Penalty for Failure: -100 to all five basic stats.

Description: The Food God Allen knew what his descendant would be like the best. Even though he believed that eating alone was good, he also believed that it was important to eat with others. This is a quest for you. A ‘satisfaction’ bar will be created during the progress of this quest. Once the satisfaction bar reaches 100%, you will be able to receive the second God’s Dish. In addition, the satisfaction would vary depending on the level, title and abilities of the person who ate the dish.

Minhyuk nodded. In other words, he wanted him to cook for others and dine with them.

‘Hmm...’

Not long after, Balzarc broke the silence. He said, “The Food God did a lot of things. Some were hateful and some were worthy of gratitude. I can’t forget the taste of his cooking. He said that this dish would help you in the process of learning the pleasure and joy of eating.”

“Is that so?”

It was truly a dish that could never be forgotten. Today, Minhyuk had tasted the pork trotter set that he made. This Pork Trotter Set was truly delicious. It was the most delicious thing in the world. It even gave him an immunity towards all poisons and abnormal conditions. Minhyuk gained a lot through the process of getting this dish.

‘Beanie, the armor, and even a title.’

Minhyuk also received countless gold and artifacts just by feeding the monsters. Of course, he still had not checked the information of the Armor of Immortality. However, just as he was about to do that...

“Oink...!”

...Beanie suddenly floated in the air.

[Beanie has evolved.]

[Beanie has evolved.]

Beanie evolved twice after tasting the God’s Dish. Maybe the experience that it received had shot up, just by eating such a special dish. Then, a bright light suddenly covered Beanie’s body.

‘Don’t tell me that you’re going to evolve into a cool pet?’Minhyuk thought, head filled with anticipation. Soon, the light disappeared and Beanie appeared!

“...Oink?”

Beanie was the same. Nothing changed at all. Minhyuk nodded helplessly as he checked Beanie’s information.

(Beanie)

Rank: ???

Race: Pet

Level: 3

Attack: 132

Defense: 3,251

Summoning Duration per Day: 2 hours.

Summoning Cooldown Time: 22 hours

Special Abilities:

?It will immediately detect if there is a medicine nearby.

?Pet Owner’s attack power will be increased by 10%.

?Passive Skill: Instinctual Protection

Condition for Growth: The more delicious the food the owner eats, the higher the EXP and the higher the level it could evolve.

Potential: 184

Experience Value: 32% / 100%

“...?”

Minhyuk was extremely surprised when he saw the changes in Beanie’s stats. Beanie’s attack only increased slightly but its defense rose exponentially.

‘3,251...?’

It was as high as the Hatchling from earlier and it had only increased its level by two. Additionally, Minhyuk would receive a buff everytime he summoned Beanie, and his attack power would increase by 10%. He clicked at the passive skill, Instinctual Protection.

(Instinctual Protection)

Passive Skill

Rank: None

Level: None

Effects: Beanie’s instinct would be to always protect his owner. Beanie will always do his best to stop the attack towards his owner with all his might.

Description: Sometimes, he might be cocky and proud, but Beanie is a good pet. Such a good Beanie always wants to protect his owner. Beanie will always use his Instinctual Protection to protect you in a moment of crisis.

Minhyuk looked at Beanie with a slight admiration. Then, after watching Beanie evolve, Balzarc said, “You’ll be able to find the rest of the God’s Dishes once you grow further.”

“Yes,” Minhyuk answered with a nod. He was now done with his business. To get the second God’s Dish, he needed to fill the satisfaction level to 100%. That was something that needed time before it was completed. Once he leveled up and filled the satisfaction level to its fullest, he would be able to receive a hint for another God’s Dish.

“I hope that you will be able to work hard and eat a lot of delicious food,” Balzarc imparted those words to Minhyuk with a smile, before disappearing.

Minhyuk decided to feed the monsters in the Monster’s Paradise before leaving, but completed it faster than the time expected. He quickly fed them all in one day and left the place.

The Land of Dead, a hunting ground where only high-leveled players at Level 450 hunted. In that place, Level 430 Dullahans were being killed and swept away.

“Graaaaaa!”

Slash!

Slash!

Whenever the light flashed, a clawmark would always appear and be left on the body of the Dullahans. The things that were dealing the damage on the Dullahans were none other than wolves. Right behind those wolves was a young man of African descent. He was Kaistra. His real name was Kaistra, and his username was also Kaistra. Once again...

Slash!

...With a flash of light, the Dullahans in front of him were swept away and killed. Kaistra smiled contentedly as he watched the scene.

Kaistra was a player who accidentally entered the South Korean server. He was a strong player standing firmly at the ninth place in the global unofficial rankings. He had the god class, Envoy of Incarnation. The reason why he accidentally logged into the South Korean server was because...

Kaistra lived in a poor village. Almost all of the people in his village died due to boils and hunger. At that time, he was saved because some Korean medical staff and volunteers came to their village. They told him that they came from a South Korean company. The Korean company was none other than the Ilhwa Group. They spared money for the village where Kaistra lived and did not wish for anything in return. They were just that generous. Then, Kaistra asked a man from their group. It was Park Munsoo, the personal secretary of the chairman of the Ilhwa Group.

‘Uncle, why did you guys help us?’

Park Munsoo smiled at him and said, ‘Because we do not want to see people going hungry. It’s such a hard and unfortunate thing to happen to people.’

The young Kaistra had asked then, ‘What is hunger in Korea?’

Park Munsoo pondered deeply, then he kneeled down and told Kaistra, ‘Do you see that guy over there? Our chairman knows this best more than anyone else.’

‘What’s the name of the chairman?’

‘Chairman Kang Minhoo. He’s a very great man.’

Kaistra smiled lightly.

Our benefactor.

When Kaistra heard his words, he decided that he would consider that man to be his benefactor forever.

Chapter 116: The Chasers

Not long after that conversation, the Korean team installed five mysterious machines in the village. From what they said, the machines allowed people to play the game named Athena.

‘This is the machine that could let you play Athenae. The game was released just a few days prior and was created by the company that supported us, you know. How about learning about the world through this game?’

Kaistra could tell that the people that helped them would leave their village soon.

‘We won’t be here forever, so if something happens to your village, send a whisper to the nickname Ilhwa with the codename 313513.’

Then they left. After that, Kaistra began playing the game, earning some profit in Athenae. The profit that he earned allowed everyone in their village to eat to their heart’s content.

‘If I go to the Northern Continent, then I can make more money,’ Kaistra thought. The Northern Continent was a land that was not yet explored and pioneered. This meant that an update would happen soon. Then, a light suddenly flashed as Penrus walked beside Kaistra.

“Grr!”

Penrus was a gray wolf and was one of the Five Incarnations, the Incarnation of Light. Penrus was born from the egg of a god class divine beast and had the god class, a class that could surpass monsters of the Legendary class.

After hunting dozens of Dullahans alone, Penrus rubbed his head comfortably on Kaistra. Then...

“Grrrrrrr!”

...Penrus looked over at one place and let out a wary growl. Penrus had a special ability that could detect strong monsters, including Legendary and Mythical monsters, except for those beings that were far above it.

Kaistra asked, “Penrus, what’s wrong?”

“Grrrrrrr!”

Kaistra’s expression stiffened when he saw how rigid Penrus had become.

“Is it another incarnation?” Kaistra asked again as he looked in the direction where Penrus was looking at.

“Brrrrrr, pwiiiiii. Brrrrrr, pwiiiiii.”

Minhyuk wanted to recall the summoning, but after looking at Beanie’s tiny nose twitching as it slept on his shoulders comfortably, he decided not to. Once the pet’s summoning was recalled, it would return to a summoning room.

Minhyuk was going to visit Boroto, the former Chef Tower’s tower master, again. Just like what he said, he went to Salov Land and found the hint about the God’s Dishes. He was even able to eat the

first dish there. He was just taking his chances, wondering if Boroto could give him another food quest.

Knock, knock—

Minhyuk knocked on the door. Soon after, Boroto opened the door and said, “Oh, Food God. Were you able to eat the God’s Dish?”

Boroto was bowing respectfully when he opened the door. After raising his eyes, he saw the baby piggy lying comfortably on Minhyuk’s shoulders. He said, “So you got a pet? It looks just like you!”

Before Minhyuk met with Boroto, he took his helmet off. After all, it was just good manners and a sort of courtesy towards him. Faced with that sudden statement, Minhyuk stuttered as he asked, “Is...is that a compliment?”

“Of course. Hahaha!”

In the end, it meant that Minhyuk looked like a pig. However, Minhyuk did not voice his complaints since he wanted to get something from Boroto. He quickly asked, “Are there any things that you need my help with? The rewards should be something delicious, or some delicious ingredients. I hope something delicious comes out!”

“Hmm. There’s something. But... Let’s go inside for now,” Boroto said, leading Minhyuk inside. Once Minhyuk was seated, Boroto handed him a glass of drink and said, “I’ll give you a glass of drink, let’s drink and talk calmly.”

“Yes!”

Soon, Boroto came out again and brought out a glass. Instead of water, it was actually barley tea.

‘Hiyaaa... it’s barley tea!’

Minhyuk remembered drinking a lot of barley tea when he was young. Barley tea was just made with plain water, but it was a bit savory and he always drank it whenever he ate. Recently though, it was made with purified water and the taste was not the same.

Minhyuk gulped the glass down. It had a savory taste and there were no pieces that got caught in his throat. Without noticing it, he was able to finish one glass of barley tea in one shot.

“Please give me another cup.”

“I made a big mistake. How dare I offer just one cup of barley tea to the Food God?” Boroto said as he brought out a huge kettle and placed it in front of Minhyuk.

Minhyuk quickly drank one, two, three glasses all at once. Then, he said, “Kgggghk!? When I was a kid, I used to pretend that it was beer since they almost looked the same.”

“Hoho. However, we don’t have enough ingredients to make them again.”

“Oh. Will I get something delicious in return if I do that?”

Boroto nodded his head. But then...

Knock, knock.

...Someone knocked on the door.

"Is someone inside?" The person from outside asked. The voice definitely sounded like a woman.

Minhyuk and Boroto both tilted their heads in unison. However, before Boroto could stand up and go to the door...

"P...please wait... Boroto!"

"Yes?" Boroto asked. He frowned when he saw how serious Minhyuk's expression was. Then, as if thinking of something, he said, "D...don't tell me... Why do I feel like my life is on the line? Could it be that the person outside is here to assassinate me?"

"No. It was because I smelt something delicious."

"Hmm?" Boroto hummed and sighed in relief. Who would assassinate someone like him? He was just a former tower master from the Chef Tower, that was now living in a small humble house.

Then, Minhyuk stood up and said, "I'll open it for you."

"Alright," Boroto agreed with his suggestion.

Then, Minhyuk walked forward and opened the door. When he opened the door, the woman let out a surprised gasp. Minhyuk tilted his head in confusion, he wondered why the woman was startled. Then, he gasped as well...

"Gasp...!"

The woman standing in front of the door, Genie, was extremely surprised.

'I wonder how great that buffed dish is? Is it really greater than what the Twilight Chef can make?' Genie thought after arriving at the Chef's Village, Raven. She was almost at Boroto's cabin with her delicious croquettes.

Genie used to be fat before, but thanks to her hard work and effort, she was able to slim down. The process was a bit bloody, but everything had been worth it. The only thing that Genie could do to maintain her figure was to eat a lot in?Athenae.?And she ate a lot in?Athenae. After all, she was just your regular Korean woman, a woman that loved to eat. This was also the reason why she was called 'Flower Piggy' by her friends.

"Ah. Croquettes are really delicious!" Genie said, smiling in delight. She could feel the crispy and crunchy texture of the bread with every bite of the croquette. Even the flavors of the meat, onion and carrots inside the bread spread in her mouth, which was immediately followed by the spicy and rich flavor of the curry. Genie easily finished two croquettes and she hesitated to open her third one.

‘Hmm, hmm. It’s not polite to meet someone for the first time with food in my mouth,’?She thought with a nod.

In a blink of an eye, she was already standing in front of Boroto’s door. Genie promptly knocked on the door.

Knock, knock.

“Is someone inside?” Genie asked, listening to the voices coming through the door.

“P...please wait... Boroto!”

“Yes?”

“D...don’t tell me... Why do I feel like my life is on the line? Could it be that the person outside is here to assassinate me?”

“No. It was because I smelt something delicious.”

Genie was taken aback when she heard their conversation.

‘.....Huh? What’s this? Ah, don’t tell me.....!’

Genie had heard about it before. There was a class that gave the player the ability to turn into a beast! Transformation! Perhaps that player could turn into a ‘wild dog’? In fact, she found it surprising that a player was with Boroto. She giggled as she thought,?‘Will they turn into a puppy? A poodle, maybe?’

As she continued to speculate about the identity and abilities of the player inside, their conversation inside continued.

“I’ll open it for you.”

“Alright.”

That was when Genie found something strange. The owner of this cabin was the former tower master of the Chef Tower. However, he was talking respectfully towards a player. Then, the door opened. Genie could not help but freeze in surprise when she saw the person who opened the door.

‘Mi...Minhyuk!’

They were trying so hard to look for him, to think that he had appeared right in front of her! Genie could see that he had changed a lot since the last time they had met. He had grown a lot taller and his face had matured a lot. As she looked at him, her heart began to thump wildly as her stomach fluttered in nervousness.

Sniff, sniff, sniff, sniff, sniff—

“Gasp...!” Minhyuk gasped, his eyes widening imperceptibly.

‘D...did he recognize me?’?Genie thought. If that was the case, then yes! He would definitely be surprised! Everyone told her that she had changed so much that they

could not recognize her. However, Genie knew that Minhyuk was a delicate and meticulous man. He would definitely recognize her.

Then, he said, “Wow. Hey, aren’t you really beautiful?”

‘Eh?’

Genie was taken aback. She thought, ‘What’s happening?’

“Wow. I just ate something, but I couldn’t stop my drool from flowing when I smelled the scent of oil. I’ve never seen a beauty like you! Your figure is even voluptuous! You must have made a lot of men cry in reality. Haha! What you just ate earlier, judging from the smell and the crumbs left on your mouth, it must be croquette, right? Do you mind if I have a piece?”

‘...OMG?’

Genie finally realized that Minhyuk did not recognize her. He only wanted to eat the croquette that she just ate!

‘But, how did he know that I ate croquettes? Don’t tell me it was just because of the smell?’

Genie looked at Minhyuk in bewilderment. She thought, ‘I wonder what this punk’s story is?’

She was extremely curious, from what she heard from Rován, Minhyuk ate quite a lot. However, that was not something unusual. He used to eat well when they were still in middle school. However, from what Rován said, he was eating a lot more than what he used to eat.

‘That’s right. Minhyuk used to listen to me whenever I gave him food.’

Genie handed her remaining croquette to Minhyuk.

“Thank you! Thank you very much! You’ll be blessed and live a long life!” Minhyuk said, nodding his head like a chicken pecking on grains as he ate the croquette quickly.

“Boy, who was it?”

“Ah...!”

Genie woke up from her trance when she heard Boroto’s words. She was reminded of her current situation and what she needed to do in this place.

“Do you have any business here?”

“Yes. I came here because I heard you needed something.”

“Ho. Come inside,” Boroto said, willingly letting her enter his house.

“Hehe. Croquettes are delicious!” Minhyuk said as he happily licked his fingers after finishing the croquette. He sat down as he chuckled to himself while savoring the

flavor that was lingering in his mouth. Genie sat beside him as Boroto gave her a glass of drink.

‘Eh... What's really wrong with you?’

She tilted her head as she looked at him while Minhyuk opened his mouth and asked her, “But Miss... your voice sounds like someone I know.”

“Is...is that so? What kind of person is she? If you listen to my voice, it's quite pretty~ so I guess she has a nice personality, right?”

Minhyuk's expression turned solemn when he heard her words. He said, “I don't think so?”

Genie's hand that was holding the glass suddenly tightened.

Crack—

It was the sound of glass cracking!

“Ho, hoho. Is, is that so?” Genie chuckled forcefully.

Minhyuk looked at her with a serious expression as he continued to talk, “She was my friend back in middle school. Whenever she came down, my classmates would shout and say ‘Here comes the wildboar!’. Yes, that's what they said. I still remember it clearly. I took a bite out of her pikachu tonkatsu once, and she dragged me behind the washroom and beat me. I almost died that day. Sometimes, whenever I sleep on my bad side, I would dream of that horrendous scene.?Phew. It was terrible.”

Minhyuk was drenched in cold sweat when he dreamt of that scene back then.

“...Sh...she wouldn't beat you to death, right? It must have been a joke~ Hohoho. That lady must be such a beauty now since she was like that as a child. When I was young, I heard that ugly kids always become pretty when they grow up.”

Minhyuk thought about her words for a moment, but eventually shook his head and said, “Impossible.”

Crack!

The glass in Genie's hand finally broke into pieces. If she hit him on the back of his head right now, she would be the same Genie who dragged him behind the toilet and almost beat him to death.

‘Phew. Patience, patience...’

She had to learn about his story!

“Ar...are you okay?”

“I'm fine~ Ho~ Ho~ Ho~”

“Anyway. Thank you. You're my benefactor now, Miss!”

“Ho~ Ho~ Ho~ Then let me sla... Hoho!”

“Yes?”

“N, nothing~”

Genie managed to hold herself back.

Then, Boroto said, “Ah, when I think about it... the request that I am about to give the Food God is the same as the request that this woman came here for.”

‘Eh, Minhyuk will be taking the same quest as I do?’ Genie thought. As far as she knew, Minhyuk was stronger than what his level was. He was even able to defeat Rován.

“Do you know about the Northern Continent?”

“The Northern Continent?”

Genie had a hunch. She thought, ‘It’s already quite rare for an NPC to give you a quest related to the Northern Continent...!’

Every single player was now eager to receive a quest about the Northern Continent. After all, these quests were almost on par with a hidden quest.

“I’ve been to the Northern Continent once in the past.”

“Really?” Genie asked in surprise.

‘He had been to the Northern Continent?’

“Yes. I went once when I was very young. Of course, I did not go deep inside. It was such a dangerous place after all.”

Most of the people that entered that place would die. Yet, this man was able to explore the place even for a bit. He was truly the former tower master of the Chef Tower.

“If you go to the place on the map that I will give you, you will be able to reach the Valkyrie Kingdom.”

“Ki...kingdom...?”

Genie was once again caught in surprise. A kingdom in the Northern Continent?! His words also meant another thing.

‘A kingdom meant that there will be new towns and villages. It means that there will be a lot of land that you can get.’

Of course, there was still a lot of land in Eivelis Empire, but most of them already had owners. The lands were either owned by nobles or great guilds. In fact, even the Legend Guild had land in the empire. However, the more territory and land they owned, the better. She listened more intently to what Boroto said.

‘He even said that he will give us a map...!’

Giving a map meant that Boroto was one of the few NPCs that could give them quests related to the Northern Continent! Once they reached the kingdom, there would be a lot more quests, more rewards and new hunting grounds! Genie listened intently until the very end.

“Go there and meet the legendary chef.”

“...Legendary chef?” Minhyuk asked as Boroto nodded in agreement.

“Yes. He’s a person who has reached the zenith of cooking! I was fortunate enough to taste his dish before.”

Boroto recalled those days. He said, “When I tasted his food, I felt that my cooking was extremely shabby.”

Minhyuk was caught by surprise. Boroto was once the top chef in the prestigious Chef Tower after all! He was a chef with great skill, and to think such a character was still humbled in front of someone else!

“I also know that the legendary chef knows of a hint about the Kong Qing Elixir.”

“Kong Qing Elixir?”

“Yes. I heard that it’s an extremely precious liquid that comes from deep underground. They also said that this Kong Qing Elixir would give you a boost if you drink it. Rumor has it that it’s a very delicious liquid.”

Boroto looked like he could not wait to tell them what it was, and he continued, “Because it’s carbonated!”

Chapter 117: The Chasers

"Carbonated?" Minhyuk asked, almost standing up in shock.

"Yes. It's a sweet, sparkling, carbonated drink."

"Wow!" Minhyuk exclaimed! Not only would he go there to get some carbonated drink, but he would also even be able to meet the Legendary Chef. He was sure that the Legendary Chef’s dishes would be very delicious!

"Since the two of you are here together, why don't the two of you bring me some Kong Qing Elixir together?"

[Hidden Quest: Meet the Legendary Chef and get the Kong Qing Elixir!]

Rank: S

Requirement: Met Boroto

Rewards: Boroto's Buffed Dish

Penalty for Failure: Boroto's Favor will decrease

Description: The Northern Continent has not yet been explored. However, Boroto has been to that place before. He even knows the whereabouts of the Legendary Chef that he met in the Valkyrie Kingdom.

Genie accepted the quest after she heard and read the same quest notifications as Minhyuk.

[You have acquired a map that will lead you to the Valkyrie Kingdom.]

"This has led us to an unexpected companion, but I still have to wait and see," Genie thought as she went out with Minhyuk.

"The croquette was really delicious. I'll see you later!"

"Huh? Wait? Where are you going?" Genie asked, flustered.

Minhyuk was just saying goodbye and walked away without looking back at her! He replied, "I'm going to get the Kong Qing Elixir."

"Y...you should come with me."

"...Why?" Minhyuk asked in confusion.

"B...because we got the quest together."

"Hey. Then there will be another mouth to feed."

"...?"

"See you later!" Minhyuk shouted as he started to walk away again.

Genie was now panicking.

Shit, what am I supposed to do? Do I really have to introduce myself?

Minhyuk was getting farther and farther away. Then, she said, as if by instinct, "I'll buy you something delicious!"

Step, step, step, step!

"Let's go! I'll make the journey comfortable and easy for you, Miss!"

In the past, whenever she said this, Minhyuk would always carry her bag for her. This was how the two of them came to accompany each other in a quest.

"Ah. I still have to stop by the village."

"The village?" Genie asked, looking at Minhyuk in confusion.

"Because I really have a lot of miscellaneous items to deal with."

Root was standing in Raven Village's central plaza, shouting loudly among the people buying and selling their wares. He said, "I'm buying items! I don't care how much, I'll buy whatever you have! I'll buy it at a higher price from wherever you're selling them! Even at 1.5 times higher than the normal price!"

Root thought that buying miscellaneous items would allow him to see how strong the player was. After all, one could infer what kind of monsters the player hunted and what kind of hunting grounds

they went to from the artifacts and items that they gathered from the drops. Besides, there were quite a lot of high-leveled hunting grounds around Raven. Root was sure that he would be able to find some strong players among them. His plan was buying the players' items and recruiting them as foreigner escorts for King Varen.

As he continued to buy items, a man and woman approached him. Root thought, 'Another Frying Pan cosplayer? I'm so sick of it, so sick!'

Then, Root's gaze moved towards the woman. He could not help but chuckle shyly at the great beauty in front of him.

"Hey, mister. I have some miscellaneous items that I want to sell. Are you really going to buy all of them at a higher price?"

"Yes. I'll buy it at a price 1.5 times higher than in other places~"

"But there's quite a lot..."

"It's alright. I have a lot of money~ haha!" Root said, smiling greasily as he casted a furtive glance towards the woman. However, the woman did not look interested at all, so Root decided to just stick to his task and get it done.

"I'm warning you, there's really a lot!"

"...It's fine. A merchant would not run out of money when they're buying things. Haha!" Root said, looking at the man from head to toe. The man was wearing a frying pan on his back, a horned helmet and a ragged-looking armor! However, his sword was pretty good.

'Hmm. Did he buy it with cash?' Root thought as he stretched out his hands and shook hands with the man. Whenever players and NPCs initiated a trade, they only needed to shake hands. Once the trading window was opened, the man quickly tapped on his own screen.

[The Trading Window is full.]

There were a total of sixteen slots in the Trading Window, and Root was looking through all sixteen of the items placed in these slots. His eyes widened in shock as he continued to browse. He thought, 'W...what?! The Twin-headed Ogre's Gauntlet? The Orc Chieftain's Greatsword? Ack?! More than five Twin-headed Ogre's Blood?!

Root was now shocked stiff. Then, his eyes stopped on one of the items.

"The Phoenix Lord's Feather?"

Phoenix Lord! It was a legendary monster that had not been found yet! Its level was estimated to be somewhere between Level 450~500 and was comparable to the current number one in the official rankings. Yet, this man in front of him actually had such an artifact material?!

"This person... He's high leveled!"

Root was very excited. He quickly decided to put a price and finish the transaction.

"There are two Orc Chieftain's Greatsword... One is priced at 50 million gold... the Phoenix Lord's Feather is priced at 80 billion gold and..."

After finishing his calculations, Root blinked blankly. He said, "Th...the total is 30.7 billion gold."

"...What?" The woman standing next to the man reacted to his words. She asked, "H...how much did you say?"

"30.7 billion gold. Ah, I said that it's 1.5 times higher than others so I'll have to give you more."

"...?"

The woman looked at the man beside her like she could not believe what was happening. This was exactly what Root was feeling. Then, he remembered something. He said, "Ahhh. I didn't put a price on the Twin-headed Ogre's Gauntlet, because it's an epic item..."

"..."

"So it's almost 80 billion gold?"

"Oh, that's a lot. But, I still have at least one to two times the amount of that."

Root's eyes widened. He asked, "Wh...what did you say?"

"I have at least one to two times the amount of that."

Root thought that this was it! This man was the benefactor that would lead him to clear his quest successfully!

"I'm sorry, but can you please excuse me for a moment?" Root asked, pulling the sword out of his waist. This was the sword that Varen lent to him, the Sun's Sword. Even if Root was a meter away from his target, he would still be able to check their reputation. The brighter the light that would shine out from the sword, the higher the reputation the player had.

"...Gasp?!"?Root gasped in shock. The sword shone brightly the moment he pointed the sword at the man. When he aimed the sword at the woman, the sword also shone brightly, albeit slightly weaker than the man's light. Regardless, the Sun Sword shone brightly when he pointed it at both of them!

Genie finally noticed. She thought, 'Isn't that a sword that a King or an Emperor has? The sword that can determine the REP of others? A...are you telling me that Minhyuk has an extremely high REP right now?'

It was another shock! Then, Root immediately prostrated on the ground and said, "P...please help me!"

The two people looked at him curiously as Root explained their situation like a rattling gun. 'Genie thought.' 'Wow, I must grasp this opportunity! It's the chance to build a relationship and increase my favor with the King of a new continent!'

As he finished explaining, Root looked at the man's expression.

'W...what's this? Why is he so indifferent?!'

Minhyuk yawned widely after listening. He said, "Speaking of kings, I want to eat king dumplings..."

"..."

"..."

"A...anyway please help us! If you help us, I'll tell the king to buy your items at 1.5, no, at double the price!"

"Hmmm..." ?Minhyuk hummed as he rubbed his chin in thought. His expression slowly turned worried. Genie did not know what he was worried about, but she whispered something in Root's ear.

"Eh? If I say that... Then he'll be extremely motivated? Hmm..." Root said, also turning a bit worried. He finally realized that there was something weird with this party. However, he still obediently followed the woman's suggestion and hinted at the man. He said, "I'll buy you something delicious on the way."

Swoosh!

"How dare they threaten the king, I'll protect you with this sword...! Let's go!"

This was how Minhyuk and Genie joined Root's party.

"I really want to eat a giant gummy worm."

Root firmly believed that this party was both strange and weird.

'No matter, they are really strong!'

Varen sat helplessly on the bed. He was currently inside the inn. He said, "Root...I hope he has good intentions."

Varen was aware that they desperately needed the aid and strength of a strong foreigner right now. Of course, Varen was also willing to give out generous compensation to the foreigner that would help them arrive safely at their destination. However, it seemed like it would still be tough. The foreigners who were pursuing them earlier looked like they were quite strong.

'Damn it!'

The king himself did not know why his situation had become like this. As he was thinking about his situation, Varen suddenly heard a loud growl from his own stomach.

"I'm hungry."

Being a king did not mean that he would not get hungry. He ran nonstop just to survive, so it was only natural that he would feel hungry.

'I can't just go downstairs and eat.'

Their pursuers would be able to find them once he did that so he had no choice but to grit his teeth and bear with it as he waited for Root. Then, Varen heard a light knock on the door of his room. Varen's lips curled in a slight smile. Root finally arrived with the foreigners! Once he came in, he would definitely ask him to go downstairs and bring him something to eat. The door soon opened.

"Your Highness. I have brought the foreigners."

"I see."

Varen nodded. The first person to come inside was a woman. Just when the woman was about to greet him, a creature as small as a fist suddenly barged in.

“Huh?”

Varen looked at it strangely as he asked in a solemn voice, “What kind of a pig is this?”

“I’m a pig named Minhyuk... no, I’m a foreigner.”

“I asked about the pig so why did you answer, boy?”

Varen looked at the strange pair of man and woman.

“I used to be called a pig so I couldn’t stop my...”

Varen was left speechless as he looked at them. The foreigner, the man, looked quite strange with a frying pan on his back. Even the woman that came with them looked a bit shabby. Varen thought that something might have gone wrong but he did not think that things had gotten so bad to such an extent.

Shaking his head, Varen asked the man, “Boy, what’s your class?”

“I’m a chef.”

“...No. Why did you bring a chef here?”

When Minhyuk heard Varen’s words, he could not help but jump up to defend himself. He said, “I came here because he told me that he will buy me delicious food. Your Highness...!”

“...”

For a moment, Varen wanted to sock Root in the gut, but Root’s expression was really flustered. It was as if he did not expect it.

“Ar...are you really a chef?”

“Why, yes. Of course.”

“...”

Root was left speechless. He thought, ‘Wh...what the hell. I thought he was a big shot character because of the sword on his waist... D...don’t tell me that he’s just skilled as a chef? He got a high REP just by cooking?’

Root saw Varen beckoning at him. Varen asked, “What in the world is going on, Root!”

He turned his head and looked at the three, no two people and a little pig, standing by the door.

“There are hundreds of soldiers, knights and monsters. Are you telling me that he’s going to break through all of them and lead me to where Empress Ellie is? Is the fate of the Valkyrie Kingdom dependent on them?!”

“Y...yes...?”

Varen supported his forehead in disbelief. He felt like he wanted to kill himself on the spot. A strange chef, an unidentified baby pig and an unknown woman with a pretty face.

‘That woman isn’t even in her right mind!’

It was definitely not natural for someone to walk with such a strange man. She was definitely crazy herself!

‘This is how the 300-year-old history of the Valkyrie Kingdom falls apart!’

Then, Varen was suddenly struck with a great idea. He turned to Root and told him, “Root, why don’t we get some more help?”

“I don’t think that’s possible. When I was in the plaza, I saw a crowd enter the village. We really have to leave this place soon.”

It was a pity. Varen sighed in defeat. For now, they have to get out of this village alive. Then they could find other ways to survive. As they left the inn with them, Genie thought, ‘The chasers... I wonder which guild it was? What about the NPCs that attacked them?’

Genie tilted her head in confusion. When they arrived near the carriage that was prepared in the forest, she approached Varen and asked, “Your Highness. Looking at the situation right now, wouldn’t it be better for you to have more reinforcements?”

“That would be for the best,” Varen said, looking down. He was stricken with grief as he recalled the faces of those people tortured and bleeding as they gave him a chance to survive.

“Then, I should go ahead and call my colleagues.”

“Thank you,” Varen said. His voice sounded normal, but his shoulders were tense.

At that, Genie opened her guild chat.

Chapter 118: Evolving Ellie’s Swordsmanship

A man covered with blood fought fiercely against bandits as the spear in his hands began to rotate fiercely.

[Tornado Spear.]

[The thrown spear will pull the enemies and brutally attack them.]

The man threw his spear with all his might towards his enemies. The bandits that blocked his way were pulled along by the momentum of the spear, tearing them apart and clearing the road.

“Keuaack!”

“Ugh, ahhhhh!”

“Y, you damn rat...!” One of the bandits shouted. This was the Bandit Boss, a Level 370 boss monster. The Bandit Boss was shocked to see one person easily dealing with dozens of his Level 200 Bandits, all by himself. The man did not even let a single

attack lay on him. When the man reached his hand out, the spear that was thrown far away flew right back into his hands.

[Spear Boom.]

[A strong energy will be concentrated at the tip of the spear.]

The man immediately stabbed the Bandit Boss.

Spurt!

Vwooom!

Splatter!

The Bandit Boss' body exploded, its body splattering all over the place.

[You have killed the Bandit Boss, Jan Becker.]

[You have gained 5 REP.]

[You can now receive the reward.]

The man shook the blood off of his spear. This man was none other than Crow, a bounty hunter. Crow was not listed in the official overall rankings, but he was ranked second in the Spearman Rankings. In fact, his strength was similar to the number one in the rankings, the 'God of Spear' Verden. Just as he was about to return to turn in his 500 million gold bounty...

Piii! Piii!

...A siren-like alarm rang in Crow's head. He thought, 'Huh? Did the Master declare a state of emergency?'

Crow was surprised. Usually, alarms like this would only be rung by the guild master whenever there was a guild war or a quest that needed to involve all of the guild members. Crow laughed in interest. It seemed like he found it fun.

[Guild Master Genie:

URGENT NOTICE!

Right now, Genie is in Raven Village escorting a King from the Northern Continent, Varen to meet with Ellie's soldiers. Varen is currently being chased by unknown pursuers. The rewards that will be given by King Varen are expected to include titles, territories, quests and countless other rewards. Guild Members, please gather right now. Those who will not be able to participate will be excluded from the compensation and rewards list.]

"Ho?" Crow chuckled in interest.

A quest to escort a king? And they were in Raven Village? Genie even gracefully added her coordinates in the message. Crow quickly returned to the city and entered the building that their guild used as a hideout. When he opened the door, there were already some of their guild members who were waiting. One of the guild members, a short man with blazing red hair and a mysterious straw hat, stood up to welcome him.

"You came, Crow?"

“Oh, Firefist. Did you find a girlfriend?”

Firefist Ace. This was his self-proclaimed name. However, his real username was Red Flame Fighter. He had the legendary class Fighter, and he was also one of the unofficial rankers in the Fighter Rankings. He was known for his flames that erupt fiercely whenever he struck an opponent. On the flip side, he was always trying to look for a girlfriend every day.

“Sigh.?I’m already giving up on the Nami-type of girlfriend. Right now, I’m into the Robin-type. My type has changed into an intellectual woman.”

“This Hyung told you not to speak to me informally, right?”

“Hey! Even though I look like this, I’m the Firefist Ace of Eunpyong Elementary! I recently won against the gum boys too!”

“Ah, yep yep. You’re amazing~” A woman answered, making Crow grin.

A woman with double swords entered the place, this woman was another ranker. She was known as the Goddess of the Battlefield, Ascar.

“What about Locke and Khan?”

“Well, I heard that they were going to the tower. They probably did not see the GC.”

“Let’s leave as soon as everyone has gathered.”

All of them were considered to be reclusive masters. Then, Fire Flame Fighter, Ace, said, “Crow, it seems like it would be a lot of fun. Right?”

Crow grinned at him and nodded. He said, “You said it.”

Ares received a report from one of his guild members.

“GM. We are sure that the king stayed for quite some time in Raven Village.”

“And then?”

“Yes. Cospo followed the scent of his blood and found an inn. I asked the owner of the inn and he told me that the man stayed in their inn for quite a while. But...”

Ares’ brows furrowed in concern.

“At first there were only two of them, but when they left, there were four people who left together. The two additional people were a player wearing a frying pan on his back and an extremely beautiful woman.”

“They recruited players?” Ares asked, immediately understanding the situation. After all, Varen was an NPC that could give out quests.

In fact, they also received a quest. And this quest was...

[Empire Quest: Capture King Varen!]

Rank: S

Requirements: Marquis Athman's Favor.

Rewards: Territories, Titles and King Varen's Skill: Evolution

Penalty for Failure: Favor with Collodis Empire's NPCs will drop significantly.

Description: You have received a shared quest from a person from Collodis Empire. King Varen is a man with great capabilities. He has the ability to further evolve and strengthen the skills that a person has. In addition, if you are able to capture King Varen alive, the Collodis Empire will be able to take over Valkyrie Kingdom and you will be able to receive territories and titles according to your contributions!

During the Quest's Progress: You will not get a Temporary Chaotic or Chaotic state even if you PKed other players.

'Keuhuhu!' Ares laughed at the unexpected Empire Quest. This was a quest shared by Callian. He was the guild master of the Iris Guild, one of the top four guilds.

Ares was clearly a citizen of Eivelis Empire, which was at odds with Collodis Empire. The players were even divided between those who started in Eivelis Empire and those who started in Collodis Empire. Iris Guild was a guild in the Collodis Empire. However, both Ares and Callian always kept in touch with each other, even though they were players of opposing empires.

One of the reasons why Callian contacted Ares for this quest was because he knew that he would not be able to reach this place quickly. They quickly mass teleported and brought in a 50-people troop to this place. They had told him that they were the best of the best. The levels of these elite soldiers had all exceeded Level 300. Most of the players who came here were those that were deprived of their titles in the Collodis Empire. Among them was the previous Imperial Sword, Rumad.

In the current Athenae worldview, Rumad was considered to be one of the 'Pinnacle Strong Men'. It was a title that could only be given to the strongest of the strong among NPCs. Even though Rumad was only the weakest among all of the Pinnacle Strong Men, he was still the former leader of the famous Crimson Savage Mercenaries.

'It's kind of reassuring.'

What would Ares be afraid of if he had a super powerful comrade with him? Besides, their enemies were only four people.

'Who the hell did they recruit?'

Ares was quite curious about their choice. Then, the guild member who was reporting earlier said, "We will continue to chase them with the help of Cospo."

Cospo was a monster leopard with a good sense of smell and they were chasing them with its help.

'He must be captured before he meets with Ellie.'

Once they met up with Ellie, it would be a big problem for them. If that happened, even if they had Rumad in their ranks, they would not have a chance to make a move. There was only one reason why they were trying to risk their lives just to capture their target...

‘The King’s power...!’

Ares could tell just from the contents of the quest that King Varen possessed an extraordinary power.

‘It’s definitely a reward that is as amazing as Ellie’s Swordsmanship!’

What was written in the rewards section was the skill Evolution. He might not know what exactly is meant by Evolution, however, he was sure that he would understand it once he read through the detailed description.

Ares had received a skill named Valkain’s Swordsmanship. It was a unique skill, however, it never rose from Level 1. He was thinking that Evolution would allow his skill to progress further and turn the unique skill into an epic skill.

‘The king is like a huge gold mine!’ Ares thought with a grin.

Clack, clack, clack—

This was the sound of the carriage carrying the king of Valkyrie Kingdom, Varen! The king who had millions of people under him and was sometimes deemed as the ‘Cold-blooded Ruler’ was currently licking his upper lip in hunger and was grabbing his stomach pitifully. The foreigner, Minhyuk, sitting in front of him brought something out at the sight of Varen’s state. It was none other than a boiled egg.

“As expected, boiled eggs and cider are the best when traveling.”

Crack!

Minhyuk cracked the boiled egg on his head as he laughed happily. Then, he peeled it off in a blink of an eye.

“Huh? Won’t you give me one? Will you be so cheap as to eat alone?”

“Hmm... Genie gave me a croquette,” Minhyuk said as he gladly gave her a boiled egg.

‘It...it’s elvan stone baked eggs...!’

Varen could not help but drool as he watched Genie and Minhyuk eat the boiled eggs happily. He had not eaten for two days! However, a king had a sense of pride and dignity that he needed to uphold, that was why he could not beg for one. All Varen could do was watch Minhyuk dip the egg in the salt and take a big bite out of it.

‘If it’s elvan stone-baked eggs, it will definitely be chewy. If you take almost half of it in a bite, you will definitely taste the harmonious flavor of the white and the yolk.’

Varen nodded in agreement with his thoughts. Then...

Fwish!

Minhyuk opened a can of cider and gulped it down. As Varen watched Minhyuk's throat bobbing as he gulped down the refreshing cider, he thought, 'It must be really cool and refreshing. The droplets on the can prove that it's definitely ice cold. That's right! You have to gulp it down all at once!'

"Kyaa!"

"Kgghk...!" Varen exclaimed at the same time as Minhyuk did after imagining himself in Minhyuk's position. Varen felt a huge sense of shame engulf his body as he turned away to hide his embarrassment.

'Bastard! A man will definitely offer an egg at least once!'

Varen's subordinates and vassals always recommended food to him first, then he would taste it first before they could eat. As he was thinking about his vassals and his life before this pursuit, Minhyuk said, "Your Highness, do you want some elvan stone baked eggs and cider too?"

Being starved for two days, Varen felt that he really needed a cool and refreshing cider right now. However, he was a king, so he needed to save his honor. He put on a nonchalant front, "It's fine."

Varen wanted to refuse his proposal first and then pretend to accept it reluctantly once Minhyuk tried to give it to him a second time.

"Is that so? Well then..."

'Wait... that's not how the script goes! Why won't you ask a second time?! Why! Why!'

One should know that all requests, suggestions, recommendations, and proposals should be done thrice!

"But Your Highness, you must be hungry so you should at least have one," Genie suggested.

It was a relief for him.

'I'm definitely going to give this woman a good reward!?' Varen thought.

Then, Minhyuk said, "Hey. I don't think His Highness likes this kind of food."

"I...is that so...? But...?" Genie said, but soon nodded in agreement. After all, there was no way that a king of a kingdom would like these simple elvan stone-baked eggs.

'I'm doomed...?' Varen thought. He was really dying for some food! Why did he stop her from giving him some food?! Why?! At that moment...

Groooooooooowl!

...Varen's stomach growled loudly.

"Ahem. Ahem!" Varen coughed loudly to hide his embarrassment. Minhyuk and Genie's eyes both turned to him.

"Although I don't particularly like elvan stone-baked eggs and cider, but..."

The two of them nodded in unison.

“But I haven’t eaten for quite a long time so I’m a bit hungry now. And because there are people waiting for me, I don’t want to give up. I want to survive through this difficulty.”

Minhyuk and Genie nodded again when they heard his words.

“So I’ll eat those eggs for my people and regain my energy.”

“So in conclusion, you want to eat eggs. That’s it, right?”

Varen nodded abashedly and said, “Y...yes.”

Minhyuk nodded and handed him some eggs willingly. Varen quickly took an egg and held it carefully. He thought, ‘You have to break the eggs on your head...!’

However, he stopped himself from cracking it on his head. There were still two people watching him so he had to act with dignity. He lowered the egg to the floor, and cracked it before peeling it and taking a bite.

“Phew. Aah.”

A sigh of relief unconsciously came out once he had some food. Varen had been starving for quite some time so having food was really a relief. The elvan stone-baked eggs were truly delicious to taste! He dipped it in salt and took a bite while he cracked another one.

Crak!

Fwish!

Varen opened a can of cider and gulped it down fiercely.

“Kkkgggk!” Varen exclaimed in spite of himself. Then he started to chomp on the elvan stone-baked eggs with vigor. Just as he was about to eat another one, Varen noticed Genie watching. He could not help but choke on the food in his mouth.

“These elvan stone-baked eggs are not that bad. Ahem, ahem!” Varen cleared his throat and began to eat again with much gusto.

“I grew up eating Rald’s satisfying dishes, you know?”

“Rald?”

“Yeah. He’s our kingdom’s chef. I heard that he was called a legendary chef outside of Valkyrie Kingdom.”

Minhyuk was suddenly interested. He must be the legendary chef that knew about the Kong Qing Elixir. Besides, Minhyuk also wanted to taste the dishes made by a chef that was deemed to be legendary.

“Rald’s dishes are truly excellent, they’re really delicious. No one in the world can cook as well as him. He also has one dish that he specializes in. The dish that he makes best...”

A dish that he is most excellent with...

Minhyuk focused intently and waited for his next words.

“...is a dish named sushi.”

“...!”

Chapter 119: Evolving Ellie’s Swordsmanship

Minhyuk almost jumped out of his seat when he heard his words. He said, “Su...sushi?”

“Yeah. He’s really good at making sushi. And you might not know of this, boy, but there’s a place called ‘Dragon King’s Sea’ in the Northern Continent.”

Dragon King’s Sea!? Just listening to its name was enough for Minhyuk to tell that it was an unusual and mysterious place.

“There are plenty of creatures living in the Dragon King’s Sea. You might not have heard of it but the Valkyrie Kingdom’s specialty is ‘seafood’. And Rald is really, really good at making sushi. It’s to the point where you will always have a smile on your face whenever you eat his sushi, you know?”

Minhyuk imagined himself entering a sushi restaurant and sitting on one of the empty chairs. Then, he would tell the owner who was also dressed like a Japanese...

‘Boss, an A course here. Please.’

A course. It was the most basic course that included ten assorted sushi and a hot mini udon. Minhyuk would definitely first taste the complimentary miso soup. He would pick up his spoon to carefully sip the hot soup.

‘Phew.’

The taste of the miso soup would definitely be enough to bring a smile to one’s face. Then, Minhyuk imagined himself putting some wasabi in a small bowl and pouring a bit of soy sauce, appropriate to go along with the wasabi. Then, the boss would have the perfect timing and hand over his ordered sushi. The long-cut flatfish sushi, the pink salmon sushi, the fresh and plump shrimp sushi, the seasonal fish sushi, the chewy octopus sushi, the eel sushi, the yellow and bright egg sushi and many others! Sushi could give you the pleasure of tasting a variety of flavors in one single order.

He imagined that he would then dip the flatfish sushi in his pre-made soy sauce, and a wide grin would definitely be plastered on his face. Often times, when he dipped sushi in a sauce made with plenty of wasabi, he would feel his nose getting all warm and tingly. Minhyuk personally loved this

strange sensation and wonderful flavor. What would happen if he tasted the udon right after a bite? It would simply be the best combination!

Sluuuuurp—

Minhyuk could not help but wipe the drool off his face.

Varen felt that he was right about Minhyuk. He asked, “Boy, I heard that you’re a chef?”

“That’s right.”

“Your cooking may not be on par with Rald but if you made a dish that can satisfy me then I will give you a chance to taste his dishes. A chef like you that’s still wet behind the ears wouldn’t have any other chances to taste his food, so you should take this chance. Furthermore, if you satisfy me, I will also evolve your abilities.”

“Evolve?” It was Genie, and not Minhyuk or anybody else, that responded to his words.

Varen nodded proudly and said, “I have the power to evolve other people’s skills and abilities.”

“...!”

Genie was shocked. She could only think of one skill with this ability. The Evolution Skill. And this skill was quite different from leveling up.

‘This is such a great opportunity...!’

Genie looked at Minhyuk with envy in her eyes. At that same moment, Minhyuk received a notification.

[Hidden Quest: Satisfy the Hungry King Varen.]

Rank: S

Requirements: None

Rewards: King Varen’s Skill: Evolution, Sushi made by the Legendary Chef.

Penalty for Failure: Varen’s favor will sharply decrease.

Description: Right now, King Varen is extremely hungry. He needs a chef to cook delicious food that can satisfy his picky taste buds. If you satisfy King Varen, you will have the chance to evolve one of your offensive skills.

The evolution of an offensive skill. In other words, Minhyuk would be able to evolve Ellie’s Swordsmanship. Ellie’s Swordsmanship was the most powerful skill under Minhyuk’s possession. It could be said to be a very great skill when compared to players on the same level as him. However, it was still not quite on par with the skills of high-leveled players.

If one were to compare Ellie’s Swordsmanship against a Level 400 player’s unique-ranked offensive skill, then the unique-ranked skill would still have a huge advantage. This was simply because of the difference in the skill level. The higher the skill level, the stronger the attack, and the more abilities the skill would unlock. Even if a player had a Level 1 epic skill, he would still lose against someone with a Level 8 unique skill.

However, what if Ellie's Swordsmanship was evolved and strengthened? Even though the overall level and capabilities of the skill would still be lower than those at Level 400, the resulting skill would not be too far off. Perhaps, Minhyuk might even be able to exert more power with his skills alone once it got evolved.

Genie asked him quietly, "There's a quest, right? What's the rank?"

"Hidden quest. S-rank."

"...!"

Genie was once again shocked. She looked at Minhyuk again with envy tainting her eyes.

'Wow... So jealous.'

However, she still thought about some things to be concerned about.

'Rovan said that Minhyuk's dishes were extremely delicious but...'

Rovan even said that Minhyuk's buffs were quite good but even if that was the case, the person in front of him was a king. This was a person who grew up wearing only good things and eating only the finest dishes. What was more important was... this was a quest to satisfy someone who had only ever eaten the dishes made by the Legendary Chef! The quest was not ranked S for no reason at all. It was a very difficult challenge.

Minhyuk nodded. He thought, 'Delicious sushi...!'

The only reason why he decided to go all out for this quest was because he wanted to eat sushi. The reason was not for Ellie's Swordsmanship but just to eat sushi! He also had the skill...

'The Joy of Eating Together!'

It was a skill that allowed him to taste the same dishes that he cooked for others. Minhyuk looked at King Varen and thought, 'Create a Recipe.'

[Creating a recipe that the other party desires.]

[You can now check the recipe for Steak.]

[The amount of buff that can be used has been decreased due to creating a recipe.]

Minhyuk nodded. It seemed like creating a recipe would decrease the number of buffs and buffed dishes that he could make in a day.

(Steak Recipe for Varen.)

Required Ingredients: A++ Grade Black Beef Tenderloin, Butter, 300-year-old Red Wine, Moon's Laurel Leaves, Matsutake Mushroom...(omitted)

Expected Dish Grade: Unique~Legendary

Expected Effects:

?Effects of Varen's Skill: Evolution will greatly increase.

?Significantly increases all stats.

Minhyuk suddenly frowned. He thought, 'What the hell is this?'

There were plenty of ridiculous ingredients listed in the recipe. Even though he knew most of the ingredients listed in it, it was still quite ridiculous in his opinion.

A++ grade black cow. The black cow was not quite a monster. However, it was a rare cow that existed in Athenae. It was so rare that it could only be found in 1 out of 50,000 cows. The black cow had more plump and juicier meat compared to regular cows, but it was also much more expensive. What made Minhyuk frown even more than the A++ grade beef, was the Moon's Laurel Leaves. This ingredient was literally the leaf from a laurel tree that bathed under the moonlight as it grew. He also knew that it was extremely rare.

'Perhaps it's because he was a king so the recipe is also extremely tricky!'

And his biggest problem now was...

'I don't have any ingredients, though?'

After all, it was not that strange for such ingredients to be extremely hard to obtain, with how precious they were. Right? Then, another notification rang.

[You can replace the ingredients with ingredients currently on hand.]

Minhyuk had some laurel leaves and beef tenderloin with him. He thought, 'Ho. Replace.'

[You can now check the altered recipe.]

He quickly checked the information.

(Steak Recipe for Varen.)

Required Ingredients: Regular Beef Tenderloin, Butter, Red Wine, Laurel Leaves, Matsutake Mushroom...(omitted)

Expected Dish Grade: Rare ~ Epic

Expected Effects:

?Effects of Varen's Skill: Evolution will increase.

?Increase in all stats.

The changes after the ingredients were replaced and the recipe altered were quite evident. Originally, the expected dish grade was at Unique~Legendary, but it had now become Rare~Epic. In addition, the?significant?increase in Varen's skill had now only become an?increase?in the skill. The 'significant'?was gone.

'Ah. As expected, the ingredients help increase the buff, right?'

Minhyuk nodded in understanding. Then, he pulled his frying pan from his back. He decided to start cooking inside the running carriage so he quickly heated his frying pan.

[Now is the best time to spread the butter.]

Minhyuk moved his hands according to the notifications given by the Food God's Cooking Skill. Minhyuk gently placed and melted the butter on his frying pan. Not long after, the sweet smell of melted butter wafted inside the cramped carriage. As soon as the smell wafted, Genie quickly

opened the windows to stop herself from drooling over the smell. Then, Minhyuk poured some red wine and placed some laurel leaves on top of it.

“Smells good,” Varen said. He might look incredibly intimidating but his expression looked like he was having a good time. However, Minhyuk did not hear any of his words. He was extremely concentrated on his task!

‘Ho?’

Varen looked at Minhyuk with a bit of surprise coloring his rigid face.

Once the red wine was boiling in the frying pan, Minhyuk added some ketchup, soy sauce and oligosaccharide. He mixed them continuously and boiled the mixture down until the consistency was thick. Then, once he finished cooking the glossy red sauce, he placed it in a bowl and set it aside. He sliced some onions and stir-fried them on medium heat.

Sizzle!

Once the onions started to turn a brownish hue, he added two tablespoons of balsamic vinegar and one tablespoon of honey and stir-fried it some more. Then, he also placed the stir-fried onions in a bowl and set them aside. Minhyuk took the red, plump and fresh tenderloin out of his inventory and cut it into thick slices.

[Tie the ends of the tenderloin with a string to prevent the juices from flowing out.]

Minhyuk knew about this even before the notification rang. He quickly tied the tenderloin with a string then he sprinkled some salt, pepper, and parsley on both sides before rubbing some olive oil all over the steak. Then, he sliced the matsutake mushrooms and zucchini into strips before adding some parmesan cheese, salt, pepper, and olive oil. He mixed them well before stir frying them on his well-heated frying pan. He then placed them in a bowl and set them aside.

Now, for the long-awaited steak. He made sure to heat the pan well before adding enough oil. Once the oil was hot enough, he placed the tenderloin steak on top of the pan.

Sizzle!

Smoke and steam rose out of the pan together with a loud sizzling sound!

“Gulp.”

It was the sound of Varen swallowing his saliva down as he heard the sound. However, no one could blame him for this since the smell and sounds were truly too enticing. After about a minute, Minhyuk flipped the steak. He wanted to keep on flipping it every minute to make sure that the steak would not stick to the pan, and to also make sure that it did not burn.

Sizzle!

[Varen prefers Medium.]

[Turn it over every 20 seconds and cook it for a total of 7 minutes.]

The ‘Create a Recipe’ effect popped up at that moment, notifying Minhyuk as though it did not want to be ignored or overshadowed. After all, this effect informs the player about the preferences of the other party! Once he finished cooking, Minhyuk pulled out a white plate. Then, he placed the

meat on top of it and added some matsutake mushrooms and zucchini next to it. Next, he placed the stir-fried onions on top of the meat before pouring the red sauce that he made earlier. Once he finished plating, he heard the notification about the completion of the steak.

[You have completed a Filet Mignon.]

[Varen's dish is the only dish with the buff effect.]

[The Create a Recipe Skill Effect can only be tasted by the same person once per month.]

[Unique Grade.]

[You have gained 2 DEX.]

[You have gained 4 REP.]

[You have gained 400 AP.]

‘Ho?’

This was the first notification that Minhyuk had heard in a while ever since he made tangsuyuk. In the case of tangsuyuk, it turned out to be rare due to the Orc Chieftain's Essence and the skill Trance. However, a unique-grade dish appeared right now. The reason was quite simple. His Food God's Cooking Skill had achieved Level 2 and he now had double the chances of getting a higher grade of dish once he cooked. The only reason why Minhyuk did not hear any notifications after cooking, aside from the tangsuyuk he made before, was because all of the graded dishes that he made were buffed dishes. However, Minhyuk did not make those dishes for their buffs. He made them just because he wanted to eat them.

“Let's try it.”

“Not yet.”

“Huh?”

“Ronny, please act as a waiter.”

“Yes? What in the...” Genie asked in disbelief.

“I really want to try eating it like we are in a restaurant!”

“...?”

“Come on~!” Minhyuk said, swiftly handing her the plate.

Even Varen followed Minhyuk's tune. He raised his hand and said, “Waiter.”

“Yes, yes... Cu...customer...” Genie responded, a puzzled look on her face.

“What are today's specials?”

“Ah, we have filet mignon. Sir.”

“I'd have one. Ah, Medium please.”

“Yes...”

When he said 'Medium', Genie wanted to slap the back of Minhyuk's head, just to stop this ridiculous skit. Then she paused and thought, 'Is this a buffed dish? Should I check it out?'

With great anticipation, Genie checked Minhyuk's dish.

(Filet Mignon)

Ingredient Grade: C

Grade: Unique

Requirements: Only Varen could have the buff effects.

Shelf Life: 7 days

Preservation Time: 10 days

Special Effects:

?All stats increase by 5%.

?Varen's Skill: Evolution +2

Description: A filet mignon made by the chef Minhyuk for Varen, and Varen alone.

Genie almost dropped the steak in shock after seeing the buffs. She thought, 'Th...this is impossible... H...how can this be...!'

The shelf time was a whole week. Furthermore, if one ate the dish, the effect would last for ten straight days! The buff effect gave the Evolution skill a +2 increase, while it also had the effect to increase all stats by 5%.

'Just what in the world are you...?' Genie stared at Minhyuk in wonder.

Chapter 120: Evolving Ellie's Swordsmanship

As for Minhyuk, he was just sitting there looking at her excitedly, not knowing the waves of shock that he brought her.

"Hmm? Waiter?"

"Ah. Yes," Genie said, hurriedly moving to place the white plate with the steak in front of Varen.

"I'm the only one who's supposed to be eating, so why are you also sitting, boy?"

"I'm also going to eat with you."

Varen tilted his head in confusion. At that moment, just as Genie placed the plate down...

[The Joy of Eating Together.]

[A dish that is similar to the dish presented to the other party has been created.]

...A plate of steak similar to what was placed in front of Varen suddenly appeared in front of Minhyuk.

"Ho. A special ability, huh?"

“Hehe. Thank you for the food!” Minhyuk said. He smiled brightly as he pulled out the knife and fork out of his inventory and started digging in.

Varen watched him as he also quickly moved his hands. Varen’s left hand held the fork while his right hand held the knife. He used his fork to steady the meat and used his knife to slice the meat into a bite-sized piece.

‘Ho. The meat is grilled moderately, the juices are perfectly contained inside and there is the unmistakable red inside that arouses the appetite.’

Varen was in awe, but his face still maintained a stoic expression. He had assumed that the food would be lacking since they lacked ingredients and it was cooked in a hurry, but it seemed like it was cooked well. Then, he placed a piece in his mouth.

King Varen was quite a gourmand. Once the meat entered his mouth, he closed his eyes and chewed lightly to savor the flavor slowly. The filet mignon was tender and soft, and the juices that came out in every bite was able to put a small smile on his face. In addition, the sauce that Minhyuk made using red wine, butter, olive oil, sugar, laurel leaves and soy sauce emphasized the flavor of the steak and gave off a harmonious flavor.

‘It...it’s cooked really well! So delicious...!’

After swallowing the meat down, Varen’s eyes opened with a tinge of surprise as he looked at Minhyuk. He saw him eating his steak quickly, as if afraid that someone would steal it away from him.

‘He’s almost comparable to Rald!’

Minhyuk’s steak dish tasted so good that it was even comparable to the legendary chef. Varen watched Minhyuk eating hurriedly for a while before he continued to eat at a faster pace. Varen then turned his attention towards the steaming and golden brown matsutake mushroom on the side. He picked one up with his fork and placed it in his mouth. Once he chewed on the mushroom, he felt that the greasiness of the meat that he had just eaten being washed away.

Varen continued to eat. One bite, two bites, three bites, four bites. And finally...

“Wow... It’s really, really delicious...!” The pent-up and hidden admiration for the food suddenly burst out. When Minhyuk heard his words, he just shrugged his shoulders as if it was something natural.

“Boy, forgive me for disregarding your talents earlier.”

Cooking delicious food could always make a person feel better and refreshed. It was the same feeling when one accidentally found a good restaurant, ate delicious food and felt better, right?

This was the case for Varen. Somehow, he met a chef named Minhyuk and a woman named Genie, at a time when his life was in danger and his anxiety was at its peak. His nerves were rattled and ragged to the point that he even showed them an unsightly face. Although Varen was a king of a kingdom, he was a gentleman through and through.

“I can’t believe that I could be served with such a delicious dish. I truly am grate...”

However, before he could finish his words, something amazing happened...

[You ate a dish from a recipe specially made for you.]

[You won't be able to eat another dish from a recipe specially made for you for a month.]

[You can't receive any duplicate buffs during the duration of the buff retention period.]

[Filet Mignon.]

[You have received an increase of 5% for all of your stats and a +2 on your skill: Evolution for 10 days.]

“...!”

Varen was astounded. NPCs could also hear the notifications. In the first place, the notifications were something that was commonplace and natural for them. However, the notifications he just heard were truly too astounding that he could not believe his ears. Did he just hear about a +2 on his Evolution skill? An increase of 5% on all his stats?

Varen had never heard of this kind of buff from a dish in his entire life. Of course, the increase in abilities like the increase in stats was commonly attributed and done by priests. However, the ability to increase a skill?

When Minhyuk checked the information about the steak after he finished cooking, he noticed the absurd increase in the preservation time of the buff and the increase of +2 in the skill Evolution. At that time he thought, ‘This is a strong buff that can only be received using the recipe creation skill!’

However, even though it was a strong buff, the balance was still not broken with this much. After eating the dish, the player or NPC would not be able to eat any dish made with the recipe creation skill again during this month. They would also be unable to receive any other buffs during the duration of the buff retention time. With these restrictions, it was only natural that the merits were huge. It must have been a huge shock for the other party to discover such a great dish that could increase their abilities by so much.

Just then, a thought flashed through Minhyuk's head, ‘If I'm able to get my hands on the ingredients that the recipe creation skill listed and cook them...’

How much buff would Varen actually get?

Finally stirring from his shock, Varen spoke after a long while. He said, “You're a really surprising chef...”

He was quite overwhelmed with awe and admiration towards Minhyuk.

“I was really satisfied with the dish.”

[You have received Varen's favor.]

[You have received Varen's favor.]

[You have received Varen's favor.]

Three consecutive notifications rang in Minhyuk's head. These notifications showed just how much satisfaction Varen felt with his dish. Minhyuk smiled slightly after eating the dish with him.

“Furthermore, your dish has made me stronger albeit temporarily.”

Varen’s skill was naturally at MAX. However, Minhyuk’s dish was able to add a +2 on his skill that was already at MAX. Varen’s skill, Evolution, was already at the point where it could no longer grow stronger. However, it had a +2 right now and was even stronger and better than his skill at MAX. In other words, the person who would be on the other end of the Evolution skill would also be able to receive greater effects.

[You have completed the?Hidden Quest: Satisfy the Hungry King Varen.]

[Varen’s Evolution skill can evolve your skill.]

[You will be able to eat the sushi made by the Legendary Chef.]

Varen continued to say, “Boy, I have only tasted one of your dishes, but I can see your limitless talent and endless possibilities. Do you want to be a royal chef together with Rald?”

[King Varen of the Valkyrie Kingdom has proposed that you become a Royal Chef.]

[You have gained 20 REP.]

[If you accept the proposal to be a Royal Chef, you will be able to receive 500 million gold every month and endless rewards from King Varen.]

However, Minhyuk’s answer was one that was to be expected, “I’m sorry, but there are still a lot of delicious things in the world that I haven’t yet tasted. Hence it’s not suitable for me to be tied up somewhere this early.”

“I see.”

Varen looked a bit disappointed, but he cheered himself up and moved on to the main point. He said, “I have eaten your dish so I will strengthen one of your abilities as promised.”

“Is it possible here?”

Varen nodded and turned to Genie. He said, “If anything happens, please wake us up immediately.”

“Yes,” Genie nodded in acknowledgment as she looked at Minhyuk with envy.

Varen sat on the floor of the carriage with his legs crossed. He also instructed Minhyuk to sit in front of him in the same position.

“We’re going to enter our dreamscape for a while.”

In any other situation, there would be no need for them to use this method, but their situation was dire, so it was inevitable that they used whatever means were at their disposal. Minhyuk slowly closed his eyes. The moment he closed his eyes, he felt like he was being sucked into another place.

When Minhyuk opened his eyes again, he saw that he was in the middle of a very huge field. Varen was standing right in front of him with his hands behind his back. He said, “Boy, try using your attack skill here.”

Minhyuk nodded and said, “Ellie’s Swordsmanship.”

“W...what did you say?!”

“Huh?”

Minhyuk looked at Varen in confusion. His reaction was too violent. Even his body was trembling hard. Varen asked again, “Boy, what did you say just now?”

“I said Ellie’s Swordsmanship?”

“When you say Ellie’s Swordsmanship, do you mean...”

“That’s right. Ellie is my Noona, we’re very close.”

“...”

Varen was shocked and speechless. He was calling the empress of a great empire, Noona? Varen thought that he was just lying, but he saw Minhyuk prove it to him when he used his skill.

‘He underwent sword training? Don’t tell me... Did Ellie teach him?’

Varen could not hide the surprise that he felt. He thought, ‘This man... he’s not just a simple chef.’

He could tell that even though Minhyuk had the chef class, he was not your average chef. In all honesty, Varen had expected that his offensive skill would be the offensive skill that chefs normally use, but it was not.

“Shall I continue?”

“Yes.”

“Rampant Sword.”

[Rampant Sword.]

[A flurry of rampant swords with additional 30% attack power will be created for 6 seconds.]

The flurry of swords was so fast that it left afterimages in the space in front of him.

‘Amazing. It might look like he just swung it indiscriminately but his attacks were accurate.’

Minhyuk’s posture and movements were just like the Sword Emperor, Ellie.

‘I did not expect that I would be able to strengthen this ability.’

Then, another skill was performed in front of him.

[Step.]

[You can instantly travel a distance of one meter twice allowing you to quickly narrow or widen your distance from your target.]

Dash! Dash!

Minhyuk was extremely fast. He moved a distance of one meter in a single step and immediately came back to his original position in another.

“Sword of Fury.”

[Sword of Fury]

[Additional 53% attack power for strong lunges and stabs, if a vital strike is successful, the bonus will be 83%.]

The edge of Minhyuk’s sword was suddenly filled with energy.

Vwoooooom!

The moment Minhyuk stabbed the sword, Varen almost lost his tongue in surprise. It sounded like the space in front of him was torn with how powerful the blow was. Varen remembered every move that was shown to him.

[Skill Analysis.]

[Quickly analyzes a skill.]

A hologram appeared in front of Varen as he utilized his skill. He checked the first movement, Rampant Sword.

‘This Rampant Sword has tremendous speed and accuracy. It also has quite a long duration.’

Swoosh!

Swoosh!

Holograms suddenly appeared in front of him. One of the holograms was showing a mini Minhyuk that was using the Rampant Sword.

‘How should I enhance this ability?’

Varen thought deeply about the adjustments that he would make. He thought for quite a while before finally realizing what he needed to do. He thought, ‘This would be good.’

The greatest advantage of the Rampant Sword was that it could instantly cut down the enemies with a flurry of swords. However, it would not be able to show its full power in a 1:1 match. So, how about giving this Rampant Sword the ability to attack only one person? He could make the Rampant Sword hit a single target with a huge number of attacks. Varen waved his hands and a wooden puppet appeared in another hologram. The mini Minhyuk wielded his sword and used Rampant Sword to attack the wooden puppet.

Swoosh!

Swoosh!

Swoosh!

‘As expected, the attack is going all over the place.’

Varen moved his hands continuously. The Rampant Sword that was going all over the place slowly began to change into a concentrated attack. The flurry of swords that were slashing in all directions soon began to hit the wooden puppet in the hologram. Just as the attack struck the wooden puppet, a

surprising thing happened, It was just a single attack but the wooden puppet shook and vibrated wildly as a series of damages appeared on top of it.

Slam, slam, slam, slam, slam, slam, slam!

The first skill was then completed.

[Scattering Sword has been completed.]

[A single attack will deal six additional damages with a 40% increase.]

After Varen completed the first movement, he moved on to the second one. ?Sword of Fury.

‘It’s a single blow that can easily overpower your enemy. As soon as the strike hits you, a huge force will be extended and transferred over to you. If I condense the force that leaks after that strike then the blow will be more powerful.’

Varen’s hands never stopped moving. He spent quite a long time adjusting and strengthening the movements of Minhyuk’s skills.

‘The effect of the +2 in my skill after eating that dish is truly amazing. The effect has been really great,’ Varen thought as he gave silent praise to his enhanced skill.

Not long after, Varen finally succeeded in evolving and strengthening Ellie’s Swordsmanship. Then, he approached Minhyuk and stood in front of him as various holograms popped out. The mini Minhyuks in the holograms were sucked one by one into Minhyuk's body. The moment they were absorbed, a notification rang out.

[Ellie’s Swordsmanship has evolved from Epic to Legendary.]