

Gourmet 231

Chapter 231: The New Vassal

Loyna was loved by most men in the world, and she was even popular with the women, thanks to her cool and chic personality. There were hardly anyone who disliked her, and some even went so far as to hail her as a girl's crush. That was why everyone fell in despair as they watched her imminent death.

However, the Frying Pan Killer suddenly appeared! The sword that he held suddenly burst out with a bright light.

[It...it's the Saint's Sword!]

[The player that pulled out the Saint's Sword in the Athenae Temple must have been Player Minhyuk!]

The media and the people all over the world were agitated. However, just in time, the world's rankers began to speak one by one.

[The Frying Pan Killer made a grand entrance. Unfortunately, there's a high chance that the Frying Pan Killer will not be able to protect Loyna.]

[Carn just defeated the Commander of the Paladins, Corr, earlier with only a few moves.]

[So what if he is the Frying Pan Killer, there are only a handful of players who can defeat the Paladin Corr.]

[What's worse is that Paladin Corr told everyone that no one can use skills related to Holy Power inside the barrier.]

That was just how people are. Once they were overcome with jealousy and envy, they would try to deny everything in front of them as they watched. Especially the rankers, did they even think that Minhyuk would be someone awesome? No, hence, they spat those words out, almost as if they looked forward to his mistakes and downfall, and wanted to laugh at his expense.

However, at that time, one man asked...

[But... what if he wins?]

[Well then, we'll have to rethink our views of the Frying Pan Killer.]

Everyone was in the midst of denial.

Meanwhile, Minhyuk was conflicted for a split second. His Pandora's Helmet had the God's Targeted Praise, which could double the Holy Power of his target. His choice was between Loyna and Corr.

Loyna had no combat abilities, but she had tremendous buffs and healing abilities. On the other hand, Paladin Corr was a powerful man. Even though he had been knocked down by Carn, he was someone who could never be ignored anywhere else. It was just a split second of conflict, but his decision was also made quickly.

"God's Targeted Praise!"

[Is he trying to use skills? I think it's a Holy Power related skill.]

[They clearly can't use any Holy Power related skill...]

Flash!

However, something surprising happened. A bright light surrounded Corr's body, breaking everyone's expectations. Corr felt a great amount of Holy Power seeping into his body. He knew that his Holy Power was becoming more powerful than usual. Unfortunately, no matter how strong his Holy Power was, he still fell to the ground, gasping.

"...How were you able to use Holy Power in this area?" Carn questioned him as his brows furrowed in thought.

Carn could feel the tremendous amount of Holy Power dwelling inside the man's body. The Saint's Sword was also in the man's hands. He thought, 'So, he was the man that pulled out the Saint's Sword?'

However, Carn, a person originally named as one of the Pinnacle Strong Men, was strengthened and reinforced by Verus. He chuckled darkly, confident that he would be able to stop whatever attack came his way, thanks to the increase in his demonic energy. Even his sword's attack and defense had increased along with it. Carn was sure that Paladin Corr would not be able to survive after a few hits from his sword.

In addition, he had also received other things from Verus. It was none other than the 'Verus' Frightening Musical Instruments'. Just like Gorac, one of the three great demons, who had created a variety of disaster artifacts, Verus had also created his own artifacts.

Without any hesitation, Carn took out the first artifact. It was a violin. The power of the violin prevented Corr from ever making contact with Carn's body. Not long after, Carn played the violin. Along with the terrible melody that could scratch and make everyone's ears bleed, a pile of sword lights poured down from the violin. It was at that moment when the notifications rang.

[You have listened to the Violin of Slowness.]

[Your AGI will be reduced by 30%.]

[You have an invincible body that can ignore and resist all abnormal states.]

[You have resisted an abnormal state.]

"Like the Wind."

Like the Wind was a skill that could allow Minhyuk to move three meters at once, or a distance of one meter thrice. Minhyuk quickly used Rampant Sword, as sword lights ran amok and clashed against his opponent.

Clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang!

"Hooooo..."

Carn grinned darkly. It seemed like this man was much more powerful than what he had initially thought. Paladin Corr was devastated by his blows because he could not use any of his Holy Power-related skills. However, this man was different.

'Then, what about this?'

He switched out the Violin of Slowness with a kayageum. Carn sat in front of the kayageum, as he began to pluck at its strings and play.

Ting—

At that moment...

Boom!

...an explosion happened right in front of Minhyuk. Carn had no intention to stop so he continued to play as explosions happened one after another.

Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom!

Every time he plucked the strings of the kayageum, a fierce explosion would occur, followed by a black demonic energy rising above the site of the explosion.

“It’s over.”

“...What the hell. Is it over already?”

“It turns out that the Frying Pan Killer is not that big of a deal...”

“Loyna...!”

The players all fell in despair. However, Minhyuk suddenly popped out of the black demonic energy.

Dash!

Then, he started running.

“Wh...what the hell!” Carn shouted, his beady eyes widening in shock.

There was not a single scratch on Minhyuk’s body. No, to be exact, there was a baby piggy that appeared on his shoulder. It was because Absolute Defense, the skill attached to Hepas’ Silver Pot Lid, was triggered.

Dash—

Carn played the kayageum again and sent attacks to the approaching Minhyuk.

Boom, boom, boom!

However, Minhyuk used Like the Wind to evade all of the explosions.

‘Then, let’s aim for a big shot.’

Black demonic energy began to condense in the kayageum. As soon as a huge amount of demonic energy was collected in the kayageum...

Booooooooooom!

...a series of explosions happened within a five-meter radius, raining down upon Minhyuk’s figure.

‘This time, for sure...’

It should definitely be over. After all, Carn had used a considerable amount of his MP just for that single attack. However, a voice came through the smoke.

“Blooming Sword.”

“...!”

Carn keenly felt a strong sense of danger as the ground shook wildly. He rapidly minimized the kayageum until it became small enough to be held in one of his hands, and turned into a different instrument. It was none other than a pair of castanets.

Tak, tak!

As soon as the castanets clacked together, black demonic energy wrapped around his body. Clacking the castanets together would double Carn’s defenses temporarily. It was because of this that he believed that Minhyuk’s attacks and swords sticking out of the ground would not deal much damage to him. He believed that those puny swords would not be able to pierce his skin at all. Alas, at that moment...

Stab, stab, stab, stab, stab, stab, stab—

...the sword blades that rose from the ground stabbed and penetrated all over his body.

“Keuaaaaaaack!” Carn shrieked in disbelief.

‘How?’

Carn was unaware of this, but Minhyuk’s Saint’s Sword had the same effect as the Intangible Sword against beings with demonic energy and would always have a 60% chance of ignoring their defenses. Even his attack and defense against the undead and the demonic beings had doubled, thanks to his Holy Power.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

Then, powerful explosions appeared one after the other. The swords that penetrated through Carn’s body blasted one by one. However, it did not end there, Minhyuk still used his Splitting Sword, as two red, fiery sword lights flew out in a cross.

Slash—

Slash—

Suddenly, the sound of something being cut down was heard.

“Hmph!?You’re messing with me, huh?!” Minhyuk said, as he wiped his nose with his thumb, just like what Bruce Lee did before he started his fights.

“...Is...is it a one shot kill?”

“Is...is it over?”

“He’s a Pinnacle Strong Man, right?”

The players outside of the barrier were all astounded. They saw him fire the Splitting Sword but they did not expect that Carn, who knocked down the Paladin Corr, would easily collapse with that attack.

[...]

[...]

[...]

The talkative rankers all over the world that had been boasting about their predictions earlier, all fell silent.

[Rankers, why aren't you saying something? Ah. Oh dear~ Where was the one that said that go was played with two people!!!]

[Pfft. Snort... Keuhahahaha. Keuheop...! Keuhehehehehe! Kehuhuhuhuheop! Lol, lol, lol, lol! Kyahahahaha! Kikikikikiki! Keuheuk. Ah sorry. I shouldn't laugh... Pfft!! Keuhahahahahaha! Keuhehehehehehe!]

The regular players began to clap back at the arrogant rankers from before, who were all left speechless.

Meanwhile, Minhyuk approached Corr hurriedly. The barrier?had?not gone away yet. Minhyuk analyzed the current situation. He could tell that things were not yet over, so before things went south once again, he needed to save Corr, who was on the brink of death.

Although Minhyuk was doing this because he desperately wanted to eat the rice cake dumpling soup, he also moved because Loyna and Corr were important people to him. After all, Corr was one of the faithful 'fanatics' that worshiped him?

"M...Minhyuk..."

"I'll treat you."

"M...Minhyuk will...?"

What Minhyuk took out to treat Corr was none other than his bandages.

"Y...you're going to treat a serious injury with just those bandages?"

[Huh. T...to be honest, that doesn't help at all, right?!!]

[Healing such an injury with just that bandage thing, what an idiot!!]

The rankers that ate some big shit earlier were starting to squeeze back in again. At that moment...

"Bandage!"

[The bandage has been wrapped perfectly.]

[You have received an additional 5% injury recovery.]

[The recovery time has become extremely fast.]

"Bandage!"

[The bandage has been wrapped perfectly.]

[You have received an additional 5% injury recovery.]

[The recovery time has become extremely fast.]

Minhyuk began to wrap bandages all over Corr's body. The red blood that was seeping out of Corr's wounds had stopped immediately. Most of Corr's injuries were caused by plenty of slashes and cuts, but those cuts had begun to heal at a speed that was visible to the naked eye!

[...I...isn't this a bug or something?]

[Th...this is a bug!]

[Rankers, will you shut up?]

[...]

[...]

As for Corr, who was personally involved and directly experienced Minhyuk's bandaging skills, he felt even more absurd. He thought, 'What kind of ability is this? It's comparable to the Athenae Priests' recovery skill...'

Was Minhyuk going to heal him with bandages alone?

"Can you move?"

"Yes," Corr answered as he stood up. He could feel some pain here and there, but otherwise, he was well enough to fight. However, at that moment...

[Carn's attack and defense has increased by 1.6 times.]

[Carn's demonic energy has been amplified by 1.5 times.]

[Demon Worshipper Carn has turned into a Demonic Human.]

Carn's body reappeared as the thick cloud of dust waned, but he looked vastly different from earlier. His skin was darkened and there were two curved horns on his head. He had literally become a demonic human.

"F*ck..."

"Corr, what do you mean by f*ck? As a Paladin you should have said 'Oh, I'm in big trouble!'."

For a moment, Corr forgot his position, and he uttered words that he usually would not say. This was all because of the terrifying pressure that was coming from Carn.

"That's right. Ah! We're in big trouble!" Corr recited in a monotonous voice, a solemn expression on his face.

The 1.6x increase in both attack and defense was an enormous addition to anyone's strength. In other words, Carn had become even stronger, and now seemed undefeatable.

"...But, there's a way."

“A way? What is it?”

“Ah, but I don’t like this way. And Corr can’t possibly do that.”

“...Yes?” Corr asked in confusion. Minhyuk just shook his head hard, as if he did not like the method at all.

However, Corr still urged him to tell him. He said, “What is your way? It’s better than just uselessly dying here.”

“But... I’d rather be forced to log out...” Minhyuk said, only hesitating at the thought of not being able to eat rice cake dumpling soup once Loyna died after he logged out.

In the end, Minhyuk relented and said, “Do you know about the ‘Saint’s Protection’ in the Saint’s Sword? If I designate my party member or guild member as a target, then their physical attack and defense, as well as magical attack and defense will increase by 20% of their Holy Power stat. But...”

“...”

Corr knew what that meant. NPCs could not be party members or guild members, so there was only one way for that to be possible.

“I should be a vassal for it to work, right?”

“Yes. I told you it’s not possible, right? Ahaha. Actually, I think it’s better that we don’t do it either. Never! Never! I’d rather we not do it at all!”

Corr turned to look back at Loyna. He could see Loyna nodding at him. The Paladin Corr was completely obedient to Loyna’s orders. Seeing her nod, he said, “Then, I will become your vassal.”

From today on, Corr could easily spit out ?s every day.

[Corr vows his eternal loyalty to you.]

Minhyuk’s expression suddenly became twisted.

Chapter 232: The New Vassal

(Corr)

Rank: Legendary

Type: Vassal

Level: 504

Attack: 5,321

Defenss: 3,151

Special Abilities:

?Passive Skill: Athenae’s Prayer

?Active Skill: Athenae's Swordsmanship

?Active Skill: Athenae's Shield

Potential: 139

Experience Value: 18% / 100%

‘N...no! Who said that I’m going to accept you!!’

Minhyuk was shocked. Unfortunately, Corr did not look like he regretted being Minhyuk's vassal.

Just like what Minhyuk said, it was not something easy. First, the priests and paladins of the Athenae Religion were people who served God Athenae. For this reason, they could not easily bend down and serve others. However, there was one exception. It would be possible for them to willingly serve another, if the person's Holy Power was twice as high as their Holy Power.

Joy Co. Ltd. thought that it was not an easy feat. After all, the requirement was having a Holy Power that was twice as high as the Holy Power of Athenae's priests and paladins! Who would actually have that?

However, Minhyuk had once saved Corr and even Loyne. This was the reason why Minhyuk was qualified as a master. Minhyuk's eyes were filled with tears as he quickly looked through the skills that he could use. His eyes widened when he saw Athenae's Prayer.

(Athenae's Prayer)

Passive Skill

Level: 8

Effects:

?When the prayer is invoked, the natural recovery rate of HP and MP for players or NPCs within a five-meter radius will be increased by 15%.

?When the prayer is invoked, the surrounding animals and plants will grow richer and faster.

?When the prayer is invoked, the mind will become relaxed and the person's thoughts will disappear just like the effects of meditation.

‘Yeah, since it's already like this anyway...’

Minhyuk said, “Corr. There's something that I need you to do for me in the future.”

“Yes!”

The Commander of the Paladins, Corr was waiting for his orders with his right fist raised over his heart!

“From now on, you will be a farmer.”

“....?”

Corr tilted his head in confusion. This was because of the second effect of the skill Athenae's Prayer! It said that the surrounding animals and plants would grow richer and faster. Even though

the NPC was powerful, Minhyuk did not need this useless strength. However, if he was a farmer, that would be a different story.

The Saint's Sword burst out a bright light.

[Saint's Protection.]

[Your physical attack, defense and magical attack, defense will increase by 30% of your Holy Power for 15 minutes.]

[Your Vassal Corr's physical attack, defense and magical attack, defense will increase by 20% of his Holy Power for 15 minutes.]

Carn moved the moment another light burst out of the Saint's Sword. Two mysterious dark hands appeared on top of his head as they held the kayageum and plucked the strings. Meanwhile, the Slow Violin appeared in Carn's hands and...

Shweeeeeeeek—

...a much darker black demonic energy seeped out from the blackened violin the moment Carn played the instrument. Dozens of the thicker and darker demonic energy began to pour down on Minhyuk and Corr.

Paladin Corr immediately summoned his square shield with the cross symbolizing the Athenae Religion. The square shield grew larger until it was large enough to protect them. Thankfully, this skill did not fall under the Holy Power category, so he was able to use it.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

Dozens of black sword lights collided with the large shield.

‘...Crazy! His attacks are too strong!’

Although Corr was treated and had the Saint's Protection, the attacks were still too strong.

“Keup!”

The impact of the demonic energy hitting his Athenae Shield kept on pushing Corr back.

Saint's Protection was largely influenced by the ‘Holy Power’ of a person. Corr's Holy Power was about 900, so all his other stats had increased by 180. The increase in his stats was equivalent to an increase of about 100 levels. However, their enemy has also become more powerful.

Corr suddenly heard Minhyuk's voice from behind. He said, “Corr!”

“Yes!”

“Provoke the enemy.”

“Provoke?”

“Yes.”

“You moron!”

“...”

“...”

Minhyuk was suddenly at a loss when he heard his words. He looked at Corr blankly and said, “N...no. Give me some more foul language. You were so natural earlier...”

“Th...that was just something I did unconsciously.”

“Then! Just provoke him unconsciously!”

Paladin Corr had never cursed or used foul language in his entire life. No, that was not right. He did it a little by mistake earlier. However, the usually upright and righteous Paladin Corr had banned himself from swearing and cursing, as much as he could, while he served God Athenae. It seemed that right now, he had to swear to get a chance to live.

“Shit, you dumbass! How dare you! You look just like a mere demonic servant and you dare set us up! Look at you! You look just like the spinach that I ate yesterday!!! You f*cking arrogant bastard! Should I shove my sword in your ass?!”

Paladin Corr let out a torrent of curses and swear words. At that moment, it felt like his twenty years of constipation was slowly going down the drain, making his chest feel lighter. Indeed, Paladin Corr had just realized his true calling.

“Haaaak ptew!?Is that all you can do?!!! Can you even break through my Athenae Shield with just that?! You f*cking moron!”

“Y...you don’t have to anymo...”

“Be quiet, Minhyuk, you punk!”

“...”

“Ah. I feel so excited and thrilled.”

A subtle smile hung around Paladin Corr’s lips.

There was only one reason why Minhyuk asked Corr to provoke their enemy. It was because during his fight with the Ancient Monarch before, the Monarch fired and triggered his most powerful skills after he got provoked. He vaguely felt that Carn was similar to the Ancient Monarch.

Black tendrils of demonic energy started to rampage in the kayageum and the violin.

[The Advent of the Frightening Demon.]

Shwaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

Hundreds of black sword lights began to pour out of the instruments. Even the ground began to shake as if it was going to explode.

At that exact same moment, Minhyuk pulled out his Bowl and Mixer. He set the bowl on the mixer's stand, placed the beaters in the bowl, then began to crank the mixer.

[Cancel.]

[Voids and nullifies all skills and magical skills within a five-meter radius of the player’s surroundings.]

More than half of the hundreds of black sword lights disappeared. The tremor in the ground also disappeared instantly. However, that was only the case for the five-meter area surrounding Minhyuk. Outside of the area, there was still pandemonium as sword lights and tremors continued to run rampant.

Minhyuk stepped forward as he increased the size of his frying pan.

[Frying Pan Gigantification.]

[You can adjust the size of your frying pan depending on the mana that you will input.]

The huge frying pan blocked the remaining hundreds of sword lights, as well as the explosions from the ground.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

“He...he’s done for...”

“He couldn’t possibly block that.”

The players sighed in regret. Just a moment ago, they saw the cacophony of attacks. All they could do was sigh ruefully at the bitter end of the player that stood to protect Loyna.

However, on the contrary, Minhyuk walked out intact. Then, he said, “...It did not hurt a bit? Maybe just like a mosquito bite?”

“...!”

Carn staggered back.

Minhyuk checked the status of his body. Due to the continuous explosions, his HP had continued to decline.

‘About 0.5% each strike?’

The attacks only meted out those puny damages. He recalled about the Saint’s Protection which increased all his other basic stats by 30% of his Holy Power. Right now, Minhyuk’s Holy Power has already exceeded 4,000. On top of that, Pandora’s helmet had a special effect of doubling his Holy Power. This meant that he had at least 8,000 points in his Holy Power.

30% of an 8,000 Holy Power stat could give him a tremendous amount of strength. In other words, he had an increase of more than 2,500 in all his physical attack and defense, as well as magical attack and defense. Having a 2,500 increase in all of those was a tremendous boost to his strength.

For example, a Level 100 player could have 1,000 points on their physical attack and defense. This meant that players at this level would not be able to beat players with 2,000 points on their physical attack and defense. This would still be the case even if five people of the same level attacked the same opponent. When their physical attack fell short of their enemy’s physical defense, their enemies would automatically get the ability to ‘escape and avoid’ their attacks. This was the reason why a Level 100 player would not be able to deal a lot of damage on players with much higher stats than them, unless they happened to land a critical strike.

Minhyuk’s situation was just like that. Comparing that to the situation before, Carn would be a player at Level 150 while Minhyuk, with his Saint’s Protection, was a player over Level 200.

“...W...what the hell?”

“This is so ridiculous?”

“Don’t you think that this is too much of a scam?”

The players were all in a buzz. However, Minhyuk just kept on advancing towards the flustered Carn.

Carn quickly pulled at the strings of his violin.

Shweeeeeek—

Clang!

Just when his attacks collided with Minhyuk’s Armor of Immortality, all of the sword lights got neutralized.

Plop, plop, plop, plop—

Carn played the kayageum and the violin continuously.

Shweeeeeek—

Clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang!

[Your HP has dropped to 95%.]

[Your HP has dropped to 93%.]

“Hmm. So that’s how it is.”

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

Explosions occurred around him one after the other but Minhyuk saw that was something that he could tolerate. It was like when someone got bitten by a mosquito and they said? ‘Ah! It hurts!’?but it really did not hurt. That was similar to what he was experiencing.

Carn stepped back.

“Hiiiiik!”

Carn was clearly 1.6x stronger than his usual self, but the bastard in front of him was beyond common logic.

One of the reasons why Carn’s attacks did not work was because he had become a ‘Demonic Human’ with the demonic energy given to him. The power of the demonic humans came from demonic energy. Demonic energy and Holy Power were both powers on opposite end of the spectrum. They were completely different, contrasting powers.

Meanwhile, Minhyuk just recovered his lost HP by bandaging himself once or twice.

“Y...you bastard! Don’t come here!”

If Carn did not turn into a demonic human and was purely a Pinnacle Strong Man, then he might have been able to kill Minhyuk. However, this was not the case.

Carn's violin suddenly erupted and created a storm of demonic energy. The sword lights that poured out of the air folded together until they became daggers. The daggers immediately flew straight towards Minhyuk.

Fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh—

Alas, most of the attacks did not land on Minhyuk's body. However, even if he did succeed...

“Bandage!”

...Minhyuk would immediately wrap a bandage on his injury.

“...”

Carn looked at him dumbfounded, until Minhyuk arrived in front of him.

“Do you think you can kill me?!!”

Carn quickly clacked the castanets together.

Clack, clack, clack, clack—

Unlike before when he just clacked them twice, this time, he clacked them together four times. Along with the sound, his defenses tripled.

In all honesty, Carn believed that he and Minhyuk were both in the same state, so he believed that Minhyuk would not be able to kill him.

The moment Minhyuk's sword moved...

Stab!

...blood gushed out from Carn's body. The blood spurting out of his body looked strangely like a fountain.

With the Saint's Sword in his hands, Minhyuk had a special ability that would let him have a 60% chance of ignoring the defenses of anyone that carried demonic energy.

“H...how can you be this strong?! How the hell?!”

Carn was the fourth Pinnacle Strong Men and with Verus' power, he was able to become a demonic human with greater power.

‘But, how?’

“I ate well, exercised hard and slept well. Ah, and...”

Minhyuk grinned widely at him.

“I'm also a bit overgeared.”

Then, Minhyuk stepped back.

Carn's body was regenerating at an alarming rate. The speed of his regeneration was even thrice that of a troll! At this rate, he would not be successfully hunted if his body was not cut into pieces.

“Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaaargh!” Carn screamed while Minhyuk prepared his Fluttering Sword.

Hundreds of silver leaves began falling down from the sky. With 8,000 Holy Power, and an additional 2,500 in his magical attack from Saint’s Protection, his attack held truly tremendous strength.

Then, this overwhelming attack was unleashed.

Fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh—

The falling and fluttering leaves began to ravage and devour Carn’s body. His body was torn apart without a single place left intact.

Notifications began to pour down constantly as soon as Carn’s body disappeared into thin air.

[You have successfully hunted the Fourth Pinnacle Strong Men and Demon Worshipper, Carn.]

[You have gained 300 REP.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

...

[You have acquired the Frightening Musical Instruments.]

[A Class Quest: Food God’s Bet has been created.]

Along with the sound of notifications, a bright light burst out in front of Minhyuk. A translucent spirit in the image of a man could be seen inside this bright light.

It was none other than the Food God.

Chapter 233: Delicious Expedition

Oh Changwook sat on the sofa with a gloomy look on his face.

The TV was turned on right in front of him, currently tuned to the game channel, ATV. It was the channel that attracted the most viewers among the existing game channels in the country. The reason why it was the most popular channel, compared to other game channels, was because ATV broadcasted new classes and various quests everyday, as well as the special methods, to target and acquire them.

At that moment, Lee Jinhwan approached Changwook, holding a cup of coffee in his hand. Changwook looked like he had lost everything in his world as he watched the TV.

“What seems to be the problem, Changwook? Huh?”

Jinhwan asked dumbly as he looked at Changwook in confusion. Changwook had his face in his hands and his expression looked like everything was over. So, Jinhwan asked, “Got dumped?”

"I confessed to Hyejin, but she thought that it was just a lie! Why? The atmosphere was clearly nice too...!"

"Hmm...?" Lee Jinhwan hummed in confusion.

It seemed like the 'Immortal Great Wizard' Changwook had attempted to make an escape from being single. Unfortunately, it looked like things did not turn out the way he thought it would.

"Did I make a mistake? I sent her a message in ka-talk, replied a few times and even read and chewed every word."

"By any chance, can I see your ka-talk messages?"

Changwook handed him his mobile phone.

"..."

After he saw the messages, Jinhwan turned to look at Changwook with disbelief written all over his face.

[Changwook: I love you Hyejin! Please date me!]

[Hyejin: Eh? OMG...!]

[Changwook: To be honest, I couldn't tell you until now because I thought that I was still not genital but I really like you!]

[Hyejin: Genital...?]

[Changwook: Yes. I'm not genital.]

[Hyejin: ...Genital, genital! Hey, super genital, genital! Genital, genital! Genital, genital! What can we do if our Changwook is still not genital... Isn't this too genital?]

[Changwook:...?]

"No, isn't the spelling wrong...? And I can't believe that you just told her that you love her with no rhyme or reason at all. Boy, you really don't have a love bone in your body!"

"Yes?"

Jinhwan looked at him incredulously. He said, "It's not genital, it's genial."

"...It's not the same?"

Jinhwan clicked his tongue. For some reason, he thought that this might be the reason why Changwook had defended his title of being an 'Immortal Great Wizard' for quite a long time.

Then, at that moment...

[Virtual Reality Game: Athenae. There's an imminent outbreak of a major war!!!]

The sound from the TV caught their attention. The voice that rang loudly in their ears was the voice that shouted 'America's Box Office Number 1!!!' in movie trailers every day, although it was a mystery to everyone how there could always be a movie that topped the box office every day.

Along with his voice, the scene on the screen changed. The screen showed Elven Land that had not yet been opened to the public.

[Kyaaaaaack!]

[Run away!]

[Praise Verus!]

[Verus will paint the whole world with disasters!]

The Demon Worshipers shouted loudly as portals cracked open. And from those cracks, demonic monsters, as well as other demonic races came out. In the middle of it, there stood an Elf, one with signature pointy and sharp ears. The elf looked like he was nocking an arrow on his bow, even though there was no arrow at all. As soon as he let go of the bow...

Fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh!

Hundreds of arrows shot the demonic humans, demonic monsters and other demonic races.

[Elf King Gorn! There are too many enemies coming in! You have to retreat!]

[My heart is bleeding. If I did that, our Elven Forest would be painted in hell!]

[We have no other choice!]

[...I think it's time to make use of our hundred-year promise with the humans.]

[Hundred-year promise?]

[That's right. The hundred-year promise. We would be able to get help from the humans with this hundred-year promise. Send the High Elves now!]

[Yes!]

Then, the scene on the screen changed again. It showed Ellie, the Empress of the Eivelis Empire and Asvon, the Emperor of Collodis Empire, sitting face to face.

[I think it's time for us to have a cease-fire. Ellie.]

[I agree. The elves had asked us to make good of the hundred-year promise. Based on the agreement, we will lend them a hand when they're on the brink of extinction. They will pay a reasonable price as compensation for helping them. The gate to the Demon World has opened in the Elven Forest. After they ravage the Elven Forest, they will target us next.]

[Let's have a truce for a while.]

The two people shook their hands together in agreement. Then, they kept on talking.

[It seems like we will need the strength of the foreigners to stop and close the gates to the Demon World.]

[Let's set up an army and send out a subjugation force.]

Along with their words, the story about the great war was shown, which was followed by the next words.

[New Episode. The Invasion of the Demon World.]

1?Elves will appear in every village.

2?You can get a variety of quests from the elves.

3?You can proceed with the quest to prevent the invasion of the Demon World through your affiliated Empire.

4?Depending on your level of activity, you can convert your contributions to war points.

5?War points can be exchanged for various things such as artifacts, skill books and EXP books through the special elves in the village.

6?Additional information can be found in the Official Athenae Website. Have a nice Athenae, everyone!

“Oh...!”

“Weren’t you just sulky earlier?”

Jinhwan clicked his tongue when he saw Changwook’s face regain its vitality in an instant.

Changwook immediately went to check Athenae’s official website to check about the elves. He saw that the elves would receive their points, and players could exchange the points for things that they wanted with them. In particular, the items that the elves sold were rare and had never been released before.

Then, Changwook asked, “Perhaps, there’s something good to eat with the elves?”

He pondered deeply about this possibility.

“A gorgonzola pizza made with the elves’ honey, elves’ dark beer, elves’ bibimbap...
hmm...”

An idea flashed through Changwook’s head.

“This is 100% perfect for Minhyuk!!”

Minhyuk could see that the presence in front of him was the previous Food God, Allen. This was his first time meeting him. Minhyuk’s level had also shot through Level 380 in an instant.

“Hoo. You’re not as fat as I thought. Rather, you look very tiny and small.”

“The Food God is the same too.”

Minhyuk smiled at him. He was very pleased to make the late Food God’s acquaintance. After all, this man loved to eat as much as him.

“I don’t have a lot of time. I can only stay here for a while.”

It made sense since the Food God was already dead.

“Have you checked my request?”

“Not yet.”

“Look at it.”

Minhyuk immediately checked the contents of the quest.

[Class Quest: The Food God's Bet.]

Rank: SS

Requirements: Food God

Rewards: Will depend on your achievements.

Penalty for Failure: None.

Description: The Food God was an outstanding commander who had many subordinates and vassals under him during his lifetime. He was an outstanding commander that shone brightly during the wars. However, the gods had told him that his descendants would only be weak and lazy. So, they made a bet. Most of the God Class players or above will receive this quest through different methods and with different rewards. You can prove that the Food God is not just a class that only thinks about eating. However, you can still say no and it will be alright if you don't want to compete.

1?When 100% of your enemies had been shot and killed: Food God's Bizzare Spicy Rice Cake Set.

2?When 100% of your commanding ability has been displayed: Food God's Spicy Chicken Feet Set.

3?When you get the highest contribution among the three Gods that participated in the bet: Acquire the Food God's Kitchen Knife.

It was a special quest that would not mete out any penalty even if Minhyuk failed. It was also a class quest that did not have anything to do with the five God's Dishes.

The other gods thought that the Food God's descendants would be lazy and weak? It was laughable. However, Food God Allen could also understand why they thought so. After all, one only needed to eat to transfer to the Food God Class. They had to fill their fullness stat to 10/10 and choose the pig instead of the legendary class, Berserker. It was a class for food and eating alone! This was the reason why no one believed that his descendants would have a strong presence.

However, Allen had the means to gauge his descendant's strength. So, he reached his hands out slowly and said, “Boy, I wonder how far you've come in your journey. Will you take this stone?”

Minhyuk reached his hands out and grabbed the stone in Allen's hand. The stone was none other than an energy stone, one that could gauge the power of the person holding the stone. ?However, this stone was only capable of gauging the strength of someone below Level 470.

When Minhyuk held the stone...

Crack ,crack, crack, crack—

Allen's eyes widened in shock when he heard the sound of cracking coming out of his hands.

‘Wh...what the hell... this sound...’?Food God Allen thought in shock.

Just like what was mentioned earlier, the energy stone would not be able to gauge the power of the person holding it if they surpassed Level 470. In other words, Minhyuk already had a force that was

above Level 500. Of course, this force included his stats, skills and the artifacts that he had on his body.

Crack!

Flop!

The energy stone broke in Minhyuk's hands.

"Boy... What have you been doing so far..." Food God Allen asked as he looked at Minhyuk in shock.

Breaking the energy stone meant that Minhyuk's overall force was at least Level 500, or even higher.

Minhyuk looked at the shocked Allen and said, "I've just been working hard and enjoying my meals. Just like you, Food God!!"

Then, he smiled brightly. Allen's lips also curled up in a wide smile when he saw Minhyuk's bright expression. He chuckled and said, "You truly are my descendant!"

"Eyy. I'm still a long way off. Don't you think that I still need to be able to eat roasted pig with Dragon's Breath, to be called a proper descendant?"

"Ah. Right. You haven't tried it yet, right? Boy? If you eat it after fully roasting it with Dragon's Breath, the smell of smoke will spread in your mouth..."

'Gulp.'

The two gulped at the same time. It seemed like they truly were on the same wavelength.

"Ah. Wait, wait. I don't have enough time. Will you be accepting my bet?"

"Of course. The rewards..."

Allen nodded when he saw Minhyuk's excitement.

"That's right. Aren't the rewards great?!!!"

"I'm very, very, very happy! I will definitely make all of that happen!"

The rewards written in the quest were the epitome of midnight snacks. The Bizarre Spicy Rice Cake Set and the Spicy Chicken Feet Set!

Although it was occasional, there would be days when one would crave spicy food. Those days usually happened when someone was extremely stressed out. During such times, one would definitely order the Bizarre Spicy Rice Cake set, as well as the Spicy Chicken Feet Set.

Minhyuk could already imagine himself lifting the lid of the spicy rice cake set and seeing the melted cheese that was glowing in white light. Underneath the cheese was the red spicy rice cake, as well as the vienna sausages and dumplings. There were also soft, plump boiled eggs inside.

Eating the spicy rice cake and chicken feet would definitely make Minhyuk sweat and say ‘Slurp—Ho!’ with the delicious heat of the food. The spiciness and heat would then make him hurry and reach out for a drink of cold and refreshing Julpis.

Minhyuk personally preferred the peach flavor among the variety that Julpis offered. He was sure that the refreshing and cool Julpis would wash away the tingling in his mouth. Eating the spicy and bizarre spicy rice cake continuously would definitely cause him pleasurable pain, but just like the demon’s temptation, he would definitely keep on reaching out for more! After eating the spicy rice cake, he would then set his sights on the spicy chicken feet.

With those thoughts in mind, Minhyuk vowed to complete this task! Then, he asked, “Food God, is the Food God’s Kitchen Knife the artifact that you used in the past?”

“Yes. It has a very, very special and amazing power.”

However, Minhyuk was not interested in anything else aside from food. Looking at him, Allen smiled pleasantly and said, “As expected of my descendant! Yes! You should get it!”

“Eyy. What will I do with an artifact that I won’t be able to eat?”

“Right. It’s something you can’t eat. I also wanted all of the rewards for you to be food, but God Athenae stopped me!!!”

“Hahahahaha! That would definitely be a happy thing!”

The two of them really hit it off.

Meanwhile, Corr and Loyna muttered to themselves as they watched the scene in front of them.

“I’m going nuts.”

“It’s like I’m watching a gluttonous dad and his son...”

Then, Minhyuk suddenly thought of something. He said, “Ah! Do you have any special cooking utensils?”

“Special cooking utensils?”

“Yes. I got a Demigod Artifact Production Method.”

Minhyuk spoke quietly, while Allen’s eyes could not help but widen in shock.

‘N...no. What in the world were you doing?!’

‘Demigod Artifact Production Method?’

Allen knew the power that it held. He also knew one piece of information. The special treasures of those beings. When one collected all the treasures, they would be able to produce any type of artifact that they wanted.

Allen gulped and nodded. He said, “There is. A very amazing artifact. But, you’re still a long way off.”

“Where is it?”

“Demon World.”

Chapter 234: Delicious Expedition

“...!”

“...!”

Lee Minhwa and Team Leader Park were both staring wide-eyed at the monitor. They were both shocked to hear the previous Food God share information he had with Minhyuk.

[Demon World?]

[Right. The Demon World. If you go there, you will be able to meet with the Four Heavenly Kings. The Four Heavenly Kings each have their own treasures. The Bronze Sword, the Pipa, etc. Rumor has it that if you collect all four treasures, you can create any type of artifact that you want.]

[Wow. Any type of artifact that I want...!]

[Yes. You can also get one ability that you want. I was actually trying to make an oven from their treasures. In the end, I gave up because it was not an easy feat. You must either do them a favor, or fight and win against them.]

[Oho. I see. An oven... It would be nice to have an oven that keeps the fat and the oils from escaping from the chicken or the pork when roasting...!]

[Oh. Me too! I want to try making one too...!]

[I'll make sure to make an oven like that!]

[Yes. Boy, I believe you! It would be good if you can make what I couldn't back then!]

Then, the two of them shook hands. Along with that, a quest window also appeared in Minhyuk's head. However, for the Athenae operators, it was the worst handshake to have ever happened in the entire world.

“Show us the quest window.”

“Yes, Team Leader.”

[Linked Quest: Meet the Four Heavenly Kings in the Demon World.]

Rank: SSS

Requirements: Food God.

Rewards: Four Heavenly Kings' Treasures.

Penalty for Failure: -20 to all stats.

Description: Rumor has it that you can produce any type of artifact that you want if you collect all four treasures of the Four Heavenly Kings in the Demon World. Go and gather their treasures. But before that, shouldn't you go to the Demon World first?

The reason why the operators were astounded, was because most of the NPCs that gave any quest related to the Four Heavenly Kings Treasures would always say, ‘Rumor has it that they give the

form of artifact that you want but we don't know if it will be good,' or something along those lines. With those vague words, most players would likely wonder about the probability of getting a good artifact, and hence would choose whether they would challenge or give up the quest.

The Four Heavenly Kings were the next most powerful beings, right after the three Great Demons. It was not easy to meet any of them, and to think that the player would still have to do quests for them or hunt them. However, right now...

"Right now, even Calauhel is struggling just to meet with the Four Heavenly Kings. Right?"

"Yes, Team Leader."

Calauhel had arrived at the Demon World much earlier, and he was moving around trying to find their treasures.

Just like Beas Village, the Demon World was a meeting place for players all over the world. Currently, even though Minhyuk was a latecomer, it was likely that he would try to challenge the quest. To the operators, Minhyuk posed more of a problem than Calauhel.

"Despite the rumors, the artifacts that will appear hold significant power. They will definitely have power similar to those of the disaster rank."

The name that Joy Co. Ltd. had given these artifacts were...

"Authority Artifact..." Lee Minhwa murmured to herself.

That was the artifact that would be created from whatever the player wanted. The artifact could also exert power similar to that of a disaster artifact.

'What will happen if he collects the four treasures and uses the Demigod Artifact Production Method?'

Then, it would definitely become stronger than a disaster artifact.

"I hope that Player Minhyuk does not go to the Demon World."

"Yes. Otherwise, it will be the first Authority Artifact to ever appear.."

After a brief pause, Team Leader Park sighed. He rubbed his chin and said, "I just hope that it's not going to be an oven..."

Minhyuk checked the artifacts that he had received while waiting at the restaurant. Loyna was currently making him some rice cake dumpling soup so he had some free time. Sitting right next to him was his new vassal, Corr.

(Frightening Instrument)

Rank: Legendary

Requirements: 400 Holy Power or 400 Demonic Energy

Durability:?

Attack Power: 714

Special Abilities:

?Can be transformed into any instrument in the world.

?For those who possess Holy Power, you will perform a warm and divine performance overflowing with Holy Power. For those who possess Demonic Energy, you will perform a chilling performance overflowing with death and destruction.

?Active Skill: Kayageum's Explosion

?Active Skill: Slow Violin

?Passive Skill: Recital Conductor

Description: The instrument bestowed by Verus, one of the three Great Demons, to one of his Demon Worshippers. It will perform differently depending on whether the player uses Holy Power or Demonic Energy.

Minhyuk believed that Kayageum's Explosion was the skill that was used earlier. It was a skill that allowed explosions whenever the kayageum was played. Slow Violin was the skill that fired sword lights with every pluck of the string.

However, among the three skills attached to the artifacts, Minhyuk's personal favorite was the Recital Conductor.

(Recital Conductor)

Passive Skill

Level: None

Effects:

?Performance done with Demonic Energy will continuously lower the HP of the listeners and give them constant pains.

?Performance done with Holy Power will restore the HP of the listeners and can help plants and animals grow faster and healthier.

"This one will be Corr's from now on."

"Oh! But this is such a precious thing... Thank you," Corr said, both shocked and excited. He quickly checked the information of the item and saw that it was a very good item.

"From now on, I will give Corr a huge mission. Use this instrument to grow the Monarch's Seeds," Minhyuk said solemnly.

Corr knew about the existence of the Monarch's Seeds. Those were the seeds made by the Ancient Monarch and the Former Pope! There might be enormous power hidden in these seeds. He was now responsible for awakening such power.

"I'll definitely make it happen!"

“Yes.”

Corr did not know that Minhyuk just wanted to eat something delicious, all he knew was that Minhyuk looked serious while giving him this order.

‘Hmm... Food God Allen told me that I should just do what I normally do and someone will come to see me so that I can proceed with the Food God’s Bet quest. I wonder when they’ll come?’ Minhyuk thought.

For now, it seemed fine for him to just wait. Then, Loyna finally completed the rice cake dumpling soup. She placed it in front of Minhyuk with some kimchi and said, “Our Athenae Temple’s garden has more Holy Power than anywhere else. The kimchi made from the cabbage that’s grown there is different from regular kimchi.”

“Oh, I see.”

Minhyuk looked at the piping hot rice cake dumpling soup. He could see the seaweed flakes, egg garnish, and carrots that were sliced and placed on top of the soup. Even the dumplings that they used were authentic dumplings.

‘Looking at the shape of the dumplings, these are clearly?Hoobigo?gyoza dumplings.’

Just like he had expected, the dumplings were Hoobigo?gyoza dumplings. The sizes of the dumplings were all similar and the fillings were generously packed inside a sturdy and strong dumpling dough.

Minhyuk tried a sip of the soup first.

‘Wow...’

In just one sip, Minhyuk could tell that this was the taste of beef bone soup.

“We have a tree called the Beef Bone Tree. I made the dumpling soup using the broth from the tree,” Loyna said, grinning widely at Minhyuk’s thumbs up.

This time, Minhyuk scooped up some joraengi rice cake and placed it in his mouth.

Chew, chew.

The texture of the chewy?joraengi?rice cake, the deep flavor of the beef bone broth, combined with the taste of the seaweed powder, danced in his mouth. Minhyuk smiled happily at the flavors that danced inside his mouth in every chew.

‘This flavor is enough to make me feel alive!’

As expected, delicious food was always best after doing hard work!

Then, Minhyuk picked up some dumplings from the soup. As soon as he raised his spoon, he could see a round, plump dumpling on top of it. There was a faint luster in the dumpling skin that made it look like it was shining. He quickly blew on it to cool the dumpling down, before eating the whole dumpling in one go. As soon as he chewed, the soup trapped inside the dumpling spread throughout his mouth. A variety of flavors danced wildly in his mouth, and somehow, the flavour truly tasted like meat.

Then, Minhyuk picked up some kimchi while he continued to eat the rice cake dumpling soup.

Crunch, crunch—

The sour and crunchy kimchi washed away the greasiness of the soup. He continued to eat like that. Towards the end, Minhyuk picked up the bowl and drank the beef bone broth directly from the bowl.

“Puhaa!?It’s really delicious!”

Minhyuk made sure to eat all of the joraengi rice cakes and dumplings. By the time he was done, there was not even a drop of soup left in his bowl. Then, he turned towards Loyna and said, “I have something important to say to Loyna.”

“...Yes?”

Minhyuk’s expression was grave and solemn, while his eyes glistened like he was longing for something.

‘I...is he going to confess...?’

Loyna’s heart suddenly beat faster without her noticing it.

The Emperor of Collodis Empire, Asvon the Bright, looked at the two people sitting in front of him. The two people sitting in front of him were both God Classes.

One was Eclei, the God of War. Eclei was an outstanding monarch, and he did not belong in any guild. Even so, he was still someone that was responsible for three small cities. He truly deserved the name God of War. Even his level was at Level 470.

The man sitting next to him was wearing a mask. He was the guild master of the assassins’ guild? ‘Secret Vessel’. Just like his guild, his God Class was the God of Death. The two of them, aside from the guild, had many troops and vassals under their command. Of course, it went without saying that their skills were superb.

“You received the Gods’ Bet?”

“Yes. We received them,” The two of them answered.

That was right, those were the two other gods who participated in the bet. Of course, God Classes were still not gods yet. After all, there were very few, especially among the foreigners, that could ascend and become gods. Those that could not exceed certain limits would stop growing and would eventually become relegated, never to reach the God Class.

“We still do not know who will be better, us or the opponent. In any case, you’ll have to join the subjugation force and stand out by rescuing ‘Prince Argon’.”

“Of course.”

The two of them were very confident. After all, the two of them were among the most prominent authorities in the Empire.

Asvon grinned wickedly as he continued to speak, “Use any means necessary.”

There was an armistice with the Eivelis Empire to make good the hundred-year promise with the elves. However, there was an unknown fact that was not disclosed to the public, which was the kingdoms would still be in constant competition.

If they were able to rescue Prince Argon, then they would be able to gain high favor with the elves and the Collodis Empire.

‘And isn’t there only one opponent?’

The two people went outside. Not long after Eclei said, “Use any means necessary...”

“It means that if things don't work out well, we can attack them.”

Unfortunately, it would cause things to become vague and ambiguous if they attacked openly. However, there were a lot of expedient means that they could resort to.

“We can bring the enemies towards them on purpose.”

“Or we can inform the enemy of their position.”

“We can also install traps and pretend to be the enemies.”

They grinned wickedly as they thought of plenty of wicked means to defeat the opponent.

Loyna’s heart was trembling. This was because Minhyuk, with his grave and serious expression, led her in a bedroom that was closed off to everybody else. With Minhyuk’s serious look, Loyna’s heart thumped violently. She was even chanting verses in her head to calm herself down.

‘You’re the Saintess.’

Even so, the Saintess was still a person. Her heart was still beating and she could still fall in love with someone else. However, she was the Saintess and she was supposed to have the finesse to handle situations like this.

The thought of Minhyuk fighting hard to save her from death suddenly flashed in her head. He was really cool and gallant.

With plenty of thoughts flying through her mind, she finally decided. She said, “This is my first time.”

“...Me too,” Minhyuk said seriously.

Then, Loyna placed her hands on her chest as she breathed deeply. She could see Minhyuk looking at her gently despite his solemn expression. She could also see the bed behind him. She had decided that she would go along with it. She would definitely feel his breath. After all, he must be in love with her.

“You’re going to be gentle, right?”

As she said that, Loyna closed her eyes and puckered her lips out. Then, she heard his voice.

“Wait. Why did you close your eyes?”

“Huh?”

Loyna opened her eyes gently and saw Minhyuk smiling gently. She also saw him holding two things that she did not know the use of.

“Hehe. Miss Loyna! Please have one! I felt sorry that I was sulking because you did not make me rice cake dumpling soup before, so I’ve been meaning to give you this. Hehe, this is the first time that I gave candy to someone else. I got some couple ring candies from an artifact called Magic Snack Box.”

“R...ring candy?” Loyna asked dumbfounded. The expression on Minhyuk’s face clearly told her that the ring candy was much more important than sleeping with her.

“Tadah!!!”

For a moment, Loyna wanted to give Minhyuk a beating. However, she could not do that since she realized that everything was a result of her own disillusion. Loyna’s face turned as red as a beetroot, unable to bear the shame. She covered her face with her palms and ran away in embarrassment!

“Huh? What’s wrong with her?”

Minhyuk was confused. He quietly took back the ring candy that Loyna did not take as he placed it on his fingers and ate it happily.

“Kgghk.?Ring candies! This is the taste in my memories!”

With that done, Minhyuk stepped outside, only to come face to face with the person who was waiting for him. It was none other than Ellie, her aide Ruth and the Phoenix Knight Order. All of them were waiting for him.

Chapter 235: Delicious Expedition

Legend Guild was busy moving around in preparation for the outbreak of the great war. When the announcement came out, there were many new quests that were given to the players, ranging from low-leveled quests to high-leveled quests.

The following was what was written on Athenae’s official website:

Elvenheim, the area near the Elven Forest is divided into areas A, B, C, D and E. Players can go to the classified area depending on their levels. Players will be able to purchase various artifacts, potions and war supplies from the Elf NPCs that they will meet there. The first person to reach the Elven Forest will be given a special reward. Joy Co. Ltd. had divided the areas so players of varying levels could experience and enjoy the event. Of course, players that dealt with the mobs in areas B, C, D and E would not be able to be the first one to reach the Elven Forest.

‘What’s in the Elven Forest?’ Genie thought curiously as they continued their preparations.

Elven Forest was a new continent that had not yet been opened to the public. This was why many people were keenly paying attention to the first player who would be able to reach Elven Forest.

Legend Guild was preparing to take on a mission to carve out and explore Area A. Genie was sure that all of the local guilds would set their sights on Area A and gather there.

Deputy Lord Ben would stay behind in the territory to protect the estate, since plenty of their troops would be dispatched to the Elven Lands. This was to prevent other guilds from trying to use this opportunity to attack them.

Genie turned to look at a man from a distance. From what Minhyuk had said, this man was a paladin and was his second vassal. Minhyuk also took that time to express his regret that he would not be able to accompany them, since he was summoned by Empress Ellie.

Meanwhile, the vassal whom Minhyuk had left in the territory, Paladin Corr, was busy trying to plow the field.

Bang, bang, bang.

“Why is this not getting split up! #\$\$\$%@@@@\$?”

“...Is he really a paladin? I think he’s more of a gangknight.”

“What’s a gangknight?” Khan, who was busily moving next to her, asked.

“Gangster Knight.”

“...Hmm.”

Genie’s brows furrowed. She might not know it but thanks to Minhyuk’s ‘pointers’, Paladin Corr was able to be enlightened with his true calling.

Paladin Corr plowed the field, planted the seeds, and watered the soil evenly. After doing all of that, he sat on the field and clasped his hands together in prayer. Then, he raised his body and bowed down as he cried, “Grow up, seeds!”

The next thing he did was to pull out an instrument. The instrument was originally in the form of a castanet, but soon, the shape suddenly turned into a recorder.

Ppi, ppippi, ppi, ppippi~

Hearing a familiar tune, Locke could not help but mutter under his breath, “Edelweiss~ Edelweiss~ Isn’t that the song that we learned back in elementary school...”

“Is the recorder the only instrument that he can play at that age?”

“Kgghk! This fantastic sound!!! I’m sure no one in the world can play a recorder as good as me! Ha! I’m truly a man among men... there’s nothing I can’t do...”

Corr was filled with emotion as he smiled after finishing his performance.

Locke and Genie’s eyes met. Then, Locke said, “...Isn’t he a crazy guy as well?”

“Yeah... Looks like it.”

Genie sighed deeply. Somehow, she felt that they had no normal vassals.

“Sigh.”

Minhyuk had been summoned by Empress Ellie, so he went to her.

“How have you been, noona?”

“Not that well.”

“Huh? Why?”

“I want to eat your food.”

“This, this! Then, I have to make you something delicious!”

Ellie smiled happily at Minhyuk.

She was a bit surprised when she learnt that Minhyuk was the descendant of one of the three Gods who entered a bet. The story about the three Gods making a bet in the past was not only passed down on Collodis Empire, but also in Eivelis Empire. The emperors of each Empire had to assign the tasks so that the God Classes would be able to fulfill their bets. Additionally, they had to be tasks that was suitable for the bet.

“The King of the Elves has a sole child. His name is Prince Argon.”

“Yes.”

“A few days ago, the demonic humans and other demonic races attacked the Elven Forest and kidnapped Prince Argon. Your mission is to lead 50 men from my troops and rescue him. Prince Argon is said to be currently held captive at Immortal’s Land.”

The dreaded Immortal’s Land. Even existing high-leveled players were reluctant to go to there. One of the reasons was the insane amount of high-leveled mobs. That was not the only reason.

“There might be quite a few of the demonic humans and demonic monsters in there.”

Aside from the high-leveled mobs, there would also be demonic humans and demonic monsters lurking in the area. There was something even more terrible.

“The Immortal’s Land not only has those monsters, there are also natural disasters that occur every minute. There are also plenty of penalties that will apply on anyone that enters the land, since Great Mage Arfield had placed a curse on the land in the past.”

Minhyuk nodded. In fact, this was something that he already knew.

“You will lead 50 men from the Phoenix Knights Order and head there. If you’re the first person to save Prince Argon, your God will be the most likely God to win the bet.”

Minhyuk nodded in understanding when he heard Ellie’s words. He said, “I’ll do it.”

He looked very determined. Then, the notifications rang.

[The God’s Bet has started.]

[1. You can achieve 100% enemies' death if you carry out a complete subjugation with the Phoenix Knights. The stronger and more special the existence is, the higher the percentage of enemy kills that you will receive.]

[2. You can achieve 100% commanding ability if you build up favor and obedience with the Phoenix Knights. The higher the favorability and obedience, the higher the percentage of commanding ability that you will receive.]

[The God who wins the bet will be determined by their final contribution.]

Seeing Minhyuk's serious and determined face, Ellie said, "Looking at you... You must be getting something delicious from this, right?"

"Oh. How did you know?!"

"I know just by looking at you."

Ellie watched him as he proceeded to meet with the 50 from the Phoenix Knights Order. Then, she said, "The other Gods have already arrived."

The God of War, Eclei, and the God of Death, Bach, watched as the Collodis Army gathered before them. Each group had about 50 people.

"I wonder who it is."

"Oh. Here he comes."

The two of them had already greeted their troops.

The God of War, Eclei, said, "We are not going there to die. We're going there and coming back alive! Well then, let's go become heroes and save the world from the demonic races!"

Bach, on the other hand, also contributed with wonderful lines. He said, "We'll just hit them harder and stronger than anybody else. If you believe in me, you will definitely be given the most valuable glory in your lives."

They were filled with confidence.

Meanwhile, Minhyuk was looking around his troop of 50 men. The Phoenix Knights Order looked at him, waiting for his speech that would rile them up. However, the man in front of them suddenly said, "Rice is the best medicine!!! Everyone already had their meals, right?"

"..."

"..."

The two other God Class players were speechless.

Not long after, one of the members of the order spoke up.

"We haven't yet."

"Noooo! How could someone commit such a felony? Did the palace forget to feed you?"

“They gave us food.”

“Why haven’t you eaten your free meals? Ha! This rice was grown by our people with their blood and sweat. You must eat rice. Well then, our slogan from now on will be ‘Rice is the best medicine’. There are a lot of people in the world who are starving because there’s nothing that they could eat! We will not leave until everyone is done eating!”

“...Pfffffft!”

“Cough!”

The two people burst out in laughter.

‘We’ve won.’

They thought that they could easily rule him out for now.

‘What a stupid thing to do!!!’

He even fed the knights to their heart’s content. As the Phoenix Knights came out of the restaurant, they said...

“Did you see? The commander ate 50 servings...”

“My goodness. Even a beluga whale can’t eat that much.”

“Can we come back alive?”

“...”

“Keuhahahahahaha!”

“Hahahahaha. I’m dying of laughter.”

‘What kind of God is that?’

The two had no choice but to laugh.

‘Even the knights are on edge?’

They laughed their heads off, happy with their victory in sight.

Then, Minhyuk came out and said, “Hello! Have you eaten yet?”

“Ah.?Pfft!?We already did. Ah. Yes.”

They were very curious about his class, but the two of them did not even bother to ask. God Class players would not reveal their job classes usually.

Not long after, Eclei asked Minhyuk, “Have you eaten already?”

“Yep! Although it’s a bit pitiful, it’s still very good!”

“Having 50 servings is still pitiful?”

"I always like to drink at least 20 cups of coffee to moisten my dry throat."

"Ah. Hey. You're really very funny."

"Haha. I'm a bit funny, right?"

Eclei and Bach felt relieved. They were already at the top of the list of people who could lead the troops well. They believed that they did not need to worry about someone who acted like this.

Then, they told him, "We can accompany each other until Immortal's Land Zone 2. Why don't you support us from the rear, Minhyuk?"

"The back?"

"Yes. We'll be hunting up front and Minhyuk can just support us from the back. You can shoot a bow, or something."

"Ah. Yes. I understand! But, you're not going to say anything about us getting drops for nothing, right?"

"Of course."

"Not at all."

"So if the item drops, can we get it too?"

"Of course. If you have the acquisition rights, you should also be able to get it too."

Gold and artifacts or other drops that dropped from the hunted mobs had acquisition rights. Any member of a party could acquire drops from the monsters that they hunted regardless of their contributions. However, this was not the case for different parties. The person with the highest contribution would have the acquisition rights for the item. Only after a certain period of time had passed would the acquisition rights disappear. By that time, everybody else could pick up the dropped item.

Eclei and Bach laughed to themselves. They knew that being a support in the rear was literally staying behind the scenes. This meant that he would have fewer results in terms of the numbers he hunted, which would result in fewer chances of winning war points. In other words, he would be left behind. It would be hard for him to feel guilty about getting things for nothing, because he would strongly feel that he was being left behind.

Eclei grinned widely and thought, 'This means that one of my competitors has been eliminated. Now, only Bach is left.'

Just like Minhyuk who would receive the Food God's Kitchen Knife as a reward if he won the bet, Eclei and Bach would also each be given artifacts if they won the bet. In Eclei's case, he would receive the Monarch's Sword. The Monarch's Sword was an artifact with the strength that exceeded the strength of a legendary artifact. There was one other thing that gave Eclei confidence.

'Demon World's ore, Viridite.'

He recently received this ore after finishing the episode quest 'Hero's Will'. Eclei happened to know about the use of this item. These were ores where Gremory had hidden her powers. It was

said that the powers from these ores would only emerge when the land was overflowing with demonic energy. This was the perfect time.

‘The viridite in my hand is said to be the ore with the weakest power. I wonder what kind of power is hidden in this.’

However, the ore would only show its power indirectly. Perhaps he would be able to see some changes soon. Eclei recalled the information about the ores that he had obtained before.

‘The ore with the strongest power. Antarinium. Who the hell has that ore?’

Just as he was questioning himself...

“Everyone, we’re going to be in the back! Wow! You know how important the rear is right?!!!”

“...”

Eclei and Bach laughed. Then, Eclei spat out, “Moron.”

Without realizing it, he had spoken in an unusually loud voice.

“Moron.”

Minhyuk heard the words from behind him. However, he was still grinning. His father had taught him that one should not judge a person by their appearance. Minhyuk had realized this lesson early on in his life.

‘You will never know what kind of person a man is until you meet him in person.’

Minhyuk had tested them step by step.

When he shouted ‘Rice is the best medicine!’, his opponents laughed at him. Of course he pretended to not notice them, but they also placed Minhyuk and his troops in the rear. This was to make sure that he would suffer losses. The morale of his knights were temporarily low, but he was willing to go through with the arrangements so he could assess their strength and power from behind.

In other words, everything was according to Minhyuk’s plans.

‘They judged a person by their appearance. And that moron...’

Minhyuk scoffed. They still did not know what kind of performance he and his troops would make from the rear.

Chapter 236: Delicious Expedition

The expedition team to rescue Prince Argon was composed of a total of 150 men and three commanders, and the moment they were ready, they all set off. Each individual commander commanded a company of 50 people and the companies were all named as well. Eclei’s company was named ‘Iron Blood’, God of Death Bach’s was called ‘Reapers’, while Minhyuk’s company was named ‘Rice Supplement’.

Meanwhile, Bendiaz, the second highest in command after Minhyuk in the Rice Supplement troop, felt that everything was absurd. He thought, ‘Damn it! This person is our commander?!’

‘Are you telling us that war is a joke? All of the knights here have families waiting for them back home. But you’re telling us that we’ll be called ‘Rice Supplement’? What kind of f*cking name is that?’

“Bendiaz, if you think that he’s not good at commanding, then why don’t you just take it away?”

“Arthur, Her Majesty has placed her trust and faith in this man.”

Another knight from the back suddenly asked, “But, aren’t we just going to die like this?”

“...Only time will tell.”

The knight beside Bendiaz suddenly exclaimed.

“Eh?”

Bendiaz turned his head to look at the knight in question.

“You can’t take command right away, but if he made one mistake...”

The knights could understand each other with just that one sentence.

‘We’d rather have Bendiaz lead us than die.’

Then, Bendiaz looked at Minhyuk who was standing in front. He thought, ‘...How can a man like this be our commander?!’

Before they knew it, they had reached the Immortals’ Land Zone 1.

[You have set foot in the Immortals’ Land.]

[This is Zone 1.]

[You can only carry one kilogram of food in Immortals’ Land. In the case of other food or food ingredients, you can only carry ingredients infinitely if they can help you be self-sufficient.]

[Most potions and parchments are restricted in the Immortals’ Land.]

[You can’t use items like residential tents in the Immortals’ Land.]

[These items also cannot be used by your troops.]

Self-sufficiency! This was one of the reasons why Immortals’ Land was so difficult. Eclei and Bach also brought the least amount of food because of this. In other words, they only brought beef jerky, nuts and the like. Food that was not only light in weight, but could also make one feel full as much as possible!

“Ah! It’s really a terrible place!” Minhyuk called out from the back.

Eclei and Bach continued on to the front until their first battle began. Monsters started to appear one by one. There were at least 60 monsters in front of them and there were some at Level 400.

However, everyone was well aware that their strengths were far beyond that of their levels. In fact, the existing monsters in the Immortals' Land were mostly 'Immortal Ogre' and 'Immortal Trolls'. However, their appearance had changed.

"What's this?"

"Is this the effect of the Demon World?"

The skin of the monsters in front of them was unusually dark!

Not long after, the clash between the monsters and the knights began.

Slash!

Stab!

Stab!

Groooooooooowl!

Baaaaaang!

"Calmly attack the enemy! Knights! Take your square shield and block the front!"

"Knights! Listen to me, use your spears and pierce the ogres from the gaps of the square shields!"

The God of War Eclei and the God of Death Bach were the ones that definitely looked like they were in command. They had already begun to clear up the mobs. In doing so, they realized that the monsters were already strong, but had grown stronger under the influence of demonic energy.

Just when one of the knights was about to announce the successful completion of the first hunt of the subjugation by striking a blow at an ogre that was on the verge of collapse...

Swoooooosh!

Thud!

"Keuheeeeeeeck!"

"Yay! It hit!"

Eclei turned around to look at the 'Rice Supplement' from behind. He could see Minhyuk in front of the troops holding a bow that was covered in blue energy. It was at that moment when a notification rang in Eclei's head.

[Iron Blood's contribution has increased by 30 points.]

At the same time, notifications also rang in Minhyuk's head.

[Rice Supplement's contribution has increased by 50 points.]

Even in ancient times, the most important thing was the final strike. They had told him earlier to back them up from the rear. That was their big mistake.

“Hahaha. That’s a great bow. You’re an archer, aren’t you?” Eclei said, smiling awkwardly.

‘It’s just one hit, so what?’

Then, another arrow pierced through an ogre’s neck. The ogre was already going to keel over and die with just one more hit, but the arrow was the one that took its life.

“Yayy! Bullseye!”

[Iron Blood’s contribution has increased by 30 points.]

And on the other side...

[Rice Supplement’s contribution has increased by 50 points.]

“...”

Eclei’s expression wrinkled into a frown.

Meanwhile, Minhyuk turned around and shouted, “Everyone, shoot your bows! Only shoot those who are almost dying!”

“Yes!!!”

Then, Minhyuk took something out of his arms. It was none other than a ‘bell’. It looked pretty, with a silvery light flashing under the sunlight. Minhyuk rang the bell without any hesitation.

Clang—

Claaaaang—

At that exact moment, a sacred light stretched and covered the armor, bows and arrows, and swords of the knights under Minhyuk.

[You have rung Pope Ramas’ Bell.]

[It is as effective as pouring the Pope’s holy water on weapons.]

[Your physical attack and defense, as well as magical attack and defense against the undead or the beings from the Demon World has increased by 1.2x.]

[Your probability of landing a critical hit against the undead or the beings from the Demon World has increased by 30%.]

“...Gasp!!!”

The knights shouted in alarm. They were shocked that Minhyuk had Pope Ramas’ Bell out.

Minhyuk had received this bell from Pope Carunu. Just when he was about to leave the church with Ruth and the knights, Pope Carunu had arrived at the Athenae Temple. He had given him ‘Ramas’ Bell’ as a gift in thanks for saving the Athenae believers. This bell was a legendary artifact with limitless power.

(Ramas’ Bell)

Rank: Legendary

Restriction: Can only be used by Minhyuk.

Durability:?

Special Abilities:

?Increases your Holy Power by 10% just by possessing the artifact alone.

?Active Skill: Pope Ramas' Bell

?Active Skill: God's Miracle

Description: This bell is the third of the Pope's Treasures. The 13th Pope, Ramas, was said to have escaped the clutches of death in the Demon World by ringing this bell. ?It was said that he was able to survive by leaving the Demonic Humans and Demonic Races in pain and distress after ringing the bell once.

The active skill God's Miracle had the power to cause the undead or the demonic beings to suffer, even with just the slightest ring of the bell. The skill had a very long cooldown and could only be used once every two weeks. However, the range was much wider than what he had expected, so he thought that the cooldown was justified.

Then, Minhyuk said, "Focus only on those that are almost dying!"

At the end of his words, Minhyuk pulled the string of his bow once more and shot another arrow.

Thud!

[Critical hit!]

A critical hit landed on the orge and it collapsed. Along with his shot, the Rice Supplement company started moving. They quickly knocked their arrows on their bows and started shooting. They simply followed Minhyuk's orders.

Thud!

Chiiiiiiiik!

"Keuaaack!"

Thud!

Chiiiiiiiik!

"Grrrrrrrrrrrack!"

The ogres began to collapse one after the other.

The knights of the Iron Blood and Reapers who were fighting at the forefront felt like they were in hell.

'I have been working very hard, you know...!'

'They're taking everything!!!'

Then, Minhyuk spoke again, "Caleman, Neville, Cody, Lark!"

"Yes!"

“Forward!”

Minhyuk and some knights began to run forward.

Eclei’s face crumpled in annoyance when he tried to acquire the items after the monsters had died.

[You have no acquisition rights.]

[There are 3 minutes left before the acquisition rights get lifted.]

“...!”

His face was now thoroughly distorted. It was at that moment when Minhyuk appeared in front of him!

“Jackpot! It’s an item! Hurry up and pick up the spoils, everyone!”

“Ooooooooooh!”

Much to everybody else’s chagrin, the soldiers of the Rice Supplement company quickly fell back after they had picked up the items that had dropped.

Thud, thud.

“Yes! Bullseye!”

Thus began another round of LH. Eclei’s Iron Blood and Bach’s Reapers were all left dumbfounded.

‘What kind of dogshit situation is this...’

‘Shit...! Those bastards!!!’

The arrows fired by the knights from behind were very powerful. As soon as their arrows pierced the enemies, the sound?Chiiiiiiiik~?would ring loudly, as if the bodies of the mobs were being burned with fire. It was clearly caused by the bell that they had seen earlier.

Furthermore, once Minhyuk saw that most of the monsters had died, he would run forward with some of the knights, acquire the items and fall back again. In other words, it was the method of killing two birds with one stone with no effort at all!

[You have leveled up!]

“Yay! I leveled up! Hehehe!”

“...”

Being annoying was an added bonus.

‘I...I want to beat you into a pulp...!’

Unfortunately, Eclei and Bach could not bring themselves to do that, since they were the ones who told Minhyuk to fall back to the rear. Furthermore, it was already established that they could acquire and get the items that they had the acquisition rights for. What was worse was that the Rice Supplement was not causing any disruptions to their battles. In a way, they were even eliminating the risks for them, so they could not say that they were ‘rudely’ acting against them.

‘It’s one hell of a situation.’

At that moment, Eclei saw that the wounds of his members were all recovering slowly. Even though their wounds were recovering very slowly, they were still recovering naturally.

During large-scale battles, the commanders could choose to have the HP and MP bars of the NPCs under them float over their heads so they could monitor their situation.

“...!”

It was obviously something that Eclei could only see, and with one look, he could tell the reason straight away.

‘Th...the power of the viridite ore...!’

The power of the ores was not explicitly stated, and one?had?to check it for oneself. It seemed like the mineral in his hands had the power of ‘natural recovery’.

‘This natural recovery skill...! It does not even consume any HP!!!!!!!’

There was also another person that was caught in surprise. It was none other than Bendiaz. Bendiaz watched as the knights shot their arrows from their bows.

‘Our knights can shoot arrows to some extent, but were they really able to shoot this well?’

Knights would learn a variety of things from a young age. Somehow, their current skills looked like they had gone from ordinary to excellent. He was left in doubt. Bendiaz might not know the reason for this, but this was all thanks to the antarinium shining with a subtle glow from Minhyuk’s arms.

While Bendiaz was focused on something else, Minhyuk was busy giving out orders. He said, “Luca, Cady, Ferdy. You guys take care of the aggro!!”

“Yes!!!”

“Wh...who said anything about him being a stupid commander... Isn’t he a genius commander...”

The knights reacted like this after seeing Minhyuk use a veteran commander’s usual trick. The Iron Blood and Reapers suffered considerable damage as they fought in front. Meanwhile, the soldiers of the Rice Supplement company did not have the slightest injuries as they stayed behind and assisted from the rear.

The knights were all in a buzz.

“...Isn’t Commander something?”

“Isn’t he better than what we expected?”

“Wow... Amazing...!”

“We don’t get hurt and we even get the spoils, isn’t this completely amazing?”

Notifications started to go off on Minhyuk’s side.

[You have acquired 1 CHA.]

[You have received Knight Cardy's favor.]

[You have received Knight Acas' favor.]

[You have received Knight Arthur's favor.]

[You have acquired 1 CHA.]

[The soldiers' morale has increased.]

[You have acquired 3 CHA.]

[God's Bet. The percentage of the 2nd clause, Commanding Ability, has increased.]

Minhyuk heard Bendiaz muttering under his breath. He was running around earlier shouting 'Yahoo! Jackpot!' and plenty of other things like that. Now, he decided to pause beside Bendiaz for a moment and said, "We're going for the fastest method with minimal damage and maximum profit."

"...!"

That was when Bendiaz realized that this person had planned everything. Strangely enough, even though a person was good, people would only whisper about the bad or hateful things that he had done, instead of his good deeds.

'Ah. He's changed now.'

'He used to be nice, but he doesn't look like he's doing anything good these days, right?'

What would be even stranger, was when a person with a bad personality speak about someone else's good deeds.

'Hey, he's gotten a lot better lately~'

'He's gotten really nice lately. So cool. Just like a real handsome guy!'

Humans were truly strange animals.

From the very beginning, Minhyuk had let everybody think of him differently. Then, when it came down to it, he overturned their expectations entirely.

'This person took advantage of it!!!'

Minhyuk received another set of notifications.

[You have received Knight Bendiaz's favor.]

[You have received Knight Bendiaz's favor.]

[You have received Knight Bendiaz's favor.]

[You have acquired 5 CHA.]

They continued their strategy again and again. In this way, the three companies moved on from the Immortals' Land Zone 1. Along the way, Eclei found out that Minhyuk's contributions were

significantly higher than theirs. He could easily see the status, since the contributions to God's Bet could be checked anytime.

[1. Iron Blood. 35,513]

[2. Reapers. 39,113]

[3. Rice Supplement. 48,240]

He thought that things could not go on like this anymore, so Eclei approached Minhyuk and said, "Your support from the rear is truly remarkable."

"Hehe. I'm pretty good, right?! Thanks."

'This man's words are so annoying that I want to bite off his head.'

Eclei laughed awkwardly as he continued, "From now on, why don't you guys stop going for the last hit, and instead, use your soldiers to attack the monsters head-on. We'll be able to take care of things more quickly this way."

In other words, Eclei was trying to tell Minhyuk to stop his crafty tactics, while they would be the ones who would do it. Bach and Eclei glared at Minhyuk fiercely, as if they were trying to pressure him. They were also under pressure since they were only able to get some of the items.

The three companies had to go together. If they kicked out Minhyuk, then they would have to move forward with only 50 people each. If they did that, then they would definitely suffer and get annihilated. Once they were annihilated, Empress Ellie would definitely know that they were annihilated because they recklessly pushed him away.

In a way, this was some form of blackmail. They thought that this man would gladly accept their terms since he looked like he was foolishly nice. Alas, Minhyuk, just grinned at them as he said, "But... I don't want to?"

Chapter 237: Battlefield's Great Ruler

"...Wh...what?!!!"

"You don't want to?!"

Eclei and Bach's expressions wrinkled at Minhyuk's words. Minhyuk just smiled and said, "Oh my~ You were the one that said that in the beginning. Support us from the rear, was what you said. We did a good job with the rear support and we even killed off a lot of mobs in contribution. So, what seems to be the problem?"

"Eeeek...!"

The both of them were really fuming with rage, but there was nothing to say. After all, they were the ones that told him to do that. In the end, Eclei burst out in anger and said, "From now on, we won't accompany you!"

"Let's see if you can even survive in this Immortals' Land with just your 50 knights!!!"

The two glared at them. They were sure that Minhyuk and his troops would surely die once their company of 100 men left them behind.

Most areas in the Immortals' Land could only be cleared through large-scale combats, truth to be told, 50 people were too small a number to face those kinds of battles. What was worse was that the monsters in this place were all strengthened by demonic energy.

However, Eclei was also secretly worried. The Immortals' Land was literally a huge land of war and the fact that they wanted to leave 50 people behind, especially ones that were providing them with excellent rear support, would mean that their battles would become less efficient.

"That would be a good arrangement."

Eclei turned to look at Bach. However, Bach just said, "We haven't used all of our powers yet, have we?"

They were commanders. However, they still had a lot of AOE buffs that they had not used yet, since they were worried about the long cooldown period, and the amount of MP that would be consumed.

Then, Bach continued, "In fact, I also have this." He brought something out.

"...?!"

Eclei's eyes narrowed sharply.

"You..."

Eclei looked at him disapprovingly. Bach just laughed wryly. The item that he had brought out was none other than the map of the Immortals' Land.

"You had such a thing?! Why didn't you tell me earlier?!"

"...You're asking the obvious."

Bach's eyes sank heavily as he said, "We might both be from the same empire, but in the end, both of us are still rivals. I'm sure you have hidden something too."

Eclei was left speechless. He could not refute Bach's words since the latter was right. In the end, this was a competition. The last person standing would be the one that would win the bet.

"Now that we have lost 50 men from the total troops, I think we should use this map. This map can show us where and what is in front of us, which allows us to prepare in advance. We also have the advantage of being able to make use of our topography.

"...That's pretty good."

"Yes. We will use this map to get to Zone 3 where Prince Argon is being held captive. With the help of this map, we will be able to get there much faster than them."

"Hehe. Then, we will determine who will win between the two of us in Zone 3."

After all, even though they had not explicitly stated it, they both knew that they were keeping each other in check. In their own way, they expected that the two of them would play fair and square.

Then, Bach said, "Ah. There's one more thing that this map does well."

“What’s that?”

“Whenever we get to each zone, it can show us the number of players and troops present in that zone.”

Then, Bach unfurled the map with his hands.

Shwaaaaa—

Black strings of light came out of the map. The light showed them the numbers on Minhyuk’s side.

[Number of Survivors: 50 Current Location: Point A-31.]

“That’s very nice. Then, that means that we can look at this map to see how far they’re left behind and when they’ll be wiped out!”

“That’s right. I think that man is an archer, so I’m not sure how long he can hold on and how good his performance will be.”

Eclei and Bach were both confident in conquering the Immortals’ Land. They continued on for two days and two nights, but ended up facing a huge problem.

[Your company is complaining of hunger.]

[Fatigue has accumulated.]

[Morale has declined among your men.]

[All of your troops’ abilities have decreased by 10%.]

Tremble, tremble, tremble—

In addition to that, they would tremble and shiver once night descended on them. All they could do was to dig a large hole and cover it with fallen leaves to keep them warm.

“Hunting is much easier than what I had expected, but our main problem is the weather in the Immortals’ Land,” Eclei said, regretting the fact that he only brought five knights that knew how to cook or do carpentry.

One of the knights was grilling an iron pig. The iron pig had a body that was as solid as a stone. Unfortunately, they had no choice but to do this.

Terrible hunger! Cold wind! The ever-changing weather! Those were the biggest problems in the Immortals’ Land.

‘These things are far more problematic than the monsters...?’

What was worse was that they even heard a notification that they could not use the backpack that they brought along when they first came in. They must be self-sufficient in everything to survive every day in the Immortals’ Land.

Eclei, who was overcome with hunger, hurriedly ate the meat that was brought to him by a knight.

“Keok!”

However, he spat it out right away.

[You ate the Iron Pig's Meat filled with a fishy smell.]

[There is a high chance of getting food poisoning if you continue to eat it as it is.]

His mouth was filled with filth.

"H...how can you bring me something like this to eat!"

Punch!

In a fit of anger, Eclei punched the knight that brought the food, causing the knight to fall down on the floor.

"F...forgive me. The iron pig has a naturally stinky smell..."

"Hoo...?I'm going to die of this hunger."

Eclei rubbed his face after the knight flew away with just one punch. He was unable to eat or sleep, yet they had to continue their march to hunt monsters. However, the same was also true for the knights that could not eat the iron pig, no matter how hard they tried to grill it.

"We're in trouble."

Then, Bach came in. He said, "The knights are already complaining about their terrible hunger."

"I know. Even all of their skills and abilities have been compromised."

It was hard to soothe their hunger with just nuts and jerkies alone. What was worse was that the knights had already eaten all of those up because of their hunger. Currently, most of them were already shivering from both hunger and cold. The problem was that the ingredients that they could get here were so extreme that they would not be able to eliminate the risks involved if they did not have a chef with them.

Eclei and Bach had no choice but to trudge on like this together. They had to continue their march. They thought hard about ways to increase the knights' morale. Even though most of their knights were hungry, Eclei's commanding ability, a part that was included in the Gods' Bet, had already risen to 41%. Bach's had also increased to 40%.

Suddenly, a new problem soon arose.

[The knights are suffering from both the cold and hunger.]

[Your commanding ability has decreased by 4%.]

The two of them were notified at the same time.

"This...! This could also drop?"

"Goddamn...!"

The two of them could not help but sigh. They would be able to eat to some extent once they got out of Zone 1, but it would still take them another day to do so.

Bach suddenly thought of something and said, "I wonder what that punk is doing now?"

It had been two days since they went their separate ways. During the day, they kept their eyes on the Rice Supplement company with the help of the map. However, they did not stray far from where they were. The two of them giggled, thinking that Minhyuk was trying desperately not to die. However, at the same time, they were unable to confirm his overall contribution ranking, since they were busy trying to advance.

“Shall we take a look?” Eclei asked as he opened up the window.

Since this was a quest with a competitive structure, it was possible for them to see each other’s contributions, including the progress percentage they had achieved for each item.

Eclei could not help but jump up to his feet when he checked the window.

“Wh...what the hell!!!”

“What’s wrong?”

“Ba, Bach. Go and check out the Rice Supplement’s score!!!”

“...?”

Bach tilted his head in confusion as he opened Gods’ Bet’s ranking window.

[Iron Blood. 1. Achieved 37% enemy kills. 2. Achieved 36% commanding ability.]

[Reapers. 1. Achieved 41% enemy kills. 2. Achieved 35% commanding ability.]

[Rice Supplement. 1. Achieved 23% enemy kills. 2. Achieved 96% commanding ability.]

“...I...impossible,” Bach said. No other words came out of his mouth.

‘What is this supposed to mean? His commanding ability is at 96%?’

There was a variety of factors that one needed to take into account to increase the percentage of the commanding ability. The commanding ability in itself, the troops’ satisfaction and growth, the commander’s treatment of his troops and so on.

The two of them were able to raise their commanding ability through their great ability to command, as well as their troops’ growth. However, with all their effort, they were only able to increase it to less than 50%. They were thinking that perhaps they needed to go through the entire Immortals’ Land for them to achieve anything higher.

‘But you’re telling me that he’s already at 96%?’

“W...what did he do in just 3 days?!!!”

That was not the end of their shock.

“...E...Eclei!!!”

“Yes?”

Eclei turned around, wondering if something else happened again. Bach said, “...Rice Supplement’s enemy kill percentage is increasing rapidly!”

“What?”

Since this was a large-scale hunt, Eclei had calculated that they needed to kill at least 50 monsters to increase their enemy kill count by 1%. However, Minhyuk's percentage was rising continuously. It was previously at 23%, then it became 24%, then 25%, 26%, 27%, 28%... The speed of increase was incredibly fast.

'Wh...what the hell is happening...!'

Two days ago.

"N...no...!"

"What are we going to do...?!"

The Rice Supplement troops felt frustrated when they saw Iron Blood and Reapers moving away from them. They were wondering how they would get past the Immortals' Land with just 50 people.

"That was too reckless. You should have taken a step back and accompanied them!"

Minhyuk shook his head when he heard Knight Bendiaz's words.

"If we continued to stay with them, we would be restricted from doing a lot of things. In our case, they would keep on watching and threatening us..."

"..."

"They would probably attack us too."

"...!"

Bendiaz's eyes widened in shock.

'He gave this a much deeper thought than I did.'

That was right. After all, they were already threatened for the first time, and there was no law that restricted them from doing it a second time. When he thought about it deeply, this was also a way to determine whether Eivelis Empire was superior to Collodis Empire.

"Then, are we going to move on and start the monster subjugation right now?"

"No. We'll first get enough food ingredients here."

"Food ingredients?"

"Yes."

Minhyuk grinned widely. He knew one piece of information about the Immortals' Land.

Even though the Immortals' Land was unexplored and largely a mystery, there were still some pieces of information about it circulating around. He knew that there were plenty of well-known medicines and special ingredients in this place. The only problem was that they were all hidden from plain sight.

"How can we get food ingredients?"

“You’ll know soon enough. Sir Bendiaz, please don’t argue with me from now on. Here, take the spoils.”

Minhyuk placed the artifacts that he had gotten from the encounter earlier in front of Bendiaz. His father was the president and the CEO of a company. One of the many things that he had learned from him was this...

‘If you want to command the people under you, then you should learn how to share with everyone. He who monopolizes everything cannot be everyone’s beloved leader.’

“Are you just going to give it to us like this?”

“It’s not *just*. You’re all great men who followed my orders!!!” Minhyuk said, grinning widely.

Foreigners were usually known to be greedy. Therefore, when he gave them the spoils, the knights were very excited and happy.

‘Aaaaaaaaaaah...! I didn’t expect that he would distribute this to us...!’

‘My goodness! This is too precious!’

[You have received Coruman’s favor.]

[You have received Acass’ favor.]

[You have gained 1 CHA.]

Then, Minhyuk summoned his one and only method of finding those “very hard to find ingredients” that he mentioned to Bendiaz earlier.

“Oink!”

Beanie appeared in front of them.

However, Minhyuk was left speechless when he saw Beanie’s appearance. He knew that Beanie could also watch what he was doing from the summoning room. To his shock, this punk appeared in front of him while wearing a red cap and sunglasses with a baton in his hands.

“...Uhm.”

Once in a while, Minhyuk would give Beanie some pocket money so it could buy some delicious food for itself. Beanie would often go out by itself and go shopping in the village alone.

‘I guess he bought it back then.’

Beanie looked like it was saying *‘This instructor of yours is not a bad person!’* while being dressed like the guerilla instructor. With its paws behind him, it then slapped the baton in its palms as it slowly looked at the knights. It was so engrossed in its act that it even stood upright with a serious expression on its face.

“Oink, oink, oink! Oink, oink!!! Oink, oink~ oink!”

“Wh...what is he saying?”

One of the knights turned to Minhyuk for answers.

“*“This Instructor Beanie is not such a bad pig, so I will feed you well!”* That was what he said.”

“...”

“...”

“...”

Not long after, one of the knights could not help but mutter, “Cu...cute...”

Chapter 238: Battlefield's Great Ruler

[Beanie is feeling grumpy.]

“Oink!”

Beanie hated the word ‘cute’ extremely, slamming the baton on the palm of its paws once more. Then, it cried loudly as if to order them, “Oink, oink, oink!”

Minhyuk translated his words for the rest of them.

“Roll forward!”

“Aha?”

The knight that called Beanie cute earlier, laid down in front of him.

“Oink, oink!”

“Roll to the left!”

“Hahahaha!”

“Oink, oink!”

“Roll to the right!”

“Hahahaha.”

Perhaps it was because Beanie’s behavior was just too cute, that was why the knight kept on laughing, even though he was lying on the ground and rolling. To some extent, the tension that hung strongly over the heads of the Rice Supplement troop began to alleviate.

“Well then, we should stop here. Beans, shall we find something delicious?”

“Oink?!”

Beanie’s eyes widened when he heard the word delicious. Then, its shiny pink nose began to twitch. Beanie moved quickly before pointing under the ground.

“Let’s dig the ground.”

Then, they started to dig the ground.

[You have acquired an Immortals’ Land Apple.]

[You have acquired an Immortals' Land Tangerine.]

“...!”

The knights were all astonished when they saw food coming out every time they dug the land.

According to Minhyuk's estimations, there was a high possibility that the food ingredients were concentrated in this area. The only way that they could be self sufficient was to either hunt the monsters, or pick the fruits by themselves, but the probability of finding small hidden berries that were usually in small quantities were pitifully small. If they left things like that, they would end up starving themselves.

Minhyuk continued to lead the troops in search of food. Not long after, they found a cave.

“Oink, oink!”

The moment they entered the cave, notifications rang in Minhyuk's head.

[You have found the Legendary Meat Paradise.]

[You have gained 50 REP.]

[The first chicken, first cow, first pig and first sheep that you can get will have special powers.]

[Meat gathered from the Legendary Meat Paradise can be carried and will not be limited by the restrictions of the Immortals' Land.]

“...!”

It was a discovery that Minhyuk never expected.

When they went deeper in the cave, Minhyuk saw a magnificent scene in front of them. Animals with meat that could be used for food were all over the place. Chicken, duck, pig, sheep, and so on. Their numbers were too many to count.

Minhyuk could not help but mumble to himself, “...I want to live here forever.”

Night was almost upon them.

Bendiaz approached Minhyuk and said, “We should dig a hole to get a good night's sleep.”

“Hmm. That's a good idea.”

Not long after, Minhyuk thought of a better idea. He said, “Let's get some Gilderin's tree branches and some Gorman's vinyl leaves.”

“Huh? I will heed your orders.”

Bendiaz was quite curious about Minhyuk's thoughts, but he still followed his orders. After all, every time he gave them some orders, he would show them amazing things.

Giderin's tree branches were quite unusual existences. They were usually hanging around, or lying down on the ground in a loose and relaxed way, but once someone slapped them with their palm, they would become as tight as the string of a taut fishing rod. Meanwhile, Gorman's vinyl leaves looked like plastic, but they were much tougher than regular plastic.

Minhyuk began to sew and weave the Gorman's vinyl leaves that the soldiers collected. He could see a red mark in front of his eyes in every leaf, which helped increase his speed further.

'He, he's extremely fast...'

"Wow..."

"Are there other knights who know how to sew? We're going to make a big tent before digging a hole so we can huddle up and sleep warmly."

The knights who knew how to sew immediately began to sew according to his instructions. However, not long after, something surprising happened.

'What's this...?'

'Have I ever sewn this well before?'

They were quite shocked. They thought that they would only be able to manage sloppily at best, since their skills were mediocre, but that was not the case at all. They even sewed at a fairly rapid pace.

"It's because of the antarinium," Team Leader Park mumbled as he looked at the monitor. Lee Minhwa's head snapped up when she heard his words.

Antarinium.

It was an ore with endless, immense power. One of its advantages was precisely what they were witnessing. Guild members, party members or troops of those that owned the antarinium would experience a 20% increase in their special stats that could not be raised with bonus points. This was also the reason why the knights under Minhyuk were able to shoot their arrows exceptionally well earlier. Even their five basic stats would increase by 15%, which in turn had an enormous effect on their strength. The best thing was, there was no mana consumption nor cooldown restrictions.

Team Leader Park saw through the monitor that Minhyuk had finally finished creating a large tent from the leaves and branches that he was sewing and weaving together earlier. The tent looked extremely solid and sturdy.

"This is the power of 2,000 DEX..."

The power of the dexterity stat was so vast and versatile that Minhyuk was even able to create a huge tent in the wild. Since they were the ones that made that tent, they would be able to store that in their inventory and use it the next day.

Team Leader Park could not help but sigh. He said, "...He's going to cook now."

Lee Minhwa nodded solemnly. She said, "Thanks to the effects of antarinium, their five basic stats had increased by 15% and their special stats had increased by 20%. To top it off, they will even have a food buff effect..."

Lee Minhwa looked at the monitor blankly. She continued to say, "It's like one versus 100. That's not too bad of an estimate..."

“Yeah.”

Team Leader Park also nodded in agreement. Then, Lee Minhwa suddenly thought of something, before turning her head to look at Team Leader Park.

“What if the individual contributions exceeded the normal numbers and approach the ridiculously impossible numbers?”

Team Leader Park grinned at her question. He said, “That’s why it’s ridiculous... In order for the individual contribution to rise to that level, he must have a monopoly on the score against Bach and Eclei. But having a monopoly over the scores means that even their knights would go under Minhyuk’s commands. That doesn’t even make sense, you know?”

“Ah. Well...”

Lee Minhwa smiled in relief.

However, it seemed like things would not proceed as expected again.

Minhyuk saw his commanding ability soar to 40%. However, he did not want it to end there, so he used his ‘Create a Recipe’ skill for every single member of his Rice Supplement company.

The ‘Create a Recipe’ skill would eat away at his buffing ability whenever he used it, so he would not be able to feed them all at once. However, thanks to his artifacts, titles and skills, his buffing ability had permanently risen. If he planned well and divided them accordingly throughout the three meals in a day, he would be able to feed each and every one of them with the ‘Create a Recipe skill’. His probability of getting a higher grade dish had also doubled.

Upon deciding on the division, Minhyuk first used his ‘Create a Recipe’ skill to cook for Bendiaz and the other key figures in the company. He also enlarged his legendary frying pan as he cooked stir-fried pork while cooking dozens of servings of rice.

“Shouldn’t we be the one to be doing this?”

“Who does it or who doesn’t do it, is it that important? I just want everyone to end this war in comfort with a full stomach.”

The company members were all thrilled with Minhyuk’s lip service, which led to an increase in favor. As a result, the percentage of his commanding ability also increased.

“But, will it be delicious?”

“Who knows...”

The entire company was left in wonder as Minhyuk distributed some spicy stir-fried pork, lettuce, perilla leaves and rice to each of them.

Among the knights, Knight William was known for his picky and fastidious taste in food. He often quarrelled with his wife back home because of that. Even the rice served in the Imperial Palace did not suit his taste. Because of that, he did not have much expectations of the food that was served to him.

Knight William quietly scooped a spoonful of rice before placing it in his mouth. He said, "The rice is not that bad."

It was made just right, not too tough, nor too sticky.

Then, he took a lettuce and placed another half a spoonful of rice together with some spicy stir-fried pork. He also did not forget to pick some garlic, before dipping it in some ssamjang and placing it on top of his rice. He then wrapped everything up neatly and placed it in his mouth.

Chew. chew.

Knight William's eyes opened wide as he chewed on his wrap. For a moment, he seemed to have heard a heavenly harmony in his head, just like what happened with Priest Kenneth in the past.

"H...how can this be..."

Surprised at the flavor, William kept on eating his spicy stir-fried pork. The spicy and sweet flavor of the dish quietly spread in his mouth, as the juices of the meat overflowed in his every bite. The meat was so tender that it seemed like it was melting away whenever he chewed on it.

"D...delicious... It's very delicious...!"

"Wow. It's really delicious!"

"My goodness! I can't believe that I'm out here in the wild eating something like this!"

"Wow!!!"

What was the most awaited time when someone was working? Wherever one was in the world, the answer would definitely be lunch time. People would even work desperately hard just to eat something delicious. After all, most would feel like they would be able to do all of their work once they had a good meal. That was what everyone was feeling right now.

Meanwhile, Bendiaz ate the dish that Minhyuk made for him using his 'Create a Recipe' skill. After tasting the dish, he could not help but eat everything in a hurry. When he finished everything, he was caught in shock by the notifications that rang in his ears.

[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.]

[Beef Bulgogi.]

[You have received an increase of 10% for all of your stats and a +2 on your Phoenix Order's Swordsmanship for 20 days.]

"...!"

Bendiaz could not believe what he had heard. Even the soldiers that were sitting all over the place were shocked.

"*Gasp...*! All stats... increased by 7%...!"

"What the hell is this?"

“N..no way!”

All of them were shocked! They could not believe that such delicious food had given them such a high buff. It was not even for just one or two people. All 50 soldiers had received at least a 5% increase in all of their stats.

“R...really amazing.”

Minhyuk smiled when he heard their words, and said, “Do you believe me now?”

“Yes!”

The eyes of all the knights present shone brightly. At the same time, Minhyuk's commanding ability increased by another 20%.

“At this rate, you will all be able to eat dishes made from my skill by tomorrow. We'll stay around this area.”

“If we do that, won't we be late?”

“It's fine.”

Minhyuk had also received information about the Immortals' Land, which came from the Informant Abel, allowing Minhyuk to make a plan based on what he had received.

He knew that Eclei and Bach would definitely move on as fast as they could. However, they would definitely be tired because of the weather, and because of hunger. On the contrary, the Rice Supplement company would be fully prepared. Their stats would increase dramatically, their stomachs would be full, and they would be able to beat the cold. By that time, they could easily catch up to them in a heartbeat.

The very next day, every member of Minhyuk's company was able to eat dishes made using his 'Create a Recipe' skill, and receive buffs specially tailored for each of them. Only then did Minhyuk decide to speed up, and the soldiers ran just like that.

‘According to Abel...’

There would be a number of mobs around here that they could pierce through.

“I'll pull an AOE aggro so don't worry too much.”

“Yes? A...AOE ag...agg...!”

‘My goodness! No matter how strong we have become, an AOE aggro?! In the Immortals' Land?!’

Bbiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii—

However, before they could even protest, the Gryphon's Cry had already whistled out of Minhyuk's mouth and hundreds of ogres began to flock around them.

“L...Lord...”

“Commander... I don't think this is right.”

“No matter how strong we have become, this is too...”

They thought that Minhyuk was just a talented chef that was good at shooting the bow. Beyond that, he had not shown them anything else. Everyone was extremely shocked and thought that they were going to die.

At that moment...

Turn, turn, turn, turn, turn—

...Minhyuk took out his millstone, before sitting down and turning it around.

‘O...our Commander is a little weird!!!’

‘Ah, for real! Sometimes I feel like he’s really a madman!!’

‘OMG...?’

There were hundreds of ogres coming right for them, but Minhyuk just ground his millstone in front of them, turning it nonchalantly. Then...

Rumble, rumble, rumble!

...dark clouds suddenly appeared above the ogre’s heads as hundreds of lightning strikes fell down on them.

[Lightning Hell]

[Powerful lightning strikes will indiscriminately strike down within a 20-meter radius and deal 120% damage for one minute.]

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

“Keuaack!”

“Aaaaaaargh!”

“Gruwooooo!”

The ogres were struck down by lightning and they could not even get their act together. Then, silver leaves started to fall down as a breeze blew gently. While waiting for the skill’s casting time, Minhyuk shouted, “Shoot them with your bows!!”

The knights quickly pulled out their bows. At the same time, the Fluttering Sword’s skill casting time also ended.

“Fire!”

Minhyuk also swung his sword as hard as he could. Fifty arrows and hundreds of falling leaves shot straight towards the ogres.

Fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh—

Thud, thud, thud, thud, thud, thud, thud, thud, thud—

The Lightning Hell skill that was still falling, the sword-like leaves, and the rain of arrows. With all of these attacks raining down on the mobs, they truly could not get their act together. Then, the knights pulled their bows once more.

Fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh—

After the Lightning Hell's duration ended, what appeared in front of them were the dead corpses of the monsters.

"Isn't this... too easy?"

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

All of the knights were left speechless for a moment, while Minhyuk smiled happily at the rapidly rising percentage of his enemy kills. He also saw that his commanding ability had already reached 96%.

After doing all of that, Minhyuk continued to run forward with his troops. Not long after, they were able to see Eclei and Bach's troops that were ahead of them.

"H...hungry..."

"I think I'm going crazy..."

"An...anyone. Does anyone have any beef jerky or nuts left?"

Minhyuk tried to pass by them, but he saw Eclei and Bach staring bitterly at him. So, he greeted, "Hello!!!?"

"...Shut up."

He did not know why they were irritated at him. Minhyuk tilted his head in confusion. He then turned around and saw the soldiers under Eclei and Bach complaining of hunger. A bittersweet smile hung around the corners of his mouth.

"Bendiaz."

"Yes?"

"Those knights, shall we lead them to the OE Religion..."

"What's OE Religion?"

“N...nothing. It was a slip of the tongue! Ehehehe!”

Minhyuk chuckled awkwardly, but a devious smile crept up his face while he muttered under his breath, “I think I found a way to bring them to my company.”

Chapter 239: Battlefield's Great Ruler

Ace had just arrived in Roscul Village, Elvenheim.

Elvenheim was the name of the area in close proximity to the Elven Forest where the large-scale war started. Since the players could not directly warp to the Elven Forest, they first needed to warp to Roscul Village, then pass through a group of monsters to get to the area that they wished to go to.

Ace recently attended an elementary school trip for the past few days so he had to join the conquests at a later time. Since he was currently alone, he was facing a lot of difficulties. The mobs that he had encountered on his way to Area A were not as simple as he thought they would be. Fortunately, perhaps because of reasons similar to Ace's situation, there were a lot of players looking for party members in the village.

“Hurry! Join our party and let's go to Area A together!!!”

“We can accompany you to Area A with great manners! Ladies are extremely welcome!”

Ace looked around and found people that were saying things that he liked.

“We're looking for a warrior who will aid us in helping save those poor elves and cross the path of life and death with us!!!”

“Give your heart to the elves!”

The players surrounding them gave them a strange look and stepped back.

“We...weird...”

“What the hell? A chuuni?”

“Are they hearing themselves?”

However, the seven people, in particular, did not mind what the others were saying about them. All of them were wearing masks. Among them, there was only one person wearing a black mask.

“Those who join us will be our blood brothers!!!”

As for Ace...

“...C...cool!!!”

...his eyes shone brightly as he stared at them.

‘Oh my god! Isn't that an amazing line? A warrior that will save the elves and walk the path of life and death!!’

Ace hurriedly approached them and said, "Great warriors! I'm Fire Fist Ace. Do you mind if I accompany you on your long journey to save the world?"

"Oho? Fire Fist? That's a great name."

"Kid. You got a cool name."

"Kid?"

Fire Fist Ace looked at them seriously and said, "I'm Fire Fist Ace. Please call me Ace."

"Oho. I see. You're such a cool kid. Ace."

"*Fufufufufu!* You warriors are very cool too!"

That was how they started accompanying each other. Ace moved towards the wagon with them. He could see the man in a black mask sitting in front of the wagon with his arms folded on his chest.

"He's quite a taciturn man."

"Yeah. He's a quiet person, but once he opens his mouth, you will see that he's a wonderful man."

Ace stared at the man sitting in front of the wagon with glittering eyes as he boarded the wagon.

'H...his coolness is exploding...!'

The taciturn man's armor glistened under the sunlight and his black sword was quite a rare sight to see. He was even wearing a mask!

At that moment, the surroundings suddenly became noisy. The players that were walking in front were suddenly fleeing to the back.

"What's happening?" The man with the black mask asked.

"A titan appeared up front!"

"A titan?"

Ace's brows furrowed.

A titan was a legendary boss mob with a level that was over Level 450. It was said that there was only a slim possibility of encountering this monster en route to Elvenheim's Area A. It was a very tricky monster to deal with since it could wield magic with every swing of its huge club. What was worse was that it was always accompanied by several one-eyed giants, also known as the cyclopes.

Most of the large guilds started early and were far ahead of them. Those who were left behind were either latecomers, or small guilds. Since most of the people that remained in this place did not have any cohesion at all, it would be very hard for them to hunt this kind of monster.

All of the players ran back from the wagons. Even Ace wanted to flee, but the man standing in front of him said, "Coachman, speed up."

"...?!"

Ace was caught in surprise. The titan was a monster that was quite hard to hunt. Even he, a player from Legend Guild, thought that way. However, the man sitting in front of him just spoke deeply with his arms still crossed on his chest.

The wagon dashed forward.

Clack, clack, clack, clack!

Clip, clop, clip, clop!

Their wagon was dashing forward, a sight that was completely contrary to the fleeing wagons.

“Wow... Others are running away but we’re moving forward.”

“Ace, don’t you think that it’s better if we try and confront it once?”

Ace nodded at the man who spoke. They were really nice old men.

Then, the titan and the cyclopes appeared in their sights. All in all, there were six cyclopes in front of them. These were monsters that were equipped with strong armor, and a strength that was enough to tear apart an ogre.

At that moment, the titan swung its club.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

It was a sudden and unexpected attack!

“*Gasp!* I’ll stop you!”

However, just as Ace was trying to summon Hell’s Fire, the man that was sitting silently in front turned his head to look at him. Ace’s eyes met with the man’s quiet gaze. Then, the man said, “Everything’s fine, boy.”

Then, he looked straight ahead again.

Ace suddenly realized that there was a huge magic attack coming straight towards them. It was the wind that was generated from the swing of the club. The magic that was shot from the club destroyed the trees and rocks in the surrounding area. Just then, an unidentified presence suddenly wriggled on the man’s right arm.

“Roar. Destiny.”

Grrrr!

A giant ice dragon suddenly appeared from the man’s right arm! The ice dragon created a huge ice wall in front of them and successfully blocked the incoming attack.

This time, the man stretched his left arm.

“Go wild. Britney.”

“*Kiiiiieeeeeeeck!*”

Crackle!

A giant fire dragon appeared this time, and it unleashed a huge Flame Breath.

Puhaaaaaa!

“*Keuaaack!*” The titan shrieked in pain.

Not long after, the man leaped gracefully up in the sky.

Tap!

Then, he landed on the back of the giant dragon that was named Britney.

The titan and cyclopes had been easily hunted and killed, which was the complete opposite of what Ace had expected. After dealing with them, only then was Ace able to ask for their names.

“E...everyone! I want to know your names. It’s such an honor to be with wonderful people like you!”

“I’m Killei. A mage.”

“I’m King God.”

“I’m Emperor.”

“I’m Magister.”

“Ah. I’m...”

A man with bulging muscles hesitated for a moment before reluctantly spitting out his name. He said, “Ge...General...”

And finally, there was only one man left. The man spoke deeply.

“Black Dragon. That’s my name.”

“...!”

Ace thought that it was really a great name.

Knight Rouverge was a temporary member of the Iron Blood company. Currently, he was extremely hungry. He thought, *‘I can even sell my soul, just to eat one sandwich.’?*

The problem was that they were in a very desperate situation. It would still take them another day to get out of Zone 1, which meant another day of dreaming about eating just a little more.

Groooooowl—

“I...I’m hungry!”

“...I’m going to die of hunger..”

“Does anyone have any jerky or nuts to spare?”

Then, at that moment...

Sniff, sniff—

...Rouverge’s nose twitched. There was a delicious smell wafting from somewhere.

“Who is it? This is definitely the smell of someone grilling meat?!”

“Where’s this smell coming from?!”

“I’ll give you 300,000 gold, please share some with me!”

After all, what was the use of their money if they were not alive to eat the food! Money did not matter at all.

The knights were all in a buzz. The smell that was wafting over was like the smell of the meat grilling in a restaurant that they always passed by whenever they were very hungry. Their mouths were watering at the thought.

Then, one of the knights suddenly cried out, “Over there!”

“O...over there...?”

Then, they saw the scene of the Rice Supplement company huddled together in front of a huge tent while having a meat party. They did not know how they made them, but they could see them grilling some pork ribs on a grill. One of the knights even made a big wrap with the pork ribs.

“Th...that’s right. Yeah... Put the pork ribs on top of it, add some pickled onions, some garlic and dip it in some mustard sauce.”

The knight that was making a big wrap did what the other knight said. Then, he placed everything in his mouth.

Chew, chew.

Rouverge’s mouth moved by itself. He could already imagine the taste of the pork ribs that the knight was eating. If it was him, he would chew the pork ribs gently as soon as he placed them in his mouth. He was sure that the sweet, savory and juicy flavor of the meat would definitely bring a huge smile to his face. Alas, Rouverge’s mouth was only filled with his own saliva.

Groooooooooowl!

It was the sound of their trembling stomachs.

“I...I want to eat...”

“Wow...”

“H...how are they able to eat pork ribs here?”

They were not aware, but it was only possible because Minhyuk had his aging jar which could immediately ripen the marinated pork ribs.

The knights looked at the Rice Supplement company in a daze. They were mesmerized by the sight in front of them. What was worse was that the Rice Supplement company looked like they were on a field trip, having so much fun.

“Do you see that tent? It looks warm...”

“How are we going to sleep in such a cold place today after seeing that...?”

In the end, Rouverge could not take it anymore. He stood up and declared, "I'm going to go there to get a bite!"

"Don't you have any pride?"

"None! At the rate we're going, I'm going to die anyway, can my pride let me stay alive?!"

It was obvious that they served under different Empires. However, he could not stand it anymore. Rouverge approached them and asked, "Th...that... Can I have some meat and eat with you?"

To his shock, the commander of the Rice Supplement company just said, "Ah. You're hungry, right? By all means."

"...Ca...can I? Really?"

Rouverge was in shock.

'I was not expecting this to be this easy?'

Then, the commander that was sitting in front of him continued to say, "There is still some food left while there are still hungry people. Even though our empires are at odds, feeding the hungry is a different matter."

Minhyuk smiled kindly at him. Rouverge could not help but feel excited. Their commanders were foreigners that would not bleed even if they were stabbed. Hence, they continued to quickly push ahead, without a care for the soldiers, until they collapsed. In contrast, the man in front of him was gracious and kind.

What was more...

"Yo! What's your name?"

"Welcome, come sit here!"

"It's good to eat together! Welcome!"

The members of the Rice Supplement company also reached their hands out to tempt him.

"Th...thank you!"

Rouverge quickly sat down and wolfed down the meat.

Meanwhile, the Rice Supplement company and the head of the religion, Minhyuk...

...each and every one of them had mischievous smiles on their faces.

[You have received Rouverge's favor.]

[You have received Rouverge's favor.]

[You have received Rouverge's favor.]

There was a spike in the enemy NPC's favor! Then, Minhyuk made eye contact with the Rice Supplement company.

‘They finally took the bait.’

‘They took the bait.’

Yes. That was right. They were baiting the enemy knights like those big-time scammers. Right around this time, the other members of the Iron Blood and Reapers company were gradually coming toward them.

“C...can we also eat together with you?”

“Can we eat with you? I only ate nuts and jerkies for three days straight...”

“Ahhhhh. That...!”

Minhyuk and the members of the Rice Supplement company all lamented at their woes, showing extreme expressions of sympathy.

“This, this! Ah! Come on here and eat!”

“Sit, sit!!!”

“Oho. Don’t rush while eating. You must have been very hungry, huh?”

“*Sob, sob, sob!*? This is delicious! Everyone back home gave us the impression that Eivelis Empire was bad, but it seems like it’s a place that’s filled with affection!”

.

“Ah. Eat slowly. Hohoho! I know how you feel. You were really hungry, huh? Here, have some water.”

“*Gulp, gulp!*”

One of the members of the Rice Supplement company patted the back of one of the hungry knights with a fishy smile on his face.

Minhyuk and the members of the Rice Supplement company were all fishing as a group to increase their numbers. Again and again, the members of the Iron Blood and Reapers came over.

Well, according to Minhyuk’s calculations, around this time...

“What are you doing?!!”

“You punks!!!”

...the two commanders would appear.

The two of them wanted to build their prestige, so they roared at them loudly.

“You’re not going to go back right now?!!!”

“At this rate, do you even have the pride to be in the Collodis Imperial Army?!!!”

Minhyuk also chose to speak at that time. He said, “Aaah. Wait~ What’s so bad about feeding hungry people?”

The members of Reapers and Iron Blood all looked at him as if they were looking at their savior. They were very comforted with Minhyuk's actions.

'Aaaaah! He's arguing with our commanders! And he even gave us food to eat!'

His favor among the hungry knights increased dramatically.

Meanwhile, the two commanders...

"We're done!"

"We don't need that favor from you!!!"

...turned around to protect their pride. Now, what do you think would happen if they did something like this? Their soldiers have already tasted Minhyuk's magical pork ribs. In the first place, it was something that they could not eat, but they ended up eating it. This meant that their hunger would just increase if they suddenly stopped.

'All we have to do is wait for them to come to us first.'

Eclei and Bach were both in disbelief. Their knights left without their permission to go and eat meat. What was worse was...

'They even ate from that goddamn bastard too!'

At that time, Knight Commander Nelson said, "Even though we separated, I don't know why you refused to let us go there when they were willing to share with us!"

"Wipe the pork ribs sauce on your mouth."

"Everyone is complaining of hunger. At this rate, there will be people that will not be able to stand it and die. It's because of your pride that you're stopping us..."

"Shut up!"

Nelson was suddenly enlightened when he heard Eclei's words. He soon came to this conclusion, *'My goodness, why are you refusing what they gave us?'*

'You're completely different from the commander over there.'

'I envy the men under the Rice Supplement company.'

Then, Eclei and Bach heard a totally unexpected notification.

[The Knights Order's distrust in their commanders has reached the highest level.]

[They will not listen to your orders well.]

[Nelson's favor has decreased.]

[Coman's favor has decreased.]

[Atejua's favor...omitted.]

[Your members may defect.]

[The percentage of your commanding ability has dropped sharply.]

“...?!”

Minhyuk clearly did not swear at them nor pick a fight with them, yet somehow, at this very moment, he and the rest of his company caused Eclei and Bach to eat some big shit, all by themselves.

Chapter 240: Battlefield's Great Ruler

Charisma (CHA) was a stat that helped the player increase their favor among NPCs. CHA would allow the players to have a stronger bond with the soldiers under their command. If the player had an incredibly high CHA, then, the morale of the troops would increase. However, CHA only played an auxiliary role. Even if someone had more than 1,000 points in their CHA, they would still experience a drop in favor if they did something terrible to their troops.

Currently, Nelso, the knight commander of the Iron Blood, as well as Audrey, the knight commander of the Reapers, Audrey, were both talking.

“Pride is important, but I don’t think that it makes sense to prioritize something like that when we need to take care of our troops.”

“That’s right. What’s more, the commander of the Rice Supplement company is a kind and virtuous man. He even told us to come whenever we feel hungry, right?”

“I’m jealous. I’m very jealous of the members of the Rice Supplement company!”

“Did you see? At night, they went inside the tent, drilled a hole inside and even warmed up the air inside with fire magic. They definitely slept sweetly.”

Meanwhile, they were all shivering in the cold.

Nelson and Audrey gazed at the Rice Supplement company from a distance. They could see them grinning and smiling over their cups of coffee from who knows where. There was a warm, pleasant and happy atmosphere surrounding them that was completely contrary to the current situation of the other two companies.

“...How about we join them?”

“His Highness Asvon will definitely be angry...”

“In the end, those two are foreigners. Isn’t it possible to deprive those foreigners of their command any time we deem necessary? And, I think that His Highness would be understanding if we told him that our troops of 100 men were on the verge of annihilation?”

“...I see.”

Generally, the command of the foreigners was finite and limited. The knights and soldiers could turn around and not follow their orders if they felt that the foreigners were misdirecting them and giving them bad orders.

In fact, both Asvon and Ellie were very cautious when they handed the command over to the foreigners. They even said that they could easily take over the command once they felt that the foreigners were immature and could not give any correct orders.

‘The most important thing right now is to rescue Prince Argon after all, right?’

Not long after, Nelson and Audrey both looked at each other before looking behind them.

They finally made a decision.

Bach felt that his head would explode from all of the complicated thoughts that were running in it.

‘The favor kept on decreasing!’

Such a decrease might result in his knights leaving the company. Eclei even logged out after saying that he would take a nap to clear the stress away.

However, before they could even do something about the favor, the knights started to move strangely. The knights of the Iron Blood and Reapers all began to move towards Rice Supplement.

“Where are you going!”

“...We’ll rely on the commander of the Rice Supplement company to lead us.”

“Wh...what?!”

Bach was caught in surprise. It was understandable that they wanted to leave the company. However, the knights moving towards Rice Supplement and sticking to their group was quite incomprehensible to him.

“Shit...! Do you think Emperor Asvon will stay still if he learns of this?!”

“I think Emperor Asvon will be able to understand our situation to some extent.”

Emperor Asvon was a very competitive man. That was why he wanted to win the God’s Bet, since it was a competition between the two empires. However, more than that, Emperor Asvon had other, deeper thoughts.

‘If you dare lay a hand on my brats then I’ll kill you.’

He was an emperor who treasured his people and his men, more dearly than anyone could know. In the end, he would trust them more than these two foreigners.

Bach just stared dumbfounded as the 100-man troop moved away. Minhyuk was even opening his arms widely in front of them.

“Ah. You came. Let’s have a meal!!!”

He was smiling brightly as if he was welcoming some regular customers.

“...!”

Bach's clenched fists trembled.

The competition between the Gods was supposed to begin earnestly in Zone 2, but they were completely robbed of their opportunity, even before it started.

“*Euhahahaha!*?This is really delicious!”

“That's right. It's really good!”

“*Hahahahaha!*”

They were all laughing and giggling.

On the other hand, Bach's side was completely empty. Things could not proceed like this. Bach marched up to them.

“You bastard! You did it on purpose, didn't you?”

“Huh? What?”

Minhyuk looked at him with a very carefree expression on his face.

“You purposely stole our troops!!”

“What are you saying? I'm just giving food to the hungry.”

“Bach, we came here of our own free will. What are you trying to do to a person who just wanted to give something to us?”

“That's right!!! What's wrong with the good-natured commander of the Rice Supplement company?”

“*Booooooooo!*”

Flinch!

The knights had started to accuse him! Bach's head turned blank at their accusations.

‘How did it come to this?’

Then he spat out in anger, “Strength is also important for a commander. You want this weakling as your commander?! Ridiculous!!”

The only thing that Minhyuk showed them was him shooting a bow. In fact, Bach did not know anything about him at all. On the other hand, the members of the Rice Supplement company had seen him ravaging hundreds of mobs all by himself.

‘What's that crazy punk saying?’?

‘Weakling? Who? You?’?

To some extent, the current Iron Blood and Reapers members seemed to agree with his words.

“The commander should also be strong!”

“I’m strong!!!”

“You keep on barking like a dog. You’re already lucky enough if you can survive three of my attacks. Are you even confident that you will survive if we do a PVP here, huh?”

Minhyuk hesitated for a moment, while he put on an expression of fear on his face. Meanwhile, the members of the Rice Supplement all looked at Minhyuk in wonder.

‘What’s wrong with him??’

‘But he will easily win against that kind of person?’

‘Hmm??’

Bach was a God-class player, but he was more inclined to being a commander. Of course, his individual skills and abilities were all excellent, since he was an assassin-class player. However, compared to the other god classes, his strength was not that great. Still, it was also a fact that he was ranked third in the local assassins’ rankings.

“Th...then, I have a condition!”

Minhyuk looked like he was very afraid. His expression was screaming that he just plucked up the courage to speak these words out. He said, “If I win, you will tell Emperor Asvon that I took over the command of your troops because you died on the way.”

“...Good. But if I win, then I will take over your troops.”

Bach’s mouth curled up in a smirk.

The only thing that Bach was sure of, was that all Minhyuk had was his archery. Even then, he did not even show him his skills yet. From what he had heard, he was an excellent chef. In other words, he was originally a chef class player.

‘I guess the bow is just a bonus.’

Bach guessed that Minhyuk was one of the two. He thought that he was either admitting the fact that he lacked the commanding ability, so that there would be no confrontation, or that he had some expectations of winning this showdown, even if the chances were slim.

Of course, Bach believed that he would win and that he would get the Rice Supplement company as additional troops. If his forces get a boost, then their hunting speed would definitely double and his enemy kills, commanding ability and contributions would definitely increase. This was his chance to beat Eclei.

Minhyuk was finally fully prepared. He had donned his armor and equipped a sword. After changing all his artifacts, he held his sword out.

“Before we begin, let’s make a foreigner’s pledge.”

The foreigner’s pledge was a pledge between players that would take effect once both players signed each other’s name on a pledge parchment.

[You have signed the Pledge Parchment.]

[You have to follow what was written in the pledge once you lose to your opponent.]

[If you fail to follow the pledge, your level will drop by five.]

The words written on the pledge parchment could never be broken. If one broke the pledge, then they would incur huge penalties.

Bach's lips curled up in an overconfident grin.

'How long will you even last. Hehe.'

Bach was very confident that Minhyuk would not be able to hold out in front of him. Then, he started his attacks.

[Splitting Clone]

Poof!

Five clones appeared around Bach after he placed his hands together. Each and every one of them was holding a dagger in their hands.

Dash!

The clones dashed towards Minhyuk as Bach prepared to deal a huge blow to him.

[Killer's Blow]

[Momentarily narrows the distance between you and your opponent for a surprise attack.]

Dash!

Bach immediately appeared near Minhyuk, who looked surprised to see him suddenly appear near himself, as he hurriedly defended with his sword.

Clang!

At the same time, the clones approached and put pressure on Minhyuk.

Clang, clang, clang, clang, clang!

Minhyuk staggered back.

Bach swished his dagger around his hands. He looked relaxed as he threw a mocking compliment at Minhyuk.

Fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh—

Clang, clang, clang, clang!

Stab!

Minhyuk shook his head as the clones continued to put pressure on him.

Poof!

Minhyuk dealt with a clone as it disappeared into a fog of dark clouds.

Poof, poof!

Then, two more clones were cut down. Then, he rushed out to attack Bach.

Clang, clang, clang!

Bach easily blocked the attack with his dagger as he looked at him in a relaxed manner.

Grin—

At that same moment, Bach slashed down on Minhyuk's arms. There was a buzz among the members of the Reapers and the Iron Blood troops, while the members of the Rice Supplement company were all watching in curiosity.

Just as they looked on in wonder and curiosity, they heard Minhyuk shout.

Minhyuk had cuts all over his body as he shouted desperately. The members of the Iron Blood and Reapers company all looked at him with their hearts breaking.

One knight even shed tears for his passion and dedication.

[Calo's favor has reached the highest level.]

[Basman's favor has reached the highest level.]

[Kenia's favor has reached the highest level.]

[Lunman's favor has reached the highest level.]

[You have acquired 10 CHA.]

That was when the soldiers of the Rice Supplement company realized.

However, contrary to what Bach expected, the knights of the Iron Blood and Reapers company cursed at him madly.

Bach tilted his head in confusion.

At the same time, Minhyuk slowly collapsed. Bach tried to give him a final blow, but Minhyuk suddenly grabbed his wrist.

At that moment, a bright light suddenly burst out of Minhyuk's body. The knights suddenly stood up in shock and trepidation.

Bach thought that he could easily pull out his wrists from Minhyuk's hold but before he could do so, the grip on his wrists tightened. He realized that Minhyuk's grip on his wrist was tremendously strong.

Something was strange. And then...

Stab!

[Your HP has dropped below 60%.]

[Your HP has dropped below 50%.]

Stab, stab, stab, stab!

Although Bach tried to stab him with his dagger, they did not reach Minhyuk at all. Then, Minhyuk attacked Bach again, slamming his head against the latter's head.

Bang!

Then, Minhyuk stabbed his sword into Bach's chest.

Stab!

[You received a fatal blow.]

[Your HP has dropped below 10%.]

Then, a phrase in a dark window surprisingly appeared in front of Bach.

[You have been forced to log out.]

After he was forced to log out, Minhyuk raised his arms and shouted.

Then, notifications rang one by one in Minhyuk's ears.

[You have achieved the highest favor among the knights.]

[You have achieved 100% in commanding ability.]

[You have acquired the Food God's Spicy Chicken Feet Set.]

Along with the notifications, Bach also dropped a piece of item.

