

Gourmet 321

Chapter 321: Strengthening the Territory

The next day, Crusoe took the 200 Death Corps soldiers, and left Atlas territory for their special training on a beach located nearby.

“Run!!! If you arrive late, I’ll have you run back and forth another time!!!”

Crusoe’s running drill was extremely unique and special, with many powerful monsters blocking their course. However, the Death Corps just ran forward without stopping. It was as if they were already used to this drill.

Dash, dash, dash, dash—

They were not tasked to hunt. So, they weaved through the monsters and avoided them, while continuing their run. In just a blink of an eye, they had already left hundreds of monsters behind them! The sight was so thrilling and could bring a chill down one’s spine. However, through this method, they would be able to gain a strong mental fortitude and quick feet. They kept on running like crazy because they wanted to survive and live.

[Soldier Rocard’s AGI has increased by +1]

[Soldier Laerito’s AGI has increased by +1]

The notifications rang constantly! After doing their running drill, the Death Corps were then tasked to kill 200 monsters, one for each of them. However, the soldiers using swords were given wooden swords, the soldiers using spears were given wooden sticks, and the soldiers using bow and arrow were given carved wooden arrows to fight against the monsters. They might have easily killed the monsters with their usual weapons, but Crusoe’s method was pushing the soldiers to their limits. This method could also quickly increase the soldiers’ swordsmanship, spearmanship and archery skills. Once their morning training was over...

“Sir Crusoe.”

“Yes, Centurion Park?”

“Do you think the training in Atlas territory is going well?”

“...”

Crusoe could not assume that it was going well. After all, all 200 of the soldiers present here had seen those weirdos too. Crusoe just said, “When we return and the soldiers’ level has not increased by four, I will immediately tell Minhyuk to make them step down. Minhyuk’s probably calling them instructors because he’s very kind, but...”

He did not need to say anything anymore, everyone understood what he meant.

The night before, the soldiers of Atlas were told that they would receive a completely different training from the people that came from Valhalla territory! Just before they went to sleep, one of the soldiers, Leo, said, “Speaking about the instructors, aren’t they a bit weird?”

“It’s not a bit, they’re really weird. Will they really be able to train us?”

The soldiers that remained in Atlas were all worried. However, some of them also thought like this...

“It seems like we’ll be able to rest a lot.”

“I know right. Fufufufu. We can just sit on the ground and grill some pollock. Ah, someone should bring some alcohol in a bucket too!”

The soldiers completely ignored the people who migrated from Valhalla territory, even the lord’s vassals. Perhaps it was inevitable. After all, they were people that wielded their swords and spears to protect their loved ones and survive! As for the people that came from Valhalla, they looked completely far from their desperation. Meanwhile, Leo fell asleep with a smile on his face, believing that he would live a comfortable life for a week from the weird, weak-looking instructors that they had. Alas, they had not even slept for a few hours when...

“Wake up!!!”

A loud voice shook the entire barracks, waking the soldiers up in surprise. Grandpa Ben, with his luxurious long black hair, stood there with his spear.

“Ah, gramps. It’s still early. Why are you waking us up already?”

“That’s right! We need to get more sleep. Training can start at nine o’clock. *Yawn*,” Leo said with a yawn.

But then, a man suddenly appeared behind the soldiers and threw water at their backs.

Shwaaaaaa—

The man was none other than Corr.

“You should be in the training grounds in 20 seconds. Those who arrive late will have to run 30 laps around the training grounds.”

“Ah. Okay...”

The soldiers wondered why Grandpa Ben and the other instructor did this. Simply put, they thought that it was ‘troublesome’. It was common to feel that way especially when they felt that the people that were going to teach them were worse than them. They just openly ignored their words and came out leisurely to the training grounds.

“Twenty seconds are long over. Run 30 laps in the field!”

“Ehhhh!~How can we run 30 laps like that~”

“Thirty laps means that I have to run 20 kilometers. How can I run that far, instructor?”

“Then, how about the instructors run instead! Hehehehe!”

When they heard their words, Grandpa Ben showed them a wide smile and said, “Hohoho. Look at them?”

The soldiers laughed slyly at Grandpa Ben. After all, they were soldiers of Atlas territory! A weak old man could not make them move! But then, Grandpa Ben said, “Instructors, forward!”

Swoosh!?

Swoosh!

Swoosh!?

Swoosh!?

With his words, the strange God of Dishwashing, the paladin with a recorder and the other member of their group stepped forward in unison. Then, Grandpa Ben gave each of them a pair of wooden chopsticks. After he did that, he looked at the soldiers and said, “All of you hold your spears, your swords and your bow and arrows. If you’re able to land a hit on your instructors with your weapons, then we will exclude you from training.”

“Really?”

“Oh! I can rest easy until Sir Crusoe comes back!”

“Eyyy~ How can you even deal with us with just chopsticks alone?”

“You’ll just get hurt. Haha!”

Then, Grandpa Ben said, “Start.”

The soldiers were laughing with ease, but they immediately rushed forward the moment they heard Grandpa Ben speak. The soldier Leo was even the first to rush towards Grandpa Ben.

‘Let’s have a relaxing week!’?

However, a pair of wooden chopsticks stabbed him strongly in the chest.

“Keoheok!!”

Leo could not breathe from the pain!!! While he screamed in pain, another soldier rushed towards Conir.

‘This little kid looks the easiest!’?

So, the soldier swung his sword, trying to scare the little boy away. But then, Conir stabbed the tip of the soldier’s sword with his chopsticks.

Clink!

The boy did not stop. He gently rotated his body and slammed his head on the soldier’s face.

“Keoheok!”

As for the boy hailed as the God of Dishwashing... he picked up his chopsticks and stabbed the soldiers easily and leisurely, effectively suppressing them.

Stab, stab, stab, stab—

And it did not end there. Corr threw away his chopsticks and took out his recorder and easily overpowered the soldiers. Just like that, the hundreds of soldiers began to collapse without even touching a single hair of their instructors!

“Keheok!”

“Ugh, aaaack!”

“Keuaaaaack!”

“Aaaaack!”

The soldiers screamed loudly as they rolled on the floor in pain one after the other. However, Grandpa Ben and the rest of their instructors did not stop. The person that got hit on the head by Grandpa Ben’s chopsticks felt like an iron hammer had slammed on his head.

“Keuaaaaack!”

The one that got stabbed by the young boy, Conir’s chopsticks felt like he was stabbed by a sword.

“Keheok!”

Not long after, all of the soldiers had collapsed from the pain.

“Stand up!”

Ben’s words might be short, but his words were strong and filled with momentum. The soldiers hurriedly stood up, groaning in pain as they did so.

“Ugh. How, how can this be...”

“This, this is impossible...”

Then, Ben told them, “You still have the energy to chat?”

“...”

“...”

Everyone turned silent at his words.

“Run 30 laps around the field! Double time!”

“...Yes, sir!”

“Yes, sir!”

“Yes, sir!”

That was when the soldiers realized that they would be in trouble for a week, no, perhaps even in the future.

The soldiers' bodies were hurting all over as they gasped heavily after morning training. They were so exhausted that they were dragging their bodies to the mess hall. However, the moment they entered the mess hall, they saw their training schedule...

[Training Schedule]

4:00 a.m.: Wake up

4:00 a.m. - 6:00 a.m. : Morning training and running

6:00 a.m. - 7:00 a.m.: Breakfast

7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.: Soldier's personal training (e.g. swordsmanship, spearmanship, etc.)

9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.: *Underwater training at Dragon King's Sea*

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.: Lunch

12:30 p.m. - ...omitted

11:00 p.m.: Lights out

"...!"

"...!"

"...!"

Leo and the rest of the soldiers looked at the training schedule in shock and astonishment.

'What, what the hell...!'

'Why, why is it so packed?!'

'Hiiik!'

What would happen to them if they continued training with the same intensity as the one that they experienced this morning? Just imagining their schedule was terrifying enough.

They ate the moment they entered the mess hall. Their breakfast was a set of *'seaweed soup, vienna sausage, seasoned seaweed, and kimchi'*. They felt like breakfast after working out and exercising hard in the morning was the best. To their pleasant surprise, Minhyuk was even the one working in the kitchen.

"Wow. It's really delicious."

"This is the most delicious breakfast that I ever had."

Leo looked around with his aching body as he said, "I wonder how delicious that seaweed soup is?" Then, he scooped a spoonful of soup filled with plenty of seaweed and beef.

'Huh?'

Leo scooped another spoonful. His eyes widened in shock from the deep flavor of the beef and seaweed broth that had the appropriate amount of soy sauce and sesame oil. Then, Leo quickly scooped some rice together with his seaweed soup. He also made sure to add some kimchi on top of that spoonful. And when he placed it in his mouth...

Crunch, crunch, crunch—

The crispy and crunchy sound of the kimchi together with the warm seaweed soup spread in his mouth. Then, Leo took a bite of the vienna sausages. The flavor and warmth of the food made him feel like his fatigue was going away. That was when the notifications rang.

[You have eaten Seaweed Soup & Vienna Sausage.]

[The food helps you recover from your fatigue.]

[Your ability to acquire EXP and learn skills will increase by 15%.]

The soldiers were in a buzz. This was because Minhyuk's buff abilities were amazing and great.

After their meal, Leo swung his sword towards the wooden doll in front of him during his swordsmanship training.

'Ah, why isn't it working?'

Leo also wanted to grow further and stand on the next level of his swordsmanship. However, it was not going as well as he thought.

Slash, slash, slash!

Leo swung his sword at the doll but nothing was improving. Then...

"Instructor Conir!!! Your Instructor will not bully you if you listen well!!!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Conir says to relax your arm and only bring your strength into your attack when you stab!!! Conir is telling you that you'll see improvement in your swordsmanship if you do that!!!"

"...?"

Leo was confused but he smiled as he thought, *'Relax my arm? What nonsense is he talking about?'*

Leo believed that he would miss his target or lose his sword if he relaxed his arm holding his sword. Missing a target or losing his sword in the battlefield would bring him close to death. Still, Leo tried out Conir's advice. He relaxed his arm and only put his strength when he stabbed. Then, at that moment...

Shwaaaaa!

"...!"

Fierce wind accompanied his sword as the tip stabbed deeply into the wooden doll.

"Conir will explain!!! Trainee Leo is using too much strength, because of that Trainee Leo's sword cannot show its proper strength. Trainee Leo loses strength even before Trainee Leo swings his sword!"

"...I...I see. Th...thank you! Thank you!!!" Leo shouted, bowing repeatedly in gratitude.

Minhyuk, who watched everything from afar, heard a series of notifications.

[The soldiers are starting to learn swordsmanship.]

[The Atlas' soldiers' understanding of swordsmanship has significantly increased.]

Meanwhile, Root brought the archers to the peak of the mountain. Then, he pulled his bow and shot his arrow somewhere.

'What is he doing??'

'No, why did he shoot in the air??'

Then, Root said, "Go to the place where I shot my arrow."

The soldiers ran with grim expressions on their faces. When they arrived at the location, they saw the arrow piercing through a very small rabbit. This was the prowess of the former archery gold medalist Root! In fact, with the game *Athenae's* influence, the title '*Godly Archer*' was not a waste on him.

"At least two weeks. You'll have to be able to shoot like this in two weeks. Pull the strings of the bow, no. Hold your breath and pull the bow string as hard as you can. Don't close your eyes, that's right. Do it like that."

Woosh—

Stab!

Rapier, a soldier known for being the worst among the archers, followed Root's instructions and shot an arrow so fast that it looked like he was a master archer.

'Wow...!'

'That, that's crazy...!'

"Thank you, instructor! Thank you!"

[The soldiers are starting to learn archery.]

[The Atlas' soldiers' understanding of archery has significantly increased.]

The surprises did not end there. Kaistra sat on his horse and taught the cavalry unit some horsemanship. He had been training with wolves ever since he was five years old, and teaching this much was nothing.

"The destructive power of the spear increases in the hands of those riding the horse. It is important to know how to use your spear on a horse, but it's also important to learn how to handle the horse. You must be one with the horse in mind and body," Kaistra said, showing his high intimacy with the horse. Then, he urged the horse to run towards the targets and...

Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack!

Kaistra successfully hit the target plate dead on the center while still riding on top of the horse.

[The soldiers are starting to learn horsemanship.]

[The Atlas' soldiers' understanding of horse riding has significantly increased.]

The soldiers grew incredibly fast in just a single day! After all, they received a x2 buff for growth and EXP rate. They were even nurtured by Minhyuk's buffed dishes and their amazing instructors!

During that time, a man wearing a black robe and riding on top of a huge snake was moving quickly.

'I'm almost there.'

The man had a smile on his face. This man was none other than Black Mage Ali. He had successfully changed into the Royal Class Moldoron's Descendant! Not too long ago, he read from the official website that Legend Guild had disbanded to form a new guild. Knowing the new owner of the new guild, Ali wanted to lend his strength to him and stay by his side. Just when he was smiling at the thought...

"Oh? That boy?!"

"Over here!! Black Prema... No, Black Mage Ali!!!"

Black Mage Ali turned to look at the source of the shout. Then, he saw the people calling for him. He said, "Oh. Aren't you the Four Hyenas? By any chance..."

Hearing Ali's words, the Four Hyena's, also known as the chairmen of Nottogi, Ilhwa Distribution, Ilhwa Electronics and Ilhwa Construction, answered Ali's question with, "Yes. We also want to join Minhyuk."

"Hahaha! I see. I want to do the same thing too!"

Strong players were starting to gather in Atlas territory.

Chapter 322: Strengthening the Territory

While the soldiers were busy training, the others were also moving to strengthen Atlas. The strengthening of the territory did not only depend on the soldiers' training, so everyone had to put in work.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!

Steam was blowing from the burning heat inside the smithy.

Fwoosh—

Steam once again rose from the red hot iron that was dipped in the water.

'Within a month, I have to bring three or more blacksmiths to master level. I also have to equip the troops with the best armor and weapons.'

Golden Hammer Dwarf Lant was putting his all into his work today!!! The reason...

'If I do that, then the Lord will...'

Originally, equipping the soldiers with armor and weapons was not a part of the rewards. But Dwarf Lant had made a promise with Minhyuk. However, if he fully equipped the soldiers, Minhyuk would make him ten cups of sweet and delicious watermelon and melon juice. What would it feel like if he drank a cup of cool, refreshing watermelon juice, or melon juice, under the steam of this hot and blazing place?

Gulp—

Lant already felt that it was awesome just by thinking about it. However, the problem was that he did not have enough hands to help him. He thought, *‘Can I really do this alone?’* No matter how strong Golden Hammer Dwarf Lant was, it would still be difficult for him to create weapons and armor for around 1,000 soldiers in just a month. Of course, it would be possible if he imprinted it like the ones in the factories. However, if he did that, that would be a stain to his name as Golden Hammer! At that moment...

“Hello. I was sent by the Lord,” A middle-aged man greeted him and entered the smithy. Dwarf Lant had already heard about his story before.

‘From what they said, he’s a very talented blacksmith from the place called Legend Guild.’

He was told that this man would be very helpful to him, but Lant did not have much expectations. All he needed was an assistant, right?

“Boy, I want to see your skills. I’m actually in the middle of making swords for the soldiers. Can you make a sword with these materials?”

Legend Guild’s financial prowess was quite huge. After gaining ownership of Atlas, they gained a *‘treasure warehouse’* located in the territory. Inside the warehouse were artifacts worth around 3,000 to 4,000 platinum. That meant that most of the materials used for these items were at the medium or upper-grade. Just like chefs, blacksmiths could also use similar materials, but produce artifacts with completely different ranks and performance.

“I understand,” The man answered as he immediately started working.

Clang, clang, clang!

Lant listened to the sound that his work was creating. He thought, *‘It would be a relief if he can create something rare but...’*

Those who could master the current available materials could only produce rare items. Of course, even if the rank was rare, it would still have excellent performance. Time went by just like that.

“I’m done.”

“I see. Good work.”

The man brought the sword that he completed to Lant, who began to examine every nook and cranny of the sword.

‘Huh...??’

Lant's eyes widened in surprise at the sword's even and smooth blade. When he dropped a piece of paper over the blade of the sword, the paper tore easily. Lant determined that the sword was admirable after inspecting the blade.

"You're pretty good."

However, he still had to closely inspect the substance and performance of the sword. Lant might not know this, but since *Athenae* was a game, there were quite a few cases where only the attack of the weapon was high. Just like that, Lant checked the sword's information.

?All stats +4

?Passive Skill: Sword Mastery +1

?Active Skill: Soldier's Roar

?Passive Skill: Soldier's Dash

"...!"

Lant was very shocked. The sword was comparable to the artifacts that he had made. He swept his hand on the flat of the blade as he said, "That...that's surprising..."

Just when he was thinking about asking for the man's name, he saw the letters that had been engraved on the blade of the sword.

"Amazing Hyemin?"

"That's right. Hyemin is the best!"

That was right. The man was none other than Hyemin's Dad. Recently, he started adding the letters for '*Amazing Hyemin*' on the artifacts that he made. True enough, he was the typical daughter-con father.

Genie, Locke, and the other guild members of Let's Eat Sect were all wandering around Atlas territory to map out the topography, discover the dungeons, and identify all the various elements inside the territory. In the process of discovering dungeons, they were able to increase their level up a bit. However, their strength was still lacking. No, perhaps it was because they saw Minhyuk's ridiculous fighting prowess that they were still not satisfied with themselves.

"Should we keep looking for more hidden dungeons?"

"Do you think it's that easy to find hidden dungeons?"

They were currently back in the territorial castle taking a break. As they chatted, Locke said, "I want to become stronger..."

Everyone fell silent at his words. They felt like they had become stagnant while Minhyuk continued to move forward. Then, suddenly...

“Strength is truly a good thing.”

Their heads turned to look at the person who suddenly talked. There, they saw a man from the demon race wetting his finger with his tongue to flip a page of his book. The man was none other than Great Sage Aruvel. Of course, they had heard about his name too. He was the man hailed as the Great Sage in the Demon World! From what they heard, he was extremely strong. However, he only kept on reading books the moment he arrived here. In fact, there was no problem with reading books. The problem was the type of books that he was reading!

‘His Majesty the Emperor’s Clandestine Stories.’

‘The Maid Leipi and the Passionate Bed.’

‘Your Highness, You Can’t Do This!’

“...”

“...”

“...”

Aruvel looked at them with a solemn expression on his face as he said, “Human’s love is truly splendid.”

“Ah. Yes...”

“That person, no, that demon is weird...”

“Why are all of the people here weird...? It seems like I’m the only exception.”

“You’re the weirdest one here, Locke.”

Everyone shook their heads at Locke as they moved slightly away from him. Then, the man slammed his book shut and stood up as he turned to them and said, “So, this is the end of all of the wonderful books left here. Ah... I want to read the third volume of *‘Your Highness, You Can’t Do This!’*”

“...”

“...”

“...”

Everyone was left speechless.

“Your Highness, You Can’t Do This! is a story about how a cold and strong prince fell in love with an innocent and pure maid... *mumble, mumble...*”

Strangely enough, everyone present was perking their ears up and listening attentively to Aruvel’s words! Then, Aruvel said, “But, it turned out that the maid was Loudee, the princess of a fallen kingdom!!! She was the person promised to the prince for marriage from before!!!”

“My goodness! How can that be?!”

“Wow! This is thrilling!”

“Kghhkhk~~”

Drama truly was crazy and thrilling! They unknowingly admired the work as they listened to Aruvel. Then, Aruvel continued to say, “But, this is the end of the second volume. How can this be...”

“It was cut off here?”

“That’s why I’m asking you, can you guys get it for me? If you can get me the third volume, I will show you the path to become strong.”

Ring!

At that moment, a notification window popped out in front of all the guild members present.

Everyone was shocked at the sudden turn of events. First, the reward listed ‘The path to High Class’. Second, they only needed to get the third volume of an adult book to get the enormous reward of High Class!

Genie recalled a notice posted on *Athenae*’s official website not too long ago. They had issued a sentence after a lot of players began making complaints about the ‘Royal Class’ and ‘God Class’, saying that the balance had been broken. Words like ‘*I don’t feel like playing this anymore*’, or ‘*Who wants to play something like this?*’ or ‘*The balance of this game is extremely bad*’?

had already spread widely on the internet.?

The notice said, ‘*Athenae already has a set measure prepared for cases like this. We have always aimed for a ‘clear and fair balance’. Of course, it will only be available for the best and worthy players.*’ Currently, all of the members of the guild were around Level 500 or higher. It was like those words were aimed at them. And from how they said it...

‘*Don’t tell me the path is...*’

‘*Awakening?*’

In RPGs, awakenings were usually divided into first awakening, second awakening and third awakening. With every awakening, the player would gain overwhelming power, as well as new skills and stats. Although they were not sure yet, it seemed like that was the case here too. So, they started to move quickly.

When everyone left, Aruvel whistled happily as he opened his book again. But then, a man, Locke, came back again and said, “By any chance, can I borrow the first and second volumes of *Your Highness, You Can’t Do This!*?”

“...?”

Black Dragon had met with the Dragon Race’s child and had arrived at the ‘*Forgotten Dragons Land*’, the place where the dragon race was residing. The moment he arrived, he received the

quest? ‘*Dealing with the Infected Dragon Race*’. He received the quest from the Dragon Race’s King Broque, a hidden NPC living as the king in the Forgotten Dragons Land. If he completed this quest, he would be able to receive the recognition of King Broque. The dragon race had been infected by an unknown poison and had become ferocious. The infected dragon race was then forced to quarantine themselves off inside the Forgotten Dragons Land. The time limit for the quest was only three days.

[You have hunted an infected member of the dragon race.]

[Total Number Hunted: 513/513]

[You have successfully hunted all of the infected members of the dragon race.]

Black Dragon nodded in satisfaction as he listened to the notifications. The dragon race was at an average level of Level 430, but they were not as strong as he thought. After finishing the quest, he recalled that the Dragon Race’s King Broque said that he would wait for him three days later at the entrance to the infected land.

“Kiyeeeeek!”

“Kiyeeeeek~”

The quest was fairly easy so he still looked relaxed. Even the three legendary dragons were playing around among themselves nearby. Then, Black Dragon rubbed his chin. He thought, ‘*The dragon race is not as tolerant and generous towards me as I thought.*’? In fact, the dragon race was even wary of them. Of course, it could have been because he had not finished his quest yet. However, Black Dragon believed that if he used his situation well, he would be able to get the best reward possible, and even increase his favorability with them.

“Ah...!” Black Dragon exclaimed in excitement as his floating thoughts came back to him the moment he found the best plan.

Dragon Race’s King Broque was pondering deeply. He thought, ‘*Dragon Monarch... If he successfully clears all of my trials, he will be able to awaken the Forgotten Dragons Land once again.*’

But before that, he wanted to confirm and check what kind of existence the Dragon Monarch was. Besides, the Dragon Monarch was a human. This was the part that the Dragon Race’s King Broque was very doubtful about. After all, the former Dragon Monarch had used the dragon race as his own weapon of mass murder. Because of them, many died and plenty were left in grief. And right now, he was waiting in front of the infected land. Not long after, he saw them coming from afar.

“He’s here!!!”

“He’s coming.”

Broque narrowed his eyes to look at the arriving figures. But what he saw made him frown.

‘*What’s this?*’

The Dragon Monarch's condition was a bit unusual. Blood was dripping from his mouth and right arm. He was even limping as he held his right arm tightly with his left hand.

"Kki, kkiyyyyyyeeeeeck..."

Even the dragons were in a sorry state. The dragons were all covered in blood and looked like they were going to collapse anytime soon. The black dragon that was flying in the sky even fell down from exhaustion. Broque heard him say, "Hang, hang in there, Britney! Hang in there! We're almost there!"

"Ki, kiyeeeeee..." Britney cried as he struggled to raise his body up while Black Dragon tried to cheer him up. The other dragons also staggered forward to help the black dragon named Britney. And the moment they left the infected land and stood in front of Broque, Black Dragon...

"Aaaah..."

Fall—

...collapsed and fell down on his knees.

"What, what happened?!"

"The...the enemies were too strong... But Broque doesn't trust me so I wanted to prove myself... Cough!"

Then, he bit his own cheek, causing blood to burst out of his mouth, before saying, "I knew that it's a bit too much for me... but I did it. With these children..."

Black Dragon sent a glance towards Destiny and the other dragons.

"Kiyeeeeeee..."

Thud—

Starting with Destiny...

Thud.

Thud.

...the dragons began to faint one after the other. Just like that, Black Dragon scampered and tricked the dragon race together with the four legendary dragons. Broque, unaware of their act, felt his heart warm. He said, "If you knew that you couldn't do it, then you should have run away! Why...why did you do something this reckless...!!!"

"That's..." Black Dragon smiled as he continued to say, "...because Broque asked us to do it."

Thud.

Leaving those words behind, Black Dragon also fainted on the spot. In their fainted state, Black Dragon and the four legendary dragons all had sly and wicked smiles on their faces!!!

“H...Hey!!! Help me bring the heroes back!”

“Y...yes!”

“Ah!!! How can this be...!”

“My goodness! Dragon Monarch!!! He really fits the name of Monarch!!!!”

Notifications about the increase in favor constantly rang in Black Dragon’s ears. That was right. It was because of Kang Minhoo, that Minhyuk was a natural at scamming and tricking people, learning it all from his father. They were the embodiment of *Like Father, Like Son*.

Chapter 323: Start of the Continental War

Crusoe was on his way back with the Death Corps after a grueling week of special training. He thought, *‘Four levels? We’ll see.’*

When Minhyuk gained ownership of Atlas territory, the additional 700-strong troop given to him were all at Level 370. Considering that normal territories only had troops at around Level 200~250, the level of the troops given to him was suitable enough for the legendary territory.

But would their levels rise by four after a week? The answer was most definitely *NO*. This was what Crusoe wholeheartedly believed, knowing that they were being trained by those strange and weird people! It would definitely be impossible. Perhaps they could only increase the troops’ level by one at most. And the worst possible outcome?

‘I hope it’s not the case, but they might have just wasted their time doing nothing.’

If that happened, then Crusoe would definitely unleash his wrath. Just as they were trekking the road that led to the entrance of the territory...

“One, two! One, two! One, two! One, two!”

...Crusoe saw the troops running in a straight line. When he turned to look at the training grounds, he saw the soldiers well-versed in swords practicing their swordsmanship, while the soldiers well-versed in spears training in spearmanship. Every single soldier was doing their best in their personal training.

‘Ho??’

Crusoe looked at the troops in surprise. They were working much more diligently than what he had thought. This meant that the instructors had trained them strictly. He recalled the status of the Atlas’ troops that he saw last week.

‘If there’s no growth, or the growth is just insignificant...’

Crusoe would definitely dismiss the instructors. So, Crusoe immediately checked the troops’ status. What he saw made him tilt his head in confusion.

‘Huh...?’

Then, he closed the current status and opened it again.

“Oh...?”

What he saw was a reality. Centurion Park saw his expression and spoke solemnly, “From your reaction... It seems like they did not improve.”

Crusoe just shook his head absentmindedly at Centurion Park and said, “N...No. That’s not it... Th...this is just too unbelievable. You know? It’s because the troops have become significantly stronger...”

“Pardon?” Centurion Park asked, wondering what Crusoe meant. Meanwhile, Crusoe checked the troops’ current status again.

“The talents of the outstanding knights have been awakened! They have discovered five soldiers with outstanding talents in a week. This was because their new instructors have recognized their talents and have trained them intensively.

“...This is crazy,” Crusoe said. He could not believe what he saw. The description even depicted that the troops were willing to jump into hell at their instructors’ orders. That meant that the level of trust and reliance the troops had for their instructors was as much as themselves and their comrades. There were even five soldiers that awakened their talents as outstanding knights! In Crusoe’s eyes, these soldiers looked like ‘outstanding knights’, but to players like Minhyuk, they would see them as ‘*hidden NPCs*’. People like that were not easy to find. Somehow, they were able to unearth five such talents.

‘It seems like Atlas territory will become ridiculously powerful...?’

Crusoe could not even imagine the extent of the changes that Atlas would undergo during this month.

The Four Hyenas had become rankers with levels exceeding Level 500. In the first place, they were overgeared and overpowered unofficial rankers. Then, there was Great Mage Moldoron’s Descendant Ali, whose strength was comparable to Minhyuk! All of them asked to join Minhyuk’s guild. Of course, Minhyuk happily accepted them.

[A new guild member has been added to Let's Eat Sect.]

[Ali(Mage) is now a member of the guild.]

[Bez(Fighter) is now a member of the guild.]

[Killei(Mage) is now a member of the guild.]

[Roadol(Trap Specialist) is now a member of the guild.]

[Smooth(Poison Expert) is now a member of the guild.]

Minhyuk welcomed them with open arms and a bright smile at their request to join him. He looked at their classes and said, “Huh? Uncle Taesik, you’re a Trap Specialist?”

Taesik, or Roadol, was Ilhwa Construction’s chairman. He said, “That’s right! It’s because of the illegal buildings in our country! I made bombs in *Athenae* while thinking of those buildings and ended up changing my class to the legendary class ‘*Master Trapper*’.”

“...You made bombs while thinking about illegal buildings?”

“It’s because I can’t tear them down in reality! Hahahahaha!”

Minhyuk had felt it long ago. He knew that his uncles were all pleasant and kind people, with their own quirky personalities too. Then, there was Smooth, the Poison Expert. Minhyuk asked, “Why did Uncle Wooseok become a Poison Expert?”

Smooth was the chairman of Nottogi. He said, “It seems like I’m extremely talented at making poisons. It’s as much as my talent for cooking.”

“...”

Minhyuk just nodded. From what he heard, Smooth also had a legendary class? ‘*Poison Master*’? and he could produce extremely potent poisons, to the point that those assassins whose sole focus was poisoned attacks would pale in comparison to his poisons.

‘It would be amazing if we can install traps and poisons around the territory. Fufufufu.’

Minhyuk smiled happily at the thought of strengthening Atlas even further. However, he still found one part very disappointing.

‘It seems like I can’t eat food outside these days.’

Of course, the crops that grew in Atlas were much better than the crops grown on normal land, thanks to the Small World Tree’s power. Soon, Minhyuk decided to let go of his disappointment in not being able to eat food from the outside, as he put his heart and soul into strengthening the territory. After all, strength and power is essential for him to eat deliciously.

A month quickly passed by in *Athenae*. Minhyu’s Atlas territory had grown rapidly over the course of that month. His troops’ average level had reached Level 433. And that was not the end of it. Golden Hammer Dwarf Lant and Hepas’ Descendant Hyemin’sDaddy joined hands to produce armor and weapons, enough to equip the more than 900 soldiers of the territory. Because of that, all of the troops were wearing equipment comparable to rare, ranked artifacts. This was something amazing, since ordinary territories would only give their troops around thirty rare artifacts.

The surprise did not end there. More than half of the guild members, including Genie, Locke, Khan, Informant Abel and Ascar had changed their class to High Class. The guild members that changed into High Class politely asked for PVP with Minhyuk. Minhyuk agreed and was surprised to see their improvement.

‘They’ve become really strong...?’

Minhyuk felt like their strength had gone beyond his imagination, as if they had taken two steps at a time on the steps of improvement. The gap between their strength and Minhyuk's strength had narrowed quite a bit. That was when articles began to pour out on the internet.

[Lucia. She has transferred to the High Class Assassin of the Moon. She's rapidly pursuing the 1st place in the assassins' rankings.]

[Ruwan. He has transferred to the High Class Blacksmith of Steel. His combat videos against Ares, the 13th in the Domestic Rankings with his amazing sorcery has become a hot topic. He even defeated Ares by a narrow margin. But what's more surprising is the fact that he's a blacksmith!]

[Royal Classes and High Classes have already appeared all over the world. But the Let's Eat Sect, which received the attention of the public, has remained silent. Are there no High Classes in the Let's Eat Sect yet?]

The Let's Eat Sect did not announce when a High Class had been born under their banner. That was the case even after more than half of their guild had changed into a High Class. Their only reason was to keep this as their ace in the hole. Genie and Informant Abel had already predicted that there would be a large-scale update coming their way soon after knowing that the players of the Chinese Server had started to cross over their continent. Sure enough, those predictions came true.

Rumble!

Crackle!

It was a rainy night. Thunder and lightning ran rampant outside the safety of the walls. Ellie, the Sword Emperor, sighed as she looked over the window. It seemed like she could not fall asleep.

'The pinnacle of swordsmanship...'

Erod, the God of Abilities and Destruction, had eight pinnacle attack skills that landed on earth. One of these was Ellie's Swordsmanship. According to the legends, only Ellie and her ancestors failed to reach the pinnacle among the eight skills. Recalling the story brought a bitter smile to Ellie's face.

'Am I not good enough?'

Including her ancestors, Ellie was known to be the strongest woman in this world. Yet, this woman was blaming herself for being weak. Since sleep had long eluded her, she was taking a walk to relieve her bitterness and boredom. Then...

Bang, bang, bang, bang!

The sound of the thunder and lightning banging outside the walls grew louder. Along with those sounds, Ellie suddenly felt an unknown murderous intent. She always carried her sword with her, even when she was sleeping, hence, she quickly grabbed the hilt of her sword and ran towards the location where she felt the murderous intent.

Dash—

'This place...'

She arrived at the place where the Empire took care of and served its guardian deities. It was the place where the statues of the Phoenix and the Minotaurus were located. Ellie slowly opened the door.

Creak—

“...This...”

What appeared in front of her was something completely shocking. The gigantic statues of the Phoenix and the Minotaurus had blood flowing down their bodies! This meant that the actual bodies of the Phoenix and Minotaurus living in the world of the guardian deities, the utopia, were also bleeding! Ellie hurriedly grabbed the summoning stone of the guardian deities and called for them.

“Kiyeeeeeeeeeck!”

“Grrrrrrr!”

The two guardian deities appeared in front of Ellie, covered in blood, almost on their last breath.

“Wh...who... Who did this to you?!!!” Ellie shouted, realizing that they were already beyond saving.

Ellie could communicate with both the guardian deities, the Phoenix and the Minotaurus. That was when she heard that they were in this situation because of the guardian deities of the Cairon Continent. It was not only the guardian deities of Eivelis Empire, even the guardian deities of Cordis Empire were attacked. Hearing their words, Ellie could tell that this was similar to the continental war that happened in the past, and more importantly, the memory of Black Dragon Vormon. She muttered...

“The start of a new war...”

Chapter 324: Start of the Continental War

Minhyuk saw Changwook, his dietitian Hyejin, and Jinhwan huddled together in front of the TV, while on his way to access *Athenae* after his daily exercise. He asked, “Are you watching a mukbang?”

“It’s not a mukbang, you punk. Today’s the day that they would broadcast the content related to *Athenae*’s large-scale update!”

“Ah... I see.”

A few days ago, *Athenae* had announced on their official website that they would broadcast a video related to the large-scale update. Minhyuk sneakily slipped between them to watch as well.

“It’s starting!”

“Oh!”

The scene in the TV flickered and showed the furious Ellie after seeing the Phoenix and the Minotaurus covered with blood. They heard her mumble...

[The start of a new war...]

As if prompted by her words, the scene in the screen changed, showing Emperor Asvon and Ellie sitting together in a discussion. Minhyuk exclaimed, “Oh! Isn’t that Ellie Noona and Asvon Hyung?”

“...Did you just call those two people Noona and Hyung?” Changwook asked as he shook his head in disbelief.

‘My goodness. You’re calling the two Emperors in the same continent as Hyung and Noona?’

It seemed like this punk besides them was truly an enigmatic person.

[Ellie. What do you think of this?]

[I think we need to wait a bit longer. But we can assume that this is caused by Black Dragon Vormon.]

[I agree. However, they might welcome this opportunity. Cairon Continent is much larger than the Asgan Continent, they have an overwhelming population, so they might want to plunder our resources. If we sit back and observe the situation just because their number overwhelms us, they might look down on us.]

[I know. We must first declare a state of emergency and start preparing for war.]

The two of them were discussing preparations for the continental war. Just then...

[We’re in trouble!!!]

[How impertinent!! How dare you enter without knocking...!!]

[A land of clouds has been formed between the Asgan Continent and the Cairon Continent.]?]

[...!]

[...!]

Ellie and Asvon looked at each other after hearing the report of the vassal.

[Let’s finish this quickly and see the commotion.]

[I agree. Let’s do that.]

The scene changed quickly once again. The scene showed Ellie and Asvon standing together with 10,000 troops each standing behind them. What was surprising was the long stretch of clouds floating above the Dragon King’s Sea and connecting the land they were standing on to Cairon Continent.

[Th...this...]

[This land of clouds clearly looks like the Continent Cloud.]

[Did Vormon awaken the Continent Cloud?]

[That might be the case.]

There was only one thing that they could get from this video. They could use this land of clouds to cross over to each other’s continent. In other words, even if the two Emperors wanted to watch the

situation for a while, this was a signal that the war was about to break out soon. However, that was not necessarily a bad thing.

[According to the legends, the Continent Cloud is something that the God of War, Argas, has created.]

[That's right. Perhaps the appearance of the Continent Cloud is the better path for the people of the Asgan Continent.]

[The number of people that can enter the Continent Cloud every day is limited. And only those with the cloud ticket are allowed to enter the other continent.]

"Hmm? Only a limited number of people can enter the Continent Cloud everyday? And only those that can get their hands on a cloud ticket can go to the other continent? Why does it sound so complicated?"

"I know, right?"

Changwook, playing General, and Hyejin, playing AmazingHyejin, both looked confused. However, unlike the two of them, Minhyuk was in awe. He said, "Kgghk~?As expected of *Athenae's* Development Team~"

"Huh? Why?"

"What do you mean, Minhyuk?"

"The difference between the number of players in China and our country is around ten times, right?"

"That's right?"

"So, if all of the players from China came through the Continent Cloud, what do you think our odds will be?"

"..."

"..."

That was right. Just like Minhyuk had implied, it would be hard to find even a 0.1% guarantee that Asgan Continent would survive the moment the players from the other servers rushed to their continent. Having a large population meant that they had to compete among a lot of people to come out on top. The rankers of a country with such a large population was bound to be better than their country's own rankers. So, what would happen even if there were plenty of resources at hand? It would definitely be a defeat.

Even so, if they could not achieve a perfect balance, what would happen if only a limited number of people were allowed to enter from both continents each day? A small percentage of hope would arise for their country.

"And once every day, *Athenae* will issue missions to each of the continents. The continent that clears the mission first will have a higher score, which will then

increase the number of people that can enter the Continent Cloud. This is how it will work."

"Then, what about the cloud ticket?"

"That's simple. Cloud tickets will definitely have rankings. C-ranked cloud tickets for Level 150~250, B-ranked cloud tickets for Level 250~300. Like that. Imagine if twenty rankers from every 100 levels came to our country, what do you think would happen?"

"...They won't even be able to make a sound. The players of the Cairon Continent will be wiped out."

"That's right," Minhyuk said with a nod.

They would not be able to come over to their continent with just a few hundred cloud tickets. In other words, it was necessary for them to collect thousands or tens of thousands of tickets before they could do something.

"We can expect the Asgan Continent to be in a defensive position and the Cairon Continent to be in an offensive position. But, if our players start to fall behind inside the Continent Cloud, then the number of enemies that will enter the Asgan Continent will also increase. That's why the outcome of this war will depend on how well the players of our country perform in the Continent Cloud."

Based on what Minhyuk had said, the side that performed well in the Continent Cloud would be given a larger amount of cloud tickets. What would happen if there were more than 50,000 cloud tickets dispensed? The Asgan Continent would falter. As soon as the war started, the players of Asgan Continent would definitely not use their tickets. It was clear that their role should be preventing the Chinese players from getting more tickets.

[Then, let's form a patrol squad so we can know what's inside the Continent Cloud.]

[We should do that.]

After the patrol squad returned, Ellie and Asvon continued to have their discussions.

[It's just like any ordinary continent... There are monsters as well as various defense and attack bases.]

[Dungeons also exist inside.]

One thing was for sure, during this episode, the players would compete against each other, inside this place called Continent Cloud, while hunting new monsters and fighting wars. Then, the words that appeared next on the screen were...

[Continental Wars' Episode 1 has begun.]

[Take over as many attack and defense bases as possible inside the Continent Cloud.]

[You can also take away the attack and defense bases of players from Cairon Continent inside the Continent Cloud.]

[The total number of players that can enter a day is 10,000. 50 players at Level 470~500 or higher, 300 players at Level 400~470... Players should check the official announcement for other information. Tickets can be obtained through NPCs or monsters.]

[Players that will die inside the Continent Cloud will not be able to participate in the episode anymore. Access will also be restricted for 3 days.]

[Please check the notice for the cloud ticket system.]

The Continental War Episode had started. Meanwhile, Minhyuk thought, ‘*Wow. There must be a lot of delicious food inside the Cloud Continent, right?*’. Minhyuk smiled slightly at the thought. He was already thinking about how he should talk his guild members into participating in this episode.

Three days after the start of the Continental War, Ares, the GM of Ares Guild, and Callian, the GM of Iris Guild were able to get a pretty good defense base inside the Continent Cloud. Since this was a continental war, none of the players of Asgan Continent would benefit if they fought against each other, so around five of the country’s leading rankers had worked together with Ares. All of them were competent players standing at the country’s top 50.

“Fortunately our country’s players and the Chinese players are just sticking to our part of the land when reclaiming bases.”

“That’s right. Also, that’s a relief.”

“What? Which one?”

“Legend Guild separating.”

“Ah. That one?”

In fact, when Legend Guild’s guild leader and name changed, most people believed that only the guild leader had changed. However, none of the members of Legend Guild had entered the Continent Cloud yet. Because of that, many of the people believed that the guild had gone their own ways, but were unaware that they were actually training a huge force of their own.

“Huh? What’s that?”

“Huh?”

Callian turned to look after hearing Ares’ words. A player was walking forward, with players wearing black armor behind him. He stood at the very front, smiled deeply and said, “My name is Hu Yitian.”

‘*Hu Yitian??*’

He was clearly a Chinese player. Seeing him, Callian turned to Ares and whispered, “Hu Yitian is the player standing in the fourth place of the Chinese Assassins’ Rankings.”

“Fourth... What’s his ranking in the Chinese Overall Rankings?”

“Nineteenth.”

“...Hmmm.”

If he was ranked 19th, then they would be enough to take him on. No, more precisely, they could win. Ares had recently finished changing his class to High Class. Although Ares had been trampled all over the place, he was still one of the rankers competing for the top rankings in South Korea! Ares asked, “What’s going on?”

“I want to have a match with you.”

“A match?”

This was a battlefield in the first place, so Ares and Callian could not understand why he was asking them politely for a match.

“I heard that the top users of Korea are here.”

“That’s true.”

“I know. Of course.”

Ares and Callian both laughed after hearing his words. However, Hu Yitian’s next words were shocking. He said, “I want to fight against the five best rankers here by myself.”

“...?”

“...?”

Ares and Callian looked at him at that moment, wondering what bullshit he was saying. Ares believed that he could probably win against him alone. No, he would definitely win. He was now a High Class player. But then, Hu Yitian provoked them further by saying, “If you win, I will hand over three of our defense bases and three of our attack bases. But, if you lose, I want you to step back from this base.”

‘Three attack bases and three defense bases...??’

‘Gasp...!’?

The bases that they currently had in their hands was just this defense base. But, the opponent was willing to give up six bases? If that happened, then their position would definitely increase sharply.

‘This is an unexpected windfall!!!?’

‘We will definitely benefit from his arrogance!’?

Callian and Ares laughed happily. So, five Korean rankers stood in front of the lone assassin Hu Yitian.

“Please take care of me!”

“We’ll crush that pride of yours!!!”

Their duel began and before they knew it, Ares, Callian and three other rankers were defeated miserably. They could not even land a huge blow on Hu Yitian.

“As expected, you’re just around this much?” Hu Yitian said, laughing as he watched them disappear after being forced to log out.

[As expected, you’re just around this much?]

Sword Emperor Ellie was leading the wars inside the Continent Cloud with Asvon. She was able to watch the situation on the battlefield in real time. Since Ares and Callian were quite important figures, Ellie and Asvon handed over a video crystal ball to them.

“Pinnacle...?”

Ellie’s eyes shook. That man was clearly a foreigner, and yet, that assassin had clearly displayed a dagger technique that had reached the ‘pinnacle’. His dagger technique pierced through the rankers and crushed them completely. Asvon saw it too. After all, he was standing next to her.

“...From what I heard, that person is going around the entire Continent Cloud looking for the strongest people from Asgan Continent and defeating them. If this continues, the tide of war will turn in favor of Cairon Continent. We might personally...”

Ellie shook her head after hearing Asvon. She said, “That’s not possible. You must not forget that we are the pillars of Asgan Continent, Asvon.”

Ellie had been speaking politely before because she was more comfortable doing so. Still, she and Asvon were equals. And right now, she was speaking coldly. She knew that the two of them must never get hurt, or die.

“Then, who will defeat that person using the Power of Pinnacle?”

At Asvon’s question, Ellie said, “You and I both know him.”

“...?”

Asvon looked at Ellie strangely wondering who she was talking about. Ellie said, “Minhyuk.”

Hearing her words, Asvon’s expression turned serious as he nodded. Then, he said, “I’m sure my younger brother will definitely be able to defeat him. I understand your thoughts. It seems like you want him to have the Pinnacle Awakening.”

“That’s right. By the way, what do you mean by younger... brother?”

“Minhyuk and I are very close. I treat him as my younger brother and he treats me as his Hyung. You didn’t know?”

Hearing his words, the veins on Ellie’s forehead popped up. She said, “Hohoho! Whatever do you mean? Minhyuk and I are like blood-related siblings! He even wants to stay by my side everyday! Hohohoho!”

“Hahahaha! Ellie, you don’t know anything. Minhyuk likes me more, you know?”

“Not at all. I taught Minhyuk swordsmanship, you know?”

Right now, the two Emperors were fighting a war of nerves against each other. They seemed to be asking, ‘*Do you like Dad?*’ or ‘*Do you like Mom?*’ despite the severity of their situation. In any case, the expressions that the both of them were sporting were very serious.

“I drank tea with Minhyuk!” Asvon said.

Ellie just grinned and said, “But, we had a meal together?”

“...”

Asvon's face twisted in defeat while Ellie smirked, ‘*Fufu. I won.*’

For some reason, the two Emperors looked very cute today.

Chapter 325: Start of the Continental War

Over the course of four days since the start of the Continental War, the players had analyzed deeply, determining the Continent Cloud to be a field. The place had countless hidden dungeons and plenty of mysterious and unfamiliar monsters loitering around. Even the amount of artifacts and gold that dropped was quite good.

Athenae did not announce any of the rewards that they would receive in the future. However, the country that would win the war would definitely receive great rewards. There was also the possibility of receiving far greater rewards if they were a part of the small number that achieved high scores inside the Continent Cloud.

And then, there were the Cloud Tickets. Anyone could get Cloud Tickets, anywhere from twenty to a hundred, by hunting monsters, discovering hidden dungeons, or obtaining attack and defense bases.

At first, both the Asgan and Cairon Continents seemed to show similar patterns. Then, on the fourth day, the tide suddenly turned in favor of the Cairon Continent. And the main reason was none other than Hu Yitian!

Hu Yitian was originally only ranked fourth among the Chinese Assassins, one of the country’s top rankers. Although a bit unexpected, he was able to transfer to a High Class. But what was even more surprising was that he met the character named Da Zhuang, the King of Assassins of the past, overcame the trial and learned the Pinnacle of Dagger Techniques. Hu Yitian was currently at Level 501. However, after learning the Pinnacle of Dagger Techniques, he could be considered as the strongest in PVP. In fact, he could even defeat five of the Korean rankers with just his strength alone. What was more shocking was the fact that he had only been able to learn half of the Pinnacle of Dagger Techniques.

Since Hu Yitian was the guild master of the assassin guild, Black Mask Guild, Da Zhuang also ended up teaching his guild members various assassin skills like dagger techniques, throwing techniques, and even stealth techniques which resulted in a significant increase in their stats. Currently, Hu Yitian was leading forty of his guild members all over the Continent Cloud on a mission, to destroy the rankers of South Korea.

“It seems like the level of the Korean players is as bad as I heard.”

Right now, Hu Yitian had been hailed as a hero by China after he started killing the Korean rankers. Since this was a battle of pride between countries, the Chinese players cheered loudly whenever Hu

Yitian knocked down a Korean ranker. In fact, High Class players were all strong, so killing these rankers must mean that they were just bad at playing this game. Of course, Hu Yitian had only met with one High Class player so far, which was none other than Ares.

‘He was strong.’

However, Ares was still no match against Hu Yitian. And, if the other High Class players of Korea were only at Ares’ level, then Hu Yitian’s prestige would just increase, since he could easily defeat them.

Da Zhuang said, “Keep in mind that we have to find Ellie, who’s hiding like a rat, as quickly as possible.”

“Of course, Master,” Hu Yitian answered, smiling softly at his master.

Da Zhuang was a legendary NPC at around Level 600. However, with his Pinnacle Skill, the strength that he could show was comparable to someone at Level 700. But from what he heard, the strength that he was wielding right now was actually around 20% less than his original strength. This was a restriction imposed on him after his revival. So, it was safe to say that Da Zhuang’s power was ridiculously strong.

There was only one reason why Da Zhuang wanted to deal with Eivelis Empire. That was because Ellie’s ‘*Ellie’s Swordsmanship*’ was also one of the Pinnacle of Attacking Skills. However, no one knew where this Pinnacle Skill was located, except for Ellie. Da Zhuang planned to compensate for his 20% loss of power by acquiring her Pinnacle Skill. Just thinking about it made Da Zhuang laugh gleefully.

“What’s the matter, Master?”

“Ellie. She’s an unlucky woman.”

“What?”

“It’s because she has the power that she shouldn’t have, that’s why she can’t climb any further.”

“...What do you mean?”

“Empress Ellie has one of the Pinnacle Skills. From what I heard, she has the best out of the eight Pinnacle of Attacking Skills, which is known to be difficult to learn. She will probably become the best Empress in the continent if she can even reach the fourth level,” Da Zhuang said, clicking his tongue at the thought.

The fifth day after the Continent Cloud opened, a ‘Sudden Mission’ was released simultaneously to players from both the Asgan and the Cairon Continents.

[The Empire that successfully recaptures the base will be given 1,000 Cloud Tickets.]

[The Empire that successfully recaptures the base will be given the chance to gain the Kharamis Soldiers.]

[The Empire that successfully recaptures the base will be given a bottle that can recover physical STM.]

This mission marked the beginning of a full-fledged war. The troops from Cairon Continent were around 3,000, and they stood face to face against the 2,500-strong troops from Asgan Continent. Both troops were gathered at the center of the Continent Cloud.

At the forefront of the Asgan Continent's players stood Carr, the Emperor of Swords. After completing his High Class trial, Carr had changed his class from Crown Prince of Swords to Emperor of Swords. Standing next to him was Lucia, the Assassin of the Moon. Lucia was now leading her own guild after becoming one of the best rankers at Level 501. Her guild '*Murderous Beauty*' was also comprised of semi-rankers and top rankers. Finally, the person standing next to them was the Blacksmith of Steel Ruwan.

Then, Ruwan asked, "Do you know what the three of us have in common?"

"..."

"..."

Lucia and Carr turned to look at him strangely wondering what he was talking about.

"Don't we all like Minhyuk?"

"What bullshit?!"

"Oh my, of course~" Lucia said as she smiled lightly behind her mask.

Meanwhile, Carr gritted his teeth and roared, "If you say something like that again, I will be the one to PK you first."

"*Woah, woah.* What's wrong with you? We're both from the same continent."

"But..." Lucia gulped dryly as she looked at the battlefield, and asked, "Why aren't they showing up?"

"..."

Ruwan's mouth turned shut. Perhaps it was because they did not succeed in changing into a High Class? Or perhaps it was because the Legend Guild had truly broken up and was only a memento of the past? Ruwan had worked hard and ran after Minhyuk hoping to be like him, wanting to stand shoulder to shoulder with him. He ran forward with that thought in mind. Right now, he believed that he was already in the same position as him, but he could no longer see him.

'The moment High Class appeared, perhaps Minhyuk...?'

Perhaps Minhyuk was no longer the best ranker in their country. Maybe that was also the reason why he was not showing up? Then, Carr said, "If they haven't changed into a High Class, then they will only be excellent rankers. They wouldn't be helpful anyway."

Carr was just reveling in his sarcasm when the enemies began to attack.

“Archers!”

Carr wanted to wash away the shame that he had experienced in *Athenae*: Korean War in this place and take revenge. The archers pulled their bows and fired their arrows towards the Cairon Continent’s players and troops. Hundreds of magic spells ran rampant in the air. In between them was the attack base, Berdk.

“Mages and archers! Continue to attack from a long distance! Close combat fighters!”

Shing!

Shing!?

Shing!?

Weapons were unsheathed one after the other.

“Charge!!!”

Carr and the other players ran forward. The fastest among them was Lucia, the Assassin of the Moon. With every step that she took, she would disappear and appear at another location. She looked like she was teleporting. She even used her skills to deal with the enemies that appeared in front of her.

[Beautiful Moon]

[The moon shines light upon your enemies, dazzling them and bringing them into a 0.4 second stun.]

A beautiful moon rose behind Lucia, causing the players of the Cairon Continent to fall into a momentary stun.

“B... Beautiful...”

“Wow...”

That single moment was enough for Lucia’s dagger to reach their throats. Just like that, hundreds of dagger lights spread towards her enemies.

Stab, stab, stab, stab, stab—

These hundreds of dagger lights accurately stabbed the Cairon Continent players’ vital points.

[Critical Hit!]

[Critical Hit!]

[Critical Hit!]

[Critical Hit!]

This was what a High Class’ player’s skill was like. And it did not just end there. Carr ran forward and jumped high up in the sky.

[Emperor of Sword’s Bloody Wind]

[Strong wind made of bloody sword energy rips and shreds your enemies to pieces.]

Slash, slash, slash, slash, slash—

A bloody wind blew towards the Cairon Continent's camp and became blades that cut the players' bodies to pieces. Hundreds of players and soldiers alike screamed from the wide-area attack that was unleashed upon them.

"Ack!"

"Keuaaaack!"

"Ugh!"

The rankers collided not long after.

Slash! Slash—!

Bang!

The commentators were also busy explaining the situation.

[Both sides aren't only composed of rankers. Their levels vary from 200 to 500.]

[This is because the higher the level of the Cloud Ticket, the lower the probability of dropping.]

[There are only a few rankers among them. It seems like the influence of the soldiers is quite large in this battle.]

[But if the rankers are able to get a good head start, then I think there's a possibility that our Korea can win this war.]

The players' levels were varied. Most of the tickets that were released tend to be for NPC soldiers. In other words, the NPCs' tickets and the players' tickets were different. The commentators continued their live commentary.

[In fact, I believe that this mission will give us the opportunity to turn the tide that's going in favor of Cairon Continent!]

The Koreans watching the scene all had their hearts up their throat.

[I feel so sorry that I'm not there. Awoo!!!]

[Let's go, Korea! Let's go!]

[Let's goooooo!!!!]

[The Chinese are laughing and mocking our country, you must win!!!]

[Awoo! If only we had the Legend Guild, we might have wiped them out!]

[Legend? Aren't they outdated? Many people even say that they already disbanded. They did not even post any videos or anything even after they created a new guild, right?]

[It's been quite a while since Legend broke up...]

[Even if they come, they wouldn't be able to create the miracles that they performed in the past. None of them had announced that they changed to a High Class.]

[When they come there, they would only be high-leveled rankers, not special rankers.]

[Regardless... I want us to win!!! Is that even important? I hope that we win!!!]

Their anger had all been bottled up. In the past four days, plenty of articles had poured in saying that South Korea's chances of winning against China was close to 0% after the '*Ranker Destroyer*' incident. There were even plenty of rumors that the Asgan Continent would be devoured by the Chinese players in the end. Even the global rankers thought the same.

American Mage Alex...

[South Korea is very weak in the Athenae Global Rankings. There's no way that a small and weak country like that can beat one of the three major nations, China.]

Russia's Ruvid...

[The probability of South Korea gaining victory? Maybe around 1%? You think what I said is too much? But if they did not even have that 1% chance of winning, would it still be fun to play such a game?]

Japan's Kentaro...

[I really want to meet with Food God Minhyuk again! What? Ah, it's not about that? Talk about the Continental War between Korea and China? But more than that, I just want to meet with Minhyuk. Minhyuk, aishiteru.]

And lastly, South Korea's Carr...

[We will do our best to win. Just like when our country failed to advance to the 16th Round of the 2018 World Cup but still successfully beat Germany, the number one in the FIFA rankings. I will make that miracle happen.]

At that moment...

"*Keuaaaaack!*" The very same Carr shrieked. Hu Yitian, the ranker destroyer, had appeared. And with his appearance, the balance that had initially seemed to be equal, started to break and tilt to one side.

[Ah... Pushed... We're being pushed back!]

[The Korean rankers are starting to get pushed back!!!]

[But our fellow citizens, don't be discouraged yet. We still have hope!!!]

However, unlike their hopeful commentary, the commentators' expressions looked so forlorn, as if they had '*confirmed*' their defeat. Even the viewers were aware. The phrase '*We still have hope!*' is something that was only used in tragic situations.

At the same time.

South Korean player Roy was busy focusing on hunting Level 350 monsters inside the Continent Cloud. The monsters that resided in the Continent Cloud were all made up of clouds.

Shwaaaa—

After cutting down an enemy, Roy suddenly heard a scream.

"Keuaaaaack!"

"Run away!!"

"The Chinese players are extremely strong!!!"

"..."

Roy also wanted to participate in the same battlefield as them, but his level was only at Level 370. He knew that his power was not enough to give a significant boost even if he went there. So, he just went to sharpen his blade and increase his level.

'One day, I'll also...'

He would also join the fight and fight for his country one day. Alas, that was clearly not the time right now. The reason why Roy did not participate right now was because he was a patriot. His heart was so patriotic that he knew that he would not be able to see reason the moment he participated in the battle. He knew that he would completely lose if that happened.

"...Damn," Roy muttered dejectedly.

All of a sudden.

"Huh...?"

The sky above his head suddenly turned dark. He slowly raised his head...

"Gasp...!"

...and saw something huge flying in the sky. It was around 500 meters, no, 1,000 meters wide? Anyway, something surprisingly huge was flying in the sky.

At the same time.

Minhyuk turned Atlas territory into a 'City in the Sky', and sent it to Cloud Continent. The reason why none of the members from the Let's Eat Sect had appeared over the course of five days, was simply because they took that time to check the enemy's power and military prowess.

Minhyuk also took the time to determine if he should change Atlas into a City in the Sky and transfer his territory over. If their enemies were stronger than expected, then their NPCs would die. So, if his assumptions were wrong, all of their NPC troops would be wiped out. That was why it was necessary for them to check if he should send the entire territory over, or just the players alone. In other words, with his decision, he was confident that their troops would not die nor incur much damage, since he sent the territory over.

Minhyuk had also entered the Continent Cloud. However, he was not in Atlas. Instead, he was somewhere else, standing in front of Ellie, to be exact. Right now, Ellie was looking at him coldly, as she said, "Minhyuk, grab your sword. Attack me as if you're going to kill me."

"...?"

Minhyuk was bewildered, not understanding what was happening right now.

Chapter 326: Atlas, The Territory with the Strongest Defense

In the battle for the Berdk Attack Base.

At first, it seemed like the Korean players were doing quite well. The top rankers stepped forward and boosted the morale of the soldiers and the other players as much as possible, doing their best to lead them. However, the Chinese rankers were very formidable too.

This was a continental war, and both sides were proud of their strength and power. The battle seemed to be in perfect balance with the Korean rankers showing that they were not easy opponents for the Chinese players.

That was until Hu Yitian appeared. His appearance brought a crisis to the Korean rankers gathered in Berdk's vicinity.

[Emperor of the Sword's Carnage]

[An additional 250% damage will be added to your quick sword attacks.]

Carr immediately used his skills the moment he saw Hu Yitian appear. Carr was one of the main dealers in South Korea. He had a high level and high attack. Even his artifacts and skills could deal additional damage to his opponents. In a blink of an eye, his sword had unleashed around thirty strikes. But, something surprising happened...

Slash, slash, slash, slash, slash—

[Your attack has failed.]

[Your attack has failed.]

[Your attack has failed.]

[Your attack...]

“...!”

Carr's eyes widened in shock. His attacks would only fail if the stats difference between him and his opponent was that of over a 100-level one.

Carr did not know this, but Hu Yitian had a skill named '*The One who Evades*'. It was a newly-acquired skill that reached half-pinnacle and had given Hu Yitian a 400% increase in his evasion rate. But that was not the end. A black light slowly covered Hu Yitian's daggers. Then, in a blink of Carr's eyes...

[Dagger of Death!]

[Immediately narrows the distance between you and the enemy, allowing you to stab the enemy in the chest with 800% additional damage.]

Stab—!

...a dagger was already right in front of him! The attack was so fast that Carr did not have the time to react and stop Hu Yitian from stabbing him in the chest with one of his daggers!

“*Keuaaaack!*”

Carr's HP immediately dropped. Thankfully, he was still in good condition. Seeing this, Hu Yitian spun the daggers in his hands and triggered another skill, making both of his daggers fly in the air.

[Phantom Daggers of Death]

[Hundreds of phantom daggers move on their own and target the enemy]

Shwaaaaaaaaa!

The two daggers floating in the air suddenly split into hundred images and flew towards Carr.

[Emperor of Sword's Guardian]

[Can see through the enemy's attack and defend against it.]

The Emperor of Sword's Guardian was a skill that was solely focused on defense, and there had never been an attack that Carr could not stop with the help of this skill. But while he was staring at the daggers and preparing to defend...

Shwiiiiiiik—

...the daggers changed their trajectory. They moved sideways, then forward, and then backward, changing direction over and over. It was as if they had a will of their own. The daggers moved swiftly and fluidly as they attacked Carr.

Clang!

“Shit...!”

‘Do these daggers have a mind of their own?’ Carr thought as he struggled to defend against the dagger strikes. The daggers were unbelievably fast and hard to track, and Carr ended up suffering from some of the attacks that landed on his body.

“Keuhaaack!”

[Ah!!! Korea's official number one ranker, Carr, is losing ground!!!]

[Are there no players out there that can stop Hu Yitian?!]

Then, the Assassin of the Moon Lucia and the Blacksmith of Steel Ruwan took advantage of the gaps from the daggers' attacks to rush forward.

“Ha!” Ruwan shouted as he hurriedly slammed a large square shield in front of them. The square shield stretched and turned into a dome that covered their bodies.

Clang, clang, clang, clang, clang—

“Go... god damn it...”

“Our situation is not good. While Carr is busy fighting Hu Yitian, our forces are being pushed back.”

“SHIT!” Carr cursed loudly.

“We have to retreat.”

“What is this bullshit?!” Carr shouted, the veins on his neck popping in anger after hearing Ruwan’s words. His ‘retreat’ literally meant ‘escape’.

Carr had always been on top. No, that place had been taken away from him once, but that did not mean that the word ‘escape’ suited Carr, a person that stood at the top.

But then, Lucia said, “Carr, you’ve done well already. Our fellow citizens will not blame us. If you continue to be stubborn and die here, not only will you lose access for three days, you will also be banned from entering the Continent Cloud.”

That was right. Carr was just upset over the fact that the attack base would be taken away and victory would tilt towards the Chinese side. But what was important right now was their survival. Only if they survive would they be able to plan the next steps that they could take in the future. If all of the top rankers died here, then all hope would be lost. In the end, Carr hid behind Ruwan’s shield and gave his order.

“Retreat!!!”

“Retreat!”

“Retreat!”

[Ah!!! In the end, Korea chose to retreat.]

[But this is the correct decision. If they lose more of their forces here, then our country’s defeat will be the only outcome.]

[What do you think caused their defeat?]

[There are two reasons. Hu Yitian, who are keeping the rankers' hands tied, and the Chinese NPCs. They account for a significant portion of their forces.]

[The Cairon Continent is much larger than our country’s continent. That’s the main reason why the number of their NPCs is overwhelming and why they have a lot of strong NPCs. In fact, they even deployed the ‘The Black Knight Order’ in this war.]

[The Black Knight Order is the personal troop of the Arcas Empire’s Emperor, and is considered to be the best order of knights in China. Their levels range from Level 500-530. There’s also the fact that once our country’s rankers die, they won’t be able to enter the Continent Cloud anymore. On the contrary, even if China’s NPCs die, they will still be able to send out more strong NPCs from their huge reserves. There aren't that huge level restrictions on NPC tickets too.]

The viewers described it simply as...

[Even if the rankers from Korea and China are on the same level, we can’t win because of the gap between the NPCs...?]

[The truth is the land in China is really larger and there are more opportunities there. How can we even win with this...]

[There’s a really huge gap between our NPCs...]

Yes, it seemed that it was truly the case.

Meanwhile, the Korean rankers chose to retreat to minimize their damage.

“Run!!!”

All of them started to run without looking back, but the problem was that the Chinese rankers did not want to leave them alone.

“After them!!!!”

“Don’t let even a single one of them survive!!!”

The Chinese players chased them with great fanfare. But then...

“Firestorm! Firestorm! Firestorm! Firestorm! Firestorm!”

Crackle!

...huge whirlpools of fire appeared in the middle of the battlefield stopping the advance of the Chinese rankers.

[Ah! There’s only one person that can use magic like this!]

[It’s Black Mage Ali!]

Just like they expected, Ali appeared in front of them using Blink. He said, “Go.”

“How, how can you deal with them alone...?!”

“Run. The plants will show you the way. So, run.”

“...?”

“...?”

“Run along the path that they show you. You will find the way for our country to win there.”

“...Alright,” Lucia answered with a nod. She could not understand what he meant but she still followed his words. Then, after running quite a distance, she heard his voice again.

“Frieeeeeeeeeeeeend!!!”

“...”

As she continued to run, Lucia thought, *‘Is he trying to make us not feel grateful with that?’?*

Lucia had just been moved by Ali’s sacrifice, but it seemed like that feeling had quickly started to disappear.

“You think we can’t kill you when you’re all alone?”

But then, a hellfire and an ice spear suddenly appeared in Ali’s hands.

“...!”

“...!”

“That’s impossible!” One of the high-leveled mages from China’s camp shouted in shock. What was even surprising was the fact that Ali cast both spells in a short amount of time. No mage had achieved such a feat yet.

“Double casting?!!!!”

“Not a single one of you rats can go past me to get to my friends.”

At that moment...

Crack!

...a gigantic snake of over ten meters in length appeared from the ground.

Slither!

The giant Predatory Snake flicked its tongue and glared at the opposing rankers. Watching this scene, Ali thought, ‘*Friends, there’s a path to our victory.*’?

The viewers of Korea and the world did not know which guild Ali belonged to right now. But this mysterious Ali just began to shoot his magic spells towards the thousands of enemies in front of him.

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

The magic was so strong that even Hu Yitian could not escape from the attacks. After all, Ali did not spare any of his MP as he defended his fellow citizens from the enemies.

[South Korea’s player Black Mage Ali has tied up the feet of our country’s rankers and soldiers!]

[We have no choice but to acknowledge the strength of that player. Even that gigantic snake by his side could dispel the mages, archers and warriors’ skills!]

[He’s amazing!!!]

Three Chinese people were sitting together in front of the TV.

“Hu Yitian has done a lot, right?”

“Hu Yitian’s head is getting bigger. He thinks he’s really strong just because the people call him a hero.”

The three of them laughed at that. These three people were unofficial Chinese rankers. They were part of a group of fifteen people. However, unbelievable as it might be, Hu Yitian could only rank tenth among these people. The three people watching the TV were all ranked first to third among their own group and they could completely overpower Hu Yitian.

“But the real big shots in Korea have not appeared yet.”

“Well, it’s the same for us too.”

None of the unofficial rankers in Korea, like Kaistra, have appeared. The same was true for them. These unofficial rankers from China were called '*Black Dragon Order*', a group of dark gamers that only moved for the money.

"He's going to escape the moment he runs out of MP."

Just like what the man said, Black Mage Ali used Blink and escaped. The members of the Black Dragon Order continued to watch their TV leisurely.

Meanwhile, Minhyuk stood still, not understanding what was happening.

If someone asked him, '*Do you think of Ellie as an NPC and not as a person?*', his answer would be no. Minhyuk, with his eating addiction, had built several connections as he played *Athenae*.? Among those connections, he could say that he valued his relationship with Ellie the most.

Even though Ellie sat in a high position as the Empress of an empire, she treated Minhyuk kindly and cared for him as if he was her younger sibling. Back then, Minhyuk firmly believed that he did not have any friends in reality, so he was very grateful for Ellie's love and care.

However, that same loving noona of his was now pointing her sword coldly towards him and said, "Minhyuk, grab your sword. Attack me as if you're going to kill me."

Minhyuk just asked her, "Why?"

"Because I judged that you're the only one that can help us overcome our current situation," Ellie answered, smiling bitterly.

Ellie knew that it was something that she could not do. However, she believed that Minhyuk could do it. Even though it was only temporary, Ellie was aware that Minhyuk had performed the Pinnacle of Ellie's Swordsmanship before. So, he was better than her in that case. But she had to experiment and see if he was qualified to get something of that caliber right now.

Ellie continued to say, "I will check your power and tell you a way to become stronger."

Hearing her words made Minhyuk think and reflect. Did he have to fight Ellie desperately to become stronger? Minhyuk thought for a while before shaking his head and saying, "Then, I won't do it."

But Ellie just smiled after hearing his words. It was as if she had expected this to happen. She asked, "Really? Are you sure?"

"Yes, I won't do it!"

Then, Ellie called for her aide, Ruth, who came in with a golden treasure chest in his hands. When she opened it, a small and mysterious stone was lying inside.

Ellie said, "This is the Wishing Stone. This Wishing Stone can be used in the place that you will be going, and I will only give this to you if I acknowledge your strength in a fight against me. Also, this Wishing Stone allows the one that will use it to set anything that they want."

Minhyuk looked a bit disappointed so Ellie continued to explain, saying, “For example, you can set ‘artifact materials’ as your reward for completing a trial. If you do that, you will get excellent materials every time you clear a trial.”

“...”

Minhyuk’s expression started to change. Like a sly fox, Ellie’s eyes gleamed. She said, “That’s right. If you set cooking ingredients, it will give you ingredients every time you break and clear a trial.”

Then, after her explanation, Ruth immediately closed the treasure box with a snap. Ellie continued to speak, “I was going to give it to you if you showed me a satisfactory result, but... What. A. Pity.”

Despite the tempting reward, Minhyuk still hesitated. No matter how much he liked food, he was not someone that would attack his noona after all.

‘He’s still hesitating. I have to use my last resort.’?

Ellie did not expect that Minhyuk would hesitate despite being offered food. She still felt happy about it. This just showed how much Minhyuk cared about her. It was also because of his love and care that Ellie had no choice but to use her last resort.

“Listen well.”

Minhyuk obediently perked his ears up to listen.

“Minhyuk, I ate the egg that you saved for your cold noodles last time.”

“...!”

“I also only asked for a bite of ramyeon, but ended up eating everything.”

“...!!”

“I was eating sweet and sour pork, but I poured the sauce and made it soggy without asking.”

“Diiiiiiiiiiii!!!”

Minhyuk charged at Ellie with the intent to kill. That was right. This was Ellie’s dignity and pride as someone that had reached the pinnacle level in her Minhyuk-Training skill!

Chapter 327: Atlas, The Territory with the Strongest Defense

Ellie had pondered deeply about this matter. She was aware that the appearance of the Continent Cloud system gave them a slight increase in their chances of winning. This was something that she was very grateful for.

However, just like the rumors, the Cairon Continent was a huge continent. In other words, their reserves of resources and strong individuals were deep and overflowing.

Ellie was also aware that the concept of the Eight Pinnacle Attack Skills existed only in both the Cairon Continent and the Asgan Continent. But to her knowledge, there were skills comparable to the power of the Pinnacle Attack Skills in other continents beyond the two. Ellie might not know

this, but the *Athenae*?operators only gave the Pinnacle Attack Skills to the Korean and Chinese servers, and gave the other countries skills that were on par with the Pinnacle Skills, but under different names.

Ellie recalled that there were two Pinnacle Attack Skills in Asgan Continent. One was her Ellie's Swordsmanship, and the other was the swordsmanship of a mysterious person that was known to be second only to the Sword God of the past.

'If the remaining six skills are in the Cairon Continent then...?'

If that was truly the case, then they were facing the worst possible situation. Fortunately, the Ranker Destroyer Hu Yitian's Pinnacle Skill was only at the half-pinnacle level.

That was when Ellie thought of a way for Minhyuk to reach the realms of the true Pinnacle.

'He can learn half of two Pinnacle Skills.'

Ellie's Swordsmanship had never reached the complete Pinnacle form. But, if Minhyuk was able to learn the halves of two Pinnacle Skills, then a new form of Pinnacle might be born. However, there was still a problem.

'The Pinnacle can only be obtained by the chosen ones.'

One had to be strong to reach and learn the Pinnacle. Ellie was also aware that Ellie's Swordsmanship was the most dangerous, and the most powerful among the eight Pinnacle Attack Skills. That was the reason why she felt a lot of pressure on her body whenever she used the skill. And it was also the same reason why she had to test Minhyuk. She had to know if Minhyuk deserved to receive that power.

'Will he be able to land an attack on me?'

Successfully doing so would prove his talent and skill. That was all Ellie needed to know.

"Dieeeeeeeee!!!" Minhyuk shouted as he rushed forward with all his might. But just like the soft dance of a gentle woman, Ellie's sword moved gently to parry his attack.

Clang!

Minhyuk's sword bounced back. Seeing this, Ellie laughed and said, "So, you're weak."

Ellie leisurely moved her sword to stop Minhyuk's attack. Despite his failed attack, Minhyuk did not stop. He turned around and used the power of Sword God Valen that resided in his body, increasing the power of his swordsmanship. One of the skills that was strengthened was 'Like the Wind'.

Dash!

Minhyuk dashed forward with 'Like the Wind' and narrowed the distance between him and Ellie, before unleashing his Rampant Sword.

Slash! Dash, dash, dash! Dash, dash, dash! Slash!?

However, even with the hundreds of sword lights that Rampant Sword had created, Ellie was still able to somehow easily dodge the attacks. No, she was even able to rush forward and narrow the distance between her and Minhyuk.

“Step.”

Ellie’s Swordsmanship was originally Ellie’s own. She could use the skill far better than Minhyuk. The distance that she could cover with the skill was longer than when Minhyuk used it. Even the movements of her sword that struck Minhyuk were as clear and fluid as a gentle, flowing stream.

Slap!

“Ugh!”

“With this strength, you think you can get any ingredients that you like? Can you even kill me for stealing the eggs for cold noodles?”

Minhyuk’s sides were struck by Ellie’s sword but he was smiling happily. He thought, ‘*This is fun...!*’?

Minhyuk definitely found it to be fun. After all, he was also a very strong person that could rival and surpass the Olympic gold medalist, Carr.

On the other hand, Ellie had held her sword since she was born. At seven years old, Ellie had killed and slashed the necks of those that tried to kill her, all by herself. At thirteen, she slaughtered hundreds of soldiers with her own hands. At sixteen, she surpassed the previous Emperor. And at twenty, her abilities to lead and govern had been recognized as the people sat her on the Empress’ throne. Ellie’s strength and power was beyond one’s imagination.

“Blooming Sword,” Ellie said as she gently lowered the tip of her sword on the ground.

[Blooming Sword]

[A sword will rise from the ground and attack your enemies indiscriminately within a 20 meter radius from your position. It will cause an additional 450% damage even if the sword failed to stab the opponent.]

Ellie’s strength was fundamentally different from Minhyuk. Compared to Minhyuk’s Blooming Sword, Ellie’s Blooming Sword could deal an enormous amount of damage with thousands of sharper, longer sword lights. Even the radius was twenty meters. That was not all. It would even cause an explosion even if it did not stab through the enemies.

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

Minhyuk was momentarily put into a daze from the powerful explosion caused by thousands of blooming flower sword lights. Ellie took the time to tie her loose hair up during the commotion. However, even after being engulfed with thousands of explosions, Minhyuk was still able to summon Beanie.

[Absolute Defense.]

[No attack will be allowed to touch Beanie and his master for two seconds.]

With the Absolute Defense skill, all attacks that came towards Minhyuk would be nullified. Once the thick cloud of dust settled down, Minhyuk appeared and said, “Noona! Isn’t this really fun?!”

“...Ha!” Ellie let out a scoff in disbelief after seeing Minhyuk swiftly summon his pet and use his pet’s skill, despite the confusion and chaos. Ellie was also shocked after hearing the words that Minhyuk used to describe his fight against her, the Sword Emperor and strongest sword of the Eivelis Empire.

‘*Fun.*’

Minhyuk’s words made Ellie startled. She thought, ‘*Minhyuk, how far have you come?*’

Ellie could feel it. She could tell that Minhyuk’s rise to power might already be much higher than what she had predicted before. The situation right now made it clear to her that she had underestimated him.

“Well, then...” Ellie grinned and continued to say, “Let’s both give it our all.”

[The rewards will be given to Cairon Continent.]

Hearing the notifications made Lucia grimace. She knew that they were in a desperate situation. Out of their 2,500 strong troops, only 300 had survived. Fortunately, most of the survivors were their country’s top ranking players.

.

“Damn! Damn! Damn!”

The guild leaders and the top rankers that did not belong to any group were all constantly cursing. That was when Lucia saw the plants in their surroundings move together and bend to one side.

“We should follow the direction that the plants are telling us to go.”

“What?” Carr asked, looking at her in question. Even the other rankers were looking at her in confusion.

“Didn’t Ali say that they will lead us to the path for our country to win?”

“Do you believe his words?”

“...If we don’t believe his words, do you think that we will still have hope with the situation that we’re in?” Lucia asked, effectively silencing Carr and the rest of the players. After all, what she said was true.

The attack base, Berdk, located in the center of the Cloud Continent had already been lost. From what they read on the operators’ announcement, Berdk was well-equipped with large siege weapons. This meant that their position would be pushed back even further in the future. There was even a high possibility of the cloud ticket-bearing Chinese players stepping into Korean land and invading.

“We understand.”

All of the players present nodded in agreement as they ran towards the direction that the plants were pointing to. As they continued their journey, they eventually arrived in front of an indescribably beautiful territory.

“What, what?! How come there’s a place like this...?”

“What the hell? Isn’t this a territory?”

“Ah... Perhaps Ali found this hidden territory inside the Continent Cloud?! Maybe the owner of the territory is very strong!”

The players talked about countless theories. After all, this was a very magnificent territory! Even the crops growing around the territory looked scrumptious.

“Ahhh. I want to eat those apples.”

Strangely enough, apples were growing on the ground and not on the trees. The moment a player reached out for an apple...

“I believe Minhyuk will not let you go if you pick that apple and eat it?”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

All of the players present turned to look at the source of the sound and saw around twenty people dressed in glimmering red armor. Everyone looked at their armors in awe and admiration while one of the players muttered unconsciously, “Legend Guild...?”

“We welcome you to our territory, Atlas,” Genie said, smiling lightly. But the moment she said that...

“Why the hell didn’t you come?!!! Why?! Damn bastards! If you came!! If you came, then the outcome would have changed!!!”

...someone went into an outburst. And this someone was none other than Carr. Carr was someone that was known for being conceited and arrogant. He always believed that he was the best. But his voice right now was tinged with ‘*despair*’ and ‘*resentment*’

.

Even if Carr said that they would be ‘*useless*’ since they did not become High Class players, the Legend Guild of the past would definitely not be powerless in the field. They were outstanding and skilled rankers by themselves even if the game’s flow had changed.

“I’m sorry. We were running a bit too late.”

“Damnit...!”

It was not easy for Carr to calm his anger and resentment. Then, Lucia stepped forward and said, “So, what are you going to do now? Ali said that there’s certainly a way for us to win here?”

"I guess our guild member has delivered the words safely."

"...?!"

"...?!"

"...?!"

"...?!"

Everyone present wondered if they had some problem with their hearing for a moment. Black Mage Ali was their guild member? The same mage Ali that was said to be standing at the peak of the player mages in the entire continent? All of the guilds had offered him their best treatment. Even the four major guilds had offered more than 50% of stakes in their guild to recruit him. But Ali had refused them all. And this very same Ali had become a member of Legend Guild, no, the new guild with their new name?

"So, what's the way?"

Genie opened her mouth calmly and said, "It's simple..." Then, Genie looked at them one by one before continuing her words. She said, "Protect Atlas territory and believe in it."

However, the rankers looked at her as if they could not understand her words. Carr even spat out, "You're crazy..."

What way? There was no way at all! They could not really understand her. But then, Genie said, "Ah, we have some visitors. Would you like to see them?"

Genie brought out a large crystal ball as the players flocked to see what she was talking about. There, they saw the team chasing after them. It was something that they were even unaware of.

"Red Dragon Order..." Lucia, the assassin, mumbled.

Genie turned to look at her. Sensing her gaze, Lucia continued to say, "The Red Dragon Order is a guild created by unofficial Chinese assassins. They have a total of thirty people. Even though they are only thirty, each and every single one of them are players above Level 500. In fact, they are considered to be China's top assassin guild. That's the Red Dragon Order."

Genie smiled, her eyes turning into crescents. She said, "Is that so? Then, let's see who will win between the best killers and the best defense. Shall we?"

Rio, a Chinese Ztuber, was world-renowned. The videos that he posted were always considered to be the best video of the month. And right now, Rio was smiling from ear to ear.

[Kgghk! Those barbarian Korean bastards are running away! Is it because they know that the Red Dragon Order is coming for them?]

[If only all thirty of the Red Dragon Order came, then all of the Korean rankers will be killed in a blink of an eye. Don't you think so?]

The Red Dragon Order had decided to show themselves in the battle in the Continent Cloud. Instead of asking a broadcaster, they asked Rio, a Ztuber, to help them do this. Rio had been expecting high

ratings for this video since the Chinese players would definitely love to watch this ‘*Massacre*’. In fact, even the leader of the Red Dragon Order, Luca, was an assassin with a level of at least Level 530. Transferring into a High Class? He already finished that long ago. His High Class was called the Envoy of Death. It was a class that was on a different level from Lucia’s Assassin of the Moon.

Right now, they were running towards where the Korean players had fled. They had missed the perfect moment to deal with them, but their members had been using their stealth and speed to chase in the direction where the Korean players went. They began to go deeper and deeper into the Korean side in the midst of their chase.

“This way.”

The members of the Red Dragon Order were all stealthy and fast, none of them was an exception. Rio might be a BJ, but he was also a ranker and yet, he was already having a hard time following them. Just then...

“*Slurp... nyam, nyam... slu... nyam...?deli... myeon!*”

A strange and mysterious voice began to echo through the thickets. Luca immediately raised his right arm at the sound, making everyone stop in their tracks.

“Somebody’s here,” Luca whispered.

“This... It’s a very unusual place.”

The members of Red Dragon Order nodded, still calm. After all, they have the strength to kill the Emperor during his meal if they ever wanted to. They believed that there was no enemy that they could not defeat. They continued to move forward, only to see a boy singing in his creepy and ghastly voice.

“*Slurp, nyam, nyam! Slurp, nyam, nyam!?Delicious Ramyeon!*”

Rio’s camera caught the figure of the boy causing a flood of comments from the viewers.

[Is that a Korean Ghost?]

[What the hell? Isn’t this too scary? Why is that little boy sitting alone and singing in this dark and gloomy forest?]

[Is he the boy who lost his family in the forest?]

[Then, did he become a ghost with resentment...?]

Just like them, the members of the Red Dragon Order were also nervous. It was strange. How could they be nervous, right? Was the boy really a Korean Ghost?

“Hey,” Luca called out to the boy carefully. And then...

“Aaaaaaaack!!!”

...the boy jumped to his feet and turned to face them and asked, “What do you put in your ramyeon first? The noodles? Or the soup?”

Chapter 328: Atlas, The Territory with the Strongest Defense

“...”

“...”

“...”

The members of Red Dragon Order and Rio the Ztuber all went silent for a moment. The only thing that was still bustling with activity was BJ Rio's live chat.

[What the hell was that Lololol!]

[Are there no frightening bastards in Korea at all?]

[As expected of the game XXX country.]

[Of course you have to put the soup first when it comes to ramyeon.]

However, the members of the Red Dragon Order and Luca were not in the mood to play games at all. All of them had no intention of answering.

Although they did not intend to play around, they were aware that this mysterious, albeit intellectually handicapped, boy came from the Asgan Continent. That meant that there was only one course of action. Their verdict? Show no mercy. They had to kill him.

Shing!

Luca's daggers appeared. Red Dragon Order's Luca was fundamentally different from Ma Zheonu, despite them both being assassins. Looking closely, Luca could see that the boy had just finished cooking ramyeon.

‘*One strike,*’ Luca thought. This was his only act of mercy. A quick, painless death.

Luca's arm moved as an image of his body appeared right behind the boy, despite his body still standing among his group. Then, he slit the boy's throat. No. He tried to do so. He truly intended for his dagger to slit the boy's throat, but his dagger was easily blocked by the boy's wooden chopsticks.

“...!”

“...!”

All of the members of the Red Dragon Order were shocked. The skill that Luca used to attack the boy was ‘*Illusion Attack*’, an attack that created an image similar to his figure. Even if it was just an illusion, the attack power of the skill would still be as strong as his own attack. No, in fact, the illusion would even have a 200% increase in attack power. It was meant to be a skill that could kill his enemies quickly and easily. To their horror, that skill was blocked by a pair of wooden chopsticks.

“Hey? Do you put the noodles in ramyeon first? Or the soup?”

“...Die,” Luca said loudly as all thirty members of the Red Dragon Order moved to attack the boy. The image of the Red Dragon Order with their black mask and red armor attacking a single boy looked a bit overkill.

Flash!

The daggers of the members of the Red Dragon Order hiding behind a tree flew towards the boy.

Clang!

To their horror, the boy’s chopsticks were enough to stop each and every single one of their attacks. The boy did not even stop moving as he rushed towards them, shouting, “I’m Conir!!! Conir just asked a question but you attacked Conir!!! Bad!!!”

Five members of the Red Dragon Order flew straight towards the boy. Someone even sneakily threw a dagger towards the boy’s head.

Fwoosh!

The boy just tilted his head to avoid the sudden attack. Then, another dagger aimed for his shoulders. And just like before, the boy gently turned his body with a slight twist of his feet and easily evaded the attack. Then, another dagger went for the boy’s abdomen. However, the boy grabbed the assassin’s wrist and pulled his body down in a single move.

‘Ho, how can this be possible...?’ Rio thought, astonished and appalled at the sight.

The Red Dragon Order was the best assassin guild in China. Once someone placed a name on their murder list, they would definitely finish the job in just three hours. But these assassins were actually being played around by a single little boy.

“Sh...shit...!” Luca cursed. Just then, the boy suddenly appeared in front of him.

“Death Dag...”

Luca tried to cast his skill, but the boy was faster. He raised his chopsticks high and stabbed Luca straight in the head.

Dong!

The sound of the wooden chopsticks hitting Luca on the head rang loudly in the clearing. The stab was so strong that Luca, the leader of the Red Dragon Order, staggered and swayed. What was worse was the fact that 15% of his HP had disappeared from that blow. But that was not the end of the boy’s attack. The boy’s wooden chopsticks went straight towards his neck, chest, and several other vital points.

Stab, stab, stab, stab, stab—

“Keuhaaaack!”

[Your HP has fallen below 70%.]

[You have received an attack to the neck.]

[Your breathing has been compromised.]

[You have received an attack to the chest.]

[Your body has been paralyzed from the pain in your chest.]

Luca was rendered helpless in an instant. He thought, *‘There, there’s someone like this in Korea...?’*

It was clear that the boy in front of them was just an NPC. Regardless, he turned out to be a monstrous existence. The members of the Red Dragon Order rushed forward to save him.

“Captain!”

“Stop him!!!”

Unfortunately for them, the boy was quicker. He had already grabbed the dagger from Luca’s arms even before his guild members had arrived. And...

Stab!

...the boy stabbed Luca in the chest.

“Keuhaack!” Luca screamed in pain as he fell down. His guild members looked at him in agitation.

“You goddamn bastard!”

“How dare you lay your hands on Captain!”

“I will show you what hell is like!!!”

“Conir!! Conir is the greatest ramyeon businessman!!! Conir, bring it on!!!” Conir shouted loudly. However, even if the boy wanted to fight, the appearance of another man made him stop.

The man was quite handsome, with his dark skin and tall build. His right hand was holding a black spear, while his left hand was holding a book with the title *‘Why Did the Prince Go Out Tonight?’*. The man said, “Conir, it’s time to go home. You can’t play anymore past this time. *Coochie, coo~*”

“Okay!”

‘A man from the demon race suddenly appeared? But, why does he sound like he’s a parent picking up his son, as though he had run around and played with his friends until late in the evening?’

Just then, the demon also did something strange. He said, “Listen, this is a very interesting scene. *My body trembled in excitement as His Majesty’s hands slowly swept down my legs...*”

“...”

“...”

“You want to hear more, right? You’re curious, right?” The man from the demon race asked, even though he was the only one who talked. He then continued to say, “Then, purchase the bestseller novel *‘Why Did the Prince Go Out Tonight?’* by the erotic novelist

and unique?author Aruvel. Now, at a 5% discount from its original price of 10,000 gold. You can now buy it at a rare price of 10,500 gold.”

“Hiiiiik!”

“This bastard...”

The Red Dragon Order lost their calm. This was clearly mockery. How could someone dare speak peacefully and calmly in front of their glaring killing intent?

These peaceful and calm words made the Red Dragon Order lose their sanity. They faltered and trembled until all reason left their minds, clouded by anger. All of this was what Aruvel intended to do. The moment all of them jumped towards him in anger, Aruvel raised his spear and swung it gently.

[Demonic Dragon’s Spear Arts Chapter 5.]

[Exploding Spear.]

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

A huge explosion rose from the direction that the spear swung in. Three of the members of the Red Dragon Order had been caught in the explosion, while the rest flew back from the impact.

Then, Aruvel and the young boy, Conir, took the opportunity to run. However, the man from the demon race did not forget to say, “If you buy it now, I will sell it to you at a 10% discount for 11,000 gold!!!”

How could the price get more expensive when the discount increased?!!! The Red Dragon Order completely lost their reason as they ran after them, disappearing behind the huge thicket.

“...”

Rio was speechless after being left alone. He might be a top ranker too, but he was no match against the Red Dragon Order, the man from the demon race, and the young boy when it came to speed. All he could do was look around his surroundings.

Caw—

Caw, caw, caw—

All he could hear were crows cawing in the distance.

[Look at Rio’s face...]

[Doesn’t he look like a lost child?]

[But where can we buy the ‘Why Did the Prince Go Out Tonight?’ that the man from the demon race mentioned earlier?]

[...]

[...]

[...]

[...]

Then, someone suddenly appeared from the bushes.

“Hiiiiic!” Rio shouted in shock and fear. However, what came out was a very beautiful woman, a figure that could never be the cause of a terrified shriek. It was none other than Genie.

Ruth had worked as Ellie’s aide for a very long time. In fact, he had been supporting her and staying beside her ever since she was born. To him, Ellie was a wonderful person standing at the peak. Ruth had watched Ellie carry her sword since she was a child. She used that very same sword to correct and restore the nation’s power, that had weakened due to the Emperor’s disease. She was also a genius. Her talent for swordsmanship easily surpassed the previous Emperor, making her the Sword Emperor at the mere age of twenty.

This very same Ellie began to care for, and loved a foreigner named Minhyuk. In fact, her love for Minhyuk seemed to be more than anybody else at this point. When it happened, Ruth thought that Ellie was lonely. She had fought for her kingdom, against the world all by herself, but she still remained the same. She never shed tears nor showed frustration despite the hardships and sorrow that was thrown at her. Her image as the Empress was the very image that her citizens had of her. She was and would always be tough.

Interestingly, she would laugh and joke around whenever she was with Minhyuk. Ruth thought that was all. But at this moment, Ruth’s thoughts changed.

‘Perhaps Her Majesty, Ellie...’

He was not aware of it despite their closeness, but he realized that perhaps Ellie was tired. She might have wanted to lean on someone’s shoulder or listen to someone’s voice. He realized that Ellie did not cherish and love Minhyuk just because she was lonely. It seemed that she cherished and loved him because she saw the potential in Minhyuk. He had the potential to grow strong and share her burdens. Ruth’s heart burned and blazed at the sight in front of him. Ellie soaring in the sky and showing her powerful swordsmanship while Minhyuk tried to dig into her gaps while casting ‘Scattering Sword’. They were strong. He was strong.

When Ruth first saw Minhyuk, Minhyuk was chuckling happily at him after he cooked and ate a precious medicine. It almost drove him crazy. He had thought that Minhyuk was an idiot. However, his views and thoughts on Minhyuk had completely changed. Minhyuk had now become strong, strong enough to fight toe to toe against Ellie without being pushed back.

‘But...?’

He could not beat Her Majesty yet. However, Ruth could see that Minhyuk had the desire to win and triumph over Ellie. He would never shame that. He would even applaud him for maintaining that strong desire to surpass such a mountain.

Flash!

Minhyuk’s body moved smoothly and neatly. He also had huge talents for the sword. His movements were quick and fast, like a butterfly flying quickly with the wind.

[Three Consecutive Quick Assault]?

[Your attacks will have three consecutive strikes.]?

Although his power and skill was still low, he was someone who Ellie had recognized and taught her Swordsmanship to. However, there were two things that Minhyuk had an advantage over Ellie. And those were ‘artifacts’ and ‘skills’.

Clang! Clang, clang!

Ellie gently blocked Minhyuk’s sword that came thrice in a row, before stabbing Minhyuk at his sides.

[You have successfully evaded the attack.]

The effect of Minhyuk’s newly acquired ‘*Monarch’s Armor*’ was fully displayed here, allowing him to evade the attack. Thankfully, evading attacks would leave a gap in the opponents’ movements. This was an advantage of evading over nullifying.

“Sword of Fury.”

Minhyuk did not miss the opportunity and quickly used Sword of Fury. Wind blew strongly in the area as a powerful force appeared in his sword.

Shwaaaaaa!

Minhyuk immediately stabbed his sword forward. However, Ellie was already behind him.

Claaaang!

She used the same powerful force to send Minhyuk flying away.

“*Cough!*” Minhyuk coughed after rolling around from the force.

“So, you’re really weak,” Ellie taunted. However, she was very surprised deep inside.

‘*One level.*’?

Minhyuk had only gone up by that much, but his strength was already comparable to Ellie’s own power. She wondered since when the kid that loved to eat food grew to be this strong.

‘*I have already confirmed it.*’?

She had confirmed that Minhyuk had the body and the talent to learn the Pinnacle Skill. However, she wanted to see more of Minhyuk’s strength, so Ellie did not stop the fight. Meanwhile, Minhyuk stood up and pondered about something.

Then, Minhyuk raised his hand and asked, “Noona, can I eat?”

“...”

It was none other than the skill ‘Let’s Have a Meal’. His idea was to use the skill and his Absorption Conversion at the same time. Ellie nodded and said, “You can use any means necessary.”

Rio was shocked by the sudden appearance of a woman. He thought, ‘*A Korean ranker?*’. He was working as a BJ, so he knew the faces of the rankers from other countries.

Seeing him Genie asked, “You’re doing a live, right?”

“Ah... Oh... Uhm... Yes...”

If Rio got logged out at this point in time, he would not be able to broadcast any content inside the Continent Cloud. That was why he was behaving like an obedient puppy in front of Genie.

“Hello. I’m Genie from the Korean Server,” Genie said, starting with a small greeting. Then, she continued to say, “These days, the confrontation between Korea and China is very hot on the internet. And I have seen a lot of bad comments about our country.”

She chuckled lightly and started to talk about some examples. Genie said, “Korea’s a game XXX country. Korea will definitely lose to China even if we only use 20% of our power. In fact, it was only just yesterday that the Chinese Ranker Chaos said that this is not a continental war against South Korea. What was it that he said? It was a slaughter?”

That was right. Even Chinese rankers, who had to be careful with their words and actions, were openly mocking Korea. Then, a cold smile settled on Genie’s lips. Their words and actions were a slap across the face of Korea. So Genie smiled and said, “Well then, let me give you my answer.”

Her smiling expression immediately turned cold and frosty. Korean rankers were also proud and strong. She thought that no matter what country it was, anyone that mocked them had to be crushed to death. They could not lose their confidence and pride.

Genie’s voice was cold as she said, “Stop wagging your tongues and come if you can. You XXX bastards.”

“...!”

Rio looked at Genie in shock when he heard her words. This was a total declaration of war against all of the Chinese players in Continent Cloud. And...

‘So, so cool!’

Rio shuddered in excitement. The rankers of the country that his people had mocked, believing that they would lose, did not shake nor waver. They even declared a war against them. Rather than being angry, Rio thought that she looked cool. He looked at her and thought, *‘Perhaps...’*.

Perhaps they were far stronger than what they had thought. And at that moment, the real-time search results on Chinese Portal Sites completely changed.

Chapter 329: The Soldiers’ Great Battle

The video of South Korea’s former Legend Guild Master Genie declaring war against China had become a hot topic on various Chinese portal sites! This was how the Chinese players responded to her words...

[Is she crazy? They already lost the greatest attack base Berdk in the center to us, China, but they still want us to come at them?]

[They say that those who are courageous are always naive. LOL. The people over there always said Legend Guild, Legend Guild, but what did Legend Guild really do there?]

Then, Doctor Ranker, the person most knowledgeable about all of the rankers in the world, appeared.

[Genie. Real name: Im Jihye. One of Korea's top rankers and was the master of the Former Legend Guild. Although Legend Guild, the guild that she led, was only a small guild, it was considered as Korea's best guild. But then they declared their guild's dissolution suddenly. She subsequently joined the 'Let's Eat Sect', a new guild led by Food God Player Minhyuk, as the vice-guild master. There has been a lot of discussion over this matter.]

[A lot of discussion?]

[Oh! The great doctor has appeared!]

[Yes. There has been a lot of discussion over Locke, Ascar and Crow's love triangle. There's also talks about Food God Minhyuk fighting an 18:1 battle against the Legend Guild to absorb the guild. However, what's certain is Legend Guild, once known as the best guild in Korea, disappeared so suddenly, only to reappear as a strange guild called Let's Eat Sect. However, the problem begins here. High Class and Royal Class have appeared all over the world. However, contrary to all of the players' expectations, the members of Legend Guild did not seem to have produced any High Class players.]

[Great doctor. Do you think that getting High Class is easy? From what I heard, Legend Guild is only a group of twenty people. Isn't it more logical that they do not have any High Class players?]

However, Doctor Ranker rebutted almost immediately.

[Not at all. They're different. The four major guilds in Korea have twenty-one people in the top 40, but Legend Guild alone has over fifteen players in the top 40.]

Everyone that saw this was both shocked and impressed. They were truly the most prestigious guild in Korea, enough to compare against the four major guilds.

[But, they haven't transferred to a High Class and there are rumors that they have disbanded for real. In other words, it's just a waste of time.]

These were the final words of the great and trusted doctor. The people listened attentively to the words of the doctor, not knowing that the doctor's true identity was actually Ascar, a member of Minhyuk's guild.

Ascar was sitting in a suite in a five-star hotel in Korea. She looked out of the window before turning her attention back to her computer and tapping on her keyboard. Then, she took a sip of tea to moisten her throat while thinking, *'It started.'*

Everything was going according to Genie's 'plan'. Right now, their counterattack had already begun.

Ever wondered what the Let's Eat Sect did when the Asgan Continent and Cairon Continent got connected through the Continent Cloud?

At the appearance of the Continent Cloud, the guild master, Minhyuk, told his guild members to watch the war situation for a while as they made preparation for emergencies and contingencies.

“Uncle Roadol, please set up powerful traps around the territory to make sure that none of our enemies can enter.”

Ilhwa Construction's president, Roadol, had the legendary class Master Trapper. Upon Minhyuk's request, he began setting up a huge number of traps around Atlas Territory.

Installing traps was basically something that the players did not want to do. First off, a trapper was considered to be the worst class to have, especially during PVPs. However, Roadol was different. He was also excellent in close combat with his gigantic ax. His class then changed to the legendary class Master Trapper after he used his amazing skills in making bombs from real life, to make bombs without the help of the *Athenae* game system. In fact, the members of the Let's Eat Sect had seen his traps at work before. However, it was more fitting to call them mines, rather than traps. It was because they had an explosive power that could blow up everything within an entire four meter radius area!

“...Uncle.”

“Yeah?”

“You're not really going to wipe out the illegal buildings in our country, right?”

“If I could, then I would? Hahahaha! Explosions are thrilling!”

“...”

Minhyuk was speechless after discovering another surprising side of his Uncle Roadol. On the other hand, Uncle Smooth, the Poison Master and the president of Nottogi, was the only person that could handle thousands of poisons in *Athenae*. The most surprising fact was that he walked the same path as Roadol. Smooth was basically an expert when it came to food distribution, but his sense of ‘taste and flavor’ might as well be in the gutters. However, the fact that he was an expert in food distribution meant that he knew how to use food as poison.

“I really don't like uncle's class...”

“...Eh?” Smooth gasped at Minhyuk's incomprehensible words.

However, Smooth could plant a variety of poisons anywhere possible, whether it be in fruits, animals or even the land. The apples that he planted might look delicious and ripe for the picking, but anyone that ate the apples would definitely experience instant death. If the skunk that he planted poison in farted, everyone in the vicinity might faint.

Just like that, Minhyuk went through a lot of preparations for the upcoming war. As they continued to monitor the situation in the Continent Cloud, the mission to recapture the attack base located in the center of the continent had been issued. That was when Minhyuk concluded that Atlas territory's power was enough to withstand whatever attack they might receive. So, for the first time, Atlas territory flew in the sky.

However, there was only one problem that they did not expect. Atlas, despite becoming the City in the Sky, was extremely slow. It was still some distance away, but the Korean rankers were already being pushed back. When he saw this, Minhyuk judged that joining the fray at this time would not change a thing. So, his following strategy centered around defending territory and accepting the fleeing rankers. After giving his orders, Minhyuk went to see Ellie.

And right now, the Red Dragon Order was chasing after Conir and Aruvel deep inside Atlas territory. Rumel, the Red Dragon Order's vice guild master, was leading the chase. Although he was not as good as Luca, he was still a strong player that no other assassin could keep up to.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

Rumel quickly turned to look at the direction where the huge explosion rang.

Rumel was shocked. They were assassins that were expert at stealth, quick attacks and digging through the enemy's traps. They even received the passive skill '*Trap Search*'?the moment they changed classes and became assassins. All of the members of Red Dragon Order had already reached Level 7 of the Trap Search skill. Reaching this level meant that every member of their guild could easily discover a trap just by looking at it. However, it seemed like the skill proved to be useless in front of some trap. And that was not even the end of it.

"Keuaaaaaack!"

"Keheok!"

"I...I can't breathe! Aaaaaack!"

Screams rang loudly among them.

Was this the murderous fart that he had only heard of?

"..."

Vice Guild Master Rumel was left speechless. Assassins were, of course, very resilient against poisons. No, in fact, the Red Dragon Order's ability to withstand poison could be said to be the strongest in the continent. But the poison that they encountered was strong enough to ignore their passive skill '*Poison Resistance*'?

‘We’ve underestimated this territory.’

Only then did Rumel realize that this was their plan all along. The enemy had deliberately led them deep inside their territory.

Alas, it was already too late. Counting all of those that had been caught in the trap and poisoned, it seemed like the only one left was him. Then, the boy that they had been chasing suddenly appeared in front of Rumel. The boy said, “Conir!!! Conir got a hostage!!! Hostage!! Eat ramyeon!!!”

“What...?” Rumel asked dumbly, not understanding the situation that he was left in. Then, the boy suddenly attacked him, leaving him unable to resist. In the first place, the boy was an opponent that he could not fight against. Then, the boy covered Rumel’s eyes with a blindfold and brought him somewhere. When Rumel opened his eyes again, all he could see were white walls and a small handcart. And...

“Eat ramyeon!!!”

...the boy cooked ramyeon for him.

“Please, please stop... stop feeding me ramyeon!!!”

“I’m Conir!!! Hostage attacked Conir first! So, Hostage must tell Conir valuable information, otherwise Hostage eats ramyeon!!!”

“Keheok! I’ve already eaten thirty bowls of ramyeon...!!! No, why the hell do you put chocolate in ramyeon!!! N...no...! Not ramyeon and orange juice...! Keheok!”

It seemed like Conir had learned how to torture using ramyeon. Right now, the second Ma Zheonu was screaming.

Meanwhile, in Atlas territory.

The Korean rankers were all shocked after watching the Red Dragon Order disappear through the crystal ball.

“My...my goodness...”

“This...this is ridiculous...”

The Korean rankers saw how fast the Red Dragon Order moved. It was to the point that they knew that they would not survive an attack from them. They were all rankers, so it was not difficult to determine the power of their opponents.

“B...but, can skunk farts really melt the enemies...?”

“So, this is the murderous fart that we’ve only heard of...”

“I’m pretty sure it can make your lungs rot the moment it enters your system,” Genie said after coming back from who knew where.

‘My goodness! What terrible poison, right?’

None of them had heard of such a terrible poison before.

“So, this is the only place that can guarantee our victory...?”

Ali made it clear to them that they would find a way to victory if they followed the plants. All of the rankers could tell that protecting this territory was their path to victory. However, there was a problem. No matter how strong the territory was, it would be useless if the top rankers were all weak. Their Chinese enemies still had a lot of trump cards hidden up their sleeves. Even during this battle, their high rankers still had not appeared yet.

“Let me take command of the battle,” Carr said. It was only reasonable since he believed that the strongest player here was him. It was also true that the person that could survive the longest should be the commander.

But then, Genie said, “You can’t be the commander.”

“What?” Carr asked in disbelief, his face distorting in anger. Who was supposed to be the commander, if not him? Of course, this was not his territory, but if Genie asked for a cooperation, it would not be impossible. It was clear that she also needed the power of all the rankers present here.

Genie just gave them a clear and blunt answer. She said, “Because compared to our guild members, all of you are weak.”

“What bullshit! You think we’re the same? You haven’t even changed into a High Class...” Carr’s words faded after seeing the glint in Genie’s eyes.

“Who said that?” Genie asked as she looked everyone in the eye. Then she continued to say, “We don’t have any High Class members? More than half of our guild members have already transferred to High Class.”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

There were a total of nineteen key members of the former Legend Guild. From what Genie said, half of that number had transferred to High Class.

“...”

“...”

“...”

Everyone was shocked and speechless. The silence that enveloped them was only broken with Carr’s words. He said, “My god...?”

Chapter 330: The Soldiers’ Great Battle

A High Class referred to a class that was much more stronger than the existing classes. For example, Genie was a *'Whip Conjuror'* before she transferred to a High Class. After transferring to a High Class, it changed into *'Whip Warriorress'*. She received an additional 350 bonus stat points, and an increase in stats that suit the class Whip Warriorress. On top of that, she also received new skills, and a dramatic increase in skill level the moment she transferred to a High Class.

According to Genie's analysis and research, the quality of stats and skills that would be bestowed to the player upon awakening to a High Class would depend on the trial that they cleared. Of course, all the players right now only knew that the High Class trials were similar. They were the only exceptions, since they were the only ones to go to the Demon World to undergo their High Class trials. This was all thanks to Great Sage Aruvel. He opened the door for them and guided them through this path. That was the place where more than half of their group had awakened.

However, the other rankers, with their exception, posted articles *'about High Class'*. The articles reported how much stats, skill levels, and skills had been added to their repertoire after transferring classes. Genie was able to compare the data of all the High Class rankers all over the world through these articles. In doing so, she came to a conclusion.

Genie realized that the people that completed average High Class trials and awakened would only receive a 250 to 270-point increase in stats. Their skills' levels would also increase only by around two or three levels. Meanwhile, the players that underwent the lower trials for High Class would only receive around 200 to 230 stat points, and would only have around one to two levels increase in their skill levels.

In addition, there were those that had achieved higher stats and skill levels, despite transferring to similar High Classes. They were none other than the members of Let's Eat Sect. On average, the members of their guild had received around 300 to 340 stat points, with their skill levels increasing by around three to four levels, just as Genie experienced.

This was what Genie had concluded from all of the information available: *'Everything depends on the trial that one takes to awaken to High Class.'*? In other words, the rewards that they would receive would vary depending on the type of trial that they underwent. Thinking about that, it seemed like the members of Let's Eat Sect were very fortunate. No, it was extremely difficult to enter the Demon World, but they had Great Sage Aruvel. He guided them and told them about the places where they could transfer to High Class inside the Demon World.

'It's all thanks to Minhyuk.'

The moment Minhyuk assumed the position of Master, he brought them overwhelming advantages.

"But... why didn't you make it public?" Carr questioned them.

Genie simply answered him, "To catch the enemy off-guard."

In fact, they had aimed this *'surprise'* for the local players. However, the Continent Cloud suddenly appeared and the war began. And now, their enemy had changed and became China. And China did not know any information about them at all. What did that mean?

'We can surprise them with a big curveball.'

Genie's eyes narrowed as she looked at each of them. She asked, "Anyone want to join us?"

All of them hesitated. In a way, it was like they were going to raise the prestige of the Let's Eat Sect.

"If you're not going to help, then leave."

Lucia was the first to raise her hand. She had no reason to refuse. This was a matter of their nation's pride, not their own individual pride. The rankers that used to growl and bite at each other should join forces to help their country get out of this difficulty. Then, the people behind Lucia began to raise their hand one after the other. In the end, only Carr was left. However, he eventually raised his hand, despite being unwilling to, up until this point. It was only right for them to join forces and get rid of the disgrace that they had shown earlier.

"Let's prepare for war now. I'm pretty sure the Chinese players are very angry after I told them, 'Come if you can, you XXX bastards!'."

"...?"

"...?"

"...?"

Everyone was shocked to hear Genie's words.

'She looks like a gentle puppy but...'

'It seems like she's also a beast.'

They quickly moved to prepare for the war.

The atmosphere in the Special Players Management Team was not good. Berdk, located in the center of the Continent Cloud, had been captured. This was a very harsh condition for Korea. After all, not only were siege weapons in that place, but also the Kharamis soldiers that could use them. There were a total of 800 Kharamis soldiers that were stronger and more proficient in killing than soldiers from other territories. With these 800 troops, China had plenty of opportunities to use them. But what was worse was...

"Tomorrow, the mission?'Soldiers' Great Battle' will be issued."

Missions would be released every 2-3 days inside the Continent Cloud. This was simply done to balance out the battle between China and Korea, which already had an overwhelming gap. These missions would be similar to competitions. If their country won, then their citizens would cheer, right?

The Soldiers' Great Battle was a mission where players would not participate in. This was the day when they would solely focus on acquiring their own offensive and defensive bases. This was also a system where NPCs were tasked to fight each other. Most of the NPCs inside the Continent Cloud followed the players based on their abilities. Some of them were troops from guilds, and of course some of them were named NPCs. Of course they were present on both the Korean and Chinese sides.

However, what they were most concerned about was China's Great Wall Guild. The Great Wall Guild had ranked second among the three most influential guilds in *Athenae* around three months ago. They achieved this mainly because of their powerful soldiers and strong, hidden NPCs. What was worse was the fact that China had acquired the Kharamis soldiers and the troops from Berdk and other attack bases.

"I hope a miracle will happen tomorrow," President Kang Taehoon said. Team Leader Park and the other team leaders all looked at him in surprise.

"Why are you all gathered in the Special Players Management Team every day?"

"Huh? Because it's comfortable here?"

"Because it's as comfortable as my house, Team Leader Park."

"..."

Team Leader Park sighed. Everyone in the room had dark expressions on their faces. Then, Lee Minhwa said, "China might have the Great Wall, but we have Atlas."

"...Atlas is only a little over a month old, right? No matter how much it was hailed as a legendary territory, what can they do against the NPCs of the Great Wall Guild? They even have Qin Shi Huang's warriors?"

Team Leader Park had been very busy the past few days. No, in fact, he had been busy since a month ago, working overtime together with everyone else for the continental war, so he did not have any time to monitor the players. However, Employee Lee Minhwa had always been in the Special Players Management Team and monitoring the players. She got by everyday by eating ramyeon, chicken, pizza and other late night snacks.

And right now, her eyes were sparkling as she said, "They're more than enough."

If Ellie asked Minhyuk what kind of person she was in his eyes right now, he would immediately answer her with, '*A mountain I want to climb over and surpass.*' Minhyuk might have started to play the game due to his eating addiction, but he was also a true gamer.

Right now, Ellie was standing like a mountain that he needed to climb and surpass. Every single player wanted to clash swords against the Sword Emperor Ellie at least once in their lives. Besides, her swordsmanship was known to be the strongest among all of the swordsmanship that existed in Asgan Continent.

In fact, Sword Saint Conir could also be said to be a flickering lamp amidst a thunderstorm in front of Ellie. Minhyuk wanted to go beyond his noona. But even if he wanted to, Minhyuk realized that he was only being pushed back. So, he decided to use his final trump card. And Ellie willingly responded to him.

"Let's Have a Meal!" Minhyuk shouted as he activated his skill. Then, a round barrier appeared around him.

Minhyuk used Let's Have a Meal because it had a higher probability of letting him create higher-grade dishes. Of course, Minhyuk would also use the '*Recipe for the Food God*'. This skill was inherently different from regular dishes in the first place. The grade of the dish that this skill would create would vary depending on various factors, like what he craved, the harmony of the dishes, and many other factors. This skill would also create a recipe that would give a much higher stat and skill increase than regular recipes. However, it had a flaw. The duration of the effect was only a few seconds. Minhyuk quickly used the Recipe for the Food God.

[You have used the Recipe for the Food God.]

[You can now check the recipe for Rabokki]

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

? Ellie's Swordsmanship will have a significant increase and evolve.

? All stats will receive a significant increase

That was right. Just like in the recipe's description, Minhyuk was in a state of extreme hunger as he continued to battle against Ellie. Every single moment of the battle was intense, making him tense, and increasing the calories that his body burned.

The moment Minhyuk saw the recipe for rabokki, he could not help but chuckle. He was someone who knew how to eat after all.

Rabokki was something that was eaten with blood sausage and fried fritters. Minhyuk made rabokki first, as it was something that could be done easily and quickly. Then, he quickly took some blood sausage, liver, and innards from his inventory, before skillfully cutting them with his elaborate knife skills.

"N...No... how can food like that come out of your inventory?"

"I always carry some with me, in case I get hungry."

"..."

Ellie was left speechless. My goodness! There was actually a person that carried blood sausage, liver, and innards 365 days a year! It did not end there. Ellie saw Minhyuk adding some squid, covered with batter, into boiling oil.

Sizzle!

Ah! The sound was clearly lively and shocking! Even Ellie jumped up a bit in shock the moment the squid made contact with the oil. She watched in rapture as the squid danced around in the oil. Minhyuk quickly scooped up the squid with a sieve and tapped it with his hands, his movements like a very experienced snack bar owner! With that, all of the dishes had been finished. Minhyuk had added some cheese in his rabokki, so he went to open the lid of the pan to check.

Shwaaaaaaa—

Steam rose from the pan showing the perfectly captivating scene of melted cheese inside. That was not the only attractive dish, even the blood sausage, liver and innards as well as the other fried

fritters and fish cake soup lined up beside it were also eye-catching. Minhyuk grabbed his chopsticks and clamped some rabokki and cheese.

Shwaaaaaaa—

The noodles covered with the spicy rice cake sauce and cheese were easily pulled up by his chopsticks. Minhyuk quickly grabbed a plate and used it to support the noodles as he slurped them up.

“It’s well-soaked.”

Then, he grabbed some rice cakes and chomped on them. The texture was extremely chewy! As expected of rice cakes made with flour! After eating the rice cake, Minhyuk quickly stretched his chopsticks towards the fried seaweed rolls. He decided to taste the fried seaweed roll in its entirety without dipping it in anything.

Crunch—

The fried seaweed roll was still a bit greasy and warm when it entered his mouth. Oil spread in Minhyuk’s mouth, together with the unique and delightful flavor of the seaweed roll in every bite. Then, with the remaining half of the seaweed roll, he dipped it in the rabokki sauce and put it in his mouth again.

Crunch, crunch—

The bland and thick sauce easily swept away the greasiness of the fried seaweed roll. It was simply the perfect combination. Then, what happened if his throat got a little too dry? He would drink spoonfuls of warm fish cake soup.

“*Kgghk!*My energy is coming back! I’m getting energized!” Minhyuk shouted as he grabbed a skewer of fish cake before dipping it in soy sauce and eating it happily. Then, he turned his sights on the blood sausage. Blood sausage was best eaten with just a bit of salt at first. This would best showcase the soft and chewy texture of the blood sausage. Then, after tasting its original flavor, one could dip it in the rabokki’s sauce. Next was the liver. Liver had quite a dry texture, but what would happen if this dry texture met with the flavor of the rabokki sauce?

‘Its texture will become soft, and its flavor will turn spicy.’

Minhyuk smiled happily as he dipped the liver in the rabokki sauce. Just like that, he added the rice cake, blood sausage and fritters set to his rabokki and ate it happily. Then, the notifications rang.

[You have eaten a dish made solely for the Food God.]

[You won’t be able to eat any Recipe for the Food God for two weeks.]

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

[Rabokki. Together with the Blood Sausage, Fritter Set and Fish Cake Soup.]

[All five basic stats will have a 16% increase and Ellie’s Swordsmanship will have an increase of +3 in mastery for five minutes.]

The second round had begun.