

Gourmet 841

Chapter 841

Minhyuk smiled happily. The Immortal Knight Order proved that there were still many people that believed in him. Then, at that moment, more notifications rang out.

[Prime Minister Haze has acquired 1.12 million platinum.]

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“...!”

Minhyuk was shocked. That amount of money was equivalent to around 200 billion won. He could not help but smile faintly.

‘So, you’re working very hard. Haze.’

He did not know how she had acquired the funds. However, Minhyuk knew more than anybody else that Haze always thought about the best for the Beyond the Heavens Empire. Not long after, Haze came knocking on his door.

The moment Haze came inside, she immediately briefed him on the current situation. There were many kings and emperors that had traveled across the continent and were waiting for him outside.

This was different from the previous meetings that he had held with the kings of Asgan. When he met with the kings of Asgan Continent, he had completely overwhelmed them. However, the situation now was vastly different from before.

The one that had a significant influence in Asgan Continent was the Eivelis Empire. However, even though the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom back then was nothing but a small nation in control of a small land, his vassals wielded considerable power.

However, continental empires would usually have at least around three million troops at hand. In a situation like this, the newly established Beyond the Heavens Empire was at a disadvantage. In fact, it would be correct to say that they would have a hard time handing their business card to other empires and kingdoms with the current state that they were in.

Just when Minhyuk was about to step out to meet with them, Haze said, “By the way, Your Majesty... You have to meet them one by one.”

“...?”

Minhyuk tilted his head in confusion when he heard the strange request. Then, Haze told him the entirety of the story.

‘Haze. You... for real...’

Haze, who earned a few million platinum with just a few words, was truly very outstanding.

The Ardo Empire was a large empire located in the American Server. Before the appearance of the Luvien Empire, the Ardo Empire and its emperor, Consteinus, were considered to be the most powerful empire and the strongest individual in the American Server.

However, Ardo Empire was the first to be attacked by the Luvien Empire upon their arrival to the server. They were immediately brought to their knees and forced to sign an agreement with them.

Because of that, the current Ardo Empire had grown much smaller than before, while the number of their troops had decreased significantly. But even though that was the case, the Ardo Empire was still a large empire with a military force of around twelve million troops.

‘That 200,000 platinum is just a small amount of money. However, I can’t shake off the feeling that I have been swindled.’

Emperor Consteinus’ laughter was stuck in his throat. He felt like the woman named Haze was very cute. Regardless, Consteinus had willingly paid the 200,000 platinum on the condition that he would be the first to meet with Minhyuk.

‘I will absorb the Beyond the Heavens Empire.’

To be exact, he would not absorb the Beyond the Heavens Empire but rather, those that belonged to the Beyond the Heavens Empire, like Spear God Ben, Brod, Sword of the Gods Luo, Fisherman King Gorfido and many more. That was right. Consteinus did not covet the entire Beyond the Heavens Empire. What he wanted were the talented people that belonged to this empire.

‘Ah. And that woman named Haze too.’

He believed that it would be a waste of their talents if they were to stay in the Beyond the Heavens Empire. Consteinus also believed that they were looking for a savior. A lifeline that would drag them out of the precarious situation that the Beyond the Heavens Empire was currently in.

‘They are definitely waiting for another empire to recruit them.’

If Emperor Consteinus were to be honest, he would definitely say that he could not understand why such talented individuals were all in the Beyond the Heavens Empire. Basically, Emperor Consteinus had no idea about what happened between these people and Minhyuk and the kind of bond they had built.

Then, at that moment, Emperor Minhyuk arrived.

‘Looking at this young man, he truly is a good sprout.’

Emperor Consteinus was in awe. The man, with his dark hair and eyes, had a sharp appearance akin to that of a westerner. For some reason, he felt like he would fall in the depths of those big and pure eyes. Even his sharp and straight nose bridge was enough to draw out a sigh of admiration from him. However, that was it. Consteinus was the emperor of the greatest empire in his own continent. He encountered people like Minhyuk all of the time.

“I guess we’ll have to serve our precious tea,” Minhyuk said. “Haze, bring out God’s Petals Tea that we obtained in Edea.”

“But— But Your Majesty, it’s too precious. We only have three kilograms of such tea...”

“Haze. We have a very precious guest here.”

“Ah... I understand.”

The God's Petals Tea was bullshit. It was nothing but chamomile tea. However, Haze served it carefully as if she was serving some very precious tea.

"God's Petals Tea was grown by receiving God's tears. This is very precious tea. I will only serve this to you, Your Majesty."

A faint smile appeared on Consteinus' face. He thought that Minhyuk could recognize the strong and he was willingly bending to cater to what they wanted.

'Look! Isn't he serving me, the emperor of another empire, a precious treat?!'

Consteinus took a sip of the tea with admiration in his eyes. He said, "It definitely has that great flavor! What a beautiful and aromatic flavor this God's Petals Tea has. It lives up to its name. I have never tasted such a delicious tea in my life."

'Yep. That's just chamomile~'

Minhyuk just smiled at him.

After that, Emperor Consteinus went straight to the point.

"How about signing a tacit alliance between my Ardo Empire and your Beyond the Heavens Empire. I'm sure my Ardo Empire will be able to help your Beyond the Heavens Empire a lot."

Then, Emperor Consteinus began to delve deeper into the details of what he wanted from them. Basically, what he wanted was for the Beyond the Heavens Empire to go under his control. And it would not only be limited to that.

'In the future, we will split the Beyond the Heavens Empire in half and share it between us.'

Then Emperor Consteinus told Minhyuk the most crucial point of this offer, "However, there is a condition for this alliance. You have to send the vassals of your Beyond the Heavens Empire to my Ardo Empire."

"...?"

Minhyuk looked confused when the man in front of him suddenly began spouting bullshit. Then, his expression grew darker and uglier the more the man talked.

"Of course, I promise to protect the Beyond the Heavens Empire. And I'm not going to ask you to send them for free. I will even give you 100 million platinum if you hand over Spear God Ben, 150 million platinum for Brod, 100 million platinum for Elpis..."

He continued his speech, listing out the price one after another. It was a lot of money.

'If I have that much platinum, then I will be able to buy several Groups and Corporations.'

However, that amount was truly feasible.

"The Beyond the Heavens Empire will be able to live without worrying about money or funds for the rest of your lives. To top it off, you will also receive our protection."

Emperor Consteinus held the teacup in his hand and took a sip to moisten his throat.

“The only reason why my Ardo Empire lags behind the Luvien Empire is because of the existence of the Sword of the Gods. If I combine my military force with the power of your vassals, I am sure that I will be able to bring down the Luvien Empire.”

It was a feasible story. After listening to his proposal, Minhyuk finally put his teacup down.

“...”

Consteinus raised his brows. Would the emperor of a newly established empire dare to reveal how offended he was with the words that he said? Today, all of the diplomats, kingdoms, and empires came here because they coveted the vassals of the Beyond the Heavens Empire. They were also thinking of obtaining benefits from the empire of this emperor that would become the Battle God.

Then, Consteinus said to him, “It might sound offensive to you. However, if you truly have the wellbeing of your subjects in your heart, then you have to let them go, no? If they want to leave, it will not be good to hold on to them.”

Consteinus was confident that all of Minhyuk’s vassals would want to go to a place where they would be treated better. He was convinced that they would all follow him if he reached out an olive branch to them.

Minhyuk, who was thinking about the matter deeply, said, “I will let my people go if they want to leave.”

‘He’s truly an emotional emperor.’

Consteinus was in a good mood. He felt like things were going very smoothly for him.

“Let us talk for a moment,” Minhyuk said as he stood up and went out with Haze for a while. After agreeing on some matters with her, Minhyuk went back to his seat.

“If I have any subject of mine that wishes to leave, then I will let them leave freely. I will even send them away. However, there are conditions.”

“Conditions?”

“You cannot take them away by force. We will also extend the same offer to selected people of your own empire. Of course, if the people of your empire accept my offer, then you have to let them go freely and in good will.”

“Kghhk. *Cough, cough.*”

Consteinus had to cover up the laughter that almost bubbled up from his throat with a cough. He was confident that he would be able to take away all of the talents of the Beyond the Heavens Empire.

As for the people of his empire, there was no way that they would willingly leave the Ardo Empire, an empire that would be able to stand up against the Luvien Empire. Besides, his people had enjoyed the wealth and honor brought about by the Ardo Empire. Of course, Consteinus had also provided them with a lot of benefits and privileges.

But in the end, the emperor and his subjects were in a contractual relationship. Everything would be up to their choices.

“Ah. There’s one more thing...” Haze said, stepping forward. “We will require you to pay a recruitment fee whenever you propose an offer to our people. This fee will be divided by their rank. For example, whenever you make an offer to Spear God Ben, you will have to pay our Beyond the Heavens Empire 20,000 platinum.”

‘Good, good. Whatever it is, I will accept it.’

Today, Consteinus would be able to get the Spear God, the Absolute God’s Sword, the Great Demon, and Shadow Luo!

Then, Minhyuk added, “Ah, Your Majesty. My vassals will definitely find this situation very unpleasant. So, do you promise not to charge my vassals with any sin if they harm those that tried to recruit them whether they are diplomats, kings or emperors?”

In the first place, what Consteinus was trying to do here was a very rude thing. Which emperor in their right mind would visit another empire to recruit their people? If Consteinus was in Minhyuk’s position right now, he would blow this issue up and immediately start a war. Aware of this fact, he agreed willingly.

Immediately after that, a notification rang in Minhyuk’s ears.

[The Emperor’s Contract has been signed.]

[If you break the contract, you will face severe punishments.]

Consteinus chuckled.

‘I will now be able to take down Luvien!’

He could see the revival of the Ardo Empire peeking through the horizon.

After that, Minhyuk continued to sign similar contracts with the kings and emperors that were on par with the emperor of the Ardo Empire.

Dozens of carrier pigeons flew to the skies. As if they viewed this thing as a competition, the rulers of the empires and kingdoms hurriedly ordered their nation’s greatest negotiators, prime ministers and diplomats alike, to come to the Beyond the Heavens Empire and make sure that they were fully prepared.

When the diplomats of the Ardo Empire arrived, the other kingdoms and empires could not help but cower from their overwhelming momentum. There was a long line of golden carriages filled with precious artifacts, golds, silver, and treasures that arrived along with them.

Consteinus sat gracefully as he held a teacup in his hand while sitting in a room of the house lent to him in the Beyond the Heavens Empire.

“Now, Spear God Ben and Brod will kneel before me and pledge their allegiance to me.”

Consteinus had prepared a lot of things to recruit these people. He would promise Spear God Ben 200 million platinum, as well as provide him with a God-grade spear that their empire had recently acquired. He would also give him the title of a *Duke*. If someone could become the duke of an empire, then they and their grandchildren would be able to enjoy great wealth and riches.

Confident with his preparations, Consteinus waited like that. However, no matter how long he waited, none of the diplomats that he sent out came back to him. At a certain point, Consteinus could not help the doubt that flashed in his head.

“Why are they not coming yet?”

“Perhaps Spear God Ben wishes that His Majesty would be the one to personally recruit him?”

“Ah...”

Consteinus nodded. He deserved that. After all, he was someone with the title Spear God to his name. His arrogance and pride must have reached the skies. Consteinus realized that even if he could recruit such a man and bring him to his side, there was no way that he would be able to overwhelm and surpass him. Spear God Ben was a Continental God, even an emperor like him had to treat a being like him with courtesy.

Consteinus finally realized that he had been far too complacent. He had to go and bring the man to his side personally. So, he hurriedly ran to where the man was.

When he arrived at where Spear God Ben was, he was met with quite an astonishing sight.

“Spear God. I am a diplomat from the Corell Empire. If you come to our side, we will give you three legendary ranks weapons and thirty million platinum...”

“...?”

While Consteinus was sipping his tea and relaxing, a lot of diplomats from various empires and kingdoms had already arrived. However, an absurd situation unfolded in front of their very eyes.

Baaaaaaaaaang—

Spear God Ben slapped the diplomat in the face.

“Keheooooooooook!”

The funny thing was, the diplomat was sent flying away with just one slap. As for the place where the diplomat landed, there were countless other diplomats there. They were all piled up like a mountain. However, it was not just them. There were also other skilled negotiators as well as countless troops. All of them had fainted at that same spot.

As for Spear God Ben, his expression was extremely distorted. It was completely different to how he looked whenever he gave his signature '*Hoho*' to the people that he encountered.

As he looked at the mountain of stunned and fainted individuals behind him, Spear God Ben thought, ‘*How dare these people come to His Majesty’s empire just so to tell me to become their dog?!*’

Spear God Ben loved Minhyuk more than anybody else. This act was both an insult and a disrespect to his beloved emperor!

Well, even though Spear God Ben slapped these people on their faces, none of them could attack or bring harm to him. After all, their kings and emperors had already signed a contract with Minhyuk. This was just a price that they had to pay for their blatant disrespect.

On the other hand, Consteinus interpreted Spear God's Ben behavior differently, *'Did you think that you will be able to recruit a person named the Spear God with such lousy conditions?!'*

The highest condition that he had heard so far was fifty million platinum along, with five legendary rank weapons, and one legendary skill book. It was no wonder Spear God Ben was angry.

'It's only natural. You are denying his worth. I will give him the proper price and take him into my arms!'

Consteinus smiled as he approached Ben with his hands behind his back.

"Why are they only offering you that much, am I right? I mean, you are the Spear God. Let me tell you this. I will give you 400 million platinum."

Ben stared at Consteinus, who was walking toward him while talking. Seeing this, Consteinus could not help but laugh deeply.

'That's right. You must be satisfied, right?'

Consteinus continued to walk toward Ben while saying, "The Ardo Empire will also grant you the title of *Duke* and bestow upon you a God-rank spear. We will give you the weapon that our empire acquired not too long ago."

Before he knew it, he was already standing right in front of Spear God Ben. So, he reached out his hand for a handshake to signal the closing of their deal.

Slap—

Alas, Consteinus' cheek got hit. Unlike the other emperors and kings, Consteinus was trained in legendary martial arts. It was thanks to that that he did not fly away. However, the tremendous pain that bloomed on one side of his face forced him to raise one hand to cover it. He could not help but stammer in shock.

The only reason why Spear God Ben had listened to his words quietly was because Consteinus was still walking toward him. Basically, Ben was waiting for him to get close enough to get slapped and hit.

"How, how dare you! I am the emperor of an empire...!"

Consteinus eyes grew wide. In fact, even Spear God Ben was surprised.

"You're an emperor?"

"That's right! I am Ardo Empire's Emperor Consti...!"

But Spear God Ben did not let him finish. This time, he slapped him on the other cheek.

Slaaaaaap—!

“Keheok!”

Consteinus, who was holding both of his cheeks with his hands, looked at Ben. He could see that there was a tremendous amount of killing intent pouring out of Spear God Ben’s body. That killing intent completely engulfed Consteinus, making him feel breathless. He had never felt something like this before. In fact, he had never faced so much pressure like this even when he had faced the Sword of the Gods.

Spear God Ben opened his mouth and said, “I... I am more afraid of seeing a single injury on His Majesty’s body than losing those things that you have offered me.”

“For me, it is better to see His Majesty eat until he’s satisfied and full than obtain the power that you speak of.”

“Even if the Beyond the Heavens Empire gets destroyed and I am left wandering the streets like a beggar with His Majesty, I will still stay by his side. As long as he laughs, I will be able to laugh.”

“And even if I’m given only one option to serve another person other than His Majesty then I, in the name of the Continental God Spear God, declare...”

“That I would rather choose death.”

Tremble—

Consteinus trembled and shook from the words of the wonderful and amazing subject that stood in front of him.

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A shiver ran down Emperor Consteinus' spine.

Many of his subjects had offered to give up their lives for his sake. However, that was only because of their long-standing belief in his *power* and *authority*. Those that had given up their lives for him were people that were born and raised in Ardo Empire. All of them believed that their emperor was their *god*. And if their god were to die, then they might as well die instead.

‘But from what I heard, Spear God Ben was not even a native citizen of the Beyond the Heavens Empire.’

From what Consteinus knew, he was once called Ghost Spear Ben, and was one of the Pinnacle Strong Men, a legend that wandered the continent. Yet, a man like this was devoted to the emperor that he served to such an extent!

However, the awe disappeared not long after. Shame and disgrace washed over Consteinus. He could not believe the humiliation he was facing, in his capacity as the emperor of a great empire at that.

“Bastaaaaaaaard! How dare you treat an emperor like this?! I will twist all of your limbs on my own!”

That was what Consteinus said but then, he realized that he had signed a contract that explicitly stated that they could not cause any harm to the vassals of the Beyond the Heavens Empire no matter the insult or disgrace that they received.

[You have offered to recruit to Spear God Ben.]

[According to the contract you signed with the Beyond the Heavens Empire, you will have to pay 20,000 platinum.]

[Beyond the Heavens' Emperor Minhyuk can now send an offer to recruit one of your empire's talents.]

“...”

What a damned thing! However, Consteinus believed that it was still too early to conclude this matter. There were still quite a lot of talented people in the Beyond the Heavens Empire. The face of one person flashed in Consteinus' head.

'Absolute God's Sword Brod! He will be the next one!'

Consteinus vowed to pay back the humiliation that he suffered in this place one day. The contract that he signed with Minhyuk stipulated that he could not bring any kind of harm to the other party with regards to their reaction to their recruitment offer. However, he could use some other methods to deal with them.

'I can wage war with the Beyond the Heavens Empire using this as a pretext.'

To do that, he needed enough people. That meant that he needed to recruit Brod right away. Recruiting Brod would mean that he would also be able to recruit Spear God Ben.

Consteinus began to move.

Emperor Consteinus, who sported bright red cheeks, quickly ran to where Brod was. Just like before, there was also an unusual scene unfolding in that place.

Dozens of diplomats, prime ministers, kings and even emperors followed right behind Brod and shouted the conditions that they were willing to give if he followed them. However, Brod ignored all of them. He just hummed as he fed his pigs, chickens and cows.

“Look at the situation that you are in right now!!! How can the Beyond the Heavens Emperor order a man like you to raise livestock like this?!!!”

However, even after shouting loudly for an hour or two, there was no response from Brod. He did not respond to their words at all. Emperor Consteinus, who was among the crowd, was also suffering from the same treatment.

“Sir Brod,” Emperor Consteinus shouted politely at Brod.

“If you come to my Ardo Empire, I will immediately build a statue for you and hail you as my empire's legend. I will also pay you 500 million platinum. And if you so wish

it..." Consteinus mustered all of the sincerity that he could muster and continued, "You will be the one to lead the Ardo Empire upon my death."

In other words, he was even going to give him his throne.

"...!"

"...!"

"...!"

The emperors and kings of the other kingdoms were taken aback. The succession of the throne usually followed the bloodline of the imperial or the royal family. However, Consteinus was willing to go so far for someone that did not have anything to do with the Ardo Empire. They could hardly believe their ears.

Brod was the Fallen Wretched Emperor. Consteinus was aware of this and he was fully convinced that the Ardo Empire would prosper forever if Brod became its emperor.

"Oinkies, make sure to eat a lot."

However, despite that grand offer, Brod still treated him like air. After almost half a day had passed, Consteinus could no longer stand it. He shouted, "Bastaaaaaaaaaaaaard!"

The scene where Brod looked completely disinterested while Consteinus' veins almost popped with how loud he was shouting looked completely ridiculous.

"I know you are a great being, but in the end, you are still nothing but a vassal of an emperor! So, why are you ignoring us here, huh?! Kneel in front of me and apologize!!!"

Brod glanced at Consteinus, as he cried loudly in front of him, and said, "I belong to His Majesty. Aside from His Majesty, I do not have any obligation to answer your questions or entertain your requests. I will only listen to His Majesty and the people of the Beyond the Heavens Empire. I have no other reason. As such, I do not need to answer you."

"...!"

"...!"

The faces of all of the kings, emperors, diplomats and prime ministers all turned red. In other words, all this time, it had been a *'You guys can go and bark all you want, I don't care'* situation.

'Does that mean that you will not listen at all if it's not your emperor's words?'

'What a really strong and close bond.'

The kings and emperors were in awe.

At that moment, one of the soldiers approached Brod and said, "Sir Brod, His Majesty is looking for you."

"His Majesty? Is there a problem?"

Brod immediately looked contemplative when he heard that His Majesty was looking for him.

“His Majesty said that he misses you.”

“What?! His Majesty said that he misses me?!” Brod’s face was filled with sadness.

“Yes. His Majesty said that he hasn't seen you for quite some time since he has been very busy lately. He wants to see you as soon as possible.”

“Your Majesty, please forgive this unfaithful servant of yours!”

Brod looked completely different from when he was dealing with them. He looked like he was about to cry, resenting himself for being unfaithful and causing His Majesty Minhyuk to miss him like this.

“Your Majeeeeeeesty!!! This servant of yours is coming right awaaaaaaaay!!!” Brod ran like the wind as he cried out for Minhyuk.

“...”

“...”

The kings and emperors looked at his retreating figure with ridiculous looks. However, they immediately dispersed. There were still many figures in the Beyond the Heavens Empire that they could recruit.

All of them ran to the Great Pirate Gorfido, who was walking with a net hanging on his back.

“If you come to our empire then...!”

“If you come to our kingdom then I will give you a title in the nobility...!”

“Do you have a death wish?”

“...”

“...”

The kings and emperors hurriedly moved to find another target. This time, they gathered around the Great Sage and Best-selling Author Aruvel.

“A best-selling author like me can only be in harmony when I am in the arms of His Majesty Minhyuk.”

He was adamant in his rejection. However, there were still some kings that had a different line of questions.

“Did— did you release a new work?!”

“I also want to read your new work...”

“Sir Aruvel, please let us read your new work!!!”

The other emperors and kings were earnestly hoping to get a glimpse of his new work.

“I will not distribute my new works to the kingdoms and empires that offered to recruit me today.”

“Aaaaaaaaah!”

The kings and emperors collapsed. However, they immediately picked themselves up and ran to another place. There, they saw Paladin Corr, who once served and protected Saintess Loyna!

“Come to my Paragon Empire! If you come to my empire, I will promise you eternal wealth!”

“I refuse. More importantly, emperor of the Paragon Empire, I believe that you are in dire need of my blessings.”

“Blessings?”

Not long after, the emperor of the Paragon Empire felt a heat bloom on his head.

“U— uwoooooooooooooh! It’s— It’s growing!!!”

“Talmoooooooooor!!!”

Emperor Consteinus of the Ardo Empire hurriedly moved to another location when he saw some of the other kings and emperors began to shout for Talmor.

He tried to recruit the baby piggy, who was running around with his squishy and bulging belly.

“Oiiiiiiiiink!”

However, the baby piggy just raised a middle finger at him and disappeared with a big and wide smile on his face.

When he approached the God of Alchemy, who could make the best potions in the world, he received a firm shake of the head.

He also tried to recruit a randomly passing knight by the street...

“I don’t want to.”

...only to receive a firm refusal.

This had now become a battle of pride. Consteinus ran to the military training grounds and barracks.

“To anyone who comes to my empire, I promise to bestow upon you 100 million platinum as soon as you promise to move to my empire!”

It was a huge sum. In fact, it was enough for a soldier or a knight to spend for the rest of his life. However, not a single one of the hundreds of thousands of troops that were training in the training grounds answered him. In other words, none of them wanted to move to his empire.

Exasperated, Consteinus asked the perfectly groomed bichon that was passing by, “Will you come to my empire?”

“F*ck you,” the bichon Bichor replied bluntly and sharply, before turning around to leave.

Consteinus sighed. Then, he shouted in front of the huge doghouse that had the name Love, Hope, Happiness written on it, “Become the dog that protects my empire...”

“Grrrrrrrrrrrr!”

“Groooooooooooar!”

“Roaaaaaaaaaaaaar!”

However, Consteinus was forced to run away when he saw Cerberus appear with drool dripping down their sharp canines that could rip through a lion in one swift movement.

“...”

Finally, Consteinus even tried to ask an ordinary-looking farmer that was passing by, “My Ardo...”

“No!”

It was a perfect defense!

“...”

Emperor Consteinus was not able to recruit anyone. Walking around empty-handed, he looked around with a helpless and desperate look on his face. And what did he see? All of the emperors, kings, diplomats and prime ministers were sporting frustrated expressions on their faces. None of them were able to recruit anyone.

Minhyuk gathered all of the kings, emperors and diplomats that came to his empire.

[Emperor Consteinus will have to give 110,000 platinum to the Beyond the Heavens Empire as a recruitment fee.]

[You can try to recruit 29 talents from the Ardo Empire.]

[Emperor Valkarra will have to give 70,000 platinum to the Beyond the Heavens Empire as a recruitment fee.]

[You can try to recruit 28 talents from the Rekkad Empire.]

[Emperor Rumai will have to give 67,000 platinum to the Beyond the Heavens Empire as a recruitment fee.]

[You can try to recruit 25 talents from the Ars Empire.]

They were able to secure around 1.75 million from the recruitment fees. On top of that, they could extend the offer to recruit to around 400 people from various empires and kingdoms. This meant that the Beyond the Heavens Empire could approach 400 new talents from their pool of talents.

“For an entire week, the Beyond the Heavens Empire will send diplomats and executives to your respective empires and kingdoms to recruit people. As the

emperor of the Beyond the Heavens Empire, I will also make a move and recruit people. Do you have any objections to that?"

Everyone was mute. Everything had already written and signed under a contract.

"Then, I will see you here in a week. If those that I recruited decided to come here, their families will have to come along with them. Please bear that in mind."

Recruiting a talent meant that their families would also have to move and migrate to the Beyond the Heavens Empire.

After a week.

Emperor Consteinus came back to the Beyond the Heavens Empire. Of course, the same was true for all of the other emperors and kings. They all came to attend this event.

The Beyond the Heavens Empire had been recruiting talents from their kingdoms and empires up until this point. Of course, the kings and emperors all put pressure on those that they tried to recruit.

—You're going to the Beyond the Heavens Empire? If that's the case, then I will make sure to remember you.

It was more of a threat than pressure.

Consteinus had a wide smile on his face. He had already discussed it with the other kings and emperors. He was confident that Minhyuk would not be able to take anyone from them, just like how they were unable to take anyone from him.

Since that was the case, then they wanted to make a second proposal. That was to deploy their military forces to the Beyond the Heavens Empire. They intended to eat away and devour the Beyond the Heavens Empire by using the pretext of deploying their military forces to protect them.

"Duke Amacar. I will force the Beyond the Heavens Empire to kneel and kiss my feet. At the end of the day, even the Luvien Empire will be absorbed by me. By then, you will be able to enjoy greater wealth and glory. Look forward to it," Consteinus said politely.

Duke Amacar was the founder that established Ardo Empire's Hound Knight Order. The Hound Knight Order was an overwhelming and shocking order composed of 100 individuals with levels over Level 550. Prior to the appearance of the Luvien Empire and the Swords of the Gods, the Hound Knight Order was considered to be the strongest knight order in the entire continent.

Because Duke Amacar founded and established such a knight order, he was bestowed with the title of Duke. And Duke Amacar was loyal to Consteinus. He loved, cared for, and respected the emperor of the Ardo Empire. But that was not all. Duke Amacar was also a Named NPC, and his level went beyond Level 650. Duke Amacar was the pride of the Ardo Empire.

The huge hall was filled with countless talents as well as their families. Some of these talents were hailed as the legends of their empires or recorded as heroes that protected their kingdoms.

Their respective kings and emperors obviously cared for them so they were sure that these people would willingly risk their lives for their sake. Would such people truly come to the Beyond the Heavens Empire? An empire that was in a precarious situation and would probably disappear at any given moment?

At that moment, Minhyuk appeared. He said, "I believe none of the kings and emperors present here will be dissatisfied with whatever decision their talents will make today, no?"

All of the kings and emperors nodded. Secretly, they did not believe Minhyuk could take away the pride and glory of their kingdoms and empires.

Then, Haze stepped forward and began to call out the names of the talents one by one.

"Weiden Kingdom's Earl of Spears, Sir Hathor."

"Roicun Kingdom's Duke of Magic Polo."

"Epoch Empire's Magic Weapon Manufacturer Emfez."

The names were constantly being called out. Of course, there were also dozens of people from the Ardo Empire among the list. However, Emperor Consteinus remained arrogant and proud. He continued to listen with his arms crossed in front of his chest.

'No one will leave my proud and glorious empire!'

The Ardo Empire was the largest empire after the Luvien Empire. Besides, his bond with his people was very tight knit and close.

Then, Haze said, "Those whose names have been called, if you wish to serve the Beyond the Heavens Empire, please kneel in front of His Majesty and swear your allegiance."

Many of the kings and emperors laughed at Haze's words. No one made a move as silence engulfed the entire hall.

Consteinus could not help the laughter that spilled from his mouth. He grinned widely and said, "How dare you mention Duke Amacar's name?"

As ridiculous as it might sound, Beyond the Heavens' Emperor Minhyuk has also extended an offer to Duke Amacar. Perhaps they had planned it in secret. However, it was nothing but a useless and ridiculous act.

Consteinus was somewhat disappointed that Duke Amacar did not mention this to him before. But he felt like the reason why the duke did not tell him was because there was simply no need to.

Then, at that moment, Duke Amacar knelt in front of Consteinus.

"Hoo... Duke Amacar. How come you're kneeling in front of me in this shabby place?"

Deep inside, Consteinus was feeling delighted. It seemed like even Duke Amacar felt humiliated after being called like that.

'How dare he receive an offer from another emperor when he is already serving me?'

Consteinus felt like Amacar was trying to apologize to him here. He could already hear what he was about to say to him. He would definitely shout it loudly so that even the Beyond the Heavens' Emperor would be able to hear.

'Your Majesty! You are the only one that I will serve! I will serve no one else in this life!'

This was the loyalty of a vassal to his emperor. Of course, Emperor Consteinus would show how much he cared for Duke Amacar. He quickly bent down and said, "I am fine. Duke Amacar, don't kneel like this here..."

But then, Amacar shouted, "Your Majesty!!!"

Emperor Consteinus was left dumbfounded with his loud and powerful voice.

"May you live long and healthy!!!"

"...?"

Consteinus watched in confusion as Duke Amacar kowtowed to him on the ground and slowly stood up. Then, amidst the silence, Amacar walked in front of the Beyond the Heavens' Emperor Minhyuk and proceeded to kneel down strongly.

Thud—!

"I vow to stay by His Majesty's side forever and help the Beyond the Heavens Empire!!!"

"...!"

"...!"

"...!"

Emperor Consteinus was left speechless. Duke Amacar was the representative of the Ardo Empire. He could be considered to be the main pillar of the empire too.

At the same time, a notification rang in Minhyuk's ears.

[The Hound Knight Order's Master, Amacar, has pledged his eternal loyalty to you!]

Chapter 843

One week ago.

Many kingdoms and empires had tried to recruit the talents of the Beyond the Heavens Empire. They not only stretched their hands to recruit the main pillars— Spear God Ben, Brod, Elpis and the like— of the Beyond the Heavens Empire, but they also stretched their hands toward the ordinary soldiers.

This was obviously a show of contempt for the Beyond the Heavens Empire. However, they were unsuccessful, not even able to entice anyone, not even a single soldier, from the Beyond the Heavens Empire.

"Now, it's our time to shine."

“We have finished preparations, Your Majesty.”

Haze shook her head when she saw the serious expression on Minhyuk’s face. She had already mentioned the people that they had to recruit.

“We have to absolutely, without a doubt, recruit the blacksmith of the Ars Empire. He might not be someone that can create legendary or god-rank weapons but from what I heard, he has a mysterious power, such that the weapons that he creates are stronger compared to other weapons in the same grade. Because of that, the artifacts and weapons that he produces will quickly sell out. In fact, the sales of his artifacts account for more than 5% of Ars Empire’s trade.”

“Ardo Empire’s archeologist, Pulse, is someone that possesses extraordinary talent. He can explore and search for a variety of things, including sealed or very old and antique items. Perhaps he will be able to find what Your Majesty likes the most, which are food ingredients.”

Haze recited the names of the people that they had to recruit one after another. With a strange glint in her eyes, she brought up the last man that they wanted to recruit.

“The master of Ardo Empire’s knight order, Amacar. He’s someone that we absolutely have to recruit.”

“How come?”

“He is the one that established the Hound Knight Order, the strongest knight order before the arrival of the Sword of the Gods. The Hound Knight Order had reigned as the best and strongest knight order in the entire continent, yet surprisingly, they had been nothing but mere *ordinary knights* when they started.”

“That means...”

“That’s right. It’s all thanks to Amacar’s outstanding ability. He nurtured ordinary knights and made them into the best knights of the continent.”

They were now done discussing those that they had to recruit. All they needed to do was to win their hearts.

“Ars Empire’s blacksmith is said to be a man that came from a family afflicted with baldness. According to the information that we have gathered, he had poured a huge portion of what he had accumulated with his blacksmithing work into hair care. However, not a single strand of hair grew on his head.”

“...”

Minhyuk and Haze’s eyes met. It was quite a sad story.

“Actually, it was said that he had been born bald.”

“...”

Tears almost dripped down Minhyuk's eyes when he heard that.

“Let's send Talmor Religion's Leader Corr.”

“I understand. Then there's this man named Ronweiner. He leads the Falcon Archer Corps in the Effinor Kingdom. From what we had gathered, he bought Best Selling Author Aruvel's limited edition book, *Ners: The Maid Next Door* for 50,000 platinum in the black market.”

“Fif— fifty thousand?”

Fifty thousand platinum was not an amount that an ordinary knight possessed.

“It is said that he used up all of his wealth and properties to buy it.”

“...Then, we will have to send Aruvel.”

“There's Keller, the Dragon Spearman of the Accas Kingdom. He considers the spear as the strongest weapon.”

“Send Spear God Ben.”

“Yes. *Murmur, murmur, murmur... omitted.*”

Haze was able to see through each and every single one of the continent's leading powerhouses. This was because she combined the information in her hand, as well as the information that Informant Abel had obtained, to determine who they would send to each and every single one of them.

The Beyond the Heavens Empire was just a newly established empire. They were in dire need of a lot of talent and money.

‘We need a lot of talented people. Only by having them by our side will we be able to protect our Beyond the Heavens Empire from the Luvien Empire and the other empires.’

They needed to have a solid foundation.

“And finally, there's Ardo Empire's Hound, Amacar. His special characteristic is...”

“Special characteristic?”

“His *raison d'être* is to see the revival of Consteinus' empire.”

“...”

The man that they coveted the most was the most righteous one.

“I'll personally go to recruit him.”

“I understand, Your Majesty. After setting everything up and deploying all of the diplomats, I will also set out myself,” Haze said as she stepped out.

After she left, Minhyuk looked up at the sky with a faint smile on his face and said, “Obren, do me a favor. Please.”

[Your Guardian Deity is looking at you incredulously.]

[Your Guardian Deity is looking at you angrily for trying to make him do that.]

[Your Guardian Deity swears that he will never, ever, help you with that.]

However, Minhyuk knew him all too well.

‘I know you will do it for me.’

Minhyuk set off for Ardo Empire with a faint smile on his face.

Ars Empire’s Blacksmith Hansen was one of the empire’s pride. Although he could not produce legendary or god-rank artifacts, Hansen had a special ability. As long as he gave it his all, it would be possible for him to create items that were better than items of the same rank.

On top of that, he was one of the top producers of artifacts in the empire. So, he was considered as one of the most profitable figures of the empire. Some would even say that all of the troops of the Ars Imperial Army were equipped with Hansen’s artifacts.

There was only one reason why he worked hard and produced a lot of artifacts. This was all because of the words that his father had left him.

—*Son.*

—*Yes, Father.*

—*Women do not like men with bald heads.*

It was all because of their curse of baldness! A curse that had been passed down from their ancestors down to him, the 28th generation descendant!

—*Work hard and live diligently.*

Hansen had always kept those words in his heart. Because of that, he had been working really hard. Thankfully, his diligence allowed him to meet his wife, who was kind enough to see through him and not his outside appearance.

However, because of that, Hansen had to face a new challenge.

‘Son...’

They gave birth to a son and Hansen was left in despair. He felt very sad to see that his son would have to walk the same path as him. He did not want that for his son. So, he spent the hundreds of thousands of platinum that he had earned so far to find a treatment for baldness. But not a single strand of hair grew on their heads.

‘Not! Even! A! Single! One!’

Hansen's childhood nickname was *Sweating Octopus*. His father's nickname was *Sun*, while his grandfather was nicknamed *Shining Octopus*. As for his great grandfather? He was nicknamed *Bald Eagle*. There was also his grandfather's grandfather's grandfather.

Hansen was truly in despair. He knew how heartbreaking and painful those words were. Unable to find a way to cure baldness even after spending hundreds of thousands of platinum, Hansen could only cry as he hugged his wife and child.

In the end, all Hansen could do was go to the smithy today and work hard. He had to make money. If he could make money, then one day, he would be able to find a way to end this terrible curse. If he could end this terrible curse, then his son would be able to live a different life from him.

Then, at that moment, he heard a commotion.

Murmur, murmur—

“What’s the matter?”

“How come another empire’s imperial army is in our empire?”

“They’re diplomats. They’re trying to recruit talented people.”

“Talentful people?! Ho! How dare they say that in another empire?!”

“From what I heard, this was what they had already discussed in advance.”

A man waved to Hansen, who was walking down the street.

“Hansen, I think you’re going to be recruited by that empire?”

“I’m not someone that can be swayed so easily.”

Hansen ignored the crowd. It was none of his business. Even if they come, he would just hit them with his hammer.

The truth was, there was only one reason why Hansen loved this empire. This was because this empire had brought him a lot of money and they even actively cooperated with him to help him find the cure for baldness.

Hansen arrived at the smithy just like that. He had never stopped hammering to find the cure for baldness.

Drip, drip, drip—

With every swing of his hammer, a trickle of sweat would flow down his shiny head. This was the reason why Hansen was nicknamed *Sweaty Octopus*.

Then, at that moment, the diplomats of the Beyond the Heavens Empire appeared.

“We are from the Beyond the Heavens Empire. I hope that you will listen to Sir Corr, the diplomat that our empire has dispatched.”

“Not interested.”

“Please don’t do that, just listen to us...”

“You moth*rf*ckers! Can’t you see that I’m busy?!” Hansen shouted emotionally. All of the pent up sadness and despair exploded at this very moment.

Hansen was a tall and burly man. He started swinging his hammer and threatening the soldiers of the other empire that came to bother him.

‘I didn’t want to go bald either!!!’

‘Why?! Why does my son have to carry on this pain?!’

Tears streamed down Hansen’s face as he raised his hammer like a bull charging at its opponents.

“From what I can see, this is a curse that has been passed down for a very long time.”

“...”

A noble and majestic voice rang in Hansen’s ears. The voice sounded arrogant, like God’s Voice, but it was also filled with warmth, a warmth that seemed to embrace Hansen.

“That curse. It has been passed down in your family from one generation to another and has been making your family suffer for a very long time.”

There was a kind smile on the man’s face. The man walked one step at a time as he approached Hansen.

Hansen huffed. “What do you know?! Do you know what it feels to be bald from one generation to another?! Do you even know how I felt when I learned that my son has to live his life as a bald man?!!”

In the end, Hansen fell to his knees crying.

Corr looked at him and said, “It must have been hard and painful. You must have been suffering for a very long time.”

“Sob, sob, sob, sob, sob...”

“I am the leader of Talmor Religion, Corr. I came running for your sake,” Corr said as he slowly placed his hand on Hansen’s head. Then, he continued, “Follow me. Follow me and I will let your hair grow.”

The truth was, Hansen was already at his wits end. He felt that life was so sad and unfair to him that he could not even tell for a second what was happening to him. He just grasped the straws that were dangling in front of him.

“Grow, grow hair, grow.”

“G... row... Sob... grow... h— hair... grow...”

“Louder! With more power!”

“Grow, grow... hair— hair...!”

“Loudeeeeeeeeer!!!”

“Grow, grow hair, groooooooooow!!!”

Then, at that moment, Corr took out his flute and began to play a tune. A warm power wrapped around Hansen’s sweaty head.

‘It— it’s warm...’

It was a feeling that he had never felt before. Then, not long after, a ticklish sensation spread on top of his head.

Originally, the effect of Corr’s Talmor Treatment would not appear in just a day. However, Corr had grown a lot as the leader of the Talmor Religion.

Twitch, twitch—

Hair started to grow on Hansen’s head. The dazed Hansen rubbed his head in disbelief. It was thick and abundant!

“Oh— ooooooooooh... Oooooooooooooooooh...!”

Hansen was so thrilled that he could not even utter a single word. The curse of baldness that had been passed down to 28 of their family’s generations was now gone!

“I am Corr, a diplomat of Beyond the Heavens Empire. I am asking you to move to the Beyond the Heavens Empire. Do you know the reason why you have to move to the Beyond the Heavens Empire?” Corr spoke kindly.

“Because I’m the only one that can end the curse that is afflicting your family.”

Then, Corr continued with a kind and gentle smile on his face, “The One that has been freed from baldness.”

“Please— please speak.”

“Go and buy your very first shampoo.”

“...!”

The teary and emotional Hansen ran out to buy shampoo for the very first time in his life!

At the same time.

Ronweiner, the commander of the Falcon Archer Corps of the Effinor Kingdom, was a huge fan of Best Selling Author Aruvel. That was why he spent the huge amount of 50,000 platinum to buy one of his limited edition books.

Of course, he had always been single since birth. That was why for him, Aruvel’s works had always been his friend and salvation. When he met Aruvel, the man that he considered God, he cried tears of joy.

“Come to the Beyond the Heavens Empire.”

Ronweiner was an outstanding talent with a level that went beyond Level 550. Even his skills with the bow could be said to be the best and finest in the kingdom. However, he was born and raised in Effinor Kingdom. Even though he was an orphan, he had grown up outstandingly thanks to the support and welfare given by the Effinor Kingdom. That was why he had sworn his life and body to serve the Effinor Kingdom.

“H— how... How can you say that to me, Sir Author!” Ronweiner cried. “I, Ronweiner, am an orphan born and raised in this kingdom. This kingdom’s royal family has raised me and I will continue to live for their sake...!”

But then, Aruvel said, “You will be given the right to preview my new works forever.”

“...!”

“This privilege will only be given to you.”

“...!”

Ronweiner bit his lips strongly.

‘How can he say that?! How can the author and the person that I admire say that to me?!’

“Can we go now?”

Ronweiner switched sides faster than light. Erotic novels were truly amazing.

Chapter 844

There was a man inside the Careon Kingdom that many empires and kingdoms coveted.

Mortal Martial Artist Ronson was barely twenty-two years old. However, two years ago, he had defeated the Careon Kingdom’s veteran and most powerful Knight Order Commander on his own.

Everyone called Ronson a genius. There were even talks about how he would become a Continental God, specifically the *God of Martial Arts*. He still had a lot left in store for him. However, the twenty-two year old Ronson, who was leading the knights that mainly used fists, actually had a secret that he could not tell. He had a condition: *limited mana*.

People with this condition were very rare. In fact, there were only less than ten of them in the entire continent. So, what did it mean to have limited mana? They were people that could display an explosive increase in mana from ages ten to twenty. However, once they reached the age of twenty, they would no longer be able to increase their mana volume.

People with limited mana were fortunate enough to know that their mana would not disappear. However, for the young Ronson, this meant that he would no longer be able to grow. This also meant that he would not be able to reach the level of the *God of Martial Arts*, like what everyone wished for him.

Since Ronson could no longer make his mana grow and increase, there was only one thing left for him to do. Ronson devoted his life to training martial arts from the moment he woke up to the moment he slept.

"If Sir Ronson comes, then the Beyond the Heavens Empire's famous and well-known powerhouses would be able to serve as your springboard."

"Get lost."

"I'm saying that Sir Ronson could truly become the *God of Martial Arts*."

"Didn't I tell you to get lost?"

Haze had led their troops to try and recruit Ronson. However, Ronson was tough and stubborn.

Ronson's goal was never to obtain wealth, or fame, or power. All he wanted was to grow stronger. Since he knew that he could no longer grow, he continued to run and train to grow his skills and abilities. People commonly refer to him as *The One that Only Knew How to Train*. If someone did not have a way to help him grow right away, then he would not bother listening to them.

'I have told him so much. Why does he refuse going to the Beyond the Heavens Empire when we have Spear God Ben and Brod on our side?'

If it was an ordinary empire, recruiting Ronson would be an absolutely ridiculous thought. However, the Beyond the Heavens Empire was a place where a Continental God resided in. That was why Haze could not believe what was happening in front of her.

'Why is Ronson so reluctant to be recruited to the kingdom?'

Unfortunately, she could not have guessed that he had *limited mana*.

Even when Haze hung around him all day, Ronson did not budge at all.

"I'll come and visit you tomorrow morning. Please think about it one more time."

"Go back. I won't change my mind."

Ronson continued to punch and kick the wooden puppet in front of him like crazy even after the people of the Beyond the Heavens Empire had left. After how many hours, he finally took off his gloves. His gloves were stained with blood and his hands had abrasions from the continuous impact on the wooden puppet.

'If only I can grow even further then...'

While Ronson was a genius, he was also diligent and hard-working. If he could only grow further, then he would definitely become the God of Martial Arts.

"*Sob, sob, sob, sob*. Damn it...!"

In the end, he fell on his knees crying. He wailed and cried for a very long time before laying down on the ground in exhaustion. He wiped off the tears on his face and stared at the night sky. It was beautiful, littered with beautiful and twinkling stars. Then, at that moment, something unusual and unexpected happened.

[One of the Absolute Gods, the God that Lives for Someone, Leads Someone on the Right Path and Protects Someone, is looking at you.]

[The God that Lives for Someone says that perhaps he can treat your incurable disease.]

“...!”

Ronson leapt up from the ground, his eyes trained on the beautiful night sky. He knew what kind of existence the Absolute Gods were. They were gods that were completely on a different stage from the Continental Gods.

‘God... Is God feeling sorry for me?’

If one thought about it deeply, perhaps that was true. After all, Ronson was a genius of his time, and yet, his condition meant that he was forced to never grow.

‘He must have felt pity for me, a genius that can no longer grow no matter how hard I try. That’s right. It’s a waste to spoil a talented genius like me just like that.’

Indeed. Ronson was also a narcissist. However, the holy, mighty and noble god was completely different from what he thought.

[One of the Absolute Gods says...]

[Are you going or not? Quick, say it. So annoying.]

“...?”

‘No... wasn’t he looking at me with pity? Wasn’t he feeling sorry for me?’

[The Absolute God is the ‘Guardian Deity of the Beyond the Heavens Empire.’]

“...!”

Ronson was once again left in shock. He recalled hearing that the one called Evil God had become the Guardian God to protect the Beyond the Heavens Empire. To put it simply, it was only right for him to go to the Beyond the Heavens Empire to seek help from this god.

[One of the Absolute Gods is grumbling.]

[How dare you make me do something like this...]

“...?”

What was he grumbling about? Ronson had absolutely no idea. However, he could feel some suppressed anger in that voice.

[One of the Absolute Gods says...]

[Ah. If you don’t want to come then don’t come. So annoying.]

Then, the voice of the divine and great god disappeared.

The next day.

Haze, who had seen Ronson’s stubborn and determined eyes, was fully convinced that she would not be able to recruit him. However, when they arrived to try once again, they saw that Ronson had already finished all preparation and had already packed everything.

“Let’s go. Quick.”

On that day, this voice rang all over the place.

[One of the Absolute Gods is annoyed.]

[One of the Absolute Gods is irritated.]

[One of the Absolute Gods asks if you're going or not.]

[One of the Absolute Gods turns around to leave without any hesitation.]

It seemed Obren did what Minhyuk asked him to do even though he did not like it.

Hound Amacar was the pride of the Ardo Empire. Perhaps he could be considered as face of the Ardo Empire himself. The tales about how he turned the most ordinary knights into the strongest of the continent was already the stuff of legends in the continent.

The very same Amacar recalled what Emperor Consteinus told him before he left.

—If Spear God Ben comes to our empire, then Commander Kond has to give way and give his commander's position to him. I will just have to make Kond into a deputy commander.

—What position should I give Brod? Hmmm. All of the positions are full. Then, should I give him the position of Duke Loic, who died from the monsters not too long ago?

When he heard those words, Amacar had asked.

—Your Majesty, I'm sorry but Commander Kond had lived as a commander all his life. Why...

—Sir Amacar, the revival of our empire is just right around the corner. Would those things be more important than that?

When it came to giving the position of the late Duke Loic...

—Your Majesty, the late Duke Loic died while fighting to protect your people. Less than a week has passed since his death. Please consider the feelings of the family of the bereaved.

—Sir Amacar.

Consteinus called out his name with a smile on his face.

—You don't have to worry. This emperor will make sure to keep Sir Amacar's seat no matter what.

Consteinus looked at Amacar as if he wanted him to believe him. However, Amacar did not really want that.

—Please consider those that are truly protecting the empire, Your Majesty.

All Amacar wanted was for Consteinus to return back to how he used to be. When they were very young, Amacar received Consteinus' order.

—Sir Amacar! Create the strongest and the best knight order in the entire world!

When Emperor Consteinus said that, he looked at his men with trust and faith.

Hound Amacar was said to have only lived for the sole purpose of making the *revival of the empire* possible. However, that was not really the case. Whether they were dukes or commanders, in the end, they were still the people of the empire. What Amacar truly wanted was to safeguard the safety and peace of the people of the empire.

However, after the battle against the Luvien Empire, Emperor Consteinus had changed. He began to persecute his people and bring them down, while he went on to recruit talented people from another empire.

Amacar recalled the conversation that he had with Consteinus just a few days ago.

—*Your Majesty. Please reconsider it. You cannot increase the taxes by 10% more. The number of people going hungry is increasing by the day.*

—*Sir Amacar. We can't help it. We have to recruit Ben, Brod and the others at all costs!*

—...

The only reason why Amacar protected Consteinus was because their intentions aligned perfectly. But now, Consteinus wanted to have the largest and strongest empire, instead of the safety and the peace of his people.

The worst part was that Consteinus had sent soldiers to the homes of those that could not pay taxes. He forcibly collected money from them in order to recruit the talents from another empire. However, he came back in failure.

“That damned Beyond the Heavens’ Emperor! How dare the emperor of a newly established empire...!”

Consteinus could not hold back his anger upon his return. In the end, he even killed a maid, who accidentally broke a cup, on the spot.

“...Have the soldiers clean this up, Sir Amacar.”

Amacar clenched his fists tightly as he looked at the maid that had been beheaded swiftly just like that. Up until yesterday, this maid had been greeting him with a smile on her face, but now...

‘*Didn’t you tell me that you will be the emperor for the people?*’

However, Consteinus said, “The Beyond the Heavens Empire will soon dispatch people to recruit our talents. I’m sure they will also approach Sir Amacar. However, I know that Sir Amacar will not leave.”

Consteinus smiled warmly at Amacar. It was a smile warmer than the smile that he used on others. However, that was probably because *Amacar* was the strongest existence in the empire, and was considered to be the representative of the empire himself.

On that day, *he* came to find Amacar. The man looked shabby, acting differently from the other diplomats sent by the Beyond the Heavens Empire to the Ardo Empire. Contrary to what Amacar heard, his face was not handsome.

"I don't think there's any need to show my face. So, I hid it."

"..."

"Please come to the Beyond the Heavens Empire."

"..."

Of course, Amacar did not respond. The man kept on coming to him for days. However, Amacar remained silent.

Then, one day, Amacar saw the shabby and rugged man eat with the hungry children.

"Woah! What food is this, hyung?"

"This dish is called chicken porridge. If you eat this, you will feel warm, comfortable and full."

"It tastes yummy!"

"There's a lot from where that came from so make sure to eat lots!"

"Oppa, you're the one that's eating the most!"

No one recognized him as the emperor. Amacar unknowingly laughed when he saw him eat and laugh with the children. Perhaps it was because of that scene that Amacar opened his mouth when he came back to find him.

"I saw you eating chicken porridge with the children."

"Food will always taste better if you eat it with others."

"You are the emperor of another empire, is it really alright for you to act so unbecoming like that?"

In a way, what he did could be considered to be lowly and vulgar. The man called the emperor of an empire was eating in a slum surrounded by rough and scruffy children.

"What makes it so something is considered to be unbecoming and coarse?"

"..."

"I just shared a meal with the kids. Nothing more, nothing less."

"Why did you share it? They could be the children of your enemies."

"Even though they are the children of an empire that may perhaps become an enemy to me, it's not in my nature to just pass by someone who is hungry. What are you trying to ask? Besides, I don't think an emperor can declare that he cares for the people if he persecutes and ignores the children of his enemies."

"..."

Amacar realized that he asked the wrong question. The man in front of him was a righteous and upright emperor, even more than the Consteinus of the past. So, he asked, “What are the people to you?”

However, instead of an answer, an unknown voice rang in Amacar’s ears.

[One of the Absolute Gods, the God that Lives for Someone, Leads Someone on the Right Path and Protects Someone, looks at you and says...]

Amacar had also heard about it. He had been very surprised when he heard that the man called the Evil God became the Guardian God, the one and only Guardian Deity of an empire, just so he could protect *him*. Amacar listened intently to the words of the Absolute God.

[He is the one that will smile at his people first.]

[He is the one that will feel sad if his people are sad and grieving.]

[He is considered as an emotional king, more emotional than anybody else.]

That was right. Perhaps caring for the people was attributed to emotions.

[Among his people, there was a man called the Ghost Spear.]

[Among his people, there was a man named Brod.]

[Among his people, there was a man named Elpis.]

[Among...]

[Among...]

[Among...]

[For him, his subject became the Spear God.]

[For him, his subject became the Commander.]

[For him, his subject became the Great Demon.]

However, even though he was emotional, people still gathered around him. The people that surrounded him grew stronger and tougher despite the risks and dangers just so they could protect their weak king.

[For him, his people are his family.]

[He once told me...]

[In my world, I am afflicted by a very rare disease and was forced to have no friends.]

[So, he made a family in his small nation called the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.]

[For him, his people were his hyungs, noonas and younger siblings. They were also sometimes his mothers and even his fathers.]

[Even I, the Evil God...]

[...became his family.]

“ ... ”

Amacar turned to look at Minhyuk.

Minhyuk pondered deeply about the matter. Then, with a small smile on his face, he answered Amacar's question. He said, "They're my family."

At the same time, something else happened.

[Emperor's Authority.]

[The Emperor's Comfort has been triggered.]

Minhyuk's new power was triggered.

Chapter 845

Special Players Management Team.

Employee Lee Minhwa could confidently say that she was the busiest person in Joy Co. Ltd. these days.

The level of the current players kept on improving and the number of new players and subscribers were increasing on a daily basis. In fact, the number of players that could be considered as special and outstanding was also increasing. In other words, the number of players that the Special Players Management Team had to monitor was increasing.

'When is the new recruit going to come?'

They had posted an announcement but it was still hanging there. According to Team Leader Park, the new recruits had to have a strong mentality.

At that moment, a warning popped out in Lee Minhwa's monitor.

[Warning.]

[Player Minhyuk has triggered the Emperor's Comfort.]

[The target: Ardo Empire's Hound Amacar.]

"...?!"

Lee Minhwa looked at the screen in confusion.

'Why is it considered a warning when Player Minhyuk triggered the Emperor's Comfort?'

At that moment, Team Leader Park, who was handling his own work, stood up after hearing the warning and came to look at her screen.

"Amacar...?"

Ardo Empire's Amacar was a top-level Named NPC. He was someone that even the operators of Athenae were interested in. After all, the Ardo Empire came to be because of him. That was not all. Many players wanted to learn from Amacar and follow his path. Amacar could be said to be someone with outstanding strength. However, when it came to nurturing someone else, he could even overshadow a genius.

'A transcendental.'

Perhaps that was the most apt expression to describe Amacar. In fact, even the *God of Growth and Development* would not be able to nurture and develop anyone as much as Amacar could nurture his men.

“Don’t tell me... Is Player Minhyuk trying to recruit Amacar?”

“That’s right.”

“But why did you get a warning message?”

Amacar might be an outstanding talent. However, everyone was fully convinced that his life would end in the Ardo Empire. That was how much he had lived for the sake of the Ardo Empire.

Team Leader Park hurriedly checked the Emperor’s Comfort. What he saw surprised him.

“What seems to be the matter... heok...!”

Not long after, Lee Minhwa also realized why Team Leader Park was taken aback.

“The Emperor’s Comfort is a skill that is influenced by CHA.”

Minhyuk’s CHA had already exceeded 14,000, after he had become an emperor.

Once a stat had reached units like that, it could definitely make a huge difference in the game. This was the case for special stats like DEX, Will and many more. Of course, among these special stats was CHA. When CHA exceeded 10,000, it could easily show the dignity and majesty of an emperor.

“Among all of the players in Athenae, Minhyuk had ranked fifth in terms of CHA.”

Initially, Minhyuk was only ranked fifth in terms of CHA. In fact, the player with the highest CHA only had 3,200 CHA, while Minhyuk only had around 2,000 CHA back then. However, when he became an emperor, his CHA grew to 12,000. Once CHA went past 10,000, its influence on a lot of things would grow with every 1,000 unit increase.

“He gained an additional 2,000 CHA when he became the Battle God’s Descendant.”

That was why it became a problem. Basically, the Emperor’s Comfort would not be influenced by CHA unless it was over 12,000 CHA. But now, Minhyuk’s CHA had reached around 14,000. This meant that the CHA would now have a huge influence on the skill.

Lee Minhwa gulped dryly. Then, she asked, “No way... Player Minhyuk would not be able to pull out the pillar of an empire, right?”

[Emperor’s Authority.]

[Emperor’s Comfort has been activated.]

Emperor’s Comfort was the first power that was released for Minhyuk when he became an emperor.

Level

•You can give comfort to your people, your soldiers, your Named NPCs, or even the players that belonged to your empire.

•The more sincere you are in comforting them, or the higher your CHA is, the more likely it is for the other person who received your comfort will be able to overcome hardships and adversities.

•Those who receive your comfort will sometimes be able to overcome their limitations and enjoy benefits like stat effects or buff effects.

Minhyuk was shocked at the unexpected activation of the skill.

‘I thought this can only be triggered and used for my people or players?’

But that was obviously not the case right now.

‘Can this be triggered as long as they have a favorable impression of me?’

It was only natural to seek comfort in difficult times. Perhaps that was the reason why those that could receive Minhyuk’s comfort were not limited to his own people. This was also proof that Amacar needed comfort.

‘Family.’

That was what the people were to Minhyuk. That was why he answered Amacar like that. However, if Amacar did not hear the Guardian God’s Voice, then he would have only thought that the man in front of him was saying those words insincerely to win his heart. However, it was undeniable that Amacar had witnessed and felt it firsthand.

Why did the Evil God named Obren chose to become the Guardian God? Why did the man named Ghost Spear Ben, one of the Pinnacle Strong Men of the past, chose to push himself until he became the Spear God? Why did the Fallen Wretched Emperor live for a man that was only a mere king?

Those questions clearly showed him that the sincerity in Minhyuk’s eyes was true. He was not lying when he said that he viewed his people as his family.

“My emperor was once like that too.”

Surprising as it might sound, the current Ardo Empire, a powerhouse among powerhouses, was founded by Emperor Consteinus.

“Is that so?” Minhyuk asked, a faint smile on his face.

The smile on Minhyuk’s face brought forth an unknown emotion in Amacar. He was the strong and powerful leader of the knights called the *Hounds*. The Hounds were soldiers that were far more cruel, but also the most righteous men in the empire. Somehow now, the master of these men, Amacar, was already starting to feel strange. He felt like he wanted to lean on and depend on the emperor of an empire that might become the enemy of their own empire.

At the same time, a set of notifications rang in Minhyuk’s ears.

[Your high CHA is attracting Amacar, who wants to be comforted.]

[Emperor's Comfort has already been triggered.]

"I would like to hear your story," Minhyuk said, smiling softly.

Sometimes, bringing up the words and the story that one had been keeping to themselves was the best way to reassure and comfort them. Just like that, Amacar began to tell his story.

Amacar was a war orphan. He did not know which empire or kingdom he came from. He wandered aimlessly as a child until he met with Consteinus' carriage procession. Consteinus decided to bring Amacar along to the Ardo Empire. However, even in that place, Amacar remained an orphan. Still, the people there provided him with food and a place to sleep in.

"I swung my sword just so I could repay them."

Amacar wielded his sword for the people that helped him. The first was Consteinus. He was immediately followed by a long list of people.

"They raised you," Minhyuk said.

'The people are my family.'

Their emperor regarded them, his people, as his family. It was the same for Amacar. He considered all of the people that helped him, including the empire itself, as his family.

"That's why I became strong."

Amacar swung his sword and became stronger to repay the help and care that he received from them. Then, one day, he joined the Ardo Empire's swordsmanship competition. When he won the championship, he bowed and shouted loudly to Emperor Consteinus.

"Back then, I declared loudly that it was thanks to His Majesty's grace that I was able to survive and grow strong like that. I even declared that I would only live for the sake of the Ardo Empire for the rest of my life. Back then, I never imagined that His Majesty would even remember me."

There was a faint smile on Amacar's face. The memories of that day were so sweet.

"However, His Majesty said..." Amacar could clearly recall the smile that Consteinus had given to him back then. "He said... I remember. I remember the little kid that smiled at me back then. I have always been watching you. I have heard that you became a soldier. I have heard that you became a knight. And I..."

There was a teary smile on Amacar's face.

"...have heard that you have truly become one of my people."

Amacar looked genuinely pleased as he recalled those memories.

"Then, one day, the Hound Knight Order that I raised, as well as several soldiers under my command were besieged and isolated by monsters. We were on the verge

of death, unable to eat and drink for days on end and exhaustion seeping through our bones.”

Back then, the Hound Knight Order had been considered as the lowest knight order. They were just beginning to grow.

“Just when I thought that we were all going to die...”

That day appeared clearly in Amacar’s mind.

“The monsters split into pieces as arrows rained down upon them. That was when I saw Emperor Consteinus charging through the gaps within the monsters’ ranks and cutting them one after another.”

Amacar’s eyes started to turn glassy from the unshed tears.

“Emperor Consteinus cut down the enemies while shouting, *‘Are you guys alright?! No one died, right? Hold on! I will protect you!’*”

The tears slowly dripped down Amacar’s cheeks.

“When all the monsters had been cut down, His Majesty threw his sword aside and ran.”

The tears that flowed down his cheeks could no longer be stopped.

“Back then, His Majesty did not even wear his boots. He came running right away when he heard the news. When all the fighting was over, he hugged me tightly and told me...”

The voice that rang in his ears back then was still vivid in his mind.

-It’s alright now. You have all survived.

On that day, the legend of the Ardo Empire began.

“I can still remember it clearly,” Amacar said with a bitter smile on his face as he wiped his tears. “His Majesty personally made some soup for those of us, who had not eaten or slept properly for days. Then, with a simple piece of bread in his hand, he sat down with us to eat and laugh together.”

Minhyuk nodded. He could tell what happened after this story. The best knight order, the best before the appearance of the Swords of the Gods, was created in the Ardo Empire.

The news of their victory spread far and wide in the Ardo Empire. Then, Ardo grew bigger and bigger until it became the strongest empire. However, with the appearance of the Luvien Empire, they became what they were now.

“You must have been very happy back then.” This was Minhyuk’s comfort. “After all, there’s nothing greater or more wonderful than moving forward and becoming stronger for someone else’s sake.”

[The Emperor's Comfort has covered Amacar with warmth.]

"You have raised your empire for your emperor."

Minhyuk placed his hand on Amacar's shoulder.

"Your emperor ran for his people to the point that he even forgot to wear his boots."

Minhyuk tightened his grip on Amacar's shoulder.

"Even now, you still care for Emperor Consteinus more than anybody else."

This was the truth. Although Amacar hated Consteinus after he changed, he was still his emperor.

"Emperor Consteinus also cares deeply about you."

Minhyuk stood up. What was *comfort*? It was just telling someone nice words.

'It did not work because you did it like that.'

'Aren't you the reason why this happened?'

'Everyone is having a hard time.'

Yes, it was saying some nice words, not the nonsense mentioned above.

"I'm sure Emperor Consteinus will still come running to save you when you're in danger, even if he forgets to wear his boots."

[The Emperor's Comfort has deeply moved Amacar.]

[With your Emperor's Comfort, Amacar's hateful feelings toward Consteinus had disappeared.]

Minhyuk began to cook quickly. What he decided to cook was nothing but a simple dish. He took out a pot and began to boil some soup.

Amacar could not forget the soup that Consteinus made for them, the soup that he ate with them as they chatted and laughed together. This dish would definitely bring greater comfort to Amacar.

Amacar looked at the soup and the dinner rolls that were placed in front of him. He clearly remembered how hungry he was back then. When he took a sip of the warm soup, the salty yet creamy soup instantly warmed his empty belly. For some reason, Amacar felt like this was the same as back then.

Back then, they were all tired and exhausted but they could laugh and joke around the moment they sat down with Emperor Consteinus and ate together. In fact, he felt like he could see what happened back then right in front of him.

Amacar picked up one of the dinner rolls. He tore it apart and slowly placed a piece in his mouth. He ate one, two bites of the soft and airy bread. Of course, he did not forget to take a sip of the soup every now and then.

Then, he dipped a piece of the dinner roll in the soup and put it in his mouth. The creamy soup made the bread even softer, a delicious flavor wrapping around his mouth with every bite. The meal was almost finished in no time at all.

Amacar chuckled as he finished the dinner roll in his hands.

‘My emperor has changed. And yet my emperor still loves me more than anybody else.’

Just like what Minhyuk had said, his emperor would definitely still come running for him if he ever came across danger.

[Amacar is responding to your comforting words!]

[Your favor with Amacar has exceeded the MAX!]

[The Emperor’s Comfort will soon end.]

Now, Minhyuk only needed to say one last thing to move Amacar’s heart and mind.

“Sir Amacar.”

Amacar turned to look at Minhyuk as the man gave him his final comfort and consolation.

“Stay in your empire.”

These were Minhyuk’s final words of comfort for Amacar.

Chapter 846

Ardo Empire’s Duke Amacar was the one that developed the Ardo Empire, which was considered the most ordinary of the ordinary, into the largest and strongest powerhouse. He was someone that the Beyond the Heavens Empire desperately needed. If he came to the Beyond the Heavens, he would surely give wings to the empire and help it develop faster.

However, Minhyuk left these final words of comfort to him, “Stay in your empire.”

At the same time, the notifications rang in Minhyuk’s ears.

[The Emperor’s Comfort has ended.]

[You have given Amacar peace of mind and have allowed him to empty his heart and his thoughts. This act has given him the chance to think better and make better decisions.]

Amacar was quite surprised when he heard Minhyuk’s words. He had thought that the reason why Minhyuk listened to his story and comforted him was mainly because the man wanted to recruit him. However, this emperor was interesting.

‘I have absolutely no idea about what’s going on in that head of his.’

That was right. Amacar could not understand what was happening. But then, at that moment, Minhyuk smiled softly.

“Weren’t you the one that said it, Duke Amacar?”

“...”

“You are still someone who would do anything and everything for Emperor Consteinus.”

That was the truth. Even though Amacar hated Consteinus now, he would still do anything for the man, even if the man ordered him to *kill himself*.

“Stay together with the man that you cherish and care for.”

“...”

To be honest, Amacar was really surprised. The emperor in front of him was different from the other emperors and kings that he knew. If it were the other emperors and kings who had been quietly waiting to take advantage of the opportunity to recruit him, they would immediately take him in.

However, after giving him comfort, Minhyuk just looked relieved. In the end, Minhyuk turned around and returned. Amacar stared at the direction that he left in before turning to look at the castle where his emperor was.

Thanks to Minhyuk’s comforts, the distracting thoughts that lingered in his head had already disappeared. This allowed him to think clearer. It did not take too long for Amacar to make a decision. Thus, he made his move.

Consteinus was left reeling in shock when he saw Amacar pledge his allegiance to Minhyuk. This was impossible. What he was seeing in front of him had to be a dream or some kind of false fantasy.

But then, Amacar told Minhyuk, “I vow to stay by His Majesty’s side forever and help the Beyond the Heavens Empire!!!”

Consteinus, who had been denying what was happening in front of him, finally realized that this was reality.

[You have succeeded in recruiting the Ardo Empire’s Duke Amacar.]

[Duke Amacar. Level 658.]

“This is not... This is impossible. How... Amacar, you...”

Some people passed by Consteinus, who had been mumbling to himself while shaking his head. There was a man that was said to be the candidate to become the God of Martial Arts. The young man knelt on both knees and yelled loudly, “Your Imperial Majesty! I vow to stay by your side and help you forever!”

[You have succeeded in recruiting Careon Kingdom’s Ronson.]

[Martial Artist Ronson. Level 592.]

Then, another man appeared. This man had been bald just a few days ago. However, his head was now filled with thick and fluttering hair as he knelt down in front of Minhyuk and said, “The Beyond the Heavens Empire is the benefactor of my entire family. Your Majesty! I promise to do my best to create artifacts for the Beyond the Heavens Empire!”

[You have succeeded in recruiting Ars Empire’s Hanson.]

[Blacksmith Hanson. Level 331.]

As time went by, the number of people that knelt in front of Minhyuk began to increase.

A long time ago, a child, who did not know how to wield the spear properly, received a piece of advice from an old man passing by on the street. Thanks to that advice, the child grew up well and

became an outstanding spearman. The very same old man that gave him advice visited him to recruit him.

[You have succeeded in recruiting Hors Kingdom's Arvon.]

[Spearman Arvon. Level 564.]

There was also someone who had been single since birth, and only found happiness by reading a novel. The author of that novel came to recruit him and he happily came running after hearing that he would be able to read all of the novels that the author would make forever.

[You have succeeded in recruiting Effinor Kingdom's Ronweiner.]

[Archer Ronweiner. Level 568.]

There were also those who were anxious about the danger that they would be exposed to with their failing kingdom, and had been taken by Haze's flamboyant and confident words.

[You have succeeded in recruiting Clyde Kingdom's Arabba.]

[Knight Arabba. Level 564.]

The kings and emperors that they passed by looked at them incredulously. After all, these were the same subjects who had said they would even sacrifice their lives for their sake, or that they would only live for them alone.

However, most of these rulers were similar to Consteinus. To be exact, there were a lot of them who were way worse compared to how Consteinus behaved and acted. Some had always treated their subjects as servants, reigning over them with power and even going so far as to destroy their families if their subjects irked them.

"Why?!!!"

"Do you think that you would be safe if you left me, huh?!!!"

"I have done everything for you!!!"

The kings and emperors shouted loudly when they saw that the Beyond the Heavens Empire was successful in recruiting a third of the people that came with them. However, before they could lash out in anger toward the Beyond the Heavens Empire, they had to question those who betrayed them.

In just an instant, the entire hall was flipped upside down. Everything was in chaos. The emperors and kings tried to grab them by the collar while some even went so far as to pull their sword out. However, the soldiers of the Beyond the Heavens Empire have been prepared for this. They immediately stepped forward and stopped them from making any move.

Even so, the emperors and kings did not stop. They continued to shout their questions. There was one person, one particular person, who approached the kneeling Amacar with disbelief in his face.

"Why... Why, Sir Amacar?"

At that moment, Consteinus remembered. He remembered the memories that the two of them shared.

When he first met him, the once young boy was smiling brightly at him. He felt a connection between them so he took in the orphan and brought him to his empire.

“I cared about you.”

He remembered the day that he won the swordsmanship competition for him. He clearly remembered the man declaring that he would live for his sake. That was why he ran, he ran to save him when he was in danger.

“Please don’t go. I beg you. Please stay by my side.”

However, Amacar remained silent. As funny as it might seem, Amacar, who was about to leave him, was crying and trembling.

The question opened the dam. Tears fell non-stop from Amacar’s eyes.

The voice resonated so loudly that everyone in the hall fell silent for a moment.

“What kind of empire did Your Majesty reign over?!!! Was it an empire that only had eyes for those with great power?!!!”

Consteinus’ mouth turned shut when he heard those words.

“Weren’t you the one that gave up on your people?!!! You discarded them and ignored their pain in order for you to recruit stronger and more talented people, no?!!!”

Amacar was confident that the decision that he had made would open one of two paths.

“Everything that I did was for the people...”

“None of your people hoped to have an empire that was only filled with the strong. Please open your eyes. Look at the world around you. See how your people look at you now and compare it with how they looked at you in the past. What is the difference?!”

Consteinus could no longer speak.

“The reason why I made the Ardo Empire strong was because I wanted to see many people laugh, cry and live more prosperously alongside you, Your Majesty.”

Emperor Consteinus stared at Amacar in a daze for a very long time. His mouth cracked open as if he was about to say something but no words came out of him.

At that moment, Minhyuk stepped forward and said, “I ask that every one of you to return.”

Consteinus was left in a daze as he slowly walked out of the hall.

Consteinus was still in a daze even after they returned to the Ardo Empire. No matter how much his aide spoke to him, he remained unresponsive. It was as if he had lost all hope.

“...Did Sir Amacar leave the empire?”

“My goodness.”

“Why did Sir Amacar do that?”

“*Shh!* Shut up. Be quiet. A maid has been beheaded not too long ago!”

Consteinus looked at them before turning to look at his aide with a determined look on his face.

“Summon the army.”

“Your Majesty, please tell me that you’re not going to try and bring down the Beyond the Heavens Empire?!! Please, reconsider! You have already signed the contract with the Beyond the Heavens Empire...”

“Shut up! Just summon the army for me!”

After the Luvien Empire, the troops from the Ardo Empire began to march.

The Athenae homepage was filled with noise.

[Guys, have you seen Tallulah’s broadcast? The Ardo Empire left only the bare minimum number of troops in their empire and is now marching out with the rest of their entire army.]

[Yep, yep. I saw that. It was amazing. That place was the strongest empire before the Luvien Empire came to be.]

[But... does anyone know where they are headed to?]

[Hey, you don’t know? Not too long ago, the Beyond the Heavens Empire was able to recruit Duke Amacar. If you look at it in Emperor Consteinus' view, he must have been very angry when that happened. If I were him, I would also send my troops and wipe out the Beyond the Heavens Empire.]

[However, from what I heard, there was a contract signed between the rulers of the nations regarding this recruitment. Won’t they receive punishment if they broke that contract?]

[They will be punished. But to be honest, if Amacar was taken away from me, then I will also gladly take on that punishment.]

[Is the Beyond the Heavens Empire going to fall as soon as it gets established?]

[Hiyaaaa... I think they brought along around eight million troops.]

One of the BJs saw the Ardo Empire advancing and began to film it. The broadcasting stations, who heard of the news, immediately dispatched their broadcasting teams to cover the issue.

[I have never seen such a huge army advance like this.]

[This is truly amazing. Eight million soldiers. This can only be possible for the Luvien and the Ardo Empire.]

[What do you think will happen if the Beyond the Heavens Empire and the Ardo Empire went to war?]

[The Beyond the Heavens Empire might have countless strong powerhouses in their empire. However, the Ardo Empire has a huge number of soldiers and knights on their side. On top of that, they are on an entirely different level from the others. The Beyond the Heavens Empire won't last two days.]

[The Ardo Empire's momentum is terrifying.]

[Emperor Consteinus' face looks dark too.]

[Well, there's no helping it. I can understand what he's feeling. After all, this would probably feel like he had lost the Ardo Empire itself to the Beyond the Heavens Empire.]

Before everyone knew it, the army had already arrived in front of the Beyond the Heavens Empire. The Beyond the Heavens Empire had also started to prepare for war when they heard the sudden news

Cold sweat dripped down Minhyuk's back as he looked at Consteinus.

'I never expected that he's willing to ignore the punishment of breaking the contract.'

However, when he thought about it deeply, he felt like he could understand. After all, Emperor Consteinus trusted Amacar more than he trusted the Imperial Family.

Minhyuk turned to look at Amacar, who was standing right beside him on the walls of the empire.

'What is going on with you?'

Minhyuk actually could not understand it either. Why did this man leave the emperor that he loved and cared for so much and came to his side? Minhyuk did not know the reason why.

The troops of the Beyond the Heavens Empire stood nervously as the overwhelming momentum of the millions of troops around them engulfed them. For some reason, they felt like this was scarier than the enemies that they had faced so far. Perhaps they felt like this was scarier since they did not have the time to heal from the pain that they suffered during the war with the Luvien Empire.

In fact, even Minhyuk was nervous. He licked his dry lips as he watched Emperor Consteinus step forward. Emperor Consteinus' expression looked stiff as he stared at Amacar, who was standing on the walls of the empire.

Meanwhile, Amacar was looking back at them with a complicated expression on his face.

'It seems like the emperor came to kill me, who betrayed him, by himself..'

Amacar loved Consteinus with all his heart. Perhaps he was being ravaged by the pain of his heart being torn apart right now.

At that moment, Consteinus opened his mouth and asked, "Sir Amacar, let me ask you this one last question. Do you have any regrets?"

“...” Amacar bit his lips tightly. He remained silent for a moment before answering, “I do. I regret it even now.”

“...”

Minhyuk turned to look at Amacar. He could see that Amacar looked like he wanted to run and approach his former emperor and ask for his forgiveness.

However, Amacar said, “But I believe this is the right choice.”

Consteinus nodded his head slowly.

“I see.”

Consteinus stared at Amacar for three, then five, then ten minutes. He just stood there silently and stared for a very long time.

[He must have a lot to think about.]

[The betrayal of someone who has been with him for all his life and the punishment that he will receive. Of course, he has a lot to think about.]

[Because of the Beyond the Heavens Empire’s greed, they might lose everything, including Amacar.]

Everyone’s attention was focused on Consteinus’ arm. Once he raised that arm and lowered it, the war would begin and following that, the likely fall of the very first empire created by a foreigner.

Thuuuuud—

But then, Emperor Consteinus suddenly knelt on the ground. Amacar, who was standing right next to Minhyuk, flinched. Then, the kneeling Consteinus placed his hands one on top of the other, and brought them to his forehead. After that, he slowly bowed down.

“Thank you.”

Consteinus’ tears dripped down and soaked the ground beneath him.

“My friend.”

Chapter 847

Most of the players knew who Ardo Empire’s Emperor Consteinus was. He was the one who ruled the strongest empire in the continent, before the appearance of the Luvien Empire.

There were mixed reactions among the people when they saw the empire led by such a man charge forward and try to bring the Beyond the Heavens Empire to collapse. Some felt that it was a pity while some, who were driven by their inferiority complex, were very delighted.

However, what was happening right in front of everyone’s eyes was something that defied all expectations. Emperor Consteinus was prostrating to the Beyond the Heavens Empire. To be exact, it was not the Beyond the Heavens Empire that he was bowing to, but Lord Amacar.

An emperor was a figure who never bowed down to others. Perhaps they might if they were in front of a *God*, or an enemy that had destroyed their empire and pointed a sword to their necks. However,

if one looked through the history of Athenae, one would never find an instance when an emperor bowed to their subject.

Emperor Consteinus, who bowed deeply and lowly, shed tears. With a trembling voice, he said, “I have always received help from you. Each and every time.”

Amacar had betrayed the Ardo Empire to become a part of the Beyond the Heavens Empire.

‘But why is he saying that he received help?’

Minhyuk turned to look at the man standing beside him. Amacar’s fists were clenched tightly. He was crying silently as he looked at the humble back of the man who he once served.

Now that they had lost Amacar, the Ardo Empire’s growth rate would infinitely weaken. Instead of thinking of *growing*, the Ardo Empire would now have to think of *protecting* themselves. If that was the case, why was Emperor Consteinus grateful to Amacar?

‘Thanks to you, I was able to see it.’

Emperor Consteinus was left reeling in shock when he returned to his empire, Amacar’s words kept ringing in his mind.

–None of your people hoped to have an empire that was only filled with the strong. Please open your eyes. Look at the world around you. See how your people look at you now and compare it with how they looked at you in the past. What is the difference?!

While pondering over that question in order to seek the answer, Consteinus began to look at his people carefully. When he looked at their eyes, the first thing that he saw was *fear*. Then, it was immediately followed by *surrender*.

Emperor Consteinus had become the emperor after the death of the previous Imperial Majesty. It had been three years since he started to rule his empire. Back then, when the people looked at him, they would smile happily at him and look at him with respect and trust.

Perhaps it was truly like what Amacar said. Nobody wanted an *empire filled with only the strong*. Consteinus just wanted an unshakeable empire so that everyone would live without experiencing much pain and sorrow. However, the only ones who wanted a strong empire to defeat the Luvien Empire were Consteinus and the nobles.

“My eyes and ears that had been closed through the years had now been finally opened. I can finally see again what kind of empire I hoped for, and what kind of emperor I aspire to be.”

The emperor, who had his head pressed to the ground, raised his head and looked up at Amacar, whose words had awakened and enlightened him.

Amacar murmured softly, so soft that Consteinus could not hear his words, “Your Majesty, please do not change. I hope that your heart will never change.”

Only then did Minhyuk realize what happened. It was true, Amacar had a favorable impression of him and the Beyond the Heavens Empire. However, the real reason why he left Ardo Empire for the Beyond the Heavens Empire was because he knew Consteinus more than anybody else. After all, he

had shared a deep bond with the Ardo Empire's emperor for a very long time now.

'Consteinus must have been feeling very urgent because of the Luvien Empire.'

The once steadfast and sturdy empire had been shaken to its core. Along the way, Consteinus had forgotten the kind of empire he truly wanted. However, even though he had forgotten the essence and nature of the empire that he wanted, Amacar was still there. And Amacar knew him more than anybody else. He knew Consteinus' true character and nature. And that was the reason why he left. His departure served as both punishment for Consteinus' actions and a lesson.

A commotion rang out amidst the eight million troops standing behind Consteinus. All of them knew that Amacar had betrayed them. In fact, all of them thought Emperor Consteinus would destroy the Beyond the Heavens Empire. They had also been angry at first. After all, they believed that Commander Amacar would remain by their side for the rest of their lives. However, he left them.

'Why?'

'Did the Beyond the Heavens Empire promise you a lot of money?'

'Or did they promise you something else?'

There was undeniable anger from every single one of them. After all, the more one looked at another with good feelings, the greater the sense of betrayal if that person left them. However, the soldiers soon realized the reason why. They all knew that Amacar cared for the Ardo Empire deeply. He was someone who lived solely for the sake of the empire.

Among them, the ones who were most shocked were the members of the Hound Knight Order. The Hound Knight Order's Deputy Commander bowed deeply beside Consteinus. Then, the members of the knight order began to bow to Amacar one after another.

[What a spectacular sight.]

[Although this bow is not meant for Minhyuk, looking at it can definitely bring a thrill down your spine, no?]

[Amacar. His deeds and actions will be imprinted deeply in the annals of history of the Ardo Empire.]

[There's also Emperor Consteinus. The fact that he bowed to his subject will turn him into a model figure for the countless emperors and kings in the continent.]

[Some might blame him for tarnishing his authority as an emperor. However, from what I can see, there's a high chance that this will bring him a much more beneficial effect.]

[This shows that the emperor of the Ardo Empire knows the importance of his vassals and people. As a result, we can expect many continents all over the world to look up to the Ardo Empire.]

When the members of the Hound Knight Order began to bow deeply, the soldiers also immediately followed suit. They bowed to the hero who made Ardo Empire what it was now. They bowed deeply to the hero who tried to steer the shaken mind and thoughts of the Ardo Empire and its emperor, who he loved so much, back to its original path, even if it meant that he had to leave them. This was them showing him respect.

‘This...’

Minhyuk’s breath hitched when he saw the spectacular sight that unfolded in front of him. The emperor and the eight million troops of the most powerful empire were bowing deeply to Amacar.

‘Is he truly a vassal that I can house?’

That was how great and outstanding Amacar was. Even Minhyuk began to question his own qualifications.

Then, they heard their voices.

“Thank you, Sir Amacar.”

“We promise to protect the Ardo Empire.”

“We will make sure to create the empire that you wish and hope for.”

“Sir Amacar, we wish you happiness.”

“Ardo Empire is what it is now because of you.”

“Please do not worry about His Majesty and the Ardo Empire. We will work hard to protect them and we will make sure to grow even stronger!”

The soldiers sincerely expressed their thoughts, perhaps for the final time, to Amacar. Their cries coalesced until it turned into one loud cry of...

“Thank you!”

Amacar’s heart throbbed when he heard the cries of the millions of soldiers in front of him. He felt like his efforts were being proven here. He felt like the actions that he had done for the Ardo Empire from the past up until now were not done in vain. These people had been with him for a very long time. They also knew him better than anybody else. So, in a way, they ought to consider him a traitor. Yet they thanked him. Amacar’s eyes turned to look back at Emperor Consteinus.

Emperor Consteinus knew that Amacar would not return to him after he had been corrupted by his own greed like that. Besides, he has already sworn his allegiance to the Beyond the Heavens Empire. Consteinus’ body shook fiercely, his head touching the ground once again. He knew that he had to let Amacar go. That he should thank him for waking him up.

“Who will I drink tea with now...?”

Consteinus was more saddened by the fact that he had lost a friend, than losing the talent that was Amacar. His back trembled as he cried uncontrollably.

“Who will I share my concerns with now...?”

Consteinus once again vowed to himself that he would create an empire where everyone was happy.

‘My empire will change. It will be just like it was in the past.’

However, Consteinus was happiest when he was with *him*.

“I... Who am I supposed to laugh with now?”

Now, *he* would no longer be by his side.

Emperor Consteinus' body trembled fiercely as he continued to cry. None of his men could come close to him. They did not even think about lifting him up from the ground. The soldiers of the Ardo Empire knew how much Consteinus cherished and loved Amacar. No one among them could console their crying emperor. Only one person could do that.

Creaaaaaaaaaaaaak—

The sobbing Consteinus heard the gates in front of him creak open. He slowly looked up at the direction of the sound.

Minhyuk, who watched everything from above, triggered the Battle God's Voice. In the sky above them, the image of a young emperor smiling kindly as the scruffy child looked up at him with a bright and wide smile on his face appeared.

[When they first met, the boy made up his mind.]

[I will live for his sake.]

Swoosh—

The image disappeared, revealing another image. The image showed Amacar winning the swordsmanship competition. The boy had now turned into a young man. This young man bowed to the man sitting on the throne as he pledged his loyalty.

[The emperor looked at him and thought that his relationship with this young man would prove to be meaningful.]

Swoosh—

The image scattered once again.

Consteinus looked toward the gates. There he saw someone in a hurry, gasping for breath as he ran toward Consteinus.

At the same time, a new image appeared in the sky. It was the image of the emperor running toward the young man who was besieged by monsters and was in danger of dying.

[The emperor ran with all his might to save him.]

The man who was approaching Consteinus was none other than Amacar. He looked just like the emperor who was portrayed in the sky above them. He ran with all his might for the sake of the emperor who he loved and cherished. Right now, he looked more afraid to see his emperor wallow in sorrow and despair than dying on his own.

Then, another image appeared in the sky above the running Amacar. It showed the image of the young man, who survived the ordeal, and the emperor who saved him. There were knights and soldiers sat around them, eating soup and bread while chatting happily.

[The young knight, who had just escaped from death, sat beside his emperor and looked at him as he told a joke while eating soup with them. At that time, the young knight made another vow to himself.]

[I will revive this empire to protect him.]

Consteinus stood up when Amacar appeared in front of him. Amacar knelt down and shouted, “Your Majesty!!!”

Amacar breathed roughly, gasping as he said, “Please do not worry about those things.”

“...”

“Whenever Your Majesty wants to drink tea, whenever Your Majesty needs someone to chat with and whenever Your Majesty is sad, I will always be here to greet you with a smile.”

Consteinus laughed, tears dripping down his cheeks as he knelt by Amacar’s side. Amacar finally barked a laugh through his tears. He said, “Whenever I want to have tea with Your Majesty, whenever there’s something sad going on, whenever I want to have a chat with Your Majesty...”

Amacar hid his feet underneath his legs as he continued to kneel on the ground.

“Please allow me to go and see you, Your Majesty.”

With those words, another image appeared in the sky. The image was so huge that it almost engulfed the entire Beyond the Heavens Empire. The image showed the figure of an emperor looking at the millions of people in front of him while a young man stood guarding by his side.

[The meeting between the scruffy young boy and the young emperor became the legend of an era.]

Consteinus, with a bright and wide smile on his face, replied, “I give you my permission.”

Chapter 848

Usually, ordinary kingdoms and empires would suffer from financial difficulties for several months after their successful establishment. Not only that, their lacking military force would also put them at great risk during that period. After all, they did not have anything to use to pay for anything, since they had only been established and built.

They had to make various exchanges with the other empires and kingdoms. And it was only through those exchanges would their people be able to make profit. Once their people made profit, they would be able to receive taxes.

In addition, they had to supply and equip their military with weapons and armor, as well as food. However, without any money on hand, it would be difficult to maintain that. And if they could not maintain that, then their military force would naturally weaken.

However, the Beyond the Heavens Empire was different. This was considering that it had only been established less than a month ago.

A beautiful lady announcer was currently having a conversation with an expert in ATV Broadcasting Station’s program called *Athenae Player’s Exclusive Information*.

“Beyond the Heavens’ Emperor Minhyuk is a truly smart emperor. He was able to navigate the situation regarding the offers that the other emperors and kings had made.”

“Can you tell our dear viewers how he dealt with it and your insights on this matter?”

“Of course. Emperor Minhyuk had put forward several conditions to those that wanted to send recruitment offers to his vassals. *‘Anyone is allowed to recruit my men. However, if you want to recruit them, then you have to pay the recruitment fee which would vary depending on the person who you are trying to recruit. It doesn’t matter whether it is successful or not. You have to pay the fee.’* The empires and kingdoms agreed with this condition and began to reach out to his men. Furthermore, each kingdom or empire had to pay the recruitment fee even if dozens of them came to recruit that one person.”

“So, you’re saying that if for example, five empires tried to recruit Spear God Ben, then each of those empires would have to pay the recruitment fee?”

“That’s right. As far as I know, there were dozens of kingdoms and empires that tried to recruit them. From what I have gathered, they all tried to recruit the most prominent figures of the Beyond the Heavens Empire like Spear God Ben, Brod, Elpis and many more. I don’t know the exact figures, but if you estimate roughly, I think the Beyond the Heavens Empire was able to secure more than four million platinum through this.”

“Wow. Four million platinum? That’s quite a huge amount.” The lady announcer clicked her tongue.

Four million platinum was worth more than hundreds of billions of won in cash.

“But that’s not all. Beyond the Heavens’ Emperor Minhyuk was also able to successfully increase their military forces through this maneuver.”

The expert held his pen as he pointed toward a piece of paper. Awe and admiration stained his voice as he spoke of the achievements made by the Beyond the Heavens Empire during this short period of time.

“He had put forward another condition, saying, *‘We will recruit as many talents as your empire tried to recruit from us.’* First and foremost, this is a blow, a counter to the disrespect that the other empires and kingdoms committed toward them.”

“However, the Beyond the Heavens Empire was able to secure many talents with that move, no?” The lady announcer said, admiration also evident in her voice. “What kind of impact do you think the talents recruited by the Beyond the Heavens Empire will have?”

“The Beyond the Heavens Empire was able to recruit the pride of a nation and was even able to recruit the pillar of an empire. Interestingly, they were very smart in their recruitment. They did not solely focus on recruiting strong talents. They also

recruited a significant number of non-combat NPCs like blacksmiths, famous poets, and even bards. In other words, not only were they able to strengthen their military force, they were also able to lay the foundation for their future trading activities."

The expert praised the Beyond the Heavens Empire.

The announcer pondered for a moment, before asking, "Does that mean that the Beyond the Heavens Empire has become the strongest empire upon their establishment?"

It was not strange for the lady announcer to think so. In fact, it was not just her, the viewers thought so too.

But the expert shook his head and said, "That's not the case."

"Yes? How come? Didn't you just say that they were able to secure a lot of funds and even recruited many famous and strong talents?"

"Of course, it's certainly good to secure a lot of talent. However, the number of their troops is still less than half the size of the troops of an ordinary empire. That's not all. The aftermath of this recruitment is also definitely going to come."

"Ah..."

"Just a few minutes ago, Emperor Consteinus bowed toward the former Hound Knight Order Commander, Amacar. However, you can consider him to be an exception."

The announcer quickly understood what he meant. "So, you're saying that even though the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom was able to get away with this thanks to the contract that they have signed, in the end the other empires and kingdoms would harbor dislike for them?"

"That's right. They might have put various restrictions and conditions to prevent the other empires and kingdoms from causing them harm during this human resource recruitment fiasco. However, at the end of it all, the actions done by the Beyond the Heavens Empire would garner the *hate* of the other empires and kingdoms. This would make things difficult for them in the future. If the smallest mistake appeared in the Beyond the Heavens Empire, these empires and kingdoms would most definitely try to bring huge punishment upon them."

Both viewers and commentators understood what the expert said. The fact that they could recruit countless talented people was obviously a good thing. However, the sweet apple that they had in their hands was not without its poison. If the Beyond the Heavens made even the smallest mistake, the others would definitely jump on the opportunity to punish them.

"Personally, I believe the greatest contributor in the human resource recruitment activity was Beyond the Heavens Empire's Prime Minister Haze..."

The conversation between the announcer and the expert continued just like that.

Minhyuk, Amacar and Consteinus were all currently together.

When Consteinus bowed deeply and Amacar came running to him, Amacar had asked his former emperor if he could come and see him anytime. Of course, they also wanted it to happen the other way around. It would be very unpleasant for both Minhyuk and Amacar to see Amacar come running to the Ardo Empire every time. However, for Consteinus to come to Beyond the Heavens Empire anytime, they would need the explicit approval of Emperor Minhyuk. After all, there was always an accompanying risk if another empire's emperor came strutting freely in the Beyond the Heavens Empire.

'Amacar goes to Ardo and Consteinus goes to the Beyond the Heavens.'

However, Minhyuk saw this as a great opportunity to forge relationships and have peace with the greater power that was the Ardo Empire.

Of course, the current Consteinus had very low favorability toward Minhyuk. It was only natural. After all, if you remove the fact that everything was an act to help him realize what was happening around him, to Consteinus, Minhyuk was just someone who took away his empire's precious talents. However, Consteinus and Amacar wanted to have exchanges. That meant that they had to talk to Minhyuk.

Right now, Minhyuk was cooking for the two of them to raise a bit of favorability. The menu was none other than *chicken*, specifically Kyochon Chicken. Even if a person could only eat half a chicken, if they were presented with Kyochon Chicken, then they would be able to eat the entire chicken.

Kyochon Chicken was the number one when it came to sales volume. Its bestseller and signature menu was its salty and savory *Kyochon Chicken* and *Soy Sauce Chicken*. Of course, they also had an extensive menu that included Sweet Chicken and Red Chicken. Minhyuk loved eating the lollipop chicken and was very fond of the flavors Kyochon Chicken and Red Chicken. Together with some wedge potatoes on the side, the food was to die for.

Minhyuk gently placed the chicken coated with seasonings in the hot frying pan.

Sizzleeeeeeeee—

Emperor Consteinus and Amacar both turned to look at him when they heard the clear and crisp sound of the sizzling oil.

"What a mouth-watering smell."

"Does it make you hungry? His Majesty Minhyuk's cooking skills are extraordinary. Please look forward to it."

Amacar had actually stood up and said that he would do it himself. After all, he was currently under Minhyuk's command. However, Consteinus opposed it hoping that they would reminisce about their past.

"I still can't forget the dish that you made for me in the past." Consteinus smiled happily. "I was surprised when I took the first bite."

"Is that so? Hoho." Amacar laughed awkwardly.

‘Did he truly enjoy the dish that much?’

“You are truly good with the sword. I even cried after eating it. It was a dish where you could taste every flavor in the world.”

“...”

When Minhyuk heard this, he thought to himself that he should really do this himself. He looked at the mouth-watering and crispy chicken before frying the wedge potatoes. After frying the wedge potatoes, he went ahead and seasoned the chicken. Minhyuk poured the seasoning on the frying pan before pouring in the fried chicken and stir-frying everything. Only by doing this would the seasoning be able to seep through the chicken.

In a blink, the chicken was done. Fried to a crispy golden brown, it looked very appetizing.

“Let me say this once again, my Beyond the Heavens Empire accepts the future exchanges between the two of you.”

“Cough. If you have any shame in your bones, then you should allow it.”

Consteinus looked more relaxed when he saw Minhyuk responding mildly to his words, even cooking for them.

Then, Minhyuk said, “The chefs of Beyond the Heavens Empire have also made chicken for the soldiers of the Ardo Empire, who must be tired from the marching.”

“Is that so? Thank you.”

Even if the eight million troops ate only half a chicken, they still had to fry at least four million chickens. However, Minhyuk was willing to bear this cost. This was because he knew that forging a friendly relationship with the Ardo Empire was necessary if they wanted to deal with the Luvien Empire in the future. More importantly, Minhyuk was confident that the taste and flavor of the chicken would definitely impress and captivate Emperor Consteinus.

“By the way, you said that you were going to treat us but... isn’t this just a pretext for you to eat, huh? Beyond the Heavens’ Emperor?” Consteinus clicked his tongue when he saw Minhyuk place around ten whole chickens in front of him.

Minhyuk only chuckled lightly in response. He was busy gulping down his saliva as he looked at the chicken in front of him.

‘Should I eat it with cola instead of beer?’

Minhyuk quickly dropped a couple of ice cubes in a clear glass and poured some cool and refreshing cola in it.

Fwiiiiiiiiish—

Minhyuk savored the sound of the carbonate escaping from the can as the cola met with the ice. Of course, he made sure to gulp a few mouthfuls of cola before digging into the food.

‘Our Lord Chicken.’

“Kghhk...!”

The carbonated cola was accompanied by an electrifying feeling as it passed down his throat. Minhyuk immediately put down the glass and grabbed a piece of Kyochon Chicken’s signature menu, the Soy Sauce Chicken.

The wing was well-fried and there was no dry portion at all. The moment he took a bite, the tender and soft chicken meat separated from the bone and entered his mouth, along with a salty and savory flavor.

“Hiyaaa.”

Every bite was truly delicious. No matter how much Minhyuk ate, it did not seem like the chicken could fill his stomach easily. This time, Minhyuk grabbed a meaty wing. He put everything in his mouth and ate it in one go. Of course, he did not forget to take a bite of the pickled radish.

Crunch, crunch—

A loud crunch rang in his ears as the sour flavor of the radish rounded up the savory and greasy flavor of the chicken.

This time, Minhyuk turned his attention to the Red Chicken. When he took a huge bite, the spicy and sweet flavor immediately spread out in his mouth. As expected, Minhyuk ate several pieces in one go while savoring the spiciness of the dish. However, the spiciness gradually crept up and spread in his mouth until it reached the tip of his tongue.

“*Sluurp. Hooo.*”

Although the spiciness that spread in his mouth was stinging, he could not stop himself from eating the delicious and mouth-watering Red Chicken. Minhyuk quickly grabbed a piece of potato wedge and placed it in his mouth to ease the spiciness in his mouth.

The saltiness of the fried potato wedge took the edge off of the spiciness. Minhyuk put one piece after another, occasionally dipping it in sweet ketchup. The combination of the saltiness of the potato wedge and the sweetness of the ketchup was fantastic.

As he ate like that, Minhyuk also did not forget to look at Consteinus and Amacar’s faces.

“This is the first time that I have tasted a chicken this delicious in my entire life.”

“Me too.”

[Consteinus’ favor has increased.]

Minhyuk was quite delighted with their words.

“We... Let’s not think too much about this matter, no? I’ll make sure to accommodate the meeting between the two of you as much as possible.”

“*Cough.* If you say so.”

The Ardo Empire obviously did not have any intention of waging war against the Beyond the Heavens Empire.

“I also view the Beyond the Heavens Empire quite favorably.”

The biggest reason for this was probably because Amacar chose Minhyuk. Before he realized his wrongs, Consteinus thought that there must have been a reason why Amacar chose Minhyuk.

Minhyuk, who was having a friendly conversation with the two, suddenly stopped moving. An extremely alarming notification rang in his ears and forced him to stop what he was doing.

[The Forgotten Monarch's Crown's 'Vassal's Voice' has been triggered.]

[Your vassal Haze is in grave danger!]

'Haze?'

Chapter 849

Previously, the kings and emperors that lost their talents heard the news about the departure of the eight million troops of the Ardo Empire.

Despite their mellow relationship, these kings and emperors gathered together. They talked about wanting to send their own troops and destroy the Beyond the Heavens Empire together.

"Let's wait and see. Emperor Consteinus will definitely bear the consequences of bringing judgment upon the Beyond the Heavens Empire."

The kings and emperors that were clamoring for a piece of the pie promptly shut their mouths when they heard that. That was right. They might be boiling with rage but that did not mean that they needed to stain their hands with blood.

"But our people will also be there, won't they be swept away by this war?"

"That's right. They might have made a slight error in their choices but they are still people who we love and care about. I plan to send some of my knights to save them."

The kings and emperors pretended as if they truly cared and loved their subordinates. But if they were to be honest, they would only feel a tinge of pity should the talents who were stolen from them died in the war.

They promptly decided to send a variety of people to win back their talents once again. However, after a few hours, the kings and emperors received shocking news.

"They said that Emperor Consteinus bowed to the Beyond the Heavens' Emperor."

"They said that they did not go to war. They marched all for the sake of sending Amacar off."

The kings and emperors were left reeling in shock after they heard the reports. Then, were they supposed to send their own troops now?

"Right now, Emperor Consteinus is currently stationed in front of their empire."

Emperor Consteinus' Ardo Empire was only second to the Luvien Empire. They could not send troops when such a person was still inside the Beyond the Heavens Empire. As a result, they were at a loss. Were they just supposed to let the Beyond the Heavens Empire be?

At that moment, the king of the Andraui Kingdom rubbed his chin and said, "From what I heard, the woman named Haze was the one who contributed greatly in this talent recruitment."

The other kings and emperors turned to look at him. They all knew of this woman. She was a woman with a smart head and a very glib tongue.

"Is there anyone here who bought something from her?"

There were quite a few things that came to mind when the kings and emperors heard it.

"I have bought some Blessed Water from the God of Life. When I drank it, I felt like my entire body was purified."

"I bought the Pure Soil bestowed by the God of Earth. I left it in my room and it felt like the air had cleared up."

"I bought quite a lot of good things."

The emperors and kings all looked happy as they recalled the things that they bought. However, they soon realized that something was off.

"...I obviously heard that they did not have much stock left."

"She said that there's not much water left so I shouldn't tell it to others. According to her, the value would only go up if the competition intensifies."

"But it seems like there's more stock than what we thought."

The kings and emperors realized something one after another. The king of Andraui Kingdom hurriedly dumped the soil from the fancy glass bottle that he bought it from on the ground.

"After checking it... It's just dirt."

"...!"

"...!"

"Even the water's just plain water. Everything that we purchased from that woman is just something ordinary."

The kings and emperors realized how dim-witted they had been. They did not even realize how eloquent the woman was. However, the most important factor here was that Haze did not push the sale unto them.

"We were the ones who asked to buy it. What can we do?"

All of them were afraid that their stupidity would be revealed to the public if they pursued the matter.

"We might be the ones who wanted to buy it but she used that glib tongue of hers to make fun of us. What should we do?" The king of Andraui Kingdom laughed maniacally. "Shall we use her to attack the Beyond the Heavens' Emperor Minhyuk?"

“...!”

“...!”

Everyone felt like they had been splashed with water when they heard those words. The reason why they were not able to attack the Beyond the Heavens Empire outright was because they did not want to get accused of getting back at him for the talent recruitment fiasco.

However, this was different. The emperor's subject used lies to deceive the kings and emperors and take away their money, causing them humiliation.

“Then, if we can find out that this was ordered by Emperor Minhyuk, we will have the justification to lead our entire army to the Beyond the Heavens Empire.”

A vicious smile appeared on the faces of all of the kings and emperors present.

“Tell those that we have sent to the Beyond the Heavens Empire to capture that woman.”

Haze had been impatient. She was tasked to gain ten million platinum within two weeks by just using her glib tongue. Thankfully, at the perfect moment, she was given the opportunity to meet with the kings and emperors.

[You have earned 9.49 million platinum using your brilliant communication skills.]

[You need 510,000 platinum more to change your class to the God of Fraud Class.]

She thought that if she could get a bit more, then she would be able to be a bigger help to Minhyuk. Haze wanted to do something for His Majesty, who had saved her from the brink of death. However, she was not as strong as Spear God Ben, nor as charismatic of a commander as Brod. She could not even lead a Demonic Army like Great Demon Elpis to help the Beyond the Heavens Empire.

To be honest, Haze did not want to become a God. No matter how much she looked at it, it was scary to become one. After all, she was just an ordinary human, with a slightly excellent brain and a smooth, eloquent tongue. Besides, what was the God of Fraud?

However, the temptation was that the money that she could gain once she became the God of Fraud could easily double.

‘I want to be of use to His Majesty.’

Therefore, even though she was nothing but an ordinary human being, she decided to become a God. The problem was she had been far too greedy. And this greed had caused her to be in this situation.

The cover that blocked Haze's vision was finally removed from her face. The kings and emperors all looked down at her with arrogant expressions on their faces.

The emperor of Aplath Empire angrily twisted open the water bottle in his hands and threw its contents at Haze, who was tied tightly with a rope.

Shwaaaaaaa—

She looked like a drenched rat with the water dripping down her face.

“This is the Blessed Water from the God of Life? After we checked it, it was nothing more than ordinary water!”

“I have made it clear to you, Aplath Empire’s emperor. No one knows about this. Only time will tell...”

“Shut up!”

The kings and emperors were left boiling in rage after seeing Haze still trying to hoodwink them despite being in danger. However, they had a goal in mind.

“The sin of humiliating all of the kings and emperors present here... you will have to pay it with your life.”

The kings and emperors wanted one answer from Haze, which was, ‘*Emperor Minhyuk made me do it.*’ In fact, it did not even have to be that exact answer. As long as the incident was connected to her emperor, whether it was true or false, it did not matter.

Swoosh—

The Aplath Empire’s emperor unsheathed his sword and pointed it at her neck. Blood immediately dripped down the sharp blade of the sword. Meanwhile, the kings and emperors sat back and looked at her as if they were watching something fun and interesting.

“Don’t you want to live?”

The answer to that question was obvious. Every human being had the will to live. As for Haze, she was not a soldier. She was just an ordinary person. For someone like her, death was something that she was terrified of. In fact, she feared death more than others.

Haze’s body trembled fiercely.

“Did your emperor make you do it? Just answer that question and I will spare your life.”

“...!”

Only at this point did Haze realize why they were doing this. They wanted to use her as an excuse to wage war against the Beyond the Heavens Empire. However, the problem was everything that she did was based solely on her discretion.

“His Majesty has never ordered me to do such a thing.”

The Aplath Empire’s emperor grabbed her small face tightly. “Say it!!!”

“His Majesty never ordered me to do such a thing.”

Hearing her answer, Aplath Empire’s emperor whispered mockingly, “That’s not the answer I want. You can get out of this place safely as long as you say ‘yes’.”

“...”

The killing intent that flashed in the eyes of the Aplath Empire’s emperor made Haze tremble more fiercely. At the same time, the other kings and emperors began to shout.

“Quick, say it!!!”

“Quickly!!!”

“Say it!!!”

“Tell us what your emperor is like!”

“Do you want to die, huh?!”

“We can even throw you and turn you into prey for monsters!!!”

Haze grew more and more afraid, the pressure they were emitting too much for an ordinary woman like her. In the end, she fainted.

“Tch.”

“All she needs to do is become a whistleblower.”

“Just put some more pressure on her and she will spill everything.”

One of the kings present then motioned for his soldiers, gesturing for them to throw water on her and wake her up.

Special Players Management Team.

Lee Minhwa was very happy because she finally had a junior employee right below her! He was even one of the thousands who overcame Team Leader Park’s picky and tedious interviews. From what she heard, the new junior employee had high mental strength.

Lee Minhwa was looking at the monitor seriously with the new employee, Lee Tae-Sung, beside her.

“The hill is just right around the corner..”

Lee Tae-Sung opened his mouth when he heard her murmurs. He said, “Uhhh, senior.”

“Why?”

“There’s something I’m curious about, can I ask about it?”

“Of course.”

“The God of Fraud is literally a scammer. So, why do you look so worried?”

A scammer. A fraud. Perhaps to Lee Tae-Sung, a newcomer to the Special Players Management Team, Haze was nothing but a bad seed. It was only natural. There was no one in the world who would think well of a scammer and a fraud, no? However, Lee Minhwa was different.

“She’s one of the NPCs who I admire the most.”

“Yes?”

Lee Minhwa smiled when she saw how bewildered Lee Tae-Sung was. Then, she said, “What do soldiers do when empires go to war?”

“They fight and try to kill each other, right?”

“That’s right. They fight and kill. But why do they need to fight and kill?”

“So that they could defend their empire with their own power?”

“That’s true. So, is it bad to lie in order to protect your own empire?”

“...”

Lee Tae-Sung looked like he understood it to some extent but that was not really the case. However, Lee Minhwa was patient and explained it to him one by one.

“She had never spent a single dime of the profits that she had earned on herself. Everything was spent for the people of the Beyond the Heavens Empire.”

That meant that all of the lies she told were for the sake of her empire.

“Then, what do you think about when you hear the words *God of Fraud*?”

“What god? One look and you know that they’re up to no good.”

“That’s true too. But do you know the conditions that one has to meet before they could be qualified to become the God of Fraud?”

Lee Tae-Sung, as a newbie, might not know but Lee Minhwa was fully aware of it.

“They have to lie not for themselves but for the sake of others. They have to lie in order to protect the people.”

There were many scammers in Athenae too. There were a considerable number of people who were better than Haze when it came to telling lies. So, why was she chosen?

“Ah. There’s a secret hidden behind the class.”

“A secret?”

Lee Minhwa turned to look at Haze, who was displayed on the monitor. She thought that it was a pity that the girl would not be able to unravel the secret of the God of Fraud class. There was a chance that she would die today.

“Senior, what’s the secret? I’m so curious.”

“The God of Fraud is a secret class.”

A secret class meant that it was a class that was hidden, not made known to most players.

“It’s a God class, but it’s also a secret class?”

“That’s right. The god’s real name is not the God of Fraud. From what I know, the Athenae’s Story Team had put great care and love when creating this class.”

New employee Lee Tae-Sung’s curiosity was now piqued. He asked, “What’s the name of the god?”

“The god’s true name is...”

Chapter 850

The kings and emperors looked at Haze, who was currently on the verge of death. Their gazes were filled with surprise. She was only an ordinary petite woman, yet her will and spirit was stronger than that of a man, perhaps even that of a knight.

She had never uttered a single word that could implicate Minhyuk. Upset, the Aplath Empire’s emperor had cut her arm with a poisoned dagger to put even more pressure on her. The poison that he used was a very deadly one, which could kill someone within thirty minutes if not given the antidote. However, Haze was an untrained personnel. This meant that the speed at which the poison spread would be faster.

Haze was now truly dying, her complexion pale and wan.

“Quick, say it! Say it!!!”

“Come on! Say that it was your emperor who told you to do this and I will give you the antidote!”

The kings and emperors were now truly in a hurry. If things continued at this rate, then Haze would truly die. If she died at this point, then they would get nothing, nothing at all.

“*Urk...!*”

Red blood dripped down Haze’s mouth. She felt like all of the organs in her body were being twisted and her blood was flowing backward.

Elise, the emperor of Aplath Empire, grabbed Haze by the collar and shouted with veins popping out of his forehead, “Say it!!! Say that your emperor made you do it!!! Say it now!!!”

Haze was nothing but an ordinary human being. She was not strong and there was no way for her to overcome this difficulty. There was only one thing that she could do.

“I... will... say it...” Haze struggled to speak, feeling as if she would throw up blood at any given moment. She knew that she had less than three minutes to live.

“I lied solely because of my own greed and to fulfill my own self-interest.”

There was just one thing that she was good at and that was lying. However, the fact that His Majesty Minhyuk did not instigate her was the truth. However, she had to add a little lie so as not to let these people take advantage of even the slightest gap.

“I have been using my glib tongue to mislead people and live the life of a wealthy person!”

Haze had never bought a single luxurious item for herself.

“I told lies so I can eat lavishly and allow my children and grandchildren to live in abundance!”

The people ate better than her.

“I joined them to take advantage of the Beyond the Heavens’ emperor!”

Haze shouted like that, but that was not what she did at all.

“I am a b*tch who has gained so much by lying behind His Majesty’s back!”

Haze had never used her skills for her own good.

Haze’s breath slowly turned shallow. She had said all of these things to keep these people from going after her emperor. That was the final lie that Haze, the prime minister of the Beyond the Heavens Empire, an ordinary human and woman, would make.

“So, spare me! If you spare me then I will give you the Beyond the Heavens Empire as long as you give me a million platinum!”

‘Greedy up until the very end.’

At this point, even the emperors and kings could not tell if she was lying or telling the truth.

“This woman lies even until the moment of her death.”

“You want us to give you money? Even at your very last breath?!”

“What a mad woman. She’s truly crazy for money.”

“B*tch, do you think you’re worth a million platinum?!”

The emperors and kings finally gave up.

Haze smiled faintly, *‘Your Majesty, no one is going to touch you anymore.’*

She was still thinking of him, up until the moment she died.

‘I hope Your Majesty will be happy. Please forgive me for not being able to become a God. I hope that you will be able to eat as much as you like.’

The kings and emperors slowly turned away from Haze.

“I will give you one million platinum. I will take your word for it.”

Then, at that moment, a voice rang out. It was very familiar to the dying Haze. She looked up at the ceiling, and noticed white coins raining down from the sky.

Clink, clink, clink, clink, clink—

Haze stared at the rain of white coins blankly.

[You have successfully collected one million platinum by using lies!]

[You can now change your class to God Class: God of Fraud.]

[You have found the God of Fraud's real name.]

[Everyone pointed their fingers at this god knowing that all he could do was talk.]

[Most of the gods ignored this god because he did not have any special ability or strong power like the others.]

[He was a god who had been subjected to severe discrimination.]

[He was a god who had always been made fun of.]

[He was a god...]

[He was a god...]

[He was a god...]

[However, this god did not leave the Land of the Gods.]

[All of his lies were so he could protect the other gods.]

[One day, this god became the god who all of the other gods looked up to.]

[When the Eight Pillars invaded, he stood there alone and fought against them.]

[He fought with what he had. He lied to protect the Land of the Gods.]

[Because of his lies, the Eight Pillars were forced to give up and return.]

[With just his words, he was able to save the Land of the Gods.]

[He became the god who everyone loved.]

[He became the god who everyone cared about.]

[He became the god who earned everyone's respect.]

[He...]

[He...]

[He...]

A voice rang constantly in Haze's ears. The voice sounded like it had recognized her and her efforts.

The truth was, there were people who were quite reluctant to interact with her, as they viewed her as obsessed with money, in the Beyond the Heavens Empire. The children even called her *Haze Who Cried Wolf*. No one recognized her sacrifices.

However, even if no one recognized her, she still did not leave. Why? Because it was the empire that she loved. Because the people who she loved lived in this place. And because the emperor who she loved and cared for the most was there.

That was right. She became the girl who cried wolf. And as the story went, the ending of the girl who cried wolf was tragic.

[He...]

[He...]

[He...]

Haze looked at the man amidst the constant notifications and the rain of white coins that was walking toward her one step at a time. This man was the reason why she willingly became the girl who cried wolf. He was the reason why she never regretted all of the actions that she had taken so far. In fact, she would continue to lie for this man.

Haze smiled brightly as the man approached her.

This was a story from a long time ago. It was a story from when Beyond the Heavens Kingdom was just newly established.

Back then, the people, the soldiers and even the players would often whisper to each other whenever Haze passed by.

“I heard that she lied just to establish a trade with another kingdom?”

“Our kingdom only has around 600,000 troops. However, she exaggerated her words and made it seem like we have three million troops and took money from them.”

“How can someone like her be our prime minister? *Tch, tch.*”

Haze was young and beautiful, she also had an extraordinary mind and superb communication skills. However, the people remained wary and uneasy about her. Some thought of her as someone who built the kingdom with lies, while others were just plain jealous of her. After all, she was an ordinary young woman, yet she was already sitting in the position of prime minister.

Every time she went out, people would whisper about her.

“The girl who cried wolf is passing by.”

“She’ll hear you!”

“What? Did I say something wrong?”

These whispers spread all over the kingdom until a report finally reached Minhyuk.

“Your Majesty, the people resent and hate our prime minister, Lady Haze.”

Minhyuk learned that they called Haze the *Girl Who Cried Wolf* and that many people did not like her. Upon learning about this matter, he quickly visited her to take a walk and have a talk.

“Haze, I know that what you want is all for the good of the kingdom. However, I want you to also think for yourself.”

“For me, Your Majesty?”

Haze was definitely a beauty. Her fair skin and wide and round eyes made her very attractive, despite having no accessories on her body at all.

Minhyuk, who saw the confusion on Haze’s face, smiled bitterly and said, “Haze, I don’t want you to get hurt because of me.”

Minhyuk was fully aware that of the sacrifice Haze was willingly undertaking, for him and the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom’s sake. He also received a report from one of the knights.

–I have seen the Prime Minister crying in the food storage warehouse.

Haze was still young. No matter how mature she acted, she would not be able to bear the weight of countless people pointing their fingers at her and whispering about her. Minhyuk spoke those words because he was fully aware of this fact.

However, Haze just shook her head and said, “You’re wrong, Your Majesty. I am not telling lies just because of you, Your Majesty.”

She looked around the kingdom. It was peaceful with children running around and people greeting each other, as they bought their goods and went about their errands.

“I might have exaggerated my words, and will continue to do so for the sake of this nation. Why would you think that I’m only doing this for you, Your Majesty?”

“It’s been hard on you,” Minhyuk said, a bitter expression on his face.

Haze shook her head in response. “Of course, I’m having a hard time. After all, the people do not have any trust or faith in me anymore. Even so, I’m still happy. Seeing the children running around and the people living prosperously because of my words is enough for me. That’s all I need.”

Haze said that she was happy despite being criticized and discriminated against. Minhyuk could only stare bitterly at her back for a very long time after he heard those words.

Quite a long time had passed since then. The once humble Beyond the Heavens Kingdom had now become a strong and powerful empire.

Haze was very impressed with the God of Fraud—no, the God who originally had a different name—that eventually received the love of all of the gods despite only telling lies. At the same time, she thought, *I can never be loved like that*. Unlike that god, she could spin her words that could save the Beyond the Heavens Empire.

On the other hand, she felt envious. Envious of the god who was able to receive the recognition of many despite only telling lies. Meanwhile, Haze could not even get out of her room much in the Beyond the Heavens Empire. She had developed a social phobia from the scathing eyes and the fingers that were constantly pointing at her.

‘I also want to be loved by everyone.’

But then, at that moment, Minhyuk, who had been walking toward her, triggered his God’s Voice.

[She has received the dislike of everyone.]

[She has always been pointed at by everyone.]

[She always has a hard time talking to anyone.]

No one wanted to talk to Haze the Liar. But everything was different now.

[They heard that she collapsed from overwork.]

[They saw that the accessories that were usually dangling in her hands had disappeared.]

[They realized that they were living prosperously in the kingdom that she helped build.]

[One day, they started to care about the Girl Who Cried Wolf.]

[One day, they started to whisper.]

[She's the one who loves and cares for the Beyond the Heavens Empire the most.]

All of these were things that Minhyuk had witnessed himself. He saw how the people, who disliked Haze, began to care for her and show her love. Minhyuk crouched down and held Haze's slender hand the moment he reached her side.

Haze cried.

'Do the people truly love me? Are there truly many people who care for me? Even though I'm just the Girl Who Cried Wolf?'

"I saw it myself."

"Their thoughts have changed after seeing you work so hard to the point that you forget to sleep."

"They have come to admire you after learning that you have not spent a single dime on yourself despite earning a lot of money."

"The children dream of becoming *you* when they saw how dedicated you are to the empire."

Haze felt delighted. The ending of the Girl Who Cried Wolf was tragic. Haze had already accepted that fact. However, at this moment, she knew that the ending of Prime Minister Haze would be a very happy ending.

"Thank you, Haze. Thank you for your dedication and devotion to me, the empire, and the people."

Finally, the notifications that rang in her ears ended.

[The real name of the God of Fraud will now be revealed.]

[The name of the God that you have become a descendant of is 'God of Devotion'.]