

Overgeared 861

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Damian heard that she had entered her 30s, yet Irene was still pure and beautiful. She didn't look like she had aged at all. Irene had already been a perfect woman even before she matured.

'She is older than Grid.'

There was a bittersweet smile on Damian's face as he watched Irene put down her cup of tea. He was also in love with Isabel, so he felt that the gap between players and NPCs was painful and sad. Irene was looking affectionately at her son, Lord, who was embarrassed about being stuck between the bald elders. Damian continued to smile as he also turned his attention to Lord. "Prince Lord has better manners now. Despite his innate talent that pierces the heavens, his humble and upright nature is thanks to your hard work."

"No. The prince was born with a good heart."

Personality wasn't something that could be resolved merely through education alone. Irene was a prominent noble from the fallen Eternal Kingdom, and she had witnessed numerous corrupted aristocrats. Didn't they hurt the weak with ease and only care about their own interests despite what they'd been taught? Thus, Irene was always grateful to Lord. She was proud of her son who respected everyone, regardless of their status.

'He is like Grid.' Irene smiled when she thought of her husband. It would be the same even if she knew about Grid's earlier personality. To her, Grid was everything.

"..."

Under the sunlight, Irene's smile was lovely. Damian's and Isabel's cheeks flushed red as they gazed at her. Then Damian shook his head and rose from his seat. "Hum hum. Elders, don't bother Prince Lord since he must be tired. I will take him back."

Damian said goodbye to Irene and crossed the green grass. His gait contained the aggressiveness of a paladin, rather than the nobility of a priest. It was one of the reasons why the elders didn't like Damian. Nevertheless, were there any humans in the world with no shortcomings? Not all the elders felt frustrated about Damian. Some of them acknowledged him, while others had high expectations for him. In fact, Damian was a great pope when compared to the fallen Pope Drevigo and the snake-like candidate, Pascal. So, it was best for the church that the elders supported Pope Damian, who was already in his third year.

"Elders, let the prince go. The prince will suffocate from the smell of old bachelors."

"Cough..."

The elders, who were obsessed with the divine power that Lord gave off, regained their spirits belatedly. They were ashamed that they had forgotten about the boy's suffering and now tried to give him a helping hand. However, they were smiling instead of blushing with shame.

"Prince Lord, I'll see you at dinner. Let's talk again."

“Prince, don’t forget to pray to Goddess Rebecca.”

“The goddess will bless you...”

The elders bowed before stepping back. They were completely fascinated by Lord’s divine power and spoke to him like he was the goddess’ messenger. Lord was finally able to breathe after they retreated! He gasped for air as Damian shrugged and said, “Sometimes, it is okay to be immature. If you already care about the eyes of others at this age, you will soon become old.”

“I’d rather become old than embarrass Father.”

“Ah...”

Lord’s behavior was praiseworthy. Still, Damian felt regretful and patted Lord’s hair unconsciously.

“Oh, I’m sorry.”

No matter how young Lord was, he was still the prince of a kingdom, so it was very rude for Damian to place his hands on Lord’s head. Damian was still apologizing when Lord entered his arms.

“Please stroke my hair, Teacher.”

“Haat! Lord-chan, so cute!”

In the end...

“Your Holiness! This rudeness...!”

“Think about your dignity, Your Holiness!”

Damian was laughing while acting as Lord’s horse! He laughed loudly as he ran through the gardens of the Vatican, while the panicked Isabel and Rebecca’s Daughters tried to stop him. Irene was happy to see this peaceful sight as she sat under the shade of a tree. Meanwhile, the Overgeared Knights escorting her and Lord were stunned. It was amazing that the Rebecca Church’s pope, one of the biggest powers next to the Saharan Empire, was treating their little prince as his nephew. They felt proud, and a chill ran down their spines.

In particular, Coke felt very proud.

‘The relationship between the Overgeared Kingdom and the Rebecca Church is deeper than the rumors say. It is good that I came to the Overgeared Kingdom.’

Coke—as one of the third generation 10 Rookies, he had recognized the potential of the Overgeared Kingdom early on. Back when he had been convinced that he was a genius, he traveled to the fortified city of Patrian and was then beaten by a bone Piaro had thrown. Convinced about the future of the Overgeared Kingdom, Coke had traveled there as soon as it was founded.

After some years, he was inducted as a knight of the Overgeared Kingdom. It was a result of his pure abilities. Even if Grid didn’t know him, Coke was loyal to Grid and was determined to live for the Overgeared Kingdom. He didn’t doubt that the Overgeared Kingdom would unite the continent sometime in the future, and he dreamed of later becoming a noble of the Overgeared Kingdom.

Why was he taking the hard path? Some people would say that Coke's evaluation was wrong. They thought Coke was stupid because he would be able to have a more stable future in the empire with his talent. Of course, Coke had also been hesitant. In particular, he had heard rumors at the founding of the Overgeared Kingdom that they were hostile to the empire and seriously wondered if he should join the empire.

However, Coke wasn't a person to easily reverse a decision once he made it. Additionally, he was a solid fan of Grid. Coke believed in Grid and the Overgeared Guild. Then the Overgeared Kingdom ended up being the first in history to make a truce with the empire. Now, Coke was no longer nervous. He watched the Overgeared Kingdom develop while he honed his skills and faithfully performed his role.

"Sir Coke?"

"Ah, I'm sorry."

Coke was watching Damian and Lord laugh in the garden when a voice called out to him. Knight Royman gave him a warning, "Have you forgotten the basic rules of an escort? You have to pay more attention when the surroundings are safe."

Royman spoke in a bold voice deliberately, unaware that her gender had already been discovered. She didn't notice that her colleagues left every time she entered the shower or the changing rooms. However, her skills were real. Her level was 320. It was only 19 levels higher than Coke's, but she was twice as strong as him.

Moreover, it wasn't just in comparison to Coke. Royman was uniquely strong among the Overgeared Kingdom's knights that Asmophel raised. There was a lot of speculation that Royman had gotten a hidden class or skill after working in the fields with Piaro.

"Yes, I will keep that in mind," Coke replied with the appropriate tension. He adjusted his position so that he could see both Irene and Lord simultaneously. It wasn't simply to build up goodwill with Royman though. Coke, who hoped to be a noble of the thriving Overgeared Kingdom, wanted Grid to win, and he felt responsible for ensuring Irene and Lord's safety.

'There are many notable people.' Coke's gaze was directed at the bottom of the hill. A parade of carriages carrying royalty from all over the continent continued to enter the Vatican. There was also a carriage with the flag of the Saharan Empire. All the countries, apart from the warring countries of Valhalla and Ultina, were gathered here to celebrate Damian's time as pope.

'An imperial prince came...!' Coke was shocked when he witnessed a carriage drawn by four white horses.

It was 2nd Prince Dulandal. Coke hadn't known that one of the greatest powers of the empire would be here and realized just how great of a presence the Rebecca Church really was on the continent. Damian put Lord down. "Lord-chan, return to your quarters with your mother. Rest and I will see you at dinner."

"Yes," Lord replied gently, not expressing his desire to keep playing with Damian. He was a bright child and understood Damian's position. Once Damian left to meet the royal family of every nation, including the empire...

"Place the golden statue over there."

“Station the 4th Knights Division at the entrance of the village. We have to pay as much attention to security as we do our VIPs.”

The elders were bustling around the Vatican. They weren't interested in any of the guests, unlike with Lord. In fact, they didn't even pay attention to the emperor of the empire. This was natural since the Rebecca Church was a transcendent collective. They didn't kneel before power. After Grid cleaned up Pope Drevido and Pascal's forces, the Rebecca Church was now regaining its full power.

Coke felt more fulfilled as he escorted Irene and Lord. It was interesting and enjoyable for him to know that the arrogant elders treated Prince Lord in a special way.

Step, step.

In a red-carpeted corridor, as Lord led the procession to the room assigned to them, he whispered in a small voice, “Teacher, do you feel uncomfortable?”

A voice was heard from the shadows, -No...I'm fine...

It was Kasim. He said he was fine, but his voice was trembling. In fact, he wasn't okay. 2nd Prince Dulandal of the Saharan Empire—the person who had just stepped into the Vatican—was the one responsible for the destruction of the Nero. Kasim couldn't suppress the anger and resentment that boiled in his heart when he saw his enemy. It was hard for him to keep his cool.

Chucksley noticed his struggling heart and said, “You shouldn't cause any incidents.”

-I know, Kasim answered nervously. The laughter disappeared from Lord's face as he overheard the conversation between the two people.

On the other hand, all three people weren't aware of the subtle changes in the atmosphere. Irene and the Rebecca's Daughters candidates were having a friendly conversation while the young knights, including Royman and Coke, were only concerned with the security of the party.

Dark clouds were once again covering the sky. The sound of thunder outside the windows was heavy and loud. Simultaneously, at the top of Kay Mountain which overlooked the white buildings of the Vatican...

“Crazy monsters have gathered.” Agnus laughed as he arrived late at the location of the appointment. Rain soaked his feet while images of the Yatan Servants were projected into the sky.

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The Yatan Eighth Servant, Yura—she was a traitor.

The Yatan Seventh Servant, Dark Bus—he died during the mission to infiltrate the Saharan Empire.

The Yatan Sixth Servant, Malacus—he died while preparing a ritual in Winston.

The Yatan Fourth Servant, Neberius—he died during the invasion of Bairan.

The Yatan First Servant, Tallos—he died due to an unidentified magician who invaded the Yatan headquarters.

This was the record of the former Yatan Servants. It was a shame that the Yatan Church wanted to erase. Those chosen by Great Demon Amoract to serve the evil god Yatan had been murdered by unknown people. It was a disgrace.

Likaos was appointed as Amoract's agent after Tallos died. On the surface, he was the Yatan First Servant, and he gave this command to the other servants, "The beasts who serve Rebecca and the people devoted to catering to them will gather at the Vatican. This is an opportunity to sweep up these bastards. Destroy the Vatican and reestablish the fallen status of the Yatan Church!"

Likaos calculated that the present Rebecca's Daughters were near the end of their lives. The curse of the Rebecca Church's three divine artifacts meant they were no more than dead bodies, while the newly recruited Yatan Servants were young and strong.

With these in mind, Likaos saw a golden opportunity to cause chaos. Apart from the Rebecca Church, this was a great chance to deal a blow to the empire and other kingdoms. So, Likaos sent out five Yatan Servants and requested cooperation from Baal's Contractor.

"Kik? Crazy monsters have gathered."

The top of Kay Mountain was soaked with heavy rains. Rose who was the 1st ranked black magician and the Yatan Eighth Servant, Baal's Contractor Agnus, and the other four Yatan Servants looked down at the Vatican.

The so-called Overgeared King? He had the power to ruin the Vatican twice over, but the Yatan Church couldn't be afraid of one person. The Red Knights escorting the imperial prince? They were people who had lost the emperor's trust and were on the brink of ruin. Rebecca's Daughters? They were worn down by the divine artifacts and were on the brink of death.

"How trivial."

This was the previous impression Likaos had of the Yatan Servants, and Agnus agreed with it. However, the power here was overwhelmingly strong. Agnus judged this due to the wave of shadows moving behind him. They were the shadows of thousands of black magicians who had been discretely moved here.

"Haha, I see."

"As expected from Prince Dulandal."

"I can't stop admiring you!"

The scenery of the dinner banquet was no different from people's expectations. Most of the royal families of other nations were gathered around the empire's 2nd prince, Dulandal. He was said to be far from the succession since he was behind the 1st Prince supported by the emperor and the 4th Prince supported by the empress, but his name was still famous. Dulandal had the power to collapse a small kingdom in one morning, so it was natural for the small royal families dependent on the empire to curry favor with him.

“Hrmm...” Dulandal’s gaze shifted from these royal families toward a corner of the room. A woman with silver hair was shining under the lights. Her beauty, which was rare even in the empire, attracted Dulandal’s attention. Dulandal especially liked the woman’s gentle impression. “Who is that?”

Once Dulandal expressed interest, the royal families explained, “The Overgeared Queen.”

“Hoh... The wife of the Overgeared King?”

The Overgeared King—he was the opponent who made the empire attempt ‘diplomacy’ for the first time in history. Emperor Juander, who wasn’t afraid to invade anywhere on the continent, was wary enough of the Overgeared King to invite him as a state guest.

“Too bad.” Dulandal emptied his drink. He thought it was a trick of fate that this woman had fallen in love with the Overgeared King first. The next person to attract his attention was a young boy. This boy had ocean blue eyes like the Overgeared Queen who attracted his attention just a short moment ago. An innate grace was felt from the boy’s white skin and ebony hair.

“What about that kid?”

“He is the Overgeared Prince.”

“Hoh...”

The son of the Overgeared King... What type of vessel was he? With his interest piqued, Dulandal moved his feet. The prince of the Fold Kingdom, who was standing with Lord, was stunned when Dulandal approached.

‘I didn’t know that an imperial prince would come...!’

The Fold Kingdom had become a tributary of the Overgeared Kingdom during the founding ceremony. After that, they had stopped all exchanges with the empire and left their fate with the Overgeared Kingdom. However, the slavery which had been imprinted in their genes for generations wasn’t something that could change overnight.

1st Prince Shining of the Fold Kingdom was afraid of what Dulandal would do. He forgot that he had a strong ally in the Overgeared Kingdom and was afraid that the Fold Kingdom would be destroyed by the empire. Prince Shining’s hands shook.

“Stay back,” Prince Lord said while grabbing him. Then something interesting happened. Prince Shining suddenly became calm. Prince Lord’s gentle voice melted the anxiety and fear in Prince Shining’s eyes, while Lord’s small and warm touch gave him courage.

“No. I will protect you.” Prince Shining held Lord’s hand and gritted his teeth. He didn’t flee from Prince Dulandal and kept to Lord’s side. “I am 1st Prince Shining of the Fold Kingdom. I am honored to greet a great imperial prince of the empire.”

“Hoh...” Dulandal was puzzled by Prince Shining’s polite and dignified attitude. What type of royalty could be so proud before an imperial prince? It was amazing and disgusting that no fear could be sensed in Prince Shining’s eyes. Still, Dulandal wouldn’t be an imperial prince if he expressed such discomfort.

Dulandal smiled and patted Prince Shining's shoulder. He pressured Prince Shining using political reality, rather than personal feelings. "Didn't the Fold Kingdom declare that it would no longer rely on our empire?"

"Yes... How can a small and poor kingdom like ours rely on the empire? There is no value in the Saharan Empire protecting our small kingdom while consuming its resources. Father thought he could no longer bring anything to the empire and was forced to become independent.."

"It doesn't consume a lot of resources to take care of a small kingdom."

"..."

"Independence is a matter for the emperor to decide, not you."

"..."

"His Majesty's wrath is very large. I am wondering if the Fold Kingdom has forgotten the grace of the empire."

"That... How can that be? We can never forget the grace that the empire has shown us..." Prince Shining paled again. His voice and his body started shaking.

The Fold Kingdom had been built on a desolate land, and the king's will to reclaim the wasteland and feed all the people couldn't be achieved. This was all due to the empire!

The Saharan Empire, which had the power to trample on the Fold Kingdom at any time, had demanded massive tributes from the Fold Kingdom for 200 years, preventing the Fold Kingdom from developing. This was despite the fact that the persecuted people couldn't afford to give the tributes.

That's right. For the past 200 years, the Fold Kingdom had been collapsing slowly and steadily. Resistance? It was useless. Several kings and countless officials who tried rebelling against the empire had been killed for the outrageous crime of 'treachery.' The Fold Kingdom was thoroughly helpless and continued to build up anger and fear toward the empire.

This fear was completely manifested in Prince Shining. The moment that Dulandal brought up the emperor, Shining seemed to become smaller and his eyes darkened. He was worried this would be the end of the Fold Dynasty. Then Lord grabbed his collar, and Shining once again overcame the fear. He regained stability in his heart, and his courage grew again. Shining felt a warm aura wrap around his body and came to know clearly that this was a blessing!

'This young child has divine power...?'

Lord smiled brightly at the confused Shining. "Pope Damian taught me."

"...?"

The pope taught the prince of a country? It was ridiculous. Prince Shining thought that Lord's words were too absurd, but he didn't doubt Lord. He simply interpreted it as a child's misunderstanding.

On the other hand, Dulandal felt something strange.

'What?'

This was already the second time. Did this person introduce himself as Shining? The prince whose name Dulandal would forget tomorrow was being influenced by something.

'Is it an artifact?'

Red flames glowed in the middle of Dulandal's black eyes. It was the appearance of the 'red energy' that only flowed in the empire's royal bloodline. Dulandal was amazed as he observed Shining with red eyes. Yet it wasn't Shining whom he was surprised by. It was the little boy standing by Shining's side.

'What is this divine power?'

'All beings apart from me are evil.' This was what the divine power felt from Lord seemed to be saying. If this child kept training in divine power, in 10 years, he would gain a divine power that even transcended Pope Damian's.

'Is he really the child of the Overgeared King?'

It was understandable if he had the talent for blacksmithing, but divine power...?

'A mutation appeared when he was born.'

Why had the Overgeared King sent a little boy to the pope's celebration? Dulandal was now able to solve this question.

'His son was born with a high divine power, so he thinks it is better to send him to the Vatican early on.'

Lord was lacking talent as an Overgeared Prince, but he was worthy for the Vatican. It was clear that the Overgeared King showed his son to the pope and elders in advance in order to leave him in the Vatican one day.

'It will definitely greatly benefit the country if a bond with the Vatican is formed...'

Wasn't this why the empire supported Pascal in the past? Dulandal grasped the Overgeared King's intentions and honestly admired them.

'Even using his young son as a political tool... As expected from the Overgeared King. He is the adversary that His Majesty acknowledges.'

A smile appeared on Dulandal's face as he thought about the Overgeared King that His Majesty the Emperor acknowledged.

"Hello, Your Highness. I am Lord, the son of the Overgeared King." Lord smiled and bowed to Prince Dulandal. He was a six-year-old. It was hard to think that a child with such pure and innocent expressions would be an enemy in the future. Right now, Lord was just cute and adorable.

"Hum hum." Dulandal was dazzled by Lord's charm and coughed when he belatedly regained his spirit. He struggled to make a serious face and spoke sternly, "It is nice to meet you. I have heard about your father's reputation..."

Dulandal didn't finish his greeting though. It was because the knights escorting Dulandal suddenly pulled out their swords.

“What?”

The inside of the hall became chaotic. People were filled with confusion at the sight of swords being drawn. The paladins came rushing, and Prince Shining embraced Lord. Coke, who was guarding Irene, ran over and shouted, “What are you doing?”

He felt a bitter hostility toward the Red Knights who drew their swords in front of Lord. Coke misunderstood that they were trying to harm the Overgeared Prince. However, Royman had a different interpretation of the scene. She glared at the shadow that Lord was stepping on. ‘King of Shadows—this man...!’

Kasim, the person hiding in Lord’s shadow, suddenly shot a killing intent at the imperial prince, and the knights reacted it.

‘For you to cause this situation...’

It was an urgent atmosphere.

“His Holiness, Pope Damian is entering!”

The main character of the celebration had shown up. Damian pretended not to know about the commotion in the hall and changed the topic itself. It was to protect Lord from being in a disadvantageous situation.

“Ick...!” Although the imperial prince might’ve been threatened, that did not mean the Red Knights could act freely. The Red Knights were furious but couldn’t say anything. Even a solo number knight couldn’t go against the pope easily. In particular, they couldn’t act freely in this sacred place.

“Your Holiness!” Prince Dulandal came forward directly, shouting to Damian in a voice like he was giving a speech. “A rodent seems to be hiding. Shouldn’t we find the rodent for the sake of Your Holiness and all of our safety?”

“...”

Lord and Chucksley made embarrassed expressions, while Kasim in the shadows regretted his mistake.

On the other hand, someone on the ceiling of the banquet hall was amazed.

‘How did he know?’

It was the Yatan Fourth Servant, Silvenas. As a darkness type demonkin, she could fully assimilate with the darkness and become darkness itself. When it came to stealth, she was confident that she was comparable to the legendary assassin, Lantier. Yet she had been caught.

‘Their skills... are better than expected?’

No, she hadn’t been discovered yet, but her position would be exposed if she moved in a panic now. So, Silvenas stayed still and gulped.

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“A rodent seems to be hiding. Shouldn’t we find the rodent for the sake of Your Holiness and all of our safety?”

Chatter chatter!

Dulandal’s cry filled the banquet hall and caused numerous people to question it. A rodent? The royal family of other nations failed to read Kasim’s killing intent from the shadows and couldn’t understand the meaning of Dulandal’s words. Consequently, they thought the imperial prince was making a fuss about nothing. They believed that capricious people always acted selfishly to relieve their boredom.

‘This is bad.’

On the other hand, the Overgeared Knights sensed a big crisis. The Red Knights had picked up Kasim’s killing intent from the shadow, so what could they do to defend Kasim and Prince Lord? The Overgeared Knights were tense. Meanwhile, Kasim lamented, ‘Prince Lord is in a difficult position because of me...!’

Past memories unfolded in Kasim’s mind as he stared with bloodshot eyes.

There had been a small village deep in the mountains. It was the village where the Nero Clan lived. The people in the Nero Clan were gentle and not greedy, and they never antagonized each other. The villagers spent there every precious and peaceful day with their families.

However, this happiness was short-lived, ending when the empire’s army came to the village.

Prince Dulandal had arrived with dozens of Red Knights and hundreds of soldiers. “With your skin that’s darker than night and your long arms... all of you are hard to look at. The empire won’t allow you to have territory and religion. Housing and clothes are also forbidden. You are beasts. If you want to live, you will have to be livestock. If you don’t want to be livestock, leave your skin here. Don’t argue. Beasts shouldn’t use human language.”

Kasim couldn’t forget any of these brutal words. For the young Kasim who was unfamiliar with the world, it was the first time he had been treated this way and he was shocked. Beasts! They were called beasts! From decent humans, they had become beasts!

This was the first time Kasim felt angry since the day he was born. It was an enormous resentment that destroyed the natural temperament of the Nero. Naturally, it wasn’t just Kasim. Thousands of Nero were outraged by the empire that denied their existence. They fought against the empire that was trying to take away their lives, but they were powerless. The Nero had excellent physical abilities, yet they were just babies in front of the well-trained empire’s knights and soldiers. The Nero were annihilated, and Kasim was the only survivor.

“...”

It was a curse called survival. Kasim felt a complicated sense of revenge that only desired the fall of the empire. Between the boy who had forgotten the awful reality and the person who served Lord, he couldn’t determine reasonably as to how he should act.

Prince Dulandal seemed to urge Kasim on, “A rodent is no different from an ownerless dog. I won’t hold anyone here responsible for hiding the rodent.”

'I don't know who you are, but don't you harbor a terrible killing intent toward me? Come out. If you stand in front of me right now, your little prince will be safe.' This was what Dulandal was implying.

He also cared about the relationship between the empire and the Overgeared Kingdom. It was a burden for Prince Dulandal to break the truce that the emperor made himself, but he would be satisfied with hunting the rodent. His intentions were read by the Overgeared Knights.

"..." Chucksley glanced at Lord's shadow. It was a signal to take responsibility. Chucksley was sad because he knew that Kasim was a valuable talent for the Overgeared Kingdom. However, talent existed for the sake of the kingdom. The talent couldn't put the kingdom in an inconvenient position. Chucksley's will was clearly communicated to Kasim's heart.

'Yes.' Kasim's shaking eyes gradually calmed down. His red eyes became white again. Kasim took a deep breath and soothed his mind. Once the Overgeared Kingdom developed safely and the genius Lord completed his growth, the Overgeared Kingdom would wipe out the empire.

'If I can't achieve revenge directly with my own hands, then I have to leave it to others. Yes, let's die.' Kasim would leave the destruction of the empire to the Overgeared King and his son, while he would take responsibility for his actions today. 'I was the one who made the mistake. It is right that I take responsibility for it,' Kasim pledged and was about to leave the shadows.

At this time, someone spoke to Kasim, "Stay still."

Lord? No. Before Lord could broach the subject, someone else stepped forward. She was Queen Irene.

"Hoh...?"

The woman standing alone in a corner of the banquet hall, who seemed to have nothing to do with politics, was stepping forward at the critical moment? Prince Dulandal lowered his hostility. He was very interested in the courage and wisdom the woman who caught his eyes would show.

'Things are becoming more serious.'

The special privilege of the strong was to be 'leisurely.' In the midst of this serious situation where someone was worried about their nation and someone else was willing to give up his life, Dulandal was pleased. Irene stared straight into his eyes and said, "Your Highness, this person isn't a rodent or a dog. He is Prince Lord's legitimate escort and a precious talent of our Overgeared Kingdom."

"Hah?" It was completely different from Dulandal's expectations.

'This stupid woman.'

Dulandal frowned and narrowed his eyes. "In other words, Your Majesty wants to claim that Prince Lord's escort tried to hurt me? The end result is that the Overgeared Kingdom tried to harm the empire's 2nd prince, meaning the Overgeared Kingdom is hostile to the empire? Then they are also ignoring the truce agreement."

"No. Think about why your escort knights pulled out their swords. Wasn't it to defend Your Highness?"

"...Hrmm? That's right."

“The same is true for Prince Lord’s escort. As a knight who grew up beside the little prince, he acted in his position of an escort when your knights approached.”

“Is emitting killing intent part of the role of an escort?”

“Isn’t killing intent less dangerous than pulling out swords?”

“Hah...?” Dulandal was hit in the head. By admitting that the Red Knights had drawn their swords to protect him, Dulandal legitimized the actions of the rodent who dared to send killing intent at him. This was absurd and embarrassing. He was angry, but he quickly suppressed this anger. Dulandal’s expression distorted, and he burst out laughing. Then he reached out to Irene with a polite attitude. “I admire Your Majesty’s intelligence. Can you please let me touch your white hand as an apology?”

“It is an honor.”

Was there anyone in the world who could refuse the formal gesture of an imperial prince? In the first place, there was no reason to refuse it. Irene readily stretched out her soft hand, and Dulandal kissed it.

“...” Lord’s clear eyes turned fierce with a sharpness that resembled his father’s. This was because Lord saw the desire which filled the imperial prince’s eyes when he gazed at Irene.

‘What?’ The Red Knights protecting the imperial prince were shocked. They wanted the intense pressure that they felt from the young prince, who was only around six years old, to be an illusion or a dream. Damian’s heart became restless as he watched the situation progress.

‘Things are better thanks to Queen Irene but...’

Could it become dangerous again now? Damian judged that Lord might make things worse and was about to step forward.

Flash!

Then all of a sudden, the banquet hall was filled with light. It was a nasty light which made it impossible for people to open their eyes, completely different from the warm light that symbolized Goddess Rebecca. Damian recognized this flash of light. While he was temporarily blinded, he shouted, “Black magic! Paladins, immediately escort the imperial prince and royalty!! Kuk...!”

Damian didn’t finish his shout as he’d stepped onto a red pentagram, which had been drawn on the floor, and was now cursed.

[Part of the will of God Yatan has cut you off from the world.]

[You can’t take any action inside this dark barrier.]

[The barrier can only be destroyed from the outside.]

‘The will of Yatan?’ Damian raised his head as he belatedly overcame his blindness. A demonkin fell from the ceiling. The being surrounded by darkness was called Silvenas, who was one of Yatan’s Servants.

“Silva did it! I neutralized the pope!” Her shout was the signal. All types of sounds were heard from outside the banquet hall, and an explosion sent the door of the hall flying open. Dust filled the inside of the banquet hall, and the royalty who barely overcame their blindness were immediately confused.

“Punish the dogs of the damned goddess!”

“The curse of God Yatan is waiting for you!”

The black magicians who entered the banquet hall shouted loudly. The knights of the various nations raised their swords to defend their masters, and the elders of the Rebecca Church and the paladins quickly prepared to fight. Meanwhile, the Overgeared Knights fled with Lord and Irene into a corner. Five new people followed the black magicians into the banquet hall. Three of them were NPCs and two were players.

The big shots were gathered together:

Yatan’s Third Servant, Aliburn...

Yatan’s Sixth Servant, Cardiora...

Yatan’s Seventh Servant, Hill...

The 1st ranked black magician and Yatan’s Eighth Servant, Rose...

And finally...

“Agnus...!!”

Baal’s Contractor. The players who attended this banquet, like Coke, were shocked. They didn’t know about Yatan’s Servants, but they were overwhelmed by Agnus’ presence...

‘There are four of them, including Silvenas?’ Damian, who was trapped inside the barrier, was wary of Yatan’s Servants apart from Agnus. Rebecca’s Daughters pulled out their divine artifacts and ran to Damian’s side.

“...!!!” Damian shouted from inside the barrier but he couldn’t be heard. Isabel decided that the first pressing need was to destroy this barrier.

“Kuk...!” She stabbed at the barrier with Lifael’s Spear, but there was no change. Far from being destroyed, it didn’t budge at all. Physical force and divine power were unable to harm the barrier.

“Leave the barrier to us and protect the people!”

“In particular, protect Prince Lord!”

The elders came forward. Their instructions reassured Damian. Damian felt a great affinity at the thought of these stuffy old people. However, it wasn’t a situation where he could feel reassured.

“Kyaaaak!”

“Kuaack!”

The screams of the guests started to fill the banquet hall. The knights and paladins who ran over to the situation seemed to be stuck outside. Agnus’ undead seemed to be interfering with them. Isabel also noticed this fact. First of all, she rushed to Prince Lord’s side. After confirming his safety, she turned toward Agnus.

“Kik! Kikikik!”

The screams of the other nations’ royal families and the creepy laughter filled their ears. The confusion in the banquet hall reached an extreme.

“It is okay. It is okay.”

There was a woman who had been captured as a virgin and almost sacrificed to Yatan. It was Irene. From the moment the Yatan Church showed up, she was frightened by her old memories, but she tried not to express it. In order to prevent her son from feeling uneasy, she held her young son in her arms and smiled.

“...Mother.” Lord felt his mother’s trembling and her love. The child’s gaze turned toward the battlefield. He was filled with a desire to fight.

“You can’t. You aren’t their opponent right now.”

“That’s right, Your Highness. Please stay back.” Kasim, Chucksley, and the young knights came forward.

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[★Hidden Quest★ The Vatican’s Crisis has occurred.]

[The history of the continent will change depending on the result of the story.]

[The privilege of witnessing the ★Hidden Quest★ The Vatican’s Crisis has increased all stats by 2. Movement speed is permanently increased by 1%. You can sell your story at an expensive price to the bards drifting around the continent.]

[★Hidden Quest★ Escape from Death is in progress.]

[Escape from Death]

[★ Hidden Quest ★

It is your responsibility to escort Irene and Lord.

Escape with Irene and Lord from the Vatican, which has become a battlefield after being attacked by the Yatan Church.

Quest Clear Conditions: Escort Irene and Lord safely out of the banquet hall.

Quest Clear Rewards: Irene will never forget your accomplishments. Your reputation in the Overgeared Kingdom will rise sharply. The Overgeared Kingdom is a nation founded and ruled by the player ‘Grid.’ The precise compensation can’t be predicted.

Quest Failure: Disqualified from being an Overgeared Knight. Expelled from the Overgeared Kingdom. Level -5.

※ Sub Quest (1) ※

Kill 150 black magicians (0/150)

Sub Quest Reward: Strength +10

* The average level of players currently in the Vatican is 301. The level of the Yatan Church's black magicians is set at 275.

※ Sub Quest (2) ※

Survive when health has fallen below 10%.

Sub Quest Reward: Stamina +20

※ Sub Quest (3) ※

Keep the health of the escort target Irene at 100%.

Sub Quest Reward: The title 'Protector' is obtained.]

"Cough..."

An urgent situation had suddenly occurred, and a hidden quest was triggered. The considerable compensation was worth looking forward to, but Coke wasn't happy at all. His facial expression distorted.

'How can I break through?'

Coke had to escape with Irene and Lord. This thought wasn't just due to the quest. It was his duty as a knight.

'First of all, I can't go against Yatan's Servants.'

The Yatan Church was a group that could fight against the Rebecca Church, the largest religion on the continent. It was easy to guess the strength of the named NPCs representing the Yatan Church, and Coke didn't have the power to break through them as a third advancement player.

'In the end, I have to break through either Rose or Agnus...'

It was a terrible predicament. Coke might be the peak of the new generation of rookies, but he wasn't first in his class rankings. Rose's and Agnus' talents in their respective fields were at least equal to Coke's, and their levels were also higher than Coke's. Above all, there was a gap that couldn't be narrowed by items.

Agnus and Rose had been playing the game since the beginning. Coke assumed that the quests and boss monsters they had cleared were extremely valuable. This made him think that both Rose and Agnus had a higher level than him and that his items and skills were also inferior.

'I can't stand by idly.' Coke drew his sword and waited for orders from his superiors.

He knew his precise role in this event that had suddenly occurred. It was a supporting role. The faces of the other actors on stage were too brilliant for him to be mistaken as a lead actor. The supporting role only followed the thoughts and judgment of the actors.

Chucksley and Royman were in the middle of a discussion.

“Rebecca’s Daughters will handle Yatan’s Servants. We have to break through the necromancer blocking the right entrance.”

“I was thinking the same thing.”

Chucksley and Royman were apparently targeting Agnus.

Kasim also agreed with them. He came out of the shadows and told Chucksley, “According to the report of my shadow soldiers, an undead army is deployed outside the banquet hall. The paladins and Rebecca’s Daughters candidates can’t enter because of them. The man who controls the undead must be that necromancer.”

“He no longer has the capacity to defend himself if is commanding such a large army,” Chucksley and his companions made this judgment.

On the staircase of the banquet hall, Isabel moved from where she had been trying to break Pope Damian’s barrier and rushed toward Agnus. “Goddess’ Wrath!”

Her judgment was the same as Chucksley’s. Most of the people gathered here analyzed Agnus as the weakest enemy. However, the reality of it wasn’t that clear.

“Kik!” Agnus laughed at one of Rebecca’s Daughters, who were considered invincible.

He raised his sword and defended against Lifael’s Spear. Isabel and those present were astonished. It was unbelievable that a necromancer succeeded in defending against an attack from one of Rebecca’s Daughters with a sword. Coke and the other players shouted simultaneously:

“He isn’t an ordinary necromancer!”

“He is Baal’s Contractor!”

“Baal’s Contractor...?” Isabel murmured.

Agnus’ rusty-looking sword engaged with Lifael’s Spear, and divine power started to escape from the spear. It had a curse that could even neutralize divine power? Isabel was convinced of it once she heard that the necromancer before her was Baal’s Contractor.

“Dispersed Dream.” Rose, the 1st ranked black magician and Yatan’s Eighth Servant, used one of her ultimate skills. It was a huge black magic that inflicted 10,000 fixed damage to all targets in sight and cursed targets without black magic with the abnormal conditions of confusion, weakness, and silence.

“Kuk...! Kuaaaaak!” Screams rang out from everywhere. In particular, people with low status resistance fell to their knees. On the other hand, the royalty of the other nations, including Irene and Lord, were safe. All of them were covered by their knights and weren’t in Rose’s vision.

“It’s okay. It’s okay,” Irene said, but her voice and body trembled as she hugged Lord. She was anxious, yet she tried to make a bright face for her son.

“Mother...” Lord, who felt his mother’s anxiety and love at the same time, was filled with a sense of purpose. He had to protect his mother. Coke witnessed Lord jumping up from his position and was shocked.

'I thought he was a smart child!'

Coke had heard many rumors about Lord. Wasn't he a genius among geniuses? Lord had learned assassination from Kasim and farming from Legendary Farmer Piaro, and he studied under High Elf Sticks. There were rumors that he was a genius who would surpass his father. However, he was only a six-year-old child. Even if he could use an assassin's techniques, how well could he fight when his strength, stamina, and agility were lacking? Coke was dumbfounded when Lord rushed toward Yatan's Servants, including Agnus. He thought that Lord was letting his emotions get ahead of his rationality.

'It can't be helped since he is still young. I have to pay more attention to him.'

Coke was filled with a larger tension, while Kasim and Chucksley blocked the road ahead of Lord. No one had to say anything. Kasim and Chucksley supported Isabel, who was struggling with Agnus and Rose. Chucksley attacked Rose and separated her from Isabel, while Kasim emerged from Agnus' shadow and struck Agnus' back with a dagger.

"Kuhat! Hat!" It was hard to distinguish if Agnus was screaming or laughing. Still, one thing was clear. Kasim's attack dealt huge damage to Agnus. Apart from Grid, there were no players who could easily handle the attacks of named NPCs over level 400.

Chucksley and Kasim succeeded in pulling Rose and Agnus away from the entrance and shouted at the same time, "Royman!"

"Yes!"

It was now time for the young knights, including Royman and Coke, to take action. They placed Irene and Lord in the center and rushed toward the empty entrance. Rose and Agnus weren't particularly interested in Royman's group though. Their primary goal was the Rebecca Church itself. In fact, the quest they were carrying out required them to get rid of Rebecca's Daughters, Pope Damian, and the paladins. Eliminating them would give Rose and Agnus great rewards.

However, the other Yatan's Servants were different. The Third Servant, Aliburn shouted, "Don't miss a single person! We must kill all of them and announce the dignity of the Yatan Church!"

Aliburn used black magic. He could burn the mental power and mana of others to use as his own resources. The Rebecca Church's subjects were helpless before him.

"Ah...! Ahhh...!" The Rebecca priests and paladins paled as they lost their mana and couldn't use magic. The thousands of black magicians in the banquet hall started to target the royal family of each nation, including Irene and Lord.

"Dark Vocation..."

"Where are you going?"

The Overgeared Knights were busy. They continuously swung their swords at the warlocks aiming for Irene and Lord.

[You have defeated a black magician of the Yatan Church.]

[2,290,190 experience has been acquired.]

The average level of the black magicians was proportional to the average level of the players present. They weren't particularly strong, so Coke killed them relatively easily. The problem was that there were too many black magicians. The Overgeared Knights killed and killed, but new black magicians kept appearing. The chants of spells being cast were heard all over the place.

In the end, Royman allowed a black magician to cast a spell. The dark flames, shackles, and curses bombarded Royman's group, including Irene and Lord.

"Your Majesty! Prince!"

Coke had to defend them. He didn't think of anything else and embraced Irene and Lord. Receiving the bombardment of black magic spells with his back, Coke's health gauge fell to less than half in an instant, and he suffered a lot of physical and mental pain.

"Cough!"

"A-Are you okay?" Irene was worried about Coke, who suffered from the curse and coughed up blood. Coke smiled brightly as he suppressed his pain and replied, "I am fine as long as both of you are okay."

"Sir Coke..."

Blood flowed down his back and hips. Coke was worried about Irene's troubles increasing and stepped away from her without showing his back. Then he immediately cut down two black magicians and cleared the way.

"Now, let's go."

"Yes..." Irene didn't hesitate. She knew that Coke and the other knights would be in greater danger if she slowed down. "Thank you."

Coke ignored the pains in his body and started running after Irene when he heard familiar voices in his ears.

"Your Majesty!! Prince Lord!"

"Prince, where are you?"

They were the Rebecca's Daughter candidates. Lord tried to respond to the cries of those outside the banquet hall, but it was impossible.

"You won't be able to take one step outside." Yatan's Fourth Servant, Silvenas, flew like the wind and blocked Irene and Lord's way. She let out an ugly laugh as she pulled out a weapon and pointed her other hand at the entrance. Then she shot black magic toward the entrance, sweeping the Rebecca's Daughter candidates waiting outside into an explosion. Through the smoke, Silvenas' eyes focused on Irene. "I have been watching you while I was hiding. You are beautiful and speak well. Bah, whatever. Pretty things are just ugly."

The courage Irene had garnered from her desire to protect Lord disappeared in a flash. Irene's body trembled with horror as she confronted the Yatan Servant.

“Hahhh, your terrified face is very good.” Silvenas was ecstatic. Her cheeks flushed red, and she licked his lips with a red tongue that contrasted with her grey hair as she approached Irene.

“Your Majesty!” Coke defeated the black magicians following closely and came just in time. However, Silvenas’ sword moved at a speed that was too fast for Coke. A red energy blade cut Coke’s armor, and he lost a big amount of health.

[You have suffered serious damage!]

[The durability of the Grid Armor Made by a Craftsman has decreased by 47.]

[You have survived with less than 10% of your health.]

[As a result of the subquest reward, the stamina stat has permanently increased by 20.]

“K...uack...! Not yet...!!”

He couldn’t die, and his quest couldn’t fail. Coke tried to raise his body quickly. He had to somehow protect Irene and Lord until Royman’s group finished off the black magicians and joined him. However, it wasn’t easy. The bleeding status made him dizzy, and Coke eventually fell onto the bloody floor.

Silvenas gazed into Irene’s eyes. “Where do you want me to tear you apart? Huh~?”

Rose, Agnus, and the black magicians were tying up the enemies’ feet, so Silvenas could afford to take her time with Irene and Lord, who were helpless sheep. She was going to enjoy this pleasant situation slowly.

...At least that was until the little prince, whom she had thought of as a meek lamb, bared his teeth.

“Storm Sword.”

“...?!” A storm of sword energy swallowed up Silvenas.

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‘What is this?’

It was an unpredictable attack from Silvenas’ point of view. Who would’ve expected the young prince to swing his sword? No, it wasn’t appropriate to call it just swinging his sword. This was a refined swordsmanship. It was a powerful, fierce, and persistent swordsmanship which cut off the flow of mana in the area!

“Kuk...!” Silvenas was trapped in the unfolding storm of sword energy and became helpless. The dark demonkin’s ‘assimilation with darkness’ and ‘conformity with the wind’ were closely related to the inborn mana circulation of the dark demonkin. The storm interfered with the circulation of mana, and it prevented Silvenas from exercising her full strength and made her lose her speed.

Unfortunately, Lord was young and weak and soon became tired.

“Hiyaaack!” Still, he managed to buy enough time for the Overgeared Knights, including Royman and Coke. The young swordsmen broke through the siege of the black magicians and bombarded Silvenas, who was trapped in the storm. In particular, Royman’s swordsmanship was brilliant. Her unique swordsmanship greatly constricted Silvenas’ behavior by continuing to freeze or knock her down.

“Ugh...!”

The never-ending CC made Silvenas burst with frustration, and she eventually pulled out her hidden card. To be exact, it was an eruption of wings made out of demonic energy. Once her demonic energy exploded, Silvenas entered a super-armored state and resisted all CCs. She regained her swiftness and flew upward before wielding her sword. A red light filled the air and aimed at the Overgeared Knights one by one.

“Avoid it!” Royman cried out urgently as she blocked some of the sword energy flying through the air. Silvenas’ next target was Coke. He was severely injured after having protected Irene and Lord alone while the other knights were tied up with the black magicians. Royman was worried about him. Currently, Coke couldn’t defend against Silvenas’ attack, and he would die the moment he was hit.

Her judgment was correct.

‘This is the end.’ Coke’s health was only at 5%. His recovery speed from consuming potions couldn’t keep up with the rate at which he was being hit by black magic. Thus, Coke humbly accepted death. He had no confidence in blocking Silvenas’ attack which the other knights, apart from Royman, couldn’t even defend against.

As Silvenas flew through the air, her speed was beyond Coke’s perception. The hairs on his body hair shot up as the demonic energy neared him. Coke felt the hair tickling his nose and told Royman with a bitter smile, “Make sure that the queen and the prince are safe...”

“Sir Coke!” Royman was already using the ‘Farmland Walk’ that she had learned from Piaro.

She knew that Coke had a blessing which allowed him to revive, but she still didn’t want to see a colleague die in front of her. Additionally, she knew that those with the blessing experienced a large penalty when they died. Farmland Walk allowed her to leap half the distance of Blink. Royman repeated the jump and tried to narrow the 13-meter distance between her and Coke.

“Hihit!”

Nonetheless, it was too late. Silvenas had already taken control of the situation behind Coke and was just about to strike him.

[Prince ‘Lord’ of the Overgeared Kingdom wants to appoint you as his knight.]

[Would you like to accept?]

This notification window popped up in Coke’s vision that was flashing red. Coke didn’t delay his response. “I will be loyal to Your Highness!”

[You have become the knight of Prince ‘Lord’ of the Overgeared Kingdom.]

[Lord has summoned you.]

[Would you like to accept the summons?]

It happened in an instant. The moment Silvenas' sword was about to touch Coke's back, Coke responded to Lord's summon and was moved to his side. Confusion filled Silvenas' eyes as she cut empty air. "This is nonsense!"

She ignored Royman who had jumped in front of her as her target was now the young prince who had already interfered with her many times. Silvenas' sword dropped mercilessly toward the young child who was sweating in the aftermath of using the sword technique. Simultaneously...

"Tearing the Sky." Lord used the wooden sword his father had given him and used the counterattack limited to attacks coming from the top. It was one of the sword techniques that Kraugel loved using before he became a Sword Saint. The strength of the master was manifested through the disciple. It was like looking at the claws of a giant beast. The sword energy cut Silvenas' body and the banquet hall continuously.

"Cough!" Silvenas suffered a serious injury for the first time, and blood flowed from her mouth. Tearing the Sky returned the attacker's technique to them and was completely different from Storm Sword, which dealt damage in proportion to the user's attack power. Lord could do great damage to Silvenas even if he was only level 60.

"Kuoh... Ugh...! You...! This little guy!!" Silvenas' health gauge fell by one-tenth, and she lost her temper. It insulted her that she was disgraced by a little boy while the Vatican's dogs, the royal families, and thousands of black magicians were watching. Silvenas had never experienced such great shame since she was born. In the end...

"Die...! Killing power!!" Silvenas threw off her mask of beauty and revealed the appearance of the dark demonkin that was ridiculed as the ugliest species in hell.

"Hiik!"

"W-What is going on?"

Her skin was peeled and twisted like it had been burned, and her eyes, nose, and mouth were jumbled together. Silvenas' ugly appearance gave a huge shock to everyone in the banquet hall. Even the Yatan believers were either shocked, dismayed, or disappointed by Silvenas' appearance. On one side of the banquet hall, Yatan's Sixth Servant Cardiora displayed a meaningful smile. "Now, no one can survive."

It wasn't an exaggeration. Silvenas exposing her ugly appearance meant she would kill everyone around her—enemies, allies... everyone!

"Kieek! Kieeeeeek!" Silvenas' shriek inflicted great pain onto everyone in the banquet hall. The dark demonkin's scream, which lamented their ugliness, made listeners feel uncomfortable and disturbed while also interfering with mana flow and damaging their hearing. It was dangerous! There might be no physical damage, but ordinary people like Irene couldn't endure it.

"Your Majesty!" Chucksley immediately noticed this and tried to run to protect her.

"Where are you going?" Unfortunately, Rose didn't let him go. She blocked Chucksley using the magic accumulated in Belial's Staff (Myth Reproduction) that she had gained in exchange for the 32nd Great Demon Belial summoning episode.

“This is a mess...!” Chucksley cried out as he fell. He blamed himself for being unable to do anything while Queen Irene was in danger. In fact, there was no reason to blame himself. The fact that he could face Yatan’s Eighth Servant for a while was already sufficient. The same was true for Isabel and Kasim. They were doing a tremendous job.

“Kikikik!” Baal’s Contractor Agnus recalled all the undead he had summoned outside the banquet hall. Agnus couldn’t cope with Isabel and Kasim alone, so he brought the death knight and demons to his side to defend himself. There was a difference in strength. Baal’s Contractor might be hostile to humanity, but he had a clear limit to his abilities as a player.

What if Baal’s Contractor was an NPC? He would be able to threaten everyone in the Vatican simultaneously, instead of just Isabel and Kasim. As a player, Agnus had all types of restrictions until a number of class quests were cleared.

“Shadow Soldiers!” Kasim raised his shadow soldiers from various places and concentrated the offensive on Agnus. Meanwhile, Isabel stabbed her spear in this gap and killed a demon.

“Kik...! Kikikik! More! More! More! Moreee! Kuhahahahat!” Agnus’ madness was getting out of control. To him, this was a sweet dream that made the terrible reality disappear.

“Your Holiness!”

“Prince Lord!”

“Imperial Prince!”

Agnus recalled the undead, allowing the paladins, Rebecca’s Daughter candidates, and soldiers from many countries to enter the banquet hall. They started to dispose of the Yatan Church’s black magicians and gave hope to Damian and the royalty of the other kingdoms.

However, this hope was short-lived.

“There are more small-fries.” The Third Servant, Aliburn, started to act. Aliburn burned the mana of the priests and paladins and jumped into the front lines. The mana he stole from others was converted to magic, and he was like a weapon made for the purpose of killing as he shot black magic everywhere. Dozens of priests and paladins lost their lives in a flash, while several Rebecca’s Daughter candidates turned to gay pillars of ash.

“Lea! Anne!!” Lord was in despair after losing his precious girlfriends. He wanted to run toward Aliburn but couldn’t. By now, he was already exhausted, yet Silvenas was threatening his mother. The first thing he had to do was protect his mother.

“Kiyaaaaah!” Silvenas’ screams grew louder.

“Uh...!” Irene stumbled from the pain. Lord supported her with his small body while Coke blocked her ears with bloody hands, despite him also bleeding from the ears.

“This can’t continue!”

“Shit!” Irene was Kasim’s top priority. He no longer clung to Agnus and switched targets to Silvenas. Thanks to this, Agnus regained his freedom and was able to breathe. Then he belatedly discovered Irene and Lord. “Huh?”

Were they Grid’s wife and son, whom he had seen on the news previously? Yes, they were Grid’s precious people. Agnus frowned. There was a certain memory he wanted to forget. However, the unforgettable memories stirred his mind. The sight of the woman he loved being abused by angry men...

“...That jerk, Grid.”

Unlike how Agnus was previously helpless, Grid was currently brimming with strength. So why was he neglecting those precious to him? Would he only realize their importance after losing them? Agnus’ wrath shot upward. Then Agnus’ eyes widened, and he summoned the trump card he had been saving—Lich Mumud.

His magic power struck Silvenas, who was floating above Irene’s and Lord’s heads.

“Agnus! What are you doing right now?” The puzzled Rose shouted.

“Kik? So what? Is it normal to hurt a weak woman?” Agnus abandoned the ‘Vatican Invasion’ quest that was in progress.

“You dog-like bastard... I want to rip you apart.”

“You are crazy!!”

Overwhelmed by the repeated explosions, the ceiling of the banquet hall started to collapse. Agnus flew toward Irene and Lord.

Simultaneously, in the capital of the Overgeared Kingdom...

“Quickly!” Grid urged Sage Sticks. Having received a whisper from Coke a few minutes ago, Grid wanted to fly to the Vatican immediately. However, things weren’t so simple.

“Just a bit more...” Due to the academy lessons, Sticks had consumed a large amount of mana and was lacking mana. In order for him to be able to use Mass Teleport, Sticks had to use Mana Drain for 5 minutes while also taking mana potions. For Grid, these five minutes felt like 10 years—no, 100 years.

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[★Hidden Quest★ ‘Vatican Invasion’ has been abandoned.]

[Affinity with the Yatan Church has decreased by 100.]

[The relationship with the Yatan Church has changed from friendly to wary.]

The Vatican Invasion was a hidden quest with huge rewards, and the clear probability of a story unfolding from it was very high. Yet Agnus was now abandoning the honeypot that he had been certain to win. It was a craziness that no one could understand.

“You are crazy!!” Rose screamed. It was already too late to stop Agnus. Lich Mumud attacked Silvenas, while Agnus flew through the gap and reached Irene.

“Agnus...!”

He was the man who was called a mad dog. Coke was frightened when the man everyone called crazy approached the queen and prince. He didn't know that Agnus had stopped Silvenas' scream and squeezed his sword with trembling hands. The sight of a weak person determined to defend someone caused Agnus' eyes to flash with emotion.

Recalling his past helpless self who hadn't been able to protect the woman he loved, Agnus felt regret, anger, resentment, and sadness. Agnus' face distorted in a terrible manner as he hated his past self. It was a face that induced sympathy rather than fear.

“Who are you?” The little prince asked. He was aware of the sad face of the man who was protecting him and his mother.

Agnus barely suppressed his anger and replied, “Just a fool.”

“...”

He was obsessed with the past that couldn't be reversed and was forming new regrets at this moment. Wasn't he a fool? That's right. Agnus was clearly aware that it was wrong for him to give up the hidden quest just for old memories. He knew he was going to regret it.

In fact, Yatan's Third Servant Aliburn was threatening him right now.

“Baal's Contractor...!! Have you forgotten the grace we showed you by giving you the Stone of Life? You will regret this!” Aliburn was furious, misunderstanding why Baal's Contractor was trying to betray the Yatan Church. “It is always Baal's Contractor...! You always pester us!!”

The Yatan Church served the evil god, Yatan, and the great demons were Yatan's children. Originally, the 1st Great Demon Baal was the second highest subject of respect for Yatan's Servants. However, Baal had an incomprehensible side. Hundreds of years ago, he contracted with the legendary Pagma and gave him a mighty force, interfering with the descent of the great demons. It was on a mere whim, but Aliburn was forced to doubt Baal's intentions when his contractor betrayed the Yatan Church.

“Baal wants to betray God Yatan!” Aliburn knew that there was no limit to the desires of a great demon, so he interpreted it as the 1st Great Demon Baal wanting to pull down God Yatan and become a god.

Agnus laughed. “That jerk's intentions aren't important.”

“What? You..?”

“I am me. Do you think I will act for others? Kik!” Agnus didn't care if this was the wrong move. He pointed to Coke and Irene. “I want to save these people. That is the desire in my heart.”

He was like a heaven-sent savior to Irene and Lord, but Coke was still vigilant toward him. Watching Agnus, Aliburn became speechless. Then he made a blatant threat, “Someday, you won't be able to protect them with your present strength. You will surely be defeated, and they will die.”

“...”

“Then you will have the Stone of Life stolen from you.”

This was Agnus' last chance.

"Now, wake up and change your mind." Aliburn reached out to Agnus.

A notification window asking if he wanted to accept the Vatican Invasion hidden quest once again appeared in front of Agnus, and once again, the rewards for the hidden quest were amazing. He would be able to secure a large amount of demonic power, intelligence, dominance and also gain a 50% resistance to divine attacks. There were quest rewards which maximized the strengths of Baal's Contractor while overcoming the weaknesses.

It was a temptation that couldn't be refused unless the person was a fool...and Agnus was a fool.

"I am still going to fight. Kik!"

Agnus' desires were different from ordinary people, and he didn't want strength, power, or wealth. He just wanted to recover the past. That's why it was impossible for him to turn a blind eye to this scene due to his regrets of the past, even if new regrets rose.

[★Hidden Quest★ 'Vatican Invasion' has been rejected.]

[Yatan's Third Servant Aliburn is extremely angry.]

[The relationship with the Yatan Church has changed from wary to hostile.]

[The hidden class quest 'Will of the Former Generation' has been opened!]

[Will of the Former Generation]

[Difficulty: Class quest.]

You have become hostile to the Yatan Church. This means you will be hostile to God Yatan and all great demons.

You have chosen the same path as the former Baal's Contractor, Pagma.

Go to the Hall of Fame!

Understand Pagma's will!

Glimpse the will and power that he left behind and prepare to fight against the great demons!

Quest Clear Conditions: Clear the events that will occur in the Hall of Fame.

Quest Clear Rewards: Baal's Contractor will acquire some of the power left by Pagma.

Quest Failure: The rewards will be permanently deleted.]

He ended up being connected with Pagma? The new development interested Agnus. One of the Five Miracles once again broke Morpheus' predictions.

"Kik?" Agnus burst out laughing.

"Yes! Baal's Contractor is like this!" Aliburn roared. His magic power that had been built up by absorbing divine power stirred the ground. However, Agnus wasn't afraid to confront it.

“Summon! Death Knight!”

Lich Mumud tied up Silvenas’ feet while the death knights rose from the ground.

“Furfu’s Power!”

A white light covered the stormy night sky. It was a scene where the pouring rain turned to ice. This was the power of Great Demon Furfu. His power was manifested through Agnus’ hands and strengthened all of Agnus’ servants, from the demons to the death knights and Lich Mumud. Silvenas was trying to keep up with Lich Mumud’s iridescent magic when she suddenly screamed, “Kyaaak!”

The strengthened Lich Mumud alone threatened Yatan’s Fourth Servant. Once Agnus crossed the irreversible river, Aliburn’s eyes turned red. “You...!”

Aliburn’s infinite pride as the best black magician of the continent was destroyed.

“The unclean darkness will spread, and the sky and earth will be corrupted!!”

The sky, which had turned white due to Furfu’s Power, darkened once again, and the heavy rain pouring down was invisible. All types of curses flew out while the people present trembled in terror.

“Do as you please!” At this moment, the elders devoted to breaking the barrier containing Pope Damian unleashed Goddess’ Purification. The elders had high dark resistance and weren’t affected by Aliburn’s Mana Burn. The divine light created by the 13 of them cleaned the polluted sky and earth in an instant.

“It will be dangerous if I don’t go out directly.” The silent 2nd Prince of the Saharan Empire manifested his red energy. His sword was wrapped in red energy and destroyed dozens of black magicians at once.

“What?” The eyes of Yatan’s Sixth Servant Cardiora widened as she engaged with the solo number knights who escorted the imperial prince. She couldn’t have imagined that the imperial prince, who grew up in a greenhouse, would have such great power concealed. It wasn’t just Cardiora. Kasim, who was flying to defeat Aliburn, and everyone else in the banquet hall was surprised by Dulandal.

‘This cursed strength!’

Naturally, Kasim knew about the power of the royal family. Indeed, he couldn’t forget the red energy that wiped out his clan.

Silvenas was caught by Agnus, and Rose was facing Chucksley and Isabel. Aliburn was fighting the elders and other Rebecca’s Daughters, and Cardiora was facing the Red Knights and Dulandal. Meanwhile, the black magicians were holding back the knights of other kingdoms and the Rebecca’s Daughter candidates.

Agnus’ betrayal and Dulandal’s power were unexpected variables for the Yatan Church, and the situation was going badly for the Yatan Church.

‘There is hope!’ The royalty, who had fairly high insight, were filled with expectations.

They believed that if they cooperated actively, they would be able to overcome this crisis and survive. With this in mind, they led the knights to kill the black magicians quickly. However, Yatan’s Seventh

Servant Hill reversed the situation again. Everyone became desperate as the fat middle-aged man showed up from wherever he had been hiding since the beginning of the battle.

“Hehe! Kihehe! Aliburn! I have succeeded!” The laughing Hill was holding a sword that was stuck in a piece of rock. The trapped Pope Damian, the elders, and Rebecca’s Daughters were all astonished. It couldn’t be helped since the Holy Sword which had been given to the first pope by Goddess Rebecca was now in the hands of the Yatan Church.

Damian was forced to proceed with a new quest.

[Recapture the Holy Sword]

[The Sealed Holy Sword, which the goddess gave to the first pope, has fallen into the hands of the Yatan Church!

The Holy Sword is the symbol of Rebecca and proof of the pope!

You must retrieve it!

Quest Clear Conditions: Take back the Sealed Holy Sword.

Quest Clear Reward: Goddess Rebecca’s blessing. Affinity with the elders will reach the peak and you will be respected by all believers.

Quest Failure: Many believers will be disillusioned with the ineffective church leadership and will leave the church. You won’t be eligible to serve as the pope. Goddess Rebecca will be disappointed in you. Level -5.]

No, what could he do when locked up in this barrier? In the midst of this crisis, Damian prayed for salvation. However, Goddess Rebecca was silent.

“Ugh...!” Despite his anxiety, Damian’s gaze kept following Isabel and Irene. He hoped that the woman he loved and the people precious to him would all be safe. How long could they continue enduring this? As Aliburn started cursing the Holy Sword, the Rebecca priests, paladins, elders, and daughters started to lose their divine power.

[Chapter 867](#)

The righteous heroes had been attracted by hymns and set up statues and temples for the goddess. The heroes had raised the saint, who became a pope and then a hero. This was the legendary history—the birth of the Rebecca Church. The Holy Sword was the first emergence of the goddess’ will. It was the symbol of the pope and the pride of the church.

At the end of the Dark War, the sword was inserted into a rock and couldn’t function at all. However, the symbolic significance of the sword was still intact, and its value couldn’t be determined. At least, this was the case in the eyes of the Rebecca Church.

‘Our precious treasure ended up in the hands of the Yatan Church!’

From the elders to the priests, the Rebecca believers were forced to become agitated. Their sacred treasure wasn't allowed to outsiders, yet it was being taken by a dirty Yatan Servant? This was an unbelievable sight.

[The Sword Stuck in the Rock has fallen into the hands of the Yatan Church!]

[The morale of the Rebecca Church has decreased drastically.]

[The defense and magic resistance of the Rebecca members have been reduced by 60%.]

[The pope has a duty to lead the members. The pope's morale is unaffected.]

[The Sword Stuck in the Rock has been contaminated with Yatan's essence! The weakened divine power remaining in the Holy Sword has been extinguished slightly!]

[The Rebecca Church members will be confused for 10 seconds. No actions can be taken.]

[The pope has a duty to lead the members. You won't become confused.]

Damian resisted the confusion with the power of the system, but his mental state wasn't normal.

"What is this...?" Damian panicked at the arrival of the worst situation he had never imagined to come about. He was trapped in a dark barrier, and his confusion was maximized because he didn't know what to do.

'Isn't it an impossible quest to clear?'

Damian was currently fully restrained. He was completely cut off from the outside world by the barrier and was unable to act. Despite the entire Rebecca Church being in a crisis, he couldn't do anything.

'Let's think. Think about it, Damian!'

As an otaku, Damian enjoyed countless movies, animations, and manhwas, and he had come across countless fantastic and interesting stories. So, he was now contemplating Satisfy's worldview from a reader's perspective.

'It doesn't make sense that the Rebecca Church will collapse. In a time when wicked people all over the world, including the Yatan Church, are trying to resurrect the great demons, the balance of the world will collapse once the Rebecca Church is destroyed.'

In short, it would be hell. It would be a world with no dreams or hope. On the day of Satisfy's release, Chairman Lim Cheolho had expressed his desire to make a world where players could achieve their dreams and feel a sense of fulfillment that couldn't be felt in reality. How could he have planned for this dystopia?

'It isn't possible. It is against the will of the world for the Rebecca Church to fall.'

Damian's body trembled with conviction. At this moment, he realized how big a burden was being placed on him. An enormous pressure weighed down on his mind and heart.

'The fate of the world is left to one person!'

The destruction of the Rebecca Church meant the end of the world, yet he was the only one who could stop the destruction. Damian obviously felt a great burden. If his spirit was at the level of ordinary people, then his mind would've blanked out due to the great pressure. However, Damian's spirit exceeded the category of ordinary people. It was a spirit that had been trained since childhood due to people criticizing him for his otaku nature.

In the first place, if he were the owner of an ordinary mind, he wouldn't have cried out in official meetings, "Isabel, I love you!" Neither would he have continued praising Grid-sama despite the criticism of the people. This meant he wasn't a regular person.

'This is too exciting!' Damian succeeded in sublimating the enormous pressure into a joyful passion, and the anxiety in his gaze disappeared.

That's right. Damian was also a protagonist. He was the same type as Grid.

'Think about it again.'

Once he realized it was a crisis that could be overcome, he forced his brain to work. Damian thought about it for a while before coming up with a hypothesis, 'What if the pope was an NPC and the current episode occurred?'

It was highly likely that the NPC pope would've easily overcome the current crisis by knowing about it beforehand due to the goddess' divine message. This was because NPCs had the characteristic of flexibly adapting to already designed stories. However, players were different. They didn't know the pre-designed story and could experience sudden crises like Damian was going through right now. Compared to NPCs, players were at a disadvantage.

Then Damian had an idea. 'Players have more disadvantages than NPCs, but they also have a lot of advantages. Let's think about it as the player Damian, not Pope Damian.'

The intervals between the explosions were gradually shortening, and the screams of the Rebecca followers rang out through the broken ceiling of the banquet hall. Damian gritted his teeth and struggled to ignore them. He couldn't spare time for the people suffering in front of him and focused on thinking of an idea.

"Kikikik! Kihahahahahaha!" Agnus' mad laugh echoed and his hair had long been wildly swept all over the place from the fighting. Two demons were already dead, while others were injured. Agnus had lost two death knights, with only Lich Mumud remaining.

Yatan's Fourth Servant Silvenas was also in bad shape. She was breathing hard and covered with blood. A named NPC representing a major force was struggling against just one player. Rose, who was overpowering Chucksley, felt horrified by this sight.

'Isn't Silvenas level 420?'

Yet a player in the 300s was dealing damage to her single-handedly? A typical level 300 player wouldn't be able to push Silvenas to this extent. The power of a legendary class was greater than expected. Rose was filled with a fierce jealousy as she pointed her staff at Chucksley lying on the ground. In the past, he had been a sword that defended the Eternal Kingdom, and now he defended the Overgeared Kingdom.

Rose shook with rage at the fact that the NPC with the golden name had managed to grab her ankles for 10 minutes.

“Due to you, I couldn’t hunt the followers properly! A trash like you interfering...!”

Rose had received some subquests to hunt the Rebecca followers. It was a precious quest that increased her intelligence every time she hunted a number of priests and paladins of the Rebecca Church. As such, she had expected to achieve massive growth from the subquest, but all her plans were completely destroyed by one NPC. The other Yatan Servants and black magicians had wiped out a large number of believers, and there wasn’t much prey remaining.

“Die! Be wrapped in thorns and die! Tempting Thorns!”

Purple vines grew from the cracked ground. Then it happened the moment the sharp blade-like thorns tried to wrap around Chucksley’s entire body.

“...!?”

A knife flew toward the thorn that was climbing up Chucksley’s ankle and cut through it. Surprised, Rose turned toward the direction that the dagger came from while Chucksley turned red.

“Your Highness...”

“What?” Rose doubted her ears. She knew that Chucksley served Grid’s son and that Lord was now around five or six years old. Still, the one at the end of her gaze really was Lord.

‘This little guy threw the dagger towards the vine and cut it off?’

No, it was too absurd...

Rose denied the reality and once again aimed toward Chucksley with her staff. Simultaneously, a new dagger flew and struck Rose exactly in the neck.

[You have suffered 1,300 damage.]

[The magic casting has been forcibly canceled.]

“Crazy...!”

It was a thin and sharp dagger. Rose pulled it out of her neck and once again turned to Lord, who was staring at her with eyes that resembled his father.

“You!”

There was a monster before her that shouldn’t be allowed to grow up! Rose felt this instinctively and cast a new spell. This time the target of the spell was Lord. Then Lord pulled out a new dagger. The throwing skills he had learned from Kasim before he was even a toddler were being unfolded.

“Kuk...! Cough!” Once again, a dagger stabbed Rose’s neck, and her casting was canceled! The daggers thrown by the little prince didn’t deal her with fatal damage due to her legendary armor, but they were definitely a hindrance. It was enough to fill her with fury!

“You...! You are your father’s son!”

Rose blamed Grid and the Overgeared members for her death during the Great Demon Belial raid. So, she didn't have any good feelings toward Grid and didn't care how young Lord was. She then opened a shield to block Lord's daggers and started chanting a spell.

"No!" Coke's and Royman's gazes shifted toward Lord from where they had been moving through the black magicians. Coke tried to throw himself over to protect Lord with his body. Flop! However, Coke fell to the ground because his stamina was at its limit. Instead, he witnessed Agnus, who had been struggling with Silvenas, reach out toward Lord.

Agnus' golden eyes shone fiercely as he moved his gaze backward. It was because he witnessed Rose casting magic toward Lord and Irene.

"This woman!"

"Are you selling one hand?"

"Kuk...!"

This was bad. The sight of Rose's disgraceful behavior agitated Agnus in an irreversible manner. With Agnus' gaze shifted to Rose, Silvenas was now able to move freely. She moved through Lich Mumud's magic, reached Agnus' back, and swung her weapon at his heart.

"Ah...!" Irene's eyes shook as her son and her savior suffered a crisis at the same time. There was only one thing she could do now that she thought it was over.

"I'm sorry. I'm really sorry." Simultaneously, Agnus and Coke, who were struggling, apologized for their efforts being in vain. Irene rushed over as hard as she could and held her young son. This was the only thing Irene could do. She closed her eyes and waited for death. Her body would become a shield for her son to live.

"Your Majesty!" Frightened, Chucksley raised his body. He once again transcended his limits as he swung his sword as hard as he could to protect his queen and prince. However, Rose's casting time was shorter than the time it took for Chucksley's sword to cut Rose. Her magic was fired out. The giant flash of magic flew straight toward Irene and Lord, but Agnus couldn't defend them. He wasn't in a position to reach them because Silvenas was clinging to him.

"Kik...! Kikikik! Kihahahahat!"

'Again?'

He had become stronger than before, but he still couldn't save a woman? Agnus' eyes filled with shame when a voice reached his ears.

"Thank you for buying time, Agnus-chan." It was someone's holy voice. The person had taken his own life and resurrected at the Vatican's resurrection point. The voice belonged to Damian, who had broken free of the dark barrier in a very player-like manner.

He fell by Irene's and Lord's side and then turned to look at Agnus and Silvenas. A bright golden magic circle rose and destroyed the black magic, forming a shockwave that caused Damian's white clothes to flutter. As Irene and Lord opened their eyes, they saw Damian's divine armor under his white clothes.

After confirming that his mother was unharmed, Lord smiled at the person who was most reliable to him after his father.

“Teacher Damian!”

“I’m sorry I’m late. I will protect Lord-chan and your mother from now on.”

The grandeur of the pope captivated everyone. He had the light of the goddess’ blessing. This was a man who competed with Sword Saint Kraugel in swordsmanship, the person who helped the Overgeared King become overgeared, and the person who learned to farm after Piaro.

One of the strongest players in the game overwhelmed the people present.

[Chapter 868](#)

“Soul Decay.”

“Dirty Whispers.”

“Mel-Pia’s Land.”

“Rising Desire.”

Pope Damian was greeted with a harsh reception by the black magicians. All types of black magic tried to neutralize Damian’s body, mind, and soul, but it was wishful thinking.

[The pope can’t be corrupted by darkness.]

[The ‘decay’ state has been resisted.]

[The ‘confused’ state has been...]

[The ‘hunger’ state has been...]

[The berserk’ state has been...]

The pope had the power to block black magic at its source! Damian’s 80% dark resistance and 100% black magic CC resistance amazed the thousands of black magicians. Their magic didn’t go through at all? The black magicians were overwhelmed by Damian who denied their existence, and this had a profound effect on the battlefield.

[The emergence of the Rebecca Church’s pope has reduced the morale of the Yatan Church members.]

[The defense and magic resistance of the Yatan Church members have been reduced by 60%.]

[Yatan’s Servants have a duty to lead the members. The morale of Yatan’s Servants isn’t affected.]

“What...?”

Damian weakened thousands of black magicians with just his existence? Rose’s defense declined dramatically, and she witnessed the black magicians failing to withstand the onslaught of the knights. She knew that the pope’s strength was beginning to come through now!

'They were fighting in such a difficult situation.' Damian kept being bombarded with black magic and realized how hard the church members and knights of other kingdoms had been struggling while he had been trapped. They fought the enemies in front of them while enduring the curses on their bodies, minds, and souls...

Feeling in awe of them, Damian blessed the church members and the knights with the skill, Light Rain, that he had gotten during his second term as the pope.

[Light Rain Lv. 1]

[You have begged Goddess Rebecca for rain.

A divine golden rain will fall in a 300-meter radius around you.

Those who aren't evil will have a 50% chance of overcoming their current abnormal status and will regain 10% of their health.

If those hit by the rain are evil, the duration of the current abnormal status has a 50% chance of doubling and will lose 10% of their health.

Skill Mana Cost: 5,000

Skill Cooldown Time: 50 minutes.]

It wasn't a definite cleanse, but it was a skill with many advantages. There was no doubt that it was a healing and offensive spell which even Saintess Ruby would admire. Moreover, it was a ranged skill that targeted all beings within 300 meters. A gold rain defeated the darkness of the night.

"Kuaaaack!" The black magicians struggled with the pain.

"Ahh..."

"I feel a bit better now!"

"Praise His Holiness!"

The Rebecca members, the royal family, and the knights enjoyed the peaceful moment. They recovered their lost physical strength, and their decreased morale started rising again. The situation was reversing. Rose was filled with questions while she shook from the pain. 'How did he escape from the barrier in the first place?'

The Yatan Church viewed the Yatan Essence as an all-purpose item. From simple curses to summoning a great demon... there was nothing worse than the combination of Yatan Essence and black magic. With it, it had been possible to corrupt one of the strongest knights of the empire in the past. It could even be said that Pope Drevigo's desires had been fueled by the essence and that it was possible to damage the world tree with the Yatan Essence.

The power of the Yatan Essence was absolute. The barrier created with the combination of the Yatan Essence and black magic should've contained Pope Damian to the end. Then how the hell had Damian escaped? Rose was questioning it when Aliburn shouted, "Rebecca's dog! Stop this nasty rain right now!"

Yatan's Third Servant threatened Pope Damian blatantly. While gesturing to the sword stuck in the rock, Aliburn shouted, "If you don't stop resisting, your symbol will disappear."

"...!" The relieved Rebecca members were once again shaken. They belatedly recalled that the symbol of the church was in the hands of the enemy. "What should we do...?"

The older the group, the more attached they were to symbols. People felt proud of their organization through the presence of their historical symbols. It was why countries around the world named national treasures. The elders were fidgeting, but Damian replied with a casual attitude, "Get rid of that sword."

"...?" Yatan's Servants and members of the Yatan Church, as well as the Rebecca elders and members, doubted their ears.

The battle paused for a moment. They were at a loss because they hadn't expected Pope Damian to give up the symbol of the church so easily. Damian was aware of this. "I mean it. It is a worthless antique. What? A symbol? Isn't Goddess Rebecca the symbol of the Rebecca Church? Will the pope not be a pope? History? The history of the Rebecca Church has already been described in countless books. There is no reason to be obsessed with antiques."

"That is absurd logic! Your claim denies the value of all artifacts throughout the continent!"

"Do you recognize the value of those artifacts?"

"...?"

"You are someone who devotes yourself to the great demons and wants to turn humanity into cattle. What type of sophistry is this that you would discuss the value of artifacts?"

"..."

"In the first place, no matter how great the value, it is just a remnant of the past. The lives of the people in the present are more important than such things! Do you understand, you villain?!" Damian channeled the heroes that he had followed for decades in anime and manhwa.

Shonen manga greatly influenced Damian's thoughts, and the relative simplicity made it hard for Aliburn to argue against. In the first place, the topic of the debate was disadvantageous to Aliburn.

The sight of the mute Aliburn served to further break down the morale of the Yatan Church. This didn't mean that the morale of the Rebecca Church rose though. The Rebecca members were disappointed with the pope's irresponsible words, and the situation was becoming a mess. Additionally, Damian had the Recapture the Holy Sword quest. If this quest failed, the penalty he would receive was huge. This meant he was in a position where he had to recover the sword.

Even so, there was a genuineness behind him treating the Holy Sword as a trivial antique. Think about it. What would happen if Damian clung to the Holy Sword? Aliburn would've aggressively exploited the weakness of the Holy Sword, and Damian's and the Rebecca members' situation would worsen. In the end...

"Kuoh...!" Aliburn held the sword in his arms. Seeing as the pope treated the Holy Sword as a trivial thing, Aliburn was now unable to use it as a threat.

'Good!' Damian maintained his calm expression while inwardly feeling delighted.

"It's annoying, but I'll take care of it myself! Come out! Hell's keepers!" Aliburn summoned a large number of cerberuses.

The three-headed dogs ran to Damian, shooting fire from their mouths. Damian couldn't withstand the heat with his divine power and stepped back. Then Yatan's Seventh Servant Hill started to act. How could he move his round, obese body so quickly? Damian's eyes widened as he moved to avoid the flames.

Dozens of fists poured toward him. "My stone fists fly at a rate of 12 times per second! Haaaap!"

This was the best monk of the Yatan Church! Hill's attack of 12 fists per second was reminiscent of a cat's paws, but unlike the cute appearance, his fists were as hard as stone. Damian's armor was hit 12 times per second.

"Kuhahaha! How is it? Can you afford to endure Hill's 12 punches per second?"

The pope, who overwhelmed the thousands of black magicians, started to swell up like a dog in front of Hill. Hill felt a sense of superiority and was determined to kill Damian. However, Damian had previously fought against a monster wielding a sword 30 times per second.

Hill's fists were slow in comparison to Link, Pagma's Swordsmanship. So, Damian gradually adapted.

Damian guarded himself with a shield spell and blocked the attacks, which were visible with the naked eye, with a square shield. After Hill finished the 12 attacks, he staggered back for a short interval of 0.5 seconds to breathe, and Damian stabbed out with his sword during this gap.

"Keok!" Confusion filled Hill's eyes as he screamed.

Damian scoffed, "I've fought with monsters much faster than you."

Damian's abilities rose to the extreme due to the divine light around him. On the other hand...

[The demon, Dyulebul, has been badly damaged and run away.]

[The demon, Cao, has gotten into great trouble and run away.]

[Lich Mumud has less than 20% of his health left. Be careful.]

'This jerk!'

Damian's Light Rain caused serious damage to Agnus who was already seriously injured. To be honest, Agnus felt like he had been hit in the back of the head. He thought that Damian was an ally who would help him, only for Damian to immediately attack Agnus and his demons.

Agnus glared at Silvenas in front of him. Like Agnus, Silvenas was also seriously wounded by the rain.

"I will kill you first...!"

"Damn traitor...! I will tear you to death!"

"Then I will cut off the pope's head!"

"Then curse that Rebecca dog! Huh?"

Was Agnus an enemy or ally? Why did they start fighting? Silvenas felt frustrated and unhappy about being caught by this madman. At the same time...

"This is a problem." In a small village below the Vatican, Sticks looked confused as he appeared on the road to the Vatican. "I can't move directly into the Vatican because of a barrier. It will take time to analyze and pull down the barrier..."

"..."

It was a barrier that only allowed the entrance and exit of evil beings. Grid stared at the barrier with some nervous paladins and immediately came up with a solution.

"Blackening."

"Your Majesty!"

The only way was for Grid to jump in alone. Sticks tried to dissuade him from passing through the barrier alone. However, Mercedes stopped Sticks. "The king will rescue the queen and the prince."

Was this the attitude of a knight who was only concerned about Grid's safety? Sticks thought it was absurd, but Grid smiled with satisfaction. "That's right. Follow as soon as you break down the barrier. I will protect Irene and Lord until then..."

Grid wasn't able to finish speaking. Dozens of black magic spells flooded toward him at the same time.

[Chapter 869](#)

The 2nd ranked black magician, Dolce, was very unhappy with this quest. Why did he have to protect the entrance while the others raided the Vatican?

'I'm not a mere dog!'

Dolce had won the position of the 2nd ranked black magician with his talent and efforts. As the second-best among thousands of competitors, he was proud to be a genius. In the first place, black magicians found it harder to hunt than warriors, so it was great that he had reached his third advancement.

Yet he had to protect the entrance? Why did he need to block the entrance? Would the enemy even come here?

'Dammit! How long are they planning to waste a talent like me?'

Wasting time while doing nothing was extremely annoying. Dolce's complaints increased greater and greater in number as dozens of minutes passed by. He was jealous of Rose, who had broken into the Vatican and would get tremendous rewards.

'If I just get a chance to become active...'

He would be as active as Rose, become one of Yatan's Servants, and eventually surpass Rose! Dolce was filled with this conviction. His confidence was based on a realistic analysis, not arrogance. The former 1st ranked black magician, Yura, felt like an inescapable wall while Rose had no such force. Dolce didn't think he was even worse than Rose. He just didn't get a chance because he was unlucky.

'A chance. If I get a chance, my position would be reversed with Rose right now... Huh?'

While Dolce was blaming his luck and was just carrying out his mission without any motivation, he sensed something.

Someone had crossed the barrier established at the foot of the mountain the Vatican was on, yet there was no notification window about the barrier being destroyed. It meant that the intruder was entitled to cross the barrier, which signified they were evil and likely to be on the side of the Yatan Church.

'Was someone assigned a trivial task like me?'

They must be quite angry. Dolce got up from his rock sulkily, wondering who had joined him in this petty task.

"Hey."

A black outfit...? The appearance of his colleague in the darkness couldn't be distinguished from this distance. Dolce frowned and tried to get closer. Then the moonlight shone through the rain clouds and revealed a newcomer wearing a crown on his head. The beautiful red and black jewels on the crown absorbed the moonlight and glowed brightly.

[You have been confused by the target! You have become defenseless. You can't take any action, and your defense and magic resistance are reduced by 40%.]

"...!?"

The biggest variable in combat was a person's status. The consequences of being caught in an abnormal state were severe, and the essence of winning a battle was to overcome it quickly. The 2nd ranked black magician, Dolce, couldn't be unaware of this fact. Like other rankers, he raised his resistance to various conditions to the extreme. Thus, he hadn't expected to become 'confused' just by looking at a person.

Was this at the same level as the 'medusa' that petrified a target by looking at them? Dolce was so creeped out that he got goosebumps. He felt like his breathing was going to stop, but there was one piece of good news.

[There is one second remaining for the confused state.]

The level of the confusion wasn't very high. Dolce's high resistance meant he was only affected by it for one second. Dolce was safe since the unknown person was 15 meters away from him. He judged that he could escape from the confusion and use magic before the person reached him.

'Once I've confirmed who it is...'

One second... It felt like it took unusually long for this one second to pass. Dolce braced himself and searched the face of the target that was getting closer and closer. The person had developed jaw muscles, a high nose, and sharp eyes. The sharp black eyes looked coldly at the 2nd ranked black magician like he was a bug.

'What?' Dolce recalled a person with this combination of features and was astonished for two reasons. The first reason was that the finally visible ID of the enemy matched the person he had thought of. The second reason...

'Fast?'

The target, who had been standing 15 meters away, moved and arrived right in front of Dolce in one second.

"Get lost." The target was a man who wore demonic energy that was darker than night. He crushed the sky above the sky and rose above him. The Overgeared King Grid showed off the power of Blackening and Quick Movements as he swung his sword.

Dolce and the five black magicians with him were caught up in the black energy blades. Their mission had been to prepare for the enemy's intrusion. Unlike Dolce's thoughts, it wasn't a trivial mission. Anxiety and fear filled Dolce as he was hit by Grid's black flames and his health fell to the bottom.

'Can they endure it?'

Would the black magicians and Yatan's Servants struggling with the enemy in the Vatican be able to cope with this enemy? Yatan's Servants were strong, but Rebecca's Daughters were present at the Vatican. Dolce judged that those Yatan's Servants on the battlefield wouldn't be able to go against this variable called Grid.

"S...top!" Just before his death, Dolce used the danger flare that he never thought would be required. He hadn't been able to use magic against the intruder, but it was significant that he endured a blow and managed to send the signal flare. What would happen if he tried to shoot black magic instead? It would be useless though since he couldn't stop Grid anyway. Sending the signal flare was a wiser decision.

Dolce smiled with satisfaction at his own judgment and turned to gray. The people who would replace him appeared.

"They are nobodies."

The black magicians and black knights, who were scattered around the foothills, ran when they saw the signal. Like Dolce, the first thing they did was attack the intruder with magic. Normally, after simultaneously casting different curses, they would thoroughly neutralize the target. Then the black knights would finish off the target with their sword. It was a simple and effective combination.

"It didn't work?"

However, the black magic didn't have an effect? The black magicians were astonished at the black-haired man who resisted all types of black magic and hurriedly shouted, "Not yet...! Wait!"

Alas, it was too late. The black knights had already moved. They remembered the combined attack which they had practiced countless times and flew toward the target the moment the curses were released. Six sharp swords filled with corrupted sword energy flooded toward the man in black. The black knights naturally thought that their swords would hit him.

"...!"

Yet the man moved at a speed that was difficult to follow with their eyes and avoided the attacks. Then he drew a circle with his sword and cut all the black knights around him.

"Cough...!"

Unlike the Rebecca Church, it was hard for the Yatan Church to foster knights. Divine magic had defensive spells which increased the physical ability of the caster in the initial stage, whereas early black magic often reduced physical abilities. Compared to the paladins, the black knights had low defense and high attack power, but having high attack power was meaningless if the attacks couldn't hit the target.

One sword strike, a second sword strike...

The black knights died every time Grid swung his Enlightenment Sword. As the black magicians watched their colleagues suffer greatly, they felt extremely fearful and stood still like stone statues.

"Wave." Grid released a sword technique the moment Blackening and Quick Movements ended. Black waves of energy poured out in all directions, destroying the black magicians, the trees, and the rocks. Grid cleared the surrounding area and finally glimpsed the Vatican.

"Irene!! Lord...!"

'Please be safe.'

Grid summoned Overgeared Corn and rushed forward aggressively.

Damian's shield and armor endured the fists that were striking it continuously, but the symbols of the pope—the silver armor and large shield—were being crushed. Hill's fists, that flew at a rate of 12 times per second, were definitely fast and powerful. Pope Damian was almost like a cockroach with his defense magic, buff magic, and healing magic. He had yet to die despite Hill hitting him with his attack of 12 fists per second for a few minutes.

"Persistent bastard!" Hill gritted his teeth. Damian still had skills to use, but inwardly, he wasn't feeling very good about this. Honestly, Damian was frustrated.

'Is it a skill?'

It was difficult to see the fists that Hill was wielding as a basic attack. Whenever he swung his fists, he entered a super-armored state which resisted CC. Hill punched 12 times per second, then there was a one-second gap.

'No matter how I think about it, it seems like a skill.'

Damian raised his shield the moment the punches came flying. As he took two steps back to offset the shockwave delivered through the shield, he was convinced Hill's attack was a skill.

'The moment it activates, super-armor is triggered. The skill will hit 12 times, then there is a cooldown of one second...!'

It could be called a fraudulent skill. Damian speculated that Hill had the greatest attack strength amongst Yatan's Servants.

'There is only one attack pattern, and it is very simple but...'

It wasn't a form of attack that Damian could cope with. 12 fists were swung per second unconditionally, and they weren't easy to defend or fight back against as the timing to counterattack was only a one-

second gap. Unfortunately for Pope Damian, he didn't have a skill which dealt powerful damage in one blow. He lacked attack power in exchange for a perfect balance and a large number of wide-area skills. So, it was impossible for Damian to knock down Hill during the one-second gap.

'The situation is bad. This can't continue.'

Damian couldn't be tied up by Hill forever. If he couldn't defeat Hill, then it was better for him to help his allies or kill the black magicians. However, who could deal with Hill except for him? Rebecca's Daughters and the Red Knights were engaged in battle with the other Yatan's Servants.

'If I can't tie up Hill, my allies will be slaughtered...'

In the end, would he have to keep fighting Hill? Despite being unable to hurt Hill, would Damian have to keep defending while watching his allies repel the enemies?

'No! It isn't a situation where I can rely on anyone else!'

Damian couldn't ignore that the Overgeared forces protecting Queen Irene and Prince Lord were exhausted. Unlike the Red Knights, the Overgeared troops had fought the enemies from the beginning and reached their limits. They were in great danger while Damian was still tying up Hill, which meant Irene and Lord could die. In the end, Damian had to choose. He had to deal with Hill alone, but it didn't necessarily have to take a long time.

'I will try it.'

Damian recalled the combat method that Grid had shown during the National Competition. He had hit harder in return for every hit received. That's right. Damian planned to fight back instead of defending against Hill's 12 punches.

'My attack power is weaker, but I have to try.'

He would be hit by Hill, then he would strike back. Damian adopted this new combat style straight away, swinging his shield instead of blocking the flying fists with spells or his shield.

"Puhahat! Stupid fool!" Hill laughed when he read Damian's intentions. Damian could only swing his sword 2-3 times per second, while Hill could punch 12 times per second.

"Two or three hits in comparison to 12 hits...? What does that mean? Puhahat!"

Damian was using a heal? It was futile though as Hill had been hiding a hidden card!

"Strike harder! Adadadada!"

Hill had an attack power buff. His fists suddenly turned red, and he started to deal twice the damage to Damian. Damian's healing skills couldn't keep up. "Kuk...!"

"Teacher Damian!"

"Your Holiness!"

It was a great crisis! The Rebecca members and royalty turned pale when they saw Pope Damian start to be pushed. In particular, Lord was filled with deep frustration. "I...! I wish I was an adult!"

Then he would've easily saved his mother from the crisis and would've helped Damian. When would he become an adult? Lord clenched his small fists and tears filled his eyes.

"Pagma's Swordsmanship." A man dropped in through the broken ceiling of the banquet hall.

His target, Hill, scoffed, "Who is this bastard? Do you want to taste my fist too?"

Hill entered the super-armored state and aimed one, two, three... twelve fists at the man. His fists, which couldn't be followed by eyes, aimed at the man's face, chest, and sides. It happened in just one second.

In that one second, the man...

"Link."

He cut Hill 30 times per second in a much stronger manner!

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During the time when he had been waiting for Sticks to recover his mana, when he couldn't teleport straight to the Vatican, when he faced the barrier surrounding the Vatican, and when his ankles were caught by successive enemies... Grid had inwardly believed that there was no need to fret.

He had believed that Irene and Lord were safe. After all, Damian and Isabel were in the Vatican. Grid knew they would watch over his wife and son, and so he calmed his heart. Yes, Damian and Isabel were a great help to Grid just by existing. If it wasn't for them, Grid could never be so calm. It might've taken him more time to get to the Vatican due to nervousness and a blurred judgment.

"Fortunately, I made it on time." Grid landed on the ground after exchanging attacks with Yatan's Seventh Servant Hill, then he saw Irene and Lord. Although they were both mentally and physically exhausted, they were mostly unharmed. There were no injuries on their bodies.

"It is lucky. It is really lucky..." Relieved, a bright smile appeared on Grid's face. It was an excellent smile. The first people to see Grid were so pure that they misinterpreted him as an angel.

"Your Majesty!"

"Father!"

Irene's and Lord's eyes turned red as they welcomed Grid. The husband and father who had just appeared in a desperate crisis seemed like the world's greatest hero to them. They weren't mistaken. The Grid before them was indeed a hero of heroes.

[You have discovered a strong person of this era!]

[You have discovered a strong person of this era!]

[You have discovered a strong...]

The purple-red aura around Grid thickened rapidly. Rebecca's Daughters, Yatan's Servants, 2nd Imperial Prince Dulandal, and the solo number knights all provoked the Hero King's fighting energy.

"Everybody..." Grid looked at the young knights while the fighting energy surrounded him. The knights were so injured that it was hard to find any part of them that was unscathed. Yet they were still

surrounded around Irene and Lord, even as the swords in their hands trembled. Grid noticed how they had received all types of injuries and had been hit by many curses in their fierce battle to protect their masters.

“Thank you. I really thank you,” he said to Kasim, Chucksley, and the young knights. Irene and Lord were safe because they had fought with all their strength. Grid thanked them before looking at Hill who was getting up. Hill’s health gauge had fallen to 9/10th after being hit by Pagma’s Swordsmanship, Link. On the other hand, Grid lost 9,600 health, and his health gauge was less than 9/10th.

Damian confirmed their health statuses and shouted, “Grid, even you will find it hard to face him!”

In the process of dealing with Hill, Damian estimated that Hill had an approximate health of 50 million. Furthermore, his attack power was at least 1.6 times higher than Damian’s while his defense was only slightly lower than Damian’s. Grid’s attack power and defense might be two times higher than Damian’s, but it wouldn’t make a big difference to Hill. Basically, Grid was at a disadvantage in facing Hill.

“He is a monster who can use his skill without any restrictions! You should avoid a frontal fight!”

Hill’s skill of 12 punches per second could be used continuously while Pagma’s Swordsmanship had a long cooldown time. Hence, Damian judged that no player could win in a one-on-one match against Hill, including Grid. Grid listened closely to Damian’s words.

“He is strong. He has high defense and attack power.”

Grid lost 800 health every time he was hit by Hill’s fist. If all 12 punches hit him, he would lose 9,600 health. Additionally, Hill could unleash the 12 punches every second. Hill’s attack power was threatening even when taking into consideration the healing power of Doran’s Ring, the blood-sucking ability of Elfin Stone’s Ring, Tiramet’s Power, and the health restoration and shield creation of the First King Title.

‘This guy is on a different level from Dark Bus.’

Grid had experience with shattering Yatan’s Servants several times in the past few years, so he could compare the current Yatan’s Servants with the previous ones in a more objective manner than anyone else. This meant he was forced to evaluate Hill highly.

‘I would’ve been defeated if we had met at the time of the National Competition.’

Yes, Hill was really strong. It wasn’t unusual that a skilled player like Damian was driven to the defensive.

“Item Combination.”

It was why Grid revealed his power right at the beginning.

[Belial’s Staff and the Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires will be combined!]

Grid made a judgment. If he activated things like the flames emission, the illusions, the red lightning bolt, the black flames, and so on, it would be counted as using magic. This meant a shield that absorbed 5,000 health would be created. The combination of the sword and staff was the only means to resist Hill’s overwhelming attack power.

“A spear?” From Hill’s perspective, an unidentified enemy had suddenly appeared. Hill slightly shrank back at the sight of the black-haired man with a beautiful crown on his head. The swordsman who could swing a sword faster than Hill’s fists abandoned the sword and armed himself with a spear.

In spite of that, Hill’s confusion only lasted for a moment. He quickly scoffed inwardly, ‘He must be trying to maximize his strength because it is hard to deal me a big blow no matter how hard he swings the sword.’

It was stupid. Didn’t the enemy know it was useless regardless of whether it was a big blow or many blows? Among Yatan’s Servants, Hill was the strongest physically. While swinging his fist, he shouted, “You can’t be just quick or strong! In order to win against me, you need a powerful attack that can penetrate my defense faster than I move! Kuhahahat!”

Hill jumped forward energetically. His face, chest, and rounded belly seemed ridiculous at first, but no one could laugh at him. Everyone shrank back at the presence of the powerful man who had already dominated Pope Damian.

“Danger!” Lord’s worried voice echoed through the banquet hall at the sight of his father in a crisis.

“...!” Hearing the distant scream of a boy, Agnus got up from where he was fighting outside the banquet hall with Lich Mumud. He had to defeat the enemy in front of him to protect the woman and child! Silvenas’ fists struck the jaws of the shaking Agnus. Agnus spat out blood, and his chest was exposed without any defenses. Silvenas’ sword cut at his chest.

“Kuk...!”

“What are you—? Why do you care about other people when you are dying? Why protect the enemy in the first place? Are you crazy?”

Yatan’s Servants were wicked people. The people who aimed at the destruction of the world and the fall of humanity ultimately couldn’t be good. From a general point of view, Yatan’s Servants were crazy. Yet even they thought that Agnus was a madman. Grasping the wound on his chest, Agnus giggled, “Is it possible to maintain my mind in a world with crazy people like you? Huh~? Kik...! Kilikik!”

Agnus himself admitted that he was crazy. He had gone insane the night his lover experienced that terrible pain.

“Mumud!” Agnus cried out to Lich Mumud, who was running out of mana. “Save the queen and the prince!”

“...?” Lich Mumud hesitated. It was a reaction that showed he hadn’t expected his master to give an order to protect others.

Agnus urged him with bloody eyes, “Get out of here quickly!”

“...”

The highest level undead lich was able to ‘think.’ They had emotions and will. However, duty was more important than personal feelings and will. From the day he had been dominated by Agnus until today, Lich Mumud had completed many undesired missions. He had harmed countless people under his

master's commands, causing Mumud to feel like he was in hell. This time was an exception. His master's command coincided with his will.

Clack...Clack clack... Lich Mumud stepped toward the banquet hall, wielding his magic power. Silvenas tried to stop him.

"Where are you going?" Agnus blocked Silvenas' way. Silvenas turned her sword on the guy who would die soon and had no more mana.

"You crazy guy!" Silvenas' sword pierced Agnus' abdomen. She thought that Agnus would die like this because he had already lost his immortality.

"Kik...! Kikikik!" Strangely, Agnus didn't die, yet the abdomen pierced by Silvenas' sword didn't heal. Agnus' body was clearly in tatters. No health could be felt from him. So how was he still alive? Silvenas took a step back out of confusion and belatedly realized that Agnus was on the boundary between life and death right now.

"Lich Transformation? You even consumed your soul for the sake of protecting others?!"

"Kik...! Kikikik!"

Death knights and demons appeared around Agnus, who recovered some of his magic power after becoming a lich. Silvenas felt a threat to her life.

'What is this...?!' Yatan's Third Servant Aliburn was astonished by the man who had suddenly entered the battlefield. It was because he knew the identity of the man with the purple-red aura.

'Hero King!'

The legend of Sword Saint and Hero King Muller having sealed several great demons was famous. The Hero King, Demon Slayer, and Rebecca's Daughters were the greatest enemies for the Yatan Church and the great demons. The Hero King was now showing up at this timing...? Did Rebecca intervene?

'...No, this is the best chance!' A smile appeared on Aliburn's face as he stopped shrinking back. Hill was Dark Bus' successor and the teacher of former Yatan's Servants. Unlike the previous servants who had been killed due to being vulnerable in close combat, Hill was someone who specialized in individual combat power. It was impossible to defeat him in a one-on-one match.

'Hill was specifically chosen by Amoract. He has a secret weapon that can destroy the Hero King.'

Aliburn's expectations soared into the sky. He saw this as a genius opportunity God Yatan created. It was a chance to wipe out the Rebecca Church and the Hero King at the same time!

"Take this punch!" The shining Hill aimed 12 punches toward the Hero King. The 25th great demon, Dantalian, had given 'Fighting Knowledge' to Hill. When it evolved, Hill gained the power to break the sky. Just like the pope, Aliburn judged that the Hero King would soon be forced on the defensive and forced to his knees. However, the result was different from Aliburn's expectations.

“What?” Aliburn’s eyes shook as he watched the battle. Every time the Hero King swung his spear, lightning and flames struck. Hill was turned to rags while the Hero King was surrounded by shields on all sides. The two of them exchanged attacks, but Hill was the only one damaged while the Hero King’s body was still intact.

“What is this?”

Wasn’t this above the legendary Muller? Aliburn’s face paled.

“Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle!”

A myth, myth, and myth...

The myth rated Belial’s Staff and Enlightenment Sword, which were combined using a god’s blessing, far exceeded the category of a legend. This was the moment when the Yatan Church’s Hill was sentenced to death.

[You have killed Yatan’s Seventh Servant, Hill.]

[Dantalian’s Knowledge Fragment has been obtained.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]