

## With The Gods 541

Chapter 541

C17

"What's your name?"

With an expressionless face, he spun the brush with his fingers.

The soldier, who was writing the participant list for the Great Celestial War, examined the new participant in front of him from head to toe.

"He has a pleasant face."

A man with uncommon black hair. His face seemed familiar, but not recalling who he is, it appears he's not that important.

He seems to be a low-level Player, probably active in a small Guild on the border.

"Kim Yu..."

The participant, who had paused for a moment, continued speaking.

"I am Kim YuHun."

"Kim YuHun?"

Thinking it's a peculiar name, the soldier noted the name on the list.

"Alright. The tournament starts tomorrow at noon, so don't be late."

"Yes."

Observing the man turning around, the soldier tilted his head in puzzlement.

Thinking once again that he had seen him somewhere.

-----

"So, the Great Celestial War."

YuWon, who had just written his name, looked at the tournament poster and thought.

'The Celestial Realm has changed a lot too.'

That arrogant Celestial Realm has truly changed. There were two turning points in its rapid transformation.

One was the death of the Jade Emperor. And the second was the war against the Outers ten years ago.

Going through that experience, Celestial Realm sought a change.

YuWon believed that Lee Rangjin would be the one to do it excellently, but he did not expect it to be this way.

The Great Celestial War was a shame that Celestial Realm wanted to erase, and moreover, the position obtained by winning was extraordinary.

"The position of General Chief..."

General Chief.

Undoubtedly, it was a very symbolic position in Celestial Realm alongside that of the Emperor.

The General Chief was a position with formidable power, able to command a thousand Celestial Generals and lead a million Celestial Soldiers.

Moreover...

It was also similar to the position of Lee Rangjin, who could be said to be the current leader of Celestial Realm.

'In the end, he decided to accept it.'

Ten years.

It was not a short time.

It was an absurdly long time to reflect on a single thing.

Lee Rangjin-gun.

For him to resign from the position of General Chief meant that he had decided to ascend to the throne of the next Emperor.

The Player Kit that YuWon had in his pocket vibrated.

It was a message from Son OhGong.

[Son OhGong: Having fun by yourself?]

It was a message he had sent upon learning that YuWon would participate in the Great Celestial War.

Being someone who loved to fight, it was natural for him to want to participate, but YuWon had come here alone, separated from Son OhGong.

"What do you mean by going back to the battlefield?"

"I'm going to create a new name."

"A name?"

"Not Kim YuWon, but a different name."

To return to the battlefield, he first had to make his name known.

However, he couldn't use the name "Kim YuWon."

If he used that name, he risked being forgotten once again in people's minds and going back to square one.

So...

"How about Kim YuHun?"

He needed a new name, similar but different.

Of course, someday everyone would remember the name Kim YuWon.

However, it was unknown when or who would remember it.

"It's a bit strange."

"Two of the letters are the same."

"And how will you make your name known?"

"I did some research on the way here."

He took out his Player Kit and showed Son OhGong the screen.

Son OhGong's eyebrows furrowed upon seeing the words "Great Celestial War."

"Are you planning another war?"

The Great Celestial War was a dark story that even Celestial Realm preferred to forget, but it was an even more sensitive word for Son OhGong.

"After all, unlike Celestial Realm, which registered as the winner, Son OhGong was known as the loser in that war."

"Look closely. It's not that."

"Then what is it?"

"It's a new tournament being organized in Celestial Realm. It's like the Murim Tournament."

"A tournament?"

His face wrinkled even more. Son OhGong, who had now even taken out his Ru Yi Bang, muttered with narrowed eyes:

"These damn people, do they dare to name a tournament like that?"

"Shouldn't you be happy?"

"Happy about what?"

"The fact that Celestial Realm uses that name for the tournament means they are proud of their history of defeating you. In a way, it's like they acknowledge you."

YuWon calmed him gently, thinking that Son OhGong might go straight to Celestial Realm and wield his Ru Yi Bang if left like this.

Son OhGong, who had been growling, seemed to calm down and nodded.

"Anyway, so? Are you going to participate in that tournament?"

"Yes. They said anyone can participate, regardless of their rank or if they are a player."

"It seems like a lot of people will gather if Celestial Realm organizes it. But can you really go to such an impromptu tournament and suddenly become famous?"

"It's not an impromptu tournament."

"What kind of amazing people would participate in a tournament held for the first time?"

"The first-place prize is five million points and the position of General Chief."

"...General Chief?"

Even a fool like Son OhGong knew how important the position of General Chief was.

Both now and in the past, there had only been one person who held the position of General Chief in Celestial Realm.

Lee Rangjin-gun.

Apart from the Battle God and the Jade Emperor, he was the strongest warrior in Celestial Realm and one of the few powerhouses acknowledged by The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal.

"Why that guy?"

"He probably plans to ascend to the Jade Emperor's throne. Since there's no suitable successor."

"Isn't Taishang Laojun (Lao Tze) there?"

"That guy retired a long time ago. Wouldn't it be strange to give the Jade Emperor's throne to a High-Ranker who hasn't been active for over five thousand years?"

Taishang Laojun.

He was a High-Ranker in Celestial Realm whose ranking was comparable to Lee Rangjin. However, his relatively low ranking was solely because he had been inactive for too long, but his real strength was said to be comparable to the Jade Emperor.

"He's doing something that doesn't suit him."

"It's Lee Rangjin's determination. Not as the General Chief protecting Celestial Realm, but as the king who will now rule Celestial Realm."

"Will that guy get along with the title of Jade Emperor?"

"The position shapes the person, or the person changes the position. Either way, they'll manage. You don't have to worry about that. The important thing is that the position of General Chief is at stake as a prize for that Great Tournament."

The position of General Chief was one of the top three positions in Celestial Realm.

Indeed, it was the position with the next highest power and authority after the Jade Emperor, excluding Taishang Laojun, who was practically absent.

Many Rankers coveted the position of General Chief.

"It doesn't matter if I don't get the position of General Chief. With that prize at stake, the winner of the Great Celestial War will gain fame comparable to that of the General Chief."

That was what YuWon sought.

An honor comparable to that of the General Chief.

Power spoken in the streets comes from honor and strength.

And YuWon needed to have that power now.

"It's a bit strange."

"What?"

"It's unlike you. The guy who always made sure of things before acting seems too eager."

"You're the one who's a bit strange."

"Me? Why?"

"It's unlike you to be so insightful."

Whoosh.

The Ru Yi Bang flew towards him, but YuWon dodged the attack without flinching.

"Are you in such a hurry?"

"There are reasons for it."

"Reasons for it?"

These were words with a profound meaning. It seemed like he had other goals besides just participating in the tournament and winning.

Son OhGong, with his usual quirk, scratched his head and asked:

"You said you knew something, right? About the Administrators."

"Yes."

Although they were Azathoth's memories, YuWon knew them clearly.

That's why Son OhGong said it wasn't like him, but he could say it with confidence.

Now was the time to move quickly.

Whoosh.

The Player Kit rang again. Another message from Son OhGong had arrived.

[Son OhGong: Having fun?]

There was no need to respond to that message.

It wasn't possible that he was having fun.

The tournament would be boring.

Especially...

'He's probably having much more fun.'

-----

The day of the Great Celestial War dawned.

In the midst of the chaos reigning in the Tower after Vishnu's death.

The atmosphere on Floor 50 seemed oblivious to this complex matter and was ablaze.

"It's an incredible scale."

"They said they expanded the Celestial Colosseum several times."

"All this area within the walls is the tournament stadium?"

A gigantic screen had been set up in the sky for spectators who couldn't enter the stadium.

The stadium size was five times larger than Asgard's Colosseum, large enough to wage a war inside.

Inside the stadium, formed by tall walls like a colosseum.

Among hundreds of thousands of spectators, the participants of the first group of seeds ascended the stage.

"There are many familiar faces."

"And there are many participants."

Participants kept a considerable distance from each other.

In a situation where it was unknown when they would become enemies once the battle started...

It was necessary to maintain a certain distance to avoid falling victim to a surprise attack.

Ding.

At that moment...

Along with the familiar sound indicating the arrival of a message on the Player Kit, a number appeared in the sky over the stadium.

[1071 / 1071]

This was the number of participants in the first group.

[Now the rules will be announced.]

Participants exclaimed at the message that resonated in their heads.

"Have they already reached the point where the System has to intervene?"

"It seems Celestial Realm is really formidable. If the System is already intervening in the first tournament."

There were two cases in which the System intervened.

The first was artificial intervention by an Administrator.

In this case, a large amount of time and points were required. Moving the Administrators and their Envoys required a considerable amount of points.

And the second case was when a large-scale "Event" occurred that the Tower needed to control.

The Tower had its own will.

An infinite and grand power that supported a hundred worlds.

That will occasionally manifested itself to maintain a certain order.

And although the reasons could be different, both cases had a common form.

When the System intervened, the scenario inevitably took the form of a "trial."

[Of the 1071 participants, only 8 will be able to advance to the next Trial.]

[You will be eliminated from the Trial if you faint or die.]

[If you declare "abandonment," you will be teleported out of the stadium automatically.]

[There are no rules in this Trial.]

[Let the battle begin.]

Ding!

With a sound similar to a bell ringing.

The participants understood the first condition to overcome this Trial.

No rules.

That meant...

'Eight people will form a team.'

It was not necessary to overcome this Trial alone.

"Who wants to team up with me...?"

"It's not necessary."

Clang!

A clear sound resonated.

The participants' gazes turned to the ground from where the sound came.

Beautiful and shining gold coins were rolling on the ground.

And the one responsible for dropping them, none other than.

'I'm going to overcome this Trial alone.'

With a truly arrogant expression and tone of voice, he was surrounded by a large number of participants on his left and right.

Chapter 542

Side Story 18

Pluto.

A short man with a long white and stiff beard, he was a Ranker who had barely climbed the Tower to the top.

Of course, being a Ranker already demonstrated some talent, but in the world of Rankers, he was just an ordinary character with nothing special.

However, his real talent was in a completely different place.

"Strength cannot be quantified by numbers alone."

He found his strength elsewhere.

"The same goes for points, can't they be quantified?"

From that moment, Pluto began accumulating money like crazy.

Leaning on Olympus, he monopolized the supply of food from various Floors.

Major foods like rice, wheat, and corn fell into his hands.

In this way, by monopolizing distribution, it didn't take long before he amassed an exorbitant amount of points.

Starting his meteoric ascent, he soon ranked among the High-Rankers, and Olympus, now dependent on him for food supply, attempted to intervene.

But.

"I prefer to leave Olympus."

Pluto, as if he no longer needed their support, left Olympus on his own.

Even after that, he continued expanding his business empire.

The richer he became, the higher his Ranking climbed.

Ranking 103.

With the massive amount of points he accumulated, he became a High-Ranker on the verge of reaching a double-digit ranking.

"Why is Pluto here?"

"That guy who wouldn't even look twice if it wasn't something that made him money..."

"Is he coveting the prize?"

"5 million points are money for that guy?"

Of course, 5 million points were a considerable amount, but for Pluto, it was an insignificant amount, no more and no less.

So, the reason Pluto participated in this tournament was...

"Is he coveting the position of General Chief?"

About a hundred participants surrounded Pluto.

For anyone looking at them, it was evident they were protecting Pluto and harassing the other participants.

Each of them was a warrior with the strength of a Ranker.

It was impossible to imagine how many points would be needed to have them all under his control as lackeys.

"Everyone, leave the competition. If you do, nothing will happen to you."

Faced with Pluto's intimidation, someone stepped forward decisively.

"Even if you climb like that, you'll never win."

An admirable boldness even in front of a hundred Rankers.

Creating dozens of Mana Spheres around him, he demonstrated his willingness to fight at any moment. (Note: Previously called: Mana Cannon)

"I've seen that guy somewhere..."

"Lee Seong Yun?"



"It's Lee Seong Yun!"

"A companion of Hargan?"

Participants who recognized the man exclaimed.

Lee Seong-Yun.

A genius who ascended the Tower alongside Hargan, recognized as one of the fastest climbers in history among Rankers.

He was known for his artistic mastery of Mana Spheres.

"I've heard of Lee Seong Yun. Although his name isn't as famous as Hargan's."

Pluto didn't flinch even at the appearance of Lee Seong Yun.

After all, this Great Celestial War was a battlefield for Rankers aspiring to the position of General Chief of the Celestial Realm.

It wasn't surprising that a Ranker like Lee Seong Yun appeared, and even if he were a higher Ranker, it wouldn't be unusual.

Instead, he felt disappointed.

"But I don't understand why they're so surprised. Seeing how amazed they are at a kid like that, I can see the level of this seed."

A mocking smile formed on Pluto's lips. His gaze toward the participants surrounding him, including Lee Seong Yun, was no different from the one given to a beast or an insect.

"No wonder. Most of the talented participants are on that side."

"You didn't come to this side either?"

"I flatly refused. I said I didn't need more companions."

"How foolish."

"Now that I think about it, I haven't heard the reason."

"Reason?"

"Why are you still recruiting unnecessary companions? What benefit do you get from winning here?"

Lee Seong Yun's doubt was valid.

After all, it was Pluto who participated in an event without a monetary reward.

"It's about the Ranking."

"Ranking?"

"I am the richest in this Tower. Even the residents of the first floor know it."

Lee Seong Yun nodded.

His wealth was recognized by everyone, to the point where they called him "Pluto's pocket" for his inexhaustible wealth.

"It all started after that. My Ranking stopped rising. No matter how many points I accumulated or how much richer I became, my ranking remained stagnant."

Ranking.

That word shook the foundations of the public image held for Pluto until now.

"What I need now isn't points. It's greater honor, status. And the title of General Chief of Celestial Realm, isn't that a pretty good title?"

What he really sought wasn't points or gold coins. What Pluto craved was the greatest value that all Tower Rankers pursued:

The Ranking.

He had amassed wealth solely because it was the only way to climb the Ranking.

Moreover, this Trial was guaranteed by the System.

Even Celestial Realm couldn't revoke the reward of an already established Trial.

Whether they liked it or not, Celestial Realm would have no choice but to hand over the position of General Chief to the winner.

"Just by obtaining the position of General Chief, my ranking will definitely increase. Celestial Realm, in need of my wealth, won't be able to get rid of me easily either."

Use money to get the position of General Chief and then use that position to climb the Ranking.

It was a proposal that shook the foundations of the Tournament.

After all, the Tournament organized by Celestial Realm sought only one thing: strength.

"It's a good strategy."

"Do you trust that arrogant Olympus behind you?"

"I only trust my own ability."

Whoosh.

The number of Mana Spheres increased.

Dozens, approaching a hundred.

In terms of numbers alone, his ability to control mana brought him close to a High-Ranker.

In the face of Lee Seong Yun's ability, a reddish aura shone in Pluto's eyes.

"Let's see that great ability of yours."

With a gesture of Pluto's hand, the participants he had hired began to move.

Unlike before, the look he directed at Lee Seong Yun was pure fierceness.

Relying on an insignificant talent...

Lee Seong Yun.

He was known as Hargan's companion and a new member of Olympus.

However, he was not a mere opportunist relying on his connections, as Pluto had disdainfully insinuated. Lee Seong Yun's ability to control mana was said to surpass even that of Hargan. His capacity to freely control over a hundred Mana Spheres was almost divine, and in time, he could become one of the most important High-Rankers.

Ironically, that dazzling talent was what blinded Pluto.

'That talent will devour you.'

The talented.

They were Pluto's greatest enemies.

Kiuuuuut-.

Along with a sharp flash, dozens of weapons and abilities flew towards Lee Seong Yun.

Attacks flying at irregular speeds and directions.

The moment Lee Seong Yun's eyes scanned the surroundings, a Mana Sphere flew towards him.

Kwa kwa kwa kwaang-!

Abilities and participants were quickly intercepted.

Seeing how Lee Seong Yun single-handedly stopped the participants hired by Pluto, other participants were stirred.

"Could we... try it?"

"If it weren't for that Ranker over there..."

Lee Seong Yun's ability to face multiple opponents was considerable.

Although the power of each Mana Sphere was nothing extraordinary, the ability to control them was almost divine.

A skill optimized to confront a large number of opponents of medium skill.

The brief moment created by Lee Seong Yun ignited hope in the hearts of participants on the opposite side of Pluto.

"We can do it!"

"There are many more of us! Right?"

"Damn it! Yes, let's just get into the top 8."

"First, let's eliminate those guys."

Participants who didn't give up joined Lee Seong Yun.

Lee Seong Yun positioned himself at the front to block Pluto's participants, while other participants dealt with enemies approaching Lee Seong Yun.

"They are more resilient than I thought."

At that moment...

After several minutes of tense battle, Pluto looked at the other participants surrounding him.

"Could you step forward?"

The five participants escorting Pluto.

One of them nodded and replied.

"Yes."

"Thank you. I'll give you a good bonus."

"Just make sure that Elixir is fine. If it's not, you'll be the first to get a bullet in the head."

"Of course. Don't worry."

Jeobak-.

A man with long hair stepped forward with a warning.

"Being able to hire that guy was a stroke of luck."

Seeing him pull out the bow, Pluto sneered.

'Victory is mine. Poor idiots.'

-----

Step-.

Strangely conspicuous steps. In this chaotic battlefield, they seemed completely out of place.

He felt relaxed.

And that was a greater threat to Lee Seong Yun than anything else.

"Who are you?"

"-Lee Ye."

The man pulled an arrow from his quiver on his back and introduced himself.

"My name is Lee Ye."

"...Lee Ye?"

Lee Seong Yun's eyes widened.

Lee Ye.

Any self-respecting Ranker had heard of him.

A Ranker without a Guild, operating alone and unaffiliated with anyone.

Nevertheless, he maintained a two-digit ranking, albeit right on the edge, at position 99.

"Why someone like you...?"

"I won't tell you twice..."

Geureuk, geureuk, geureuk-.

Lee Ye's bowstring slowly tightened.

"I also have my pride."

The arrowhead aimed at Lee Seong Yun's throat.

"So surrender. I don't want to trample on a sprout that's beginning to grow."

"I will if you go up. You're one of the candidates who can win this tournament."

Lee Ye was undoubtedly a Ranker with the potential to become the General Chief.

Even without participating much, he maintained a high ranking at position 99.

If he joined Celestial Realm and started participating actively, his ranking would undoubtedly rise dozens of positions in the blink of an eye.

However...

"Shoot."

Since he was on Pluto's side, Lee Seong Yun couldn't back down.

"At the same time, I'll also aim at the fat pig behind you."

"What a shame."

"What do you mean?"

"That a pig like that and a diamond like you die together."

Lee Ye smiled bitterly.

"But you'll understand, right? Because of my circumstances, I can't let that pig die."

Lee Ye's bowstring gradually loosened.

In the slowly flowing time.

Lee Seong Yun's eyes focused solely on Pluto, who was behind him.

'I'm not going to die.'

It was Pluto who was manipulating Lee Ye.

If he managed to eliminate that guy, the situation could change.

Dodge Lee Ye's arrow and attack Pluto.

Lee Seong Yun concentrated a large number of Mana Spheres at a single point for that purpose.

"The moment you shoot the arrow."

Kiuuuuut-.

"I will also aim at his neck."

At the moment the intricately interwoven Mana Spheres emitted a thunderous sound...

Tic-.

Lee Ye's arrow was released with a surprisingly small sound.

Very different from what was expected.

"...Eh?"

From Lee Seong Yun's mouth, who couldn't react to the approaching arrow, came a voice of bewilderment.

Lee Ye's arrow was known to pierce mountains and cross the moon and sun in the sky.

Who would have imagined it would fly with such a weak sound?

It was already too late to move the Mana Spheres concentrated in a single point.

The arrow flew straight towards Lee Seong Yun's throat.

And at that moment...

"You have grown a lot."

Tic-.

Shuaa-.

A sword that interposed itself in Lee Seong Yun's field of vision cut Lee Ye's arrow in half.

Chapter 543

C19

Something incredible happened.

Tick, tock...

The two split arrows fell to the ground powerless.

A brief silence seized the place.

A black-haired man entered Lee Sung Yun's field of vision.

His appearance seemed familiar.

A Korean?

An improbable thought crossed his mind.

The world Lee Sung Yun came from, Earth.

There were many Players who had entered the Tower from there, but only a few had managed to climb to the 50th floor.

And yet, a player from Earth, even a Korean, was participating in this Great Celestial War.

"Who are you-?"

"You're not ready to face a High-Ranker. You're not Hargan, after all."

Lee Sung Yun's eyes widened as he met YuWon's gaze after turning his head.

He was a genuine Korean. It became increasingly rare to find someone from his homeland the higher he climbed.

Although he would have liked to greet him out of joy, the situation was not right.

"This is not a situation where you should interfere. I don't know who you are, but this is a battle between Rankers."

Despite his participation in the Great Tournament proving some skill, in Lee Sung Yun's memory, he was the only Earth Ranker at the moment.

After all, it hadn't been much time since Earth Players had arrived at the Tower.

Despite Lee Sung Yun's warnings, YuWon did not withdraw.

Instead, he fixed his gaze on Lee Ye, who was at a distance.

Lee Ye.

With a complex expression and slightly trembling hands, he loaded the next arrow.

'He cut my arrow.'

If he had blocked it, he would have understood.

Those who couldn't dodge his arrows usually prepared to block them in advance.

If he had dodged it, he would have understood.

However, his original target was Lee Sung Yun, not the man in front of him, and this man had cleanly cut his arrow.

"...Who are you?"

Unlike Lee Sung Yun, Lee Ye saw something formidable in YuWon.

Among the nearly a thousand participants, Lee Ye had the illusion that only he and YuWon were there.

"Kim YuHun."

An unfamiliar name clumsily came out of his lips.

"I've never heard of you."

"You'll know from now on."

"You're arrogant, but you have the skill to back it up."

Lee Ye's arrowhead pointed upwards.

Lee Ye, known for piercing the sun by shooting into the sky.

The fact that he aimed at the sky was a clear sign that he was ready to start a serious battle.

"Do you want the Elixir?"

Lee Ye's eyes flickered at YuWon's words.

He slowly lowered the arm he had raised towards the sky and asked perplexedly.

"How do you know that?"

"No need to keep fighting. Anyway, the guy you were protecting can no longer be revived."

"What do you mean-?"

Lee Ye, who understood YuWon's words with a slight delay, turned quickly.

There, amidst the other participants, was Pluto, foaming at the mouth and lying on the ground.

When?

Judging by their expressions, the other participants also seemed unaware of when this had happened to Pluto.

"Now we're back to square one."

Swoosh.

YuWon turned to Lee Yeye and said:

"It's time to start the Trial."

-----

The first Trial, briefly halted by Pluto's elimination, began again.

Participants used their skills and wielded their weapons to eliminate each other.

Half of the participants who had been hired by Pluto surrendered on their own.

Their goal from the beginning was the points, not victory in this tournament.

However, some participants were the exception in this fight.

High-Rankers and Rankers close to High-Rankers, including Lee Ye and Lee Seong Yun.

They had been excluded as targets from the beginning.

But...

"I thought this would happen."

"Iyaaah-!"

Shukaak-.

Kkang-!

YuWon blocked the sword flying over his head with his hand and shook his head.

"It's a refreshing feeling."

Shwip-.

"...?"

The participant whose face was suddenly grabbed looked confused.

When had the distance closed?

Kwang-!

YuWon, who had slammed his opponent to the ground, looked around for his next enemy.



Even though he was just standing there, participants attacking him kept appearing.

'Looks easy.'

Look at Lee Ye.

There was no one around him.

As if there was a barrier around him, participants kept a constant distance from him.

He was the participant with the highest ranking in this first Trial and one of the candidates for victory.

And around Lee Seong Yun.

'It seems he can handle this to some extent.'

Peng, pepepeng-!

A team of several Rankers was attacking him. The four Rankers, who seemed to have affinity with each other, had a good combination.

However, Lee Seong Yun's control over the Mana Spheres was so high that he could easily block them.

"His skills are good enough to surpass his stats."

Suddenly, he realized how much time had passed in ten years.

'He learned well.'

A long time ago, YuWon had taught Lee Seong Yun, who had come with Hargan, for a short time.

Even back then, YuWon recognized Lee Seong Yun's talent.

In terms of talent and potential, Lee Seong Yun was not much different from YuWon.

However, for some reason, in the future timeline, that guy couldn't even pass the Tutorial.

'I'm curious.'

Seeing Lee Seong Yun become a Ranker, he felt curious about him.

He thought that if Lee Seong Yun had been alive in the future, the fight against the Outers would have been a bit easier.

It was then.

He realized why the next opponent didn't appear. Someone was approaching YuWon.

The most dangerous beast in this first Trial.

A dragon and tiger like no rabbit or fox could challenge.

Lee Ye.

'Finally, he moved.'

His eyes, half-hidden by his hair, looked at YuWon.

His gaze was fierce but not aggressive.

He was a bow user. If he had intended to fight YuWon from the beginning, there would have been no need to close the distance like this.

Swoosh, swoosh-.

On the other hand, participants were fleeing from him to maintain their distance.

Yuwon clicked his tongue as he saw them.

'They're afraid of their opponent and enter the archer's domain.'

That was why Lee Ye had approached YuWon.

It was to show that he had no intention of fighting.

Yuwon sheathed the sword he had in his hand again.

Lee Ye, who had seen the sword YuWon had been wielding until recently, opened his mouth.

"It looks like Kusanagi, huh?"

Yuwon was slightly surprised by Lee Ye's words as he observed the red sword sliding into the sheath.

He didn't expect Lee Ye to recognize Kusanagi.

"Where did you get it?"

"Do I really have to answer that?"

"...You're right."

There was a look in his eyes that indicated he had many questions.

Even though he had a matter to attend to, he didn't speak much.

It was easy to guess what intrigued him.

He was probably struck by the fact that YuWon had diverted his arrow.

And furthermore...

"Did you eliminate that guy even though you knew I wanted the Elixir because you were prepared to fight me?"

Partly, it was also because of the Elixir, an item he urgently needed.

Yuwon's answer would determine whether Lee Ye would reveal his murderous intent immediately.

After all, if YuWon had eliminated Pluto despite having no other way of obtaining the Elixir, that would mean he was interfering with Lee Ye.

However.

"I know how to obtain the Elixir."

Yuwon knew how to get what Lee Ye desired.

And it was something more valuable than what Pluto possessed.

"And it's not a diluted version, but the genuine one."

"...Really?"

"You'll figure out how to get it yourself. I only know the method."

"That's enough. If I have the method, I'll use any means necessary to get it. That's my business."

Lee Ye had only tried to obtain a diluted Elixir because it was extremely difficult to get.

A legendary medicine that cured all diseases, granted immunity to all poisons, and transformed an ordinary Ranker's body into one comparable to a High-Ranker.

Even for someone like Lee Ye, obtaining it was not an easy task.

"So, what's the method?"

"If I tell you, do you plan to give up and leave immediately?"

"Of course."

"Then wait a little longer. At least until this tournament is over."

"Why?"

"The tournament won't last much longer. You'll know when the time comes."

Lee Ye's expression changed drastically at YuWon's response.

The Elixir was an urgent matter for him. However, YuWon asked him to wait without even giving him a valid reason.

"I find it harder and harder to believe in you."

Swooshhh-

The mana emanating from Lee Ye began to consume the surroundings.

A sharp wind brushed against YuWon's cheek.

For an ordinary Ranker, that wind would have left a deep wound on his face.

Lee Ye narrowed his eyes fiercely, as if about to take up his bow again.

"Is this just a bluff to get through this moment? To pass the qualifying round?"

"Well...."

YuWon looked at the bow hanging on Lee Ye's back.

"I don't think resorting to such annoying lies is necessary."

"What?"

"If you don't believe me, there's nothing I can do."

It was a stubborn attitude. YuWon's words were equivalent to "catch me if you can."

It was as if he didn't care if Lee Ye shot him right there.

'I can't understand it.'

Where the hell did he get such confidence?

It was strange, even considering that he had diverted the arrow with the help of Kusanagi. The dynamic sight and speed to achieve that were purely YuWon's skill.

'It can't be.'

Although YuWon was a formidable opponent,

'Does he really think he can defeat me?'

From YuWon's attitude of not avoiding the fight, Lee Ye felt that.

Time passed.

Lee Ye watched YuWon closely, while the latter stood quietly in his place and looked around.

As time passed, participants fell one by one.

Seeing participants quickly diminishing, either by resigning or fainting, Lee Ye lifted his head.

[55 / 1071]

Suddenly, the atmosphere became quite silent.

'Now they're all looking at each other, huh?'

In a short time, not many participants were left in this group.

The mediocre ones had already been eliminated, and now only the real fighters remained.

Choosing only eight of them wouldn't be an easy task.

A brief state of calm seized the place.

The silence, a product of mutual observation, was broken by an unexpected figure.

"I can't take it anymore."

Lee Ye, who until now seemed uninterested in the competition, raised his bow again.

The bowstring tensed with force.

Other participants were surprised to see the arrowhead pointing to the sky.

"Why?"

"Didn't you say you weren't interested in the competition?"

Lee Ye's presence in this group was a real disaster.

The power difference between a High-Ranker with a two-digit ranking and ordinary Rankers was abysmal.

"Those who are not fit, withdraw immediately. Those who cannot stop this arrow have no right to move on to the next round."

Was it impatience?

Instead of pressuring YuWon, Lee Ye chose to finish this preliminary phase as soon as possible.

Swoosh~

The arrow began to swell, absorbing a large amount of Arcane Power.

"I hope at least more than eight survive."

Lee Ye's gaze, shooting the arrow into the sky, was directed towards where YuWon was.

Chapter 544

C20

Arrows were falling down. It was like it was raining. The sharp blue drops of Arcane Power pierced downward, cutting through solid armor and flesh.

--Save me!

--Run!

--I surrender! Get me out of here.

--Aaaaah!

Under the arrow rain falling like a storm, over the stadium where the sound disappeared, things resembling screams of horror spread.

An arrow shot by Lee Ye. The calamity he quickly created reduced the number of survivors in the first Trial.

And amid that...

'Those who survive are...'

Lee Ye, who shot the arrow, looked at the remaining number of survivors and their faces.

'That one survived too.'

Lee Seong Yun.

He was protected by a barrier created with mana, avoiding the arrow shower. Although he got one in the shoulder, that alone was impressive.

In the first place, such an extensive attack couldn't be easily avoided unless it was a High-Ranker.

And furthermore...

'As I thought.'

From the beginning, Lee Ye's attention was on one person.

'Is he unharmed?'

The player who had the lead on the Elixir, Kim YuHun.

'Even though I thought he was an unusual guy, it seems he doesn't have a single injury.'

He didn't think he would die. If he thought he would die, he would have stepped forward himself to save him.

Anyway, there was a chance that he had the lead on the Elixir.

But this was unexpected.

"Five remaining."

YuWon looked around, checking the number of remaining participants.

In this Tournament, where there should have been a total of eight, fewer than that came out.

A situation that could easily get complicated.

But Lee Ye's attention, who created that situation, was entirely elsewhere.

YuWon met the gaze of Lee Ye who was looking at him.

'Is it a destined encounter or a disaster...?'

Beeeeep-

A message announcing the end of the Trial.

At the same time, participants in the stadium began to disappear one by one.

'Maybe I'll find out after this tournament is over.'

-----

Competitions in the other groups weren't much different.

In each group, there were one or two strong High-Rank competitors. And thanks to their overwhelming skill differences, they eliminated participants, finally leaving eight survivors.

Chomp-

Casually cutting an apple, Lee Ye settled into the assigned sofa in the dressing room.

He was reviewing the screen with his rarely taken out Player Kit.

'Where the hell did he go?'

He was irritated.

Due to the interference of the guy whose name he had never heard, Pluto didn't pass the Trial, and there was no way to obtain the diluted Elixir.

And in reality, Kim YuHun, the guy who said he could get him the real Elixir, hadn't shown up since the preliminaries ended.

'He's not on the Ranking.'

Among the names of High-Rankers, the name Kim YuHun did not show up.

And not just among the High-Rankers.

No matter how much he searched the Ranking, he couldn't even find a name similar to Kim YuHun.

After searching the Ranking, the only thing he could find was the three-letter name, Lee Seong Yun, which was somewhat similar.

'There's no way to deceive the Administration Bureau.'

Lee Ye frowned.

'Did I make a mistake in my gut feeling?'

Administration Bureau of Rankings.

They have been in charge of determining the rankings of players and classifieds for a long time.

There were some minor problems, but no one complained too much about the rankings.

The rankings of the Administration Bureau of Rankings were so accurate, and rankings without apparent reason had some kind of hidden secret.

However, the Administration Bureau of Rankings did not mention the name Kim YuHun.

'...Should I think that I was deceived?'

What are the chances of getting clues about the Elixir from a Ranker whose name is hard to find on the ranking?

No, now he even doubted if the guy was really a Ranker.

His mind became complex.

So, while sitting in the waiting room, staring at the Player Kit.

"Would you mind moving and stop occupying the seat?"

A shadow loomed over Lee Ye's head.

In the waiting room shared by dozens of participants.

She addressed Lee Ye, who was serious, without any fear.

However.

"...Wow."

"Afrodite?"

"Are you an idiot? Her hair color is different."

Beautiful silver hair that seemed made of fine silk. Skin whiter and softer than that hair.

She was a beauty comparable to Aphrodite, the Goddess who descended from heaven.

Most participants were awestruck, and Lee Ye, who was nearby, was no exception.

'Is it Tsukuyomi?'

Silver hair wasn't common.

Moreover, there were no more than a hundred Rankers in this Tower who could keep calm in front of Lee Ye.

The only survivor of the now fallen Three Precious Children.

Tsukuyomi.

She had participated in this Great Celestial War.

"Aren't there many other seats?"

"The other seats bother me."

"Do they bother you?"

"I don't like the weak."

"Thanks for the compliment."

It was a peculiar response, but Lee Ye took it as a compliment. Her response meant that, out of all the participants in this waiting room, only she recognized Lee Ye.

Lee Ye stood up slowly and gave her the seat on the sofa.

The sofa that Lee Ye had been occupying alone was quite wide, and when he simply adjusted his posture, several more people could sit comfortably.

"But you're unexpected."

"What?"

"I didn't think someone like you would be interested in the position of General Chief."

One of the three most important beauties of the Tower, her ranking was 95.

Originally a High-Ranker at the 80th position, her ranking had dropped a bit after the fall of the Three Precious Children.

However, in terms of ranking and skill, she was in no way inferior to Lee Ye.

"That's a good thing if I have it, but it doesn't matter if I don't."

"So? Are you interested in the prize then?"

"That's also part of it."

Lee Ye wore a puzzled expression.

The championship prizes for this tournament were the position of General Chief and points. Only these two.

Although there were tiered rewards as one progressed in the ranking and approached the finals, it didn't seem like Tsukuyomi had participated just for that.

"I'm pursuing something else."

"Pursuing?"

A peculiar answer.

Lee Ye, who had a perplexed expression for a moment, suddenly remembered a scene.

"Could it be?"

The man holding Kusanagi.

Kim YuHun.

An item that was once a symbol of the Three Precious Children and led to Susanoo's death.



"The Three Sacred Treasures."

She was pursuing the same goal as him.

-----

In the fifth group, only one player remained.

Black clouds covered the stadium.

And amidst them, golden lightning intermittently illuminated.

Seeing that overwhelming golden wave, the other participants didn't dare to even think about attacking.

Crunch~

A man with shining golden hair like lightning.

Hargan, the youngest High-Ranker who would inherit the throne of Olympus and lead the next generation.

"Well, there are only mice."

He clicked his tongue as he looked around.

"...Just like back then."

Suddenly, he remembered how he felt when he played the Tutorial for the first time.

Only the numbers were high, but there wasn't anyone truly strong among them.

Just by seeing how the Rankers trembled at his appearance, one could discern his caliber.

It would have been more fun if he had been assigned to the same group as that guy, Lee Ye.

Hiss~

A Ranker nearby asked, looking at the Lightning that threatened to explode at any moment.

"Anyway, you're not interested in the prizes for this Tournament, right?"

The prize for winning the Tournament is the position of General Chief and points.

However, it was absurd for Hargan, the direct son of the King of Olympus, Zeus, to join the celestial army.

Naturally, the other participants surely wouldn't be satisfied.

However...

"It doesn't matter."

Hargan didn't care at all about the circumstances of the other participants or the prize for winning.

"I'm just aiming higher. I fight the strong, polish my skills, and rank up. This Tournament is a pretty good stage for that."

Both when he started climbing the Tower and now, Hargan's goal was only one. To become a complete Ranker with the qualifications to be the King of Olympus.

"But you guys are a bit lacking."

Hiss, hiss~

Thump!

The sky vibrated.

Hargan's eyes shone with a golden color, and the Lightning above the clouds began to fall.

Baaaang!

A lightning storm that engulfed the stadium.

The Rankers who could barely block or dodge the Lightning falling within it murmured helplessly as they watched Hargan face an entire group alone.

"He's not Zeus..."

Hargan.

Direct son of Zeus, the youngest to ascend to the Ranker realm at the fastest pace.

Like his father Zeus, he specialized in fighting against crowds.

Buuuuuuum!

Above the stadium devastated by Hargan...

Lee Seong Yun, watching the scene from the stands, nodded as if he had expected it.

"That guy with his impatient temperament..."

"It's true."

Someone approached and sat next to Lee Seong Yun's empty seat.

There were two people.

One of them was familiar.

"Kim YuHun?"

"I don't know when that short-tempered guy will fix himself. He's gotten worse."

He spoke as if he knew Hargan well.

It was strange.

Hargan had been his companion since the Tutorial.

There was no way he didn't know someone he knew.

Moreover...

"Who is she?"

Lee Seong Yun glanced at the orange-haired woman accompanying YuWon. She was so beautiful that even with more than half of her face covered by a mask, she drew attention.

He observed in the hope that maybe by knowing her group, he could discover YuWon's true identity, but due to having more than half of her face covered, there was no one that came to mind.

"Anyway, I was looking for you."

"I'm quite popular. Three people have been looking for me already."

"Three people?"

Who exactly is he referring to?

Lee Seong Yun, with a momentarily puzzled expression, soon inquired about the matter upon realizing he didn't know what they were talking about.

"You're also a player who came from Earth, right?"

"That's right."

"Maybe you lived in...?"

"Anyang. I got caught in the Tutorial in the Hongdae area in Mapo."

"Hongdae, huh."

Lee Seong Yun smiled brightly.

With a heart full of joy, he approached YuWon and greeted him.

"I also did the Tutorial near there. It was in the Sinchon area, next to Hongdae. We're fellow Tutorial comrades, huh?"

"Really?"

"Yes. Our team leader also did the Tutorial at that time. But it's strange. I have no memories of seeing you in the Tutorial."

"We probably didn't meet at that time."

"When we defeated the boss, everyone gathered, right? At that time, my team leader and I formed the team for the first time..."

Lee Seong Yun was quite chatty.

Discovering that YuWon was his Tutorial companion, he began to talk about what happened during the first Tutorial.

Apparently, he was happy to have met someone from his own country.

Just as the conversation was heading towards stories of their hometown.

"Hey, Lee Seong Yun!"

Lee Seong Yun turned around upon hearing his name.

In the distance, at the top of the stadium.

Hargan was waving at him from the stands.

"Again, huh?"

Seeing Hargan raise his Player Kit and wave, Lee Seong Yun checked the message he sent him.

This time, he wondered what annoying task he was assigning him.

"Huh?"

Lee Seong Yun's eyes widened as he reviewed the message.

He discreetly glanced at YuWon beside him and then spoke.

"Our team leader wants to see you, would you like to?"

Chapter 545

C21

Meanwhile, the sixth group had started.

"What do you say?"

Lee Seong Yun asked YuWon for his opinion.

It was a meeting with Hargan, known for his bad temper.

It wasn't a decision to be taken lightly.

Especially after turning the fifth battle into total chaos.

Lee Seong Yun looked at YuWon for a moment.

If he refused, he couldn't force him to go.

However.

"Let's go see."

YuWon made a more docile decision than expected.

"I just want to watch this upcoming fight."

"Really?"

Lee Seong Yun, who had thought he would have to listen to Hargan's complaints for a while if he refused, smiled brightly.

"Do you know anyone in the upcoming fight?"

"I know him a little."

YuWon nodded and looked towards the battlefield.

"Probably, you know him too; everyone does."

Whoosh, swoosh.

The participants of the next battle were already being summoned to the battlefield.

And among them...

YuWon looked at a participant who stood out.

"That guy probably will."

The guy who had now lost two of his three heads and stood alone.

With skin even redder than before, he stood on the battlefield with a sword and a vajra.

"General Chief."

And a beat after YuWon, the participants and the audience recognized him and began to murmur.

"Ah, Asura?"

"What is Asura doing here?"

"Won't they all die like this?"

"Don't tell me here..."

The audience was anxious.

It was understandable.

Who was Asura?

The number of Rankers who had died at his hands easily surpassed three digits, approaching a thousand.

The world considered him a mad killer.

Of course.

That was only what those who didn't know him entirely said.

'Those who died at that guy's hands were Rankers related to Indra.'

Asura had been chasing Indra for a long time.

To increase his power and catch him.

To bring down Indra from his pedestal.

Due to the Rankers who died in the process, Asura had even been pursued by a Great Guild in the past.

Of course, Asura's head, who was known as the killer back then, had disappeared in the battle against Indra.

'Is that guy also seeking a path to follow?'

After his time wandering after losing his sect at the hands of Indra came to an end, Asura, who now had only one of his three brothers, had nowhere else to go, no goals.

It was then...

Learning about this Great Celestial War and its prize, Asura seemed to have directed his steps there.

'His decision has changed.'

In the future, Asura would take revenge on Indra and finally ally with Deva.

However, for some reason, this time Asura did not choose Deva but Celestial Realm.

It wouldn't be for the position of General Chief.

The guy YuWon knew didn't covet fame or power.

The only reason would be that he needed a place to fight.

The position of General Chief, a faction to join.

All were just side benefits.

"Let's go."

"Already?"

Although he had said he would wait until the next battle, YuWon stood up immediately.

"Eh."

"Weren't you just trying to take a look? I was starting to get interested too."

Asura was currently the participant with the highest rank among all known in this Great Celestial War.

No, not just among the participants of this Great Celestial War.

His rank was 11, even higher than the current General Chief, Lee Rangjin.

"Anyway, the result is obvious, so there's no need to watch, right?"

"Were you just here to confirm it?"

Lee Seong Yun had an "Seriously?" expression.

"Do you have any relationship with Asura?"

Asura was known for not teaming up with anyone and ranking up solo for a long time, just like The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal.

However, YuWon's actions seemed to be happy about Asura's participation.

"No. For now."

"For now?"

An answer that sounded like there had been in the past.

Before Lee Seong Yoon's perplexed expression could fully dissipate, YuWon urged him.

"Aren't you going? Didn't you say he's waiting for us?"

-----

The place Lee Seong Yun led them to was a secluded hallway, far from the waiting room.

As they walked down the hallway, which felt like an alley where you could tear off a roof, Lee Seong Yun sighed.

"I'm sorry for both of you. He said he wanted to talk in private..."

"It's okay."

"Me too."

Lee Seong Yun sighed in relief at YuWon and Pandora's permission.

He was worried that the gloomy atmosphere might bother them, but fortunately, it didn't seem to bother them.

'But who are they?'

On the way to meet Hargan, Lee Seong Yun looked at YuWon and Pandora several times.

'I've definitely seen that silhouette somewhere.'

This déjà vu feeling wasn't only with one person.

YuWon gave him a familiarity that he had definitely seen somewhere.

Pandora, beside him, had a silhouette he had definitely seen before, but he couldn't remember who she was.

"Eh, have you arrived already?"

In the distance, at the end of the hallway, Hargan waved.

"You almost fell. And you were also severely injured by this guy named Lee Ye."

"If you don't know, shut up. The arrows from that guy are sharper than the spears the team leader throws."

"But he didn't just target you, did he?"

Lee Seong Yun's expression distorted at Hargan's smiling taunt.

Although the wound had been quickly suppressed, Lee Seong Yun's state was such that it made it difficult for him to act properly in the upcoming main round.

He wished he could give a Mana Sphere to Hargan's smiling face.

'The Ranking is crap.'

Hargan's rank was 513.

Not even as a novice, but he had reached the level of a mature High-Ranker.

His strength was growing day by day, to the point where it was now suspected that he was stronger than his ranking indicated.

Even Lee Seong Yun couldn't think of attacking Hargan recklessly.

"Anyway, it's lucky. If you had died there, I would have had to deal with Lee Ye."

Hargan's eyes, playfully mocking Lee Seong Yun, shone fiercely for a moment.

Although he soon returned to his normal state, Lee Seong Yun could see from the look in his eyes that Hargan's words were not a joke.

"By the way, behind you..."

It was then that Hargan's gaze turned to YuWon and Pandora.

"Did you say he's Kim YuHun? A fellow countryman of Seong Yun. Your names are really hard to remember."

Hargan's expression as he looked at YuWon was familiar.

YuWon could predict Hargan's next words, as if he had already experienced this before.

"Do you have a Guild or team you belong to?"

Whoosh-.

Hargan extended his hand towards YuWon.

It was like the first time they met in the Tutorial.

"If you don't, join me. In the future, let's lead Olympus together."

Fsh-.

The corners of YuWon's lips lifted.

It was an involuntary laugh at Hargan's action, which was no different from what he expected.

However, that smile could be perceived as mocking by those who saw it.

"Why are you laughing?"

"Just... thought you would do this."

"Do you have a Guild you belong to? If so, tell me. We'll pay the transfer fee."

A transfer fee was required to recruit a Ranker who belonged to a Guild.

It was a kind of compensation to prevent relations with the original Guild from deteriorating.

However, the transfer fee was not a small amount, ranging from hundreds of thousands to millions.

But the fact that Hargan mentioned the transfer fee first meant only one thing.

He liked YuWon a lot.

"I don't belong to a Guild. Just that for now, I have no intention of joining anywhere."

"Are you aiming for the position of General Chief?"

"No."

"I already figured as much."

Hargan trusted his eye for people. And indeed, his eye was quite accurate.

The fact that he had already made the same offer twice, despite forgetting his memories of YuWon, proved it.

Then, when the recruitment for the Guild failed...

Hargan's next proposal was obvious.

"You definitely don't seem to be under anyone's command. So, how about being friends?"

Friends.

YuWon had accepted this proposal before too.

And this time wasn't much different.



"That doesn't sound bad."

"As I thought."

Hargan extended his fist.

Though a bit hesitant, YuWon shook hands in response.

Satisfied, Hargan then looked back at that moment.

"Is there anyone else?"

It seemed like he was only interested in YuWon from the start.

Unintentionally ignoring Pandora, he gave her a friendly smile and greeted her.

"Sorry. I don't usually care much about others... Eh..."

His voice trailed off.

"Is this...?"

Wide-eyed, Hargan had an unusually surprised expression on his face as he opened his mouth in shock.

"Pandora?"

"Yes?"

Lee Sung Yun was surprised by the unexpected name that came out of Hargan's mouth, and he looked at Pandora.

And only then did he realize why he felt like he had seen her somewhere before.

It was impossible not to know.

One of the three beauties representing this Tower along with Aphrodite and Tsukuyomi.

Unlike Aphrodite, who frequently appeared in magazines, only a few photos of the other two were known, but no one was unfamiliar with their faces.

Moreover...

"Why are you two together?"

Hargan had fought alongside Pandora in the past, both in the Olympus civil war and in the war against the Outers.

Although they weren't close enough to be considered comrades, it was impossible for him not to recognize her.

Whoosh-

Perhaps because he had already recognized her face, or maybe because Pandora didn't mind showing her face to Hargan or Lee Sung Yun, she took off the mask covering it and replied.

"We're married."

"What...?"

His eyes, thought to be unable to grow any wider, opened wide as if they were about to burst.

Watching Hargan and Lee Sung Yun with the same surprised expression, YuWon could barely contain the laughter bubbling inside him.

"We haven't had the ceremony yet."

Since a certain day, Pandora insisted on calling YuWon her husband, but they had never organized a formal ceremony.

At first, they didn't plan on having a grand celebration since not many people remembered them, but...

"I'll invite you later."

Hargan was someone worth inviting.

Hargan, astonished by the succession of surprises, nodded with a look as if his soul had been snatched away.

In contrast, Hargan's gaze towards YuWon became more intense.

It seemed that, even though he initially only wanted to be friends, he now desperately wanted to be his companion.

'He's full of secrets. Really, I can't see anything in him.'

Hargan had a fairly important position within Olympus.

Therefore, before coming to this place, Hargan had briefly investigated the player named "Kim YuHun".

However, it was strange.

No matter how much he searched, he couldn't find any records of the player Kim YuHun, not even a single player who knew him.

So he thought he was a Ranker who had been living in seclusion and had just come out into the world.

'How did they meet?'

Hargan stared at YuWon.

'He's handsome, but not as much as me.'

Moreover, it was impossible for Pandora to fall in love with him just for his appearance.

That meant he must have something that attracted her.

Hargan couldn't quell his curiosity to know what it was.

"So, will you come to our wedding too? Are we friends now?"

As if everything was going according to plan, YuWon continued talking before hearing Hargan's response.

"Now that we've built a friendship, can I make a request?"

"A request? What is it?"

If it wasn't something difficult, he was willing to do it.

At this moment, Hargan was eager to gain YuWon's favor.

However...

"Just send a text message to your father."

At YuWon's next request, Hargan felt as if a lightning bolt had struck him on the head.

"Tell him to prepare to launch a Lightning Bolt over this stadium."

Chapter 546

C22

In the misty peaks, above dreamlike clouds, a figure walked towards a temple in the fog.

With each step, his armor resonated with a metallic sound.

Wielding a reinforced Aegis, Athena contemplated the magnificent structure unfolding before her.

"It has been a long time."

The palace where Zeus resides, the one sitting on the Throne of Heaven.

Its magnificence surpassed that of a great citadel, a grand space for a single being.

Zeus, the owner of that palace, had always valued his own greatness.

And the majesty of the palace was the starting point of that greatness.

"Wait here."

"Yes."

"Go ahead."

Two Ranker warriors with armor similar to Athena's stowed their weapons in their inventories and stood before the palace.

Although a thousand warriors of their caliber would not pose a threat to Zeus, entering the palace with weapons in hand was a sign of disrespect.

Thus, after almost a decade, Athena stepped once again into Zeus's palace.

"Have you come?"

In the center of the palace, the sky opened up to a small pond with colorful koi fish.

Zeus, sitting at the edge of the pond, calmly fed them.

Who could believe that this serene figure was the most powerful being in the Tower composed of 100 worlds?

"Yes, father."

"Your return means the era of peace has ended."

"Is it because I am the symbol of battle?"

"You are the symbol that protects peace."

An unexpected response.

Athena, who had been kneeling in reverence, lifted her head to look at Zeus.

Zeus's words, though as brusque as ever, sounded warm in a way.

'A comfort?'

She knew it. Her return to this place to meet Zeus was an omen of the beginning of another great battle.

That's why Athena's footsteps were so crucial. The world trembled with each step she took.

And the same was happening now.

Only a few in Olympus knew that she visited this place.

That's why only two warriors accompanied her.

"Is it because of the Administrators?"

"Vishnu is dead."

Zeus had been in Deva recently for Vishnu's funeral.

"One could say they have already drawn their swords."

"I don't think it will lead to a total war."

"Everyone is terrified of the Administrators' power. Just hearing the name 'Administrator' makes one want to hide in a hole."

"With Vishnu-nim's death... there is no other choice."

Vishnu was once the king who ruled this Tower. His death was enough to intimidate many of the Guilds.

"I just want to believe that Vishnu-nim's death was only a personal dispute with the Administrators."

"If you want to believe it, go ahead."

"Will you not gather the Guilds again?"

"That will be decided by my brother. I've already done my part."

Zeus, the king who ruled the massive guild called Olympus, had a rather individualistic personality.

Having called the Guilds together only once, Zeus thought he had done enough.

It was their fault if they were not vigilant about what would happen from now on.

"So, why did you call me...?"

"Convey to the others. Be prepared to fight at any time."

Olympus entering a state of alert.

Thousands of Sun Chariots would be ready to depart anytime, anywhere, and the Rankers of Olympus scattered everywhere would join forces with their subordinate Guilds.

And she who would lead them was Athena. She was the High-Ranker symbolizing "war" in Olympus.

"I will fulfill your orders."

Athena bowed her head to Zeus and raised her fist in a sign of determination; her eyes gleamed with fierceness.

If the last 10 years had been the most peaceful era ever, now was the time to prepare for war again.

And so, while Athena prepared under Zeus's orders,

'Are you laughing?'

Suddenly, she saw the corners of Zeus's lips, who was staring at the Player Kit, lift.

He was someone who rarely smiled, but now he smiled faintly.

"Is there something good?"

"Ah."

Zeus replied without looking at Athena.

"I received news from Hargan after a long time."

"From Hargan?"

That was a rather incomprehensible answer.

The usual Zeus was not an affectionate father. To him, his children were just a superior bloodline to keep Olympus strong.

That wouldn't change even if Hargan had been rapidly rising in rank lately.

So, that means the content of the message is more interesting than the sender.

"I understand he is currently participating in the Great Celestial War."

"It seems like you're keeping an eye on the younger one."

"Isn't he a strong candidate to succeed his father along with Hercules?"

"Have you given up?"

"I know my limits. I have no ambition."

"I see."

The next generation of Olympus.

Hargan and Hercules, both were clearly the best bloodline Zeus had created for that.

However...

So far, neither of the two had caught Zeus's attention.

"If they're better than me, I'll have to yield. Though I don't know when that day will come."

In terms of sheer strength, Hercules had already passed the test.

However, he was too docile to be king.

Hargan was the opposite. He was born with the qualities to be a king and resembled Zeus more than anyone.

However, Hargan, who hadn't been a Ranker for long, lacked power.

It would be perfect if the two could blend halfway, but that was just a futile dream.

"I received a message from him. To be precise, I heard that the guy by his side had a favor to ask."

"A favor? To you, father?"

The moment she heard the story, Athena thought he was a truly audacious guy.

Asking Zeus for a favor, even through Hargan.

"He's a nameless guy called Kim YuHun. I couldn't find him on the Ranking."

"So, a guy who isn't even a Ranker yet... to father..."

She couldn't close her mouth in disbelief. She thought that guy was strange, but the content was even more shocking.

"He asked me to launch a Lightning Bolt on the Great Celestial War battlefield."

"Eh?"

"Are you surprised? I had the same reaction as you at first. It was ridiculous. I even thought he was a crazy guy."

If it had been a trivial request, Zeus would have been even more annoyed.

He wondered if maybe he should have thrown a Lightning Bolt at him himself for daring to contact him through Hargan to make such an insolent request.

However, that request puzzled Zeus.

To ask him to launch a Lightning Bolt on the battlefield where the Great Celestial War was taking place.

Where else in the world would someone make such an outrageous request?

"But I like these kinds of guys. They are brave and audacious. They don't care about the means to achieve their goals."

Zeus felt that he was a guy who would undoubtedly become great, even though he hadn't appeared on the Ranking yet.

He was already intrigued without even seeing his face. It had been a long time since he felt curious about someone.

"Now we just have to wait for the result."

"Why does that guy need a Lightning Bolt?"

"I didn't ask."

"Do you trust him?"

"No."

"Then..."

"Isn't Hargan there?"

A message from Hargan arrived on the Player Kit.

The message, containing a detailed description of the situation, had traces of being erased and rewritten several times.

"I'll take this opportunity to test both of them. After all, it was Hargan who conveyed this request to me."

"It's impossible."

Athena shook her head firmly.

"Not only are Rankers on the Great Celestial War battlefield, but also Players from the lower floors and the residents of Celestial Realm who live there."

Great Celestial War was a kind of festival.

A festival in which all Players and residents from floors 50 to 100 could participate.

Launching a Lightning Bolt there would be like making enemies with all of them.

And the result would be...

"Even if it's father, if he launches a Lightning Bolt there without any conditions, he'll be penalized."

He would be penalized immediately. Of course, it's not that Zeus would be scared by a simple penalty. But if the quantity exceeded hundreds, thousands, and even reached tens of thousands, that changed things.

"That's a problem Hargan has to solve."

"Solve, you say?"

"A situation where I can launch a Lightning Bolt without any problems. If he didn't even consider that before making me this request, then he lacks enough foresight."

Upon hearing Zeus's words, Athena understood the meaning of the "test" he was talking about.

If Hargan's discernment ability was lacking, that would be a problem in itself. It would mean that he had caused a big problem without even checking if the player named Kim YuHun was trustworthy.

Moreover, if after making such a request he couldn't create a situation where launching a Lightning Bolt was possible, that would mean that both were incompetent.

"And if the situation is created but Hargan ends up being used by that guy, what will you do?"

Athena wanted to stop Zeus at all costs.

No matter how much she thought about it, launching a Lightning Bolt in the middle of the Tournament was a dangerous action that could cause the death of many Rankers...

However.

"In that case, Celestial Realm will suffer the damage. Unfortunately."

Zeus wasn't the type of person who cared about those things.

"Besides, that's not my concern, right?"

"..."

Athena could no longer say anything.

If the situation to launch the Lightning Bolt was created, Zeus was the type of person who would launch it without hesitation into the center of Celestial Realm.

The damage that occurred or the people who died weren't something he cared too much about.

Athena had forgotten.

The fact that he was a tyrant at heart.

-----

[Zeus: Understood]

A concise response.

YuWon, who checked the message through Hargan, smiled.

"His essence hasn't changed."

This was a request that he couldn't make to anyone else.

It was to be expected.

How many people had gathered in the Great Celestial War stadium?

If he asked a normal person to attack this place, they would undoubtedly label him as crazy.

However, Zeus was not normal.

His essence was that of a tyrant.

For him, who spared no means to achieve his goals, the limitations of being in the heart of Celestial Realm didn't seem to matter much.

"I really didn't think this would work."

Even Hargan, who sent the message, seemed surprised that the request was approved.

That his father, who rarely let himself be convinced by words, moved so easily.

Hargan looked at YuWon with a complex expression. With this, YuWon had managed to convince two people at once.

"Now do you believe in me a bit more?"

"...Yes."

At this point, he couldn't deny it.

"I can't go against my words anymore."

From the beginning, he had made a deal with YuWon: if Zeus approved the request, he would believe in YuWon's words.



And it was understandable, as the story YuWon had told was too fantastical to believe without further consideration.

Hargan sighed and looked up at the ceiling.

Great Celestial War.

A grand festival that determined one of the main pillars of a Great Guild, the position of General Chief of Celestial Realm.

Although he still found it hard to believe, if what YuWon said was true, this tournament...

"...It's really possible for an Administrator to appear in this tournament soon."

It would soon turn into chaos.

---

Chapter 547

C23

"Launch a Lightning Bolt over the stadium? What do you mean by that?"

Hargan was cautious when YuWon first asked him this.

He thought that maybe this guy named Kim YuHun was a terrorist sent to sabotage the Great Celestial War.

However, he soon found himself even more puzzled by YuWon's following words.

"An Administrator will appear here."

"An Administrator?"

"You're an informed guy, so you should know, right? What happened with Vishnu recently."

It was a story he couldn't ignore.

The news that Vishnu's death was related to the Administrators was so well-known that not a single Ranker was unaware of it.

Some even spread rumors that it wasn't the Administrators, but a rival Great Guild behind it all, but those were unfounded stories.

Moreover, it was Hargan's father, Zeus, who most fervently advocated for a total war against the Administrators.

YuWon's words made Hargan sink into his thoughts.

Should he believe what he says? Or should he dismiss it?

It was a hard story to believe, but if it was true, he couldn't just brush off that idea.

And then, at that moment...

YuWon offered him a compromise.

"Ask Zeus about this. Ask him the same question I asked you, and if he answers yes, then believe it. If not, then forget about everything."

Leaving the decision in Zeus's hands.

Hargan, after thinking for a while, accepted that proposal.

The Zeus he knew had never been wrong in these kinds of decisions.

And as a result...

Zeus really accepted YuWon's ridiculous request.

"Haa-."

Two days had passed since the Great Celestial War qualifiers ended.

Afternoon had already arrived, which meant the finals were about to begin.

Considering the nature of Great Celestial War, where the finals were completed in a single day, he couldn't help but sigh even more deeply.

Chewing on gum, Hargan looked up at the ceiling.

If everything went according to plan, today, a Lightning Bolt from Zeus would strike the arena sand.

'The problem is the penalty.'

Even Zeus couldn't launch a Lightning Bolt onto the arena without any restrictions.

If the conditions weren't right, Zeus wouldn't launch the Lightning Bolt.

In the end, creating those conditions was his job.

What should we do?

Just as his thoughts were deepening.

"You don't have to think too much."

YuWon, who was resting beside him in the waiting room, finally spoke.

"I'll take care of that."

"Do you have any plan?"

"Yes."

"Then why not share it?"

"I can't. For now."

Hargan looked at YuWon with suspicious eyes.

He couldn't read his thoughts, so now he was beginning to doubt him.

Of course, now that Zeus had given his consent, it was no longer Hargan's business to complain.

"For now, just relax."

YuWon, with closed eyes, yawned long and fell asleep.

"Ten minutes left."

"...Yes."

If everything went according to plan, a great battle was about to take place in the Great Celestial War.

The Administrators and their Envoys.

And the Players.

This place would turn into a battlefield when they clashed.

'Ten minutes.'

Tic, tac, tic, tac.

'During that time, I have to adjust my condition to the maximum.'

Bang!

The door swung open abruptly, and the gazes of YuWon, Pandora, Hargan, and Lee Seong Yun turned toward it.

And then...

"Eh?"

"Wow..."

Hargan was surprised by the unexpected guest, while Lee Seong Yun opened his mouth.

A beautiful woman with long silver hair appeared with a cold aura.

Tsukuyomi had arrived at the four-person waiting room.

"I'm sure the door was locked."

YuWon, who was reclining on the chair, slowly opened his eyes.

"... Did she just break in?"

"I found you, finally."

Although the most famous people here were Hargan and Pandora, Tsukuyomi's gaze was fixed on YuWon.

Her eyes were quite penetrating.

Walking quickly toward YuWon, she extended her hand.

"Hand it over."

"This?"

Clang~.

YuWon waved Kusanagi hanging from his waist along with the Magatama Jewel attached to the sword.

In addition to that...

"Or this?"

A transparent mirror from the inventory reflected Tsukuyomi's face.

"All of them."

"I have no reason to give you these just because you said you were looking for them."

"I'll let you live."

"I have a lot of money."

Tsukuyomi's eyebrows moved at the firm refusal.

"Except for the Yata Mirror, the other two were originally mine."

"They weren't yours."

"That's..."

Just as Tsukuyomi was about to refute something.

Chill~

With a shiver down her spine, Tsukuyomi raised her head.

The silver hair fluttered, and an Arcane Power the color of moonlight spread through the place.

"You, leave."

"...Pandora."

Tsukuyomi squinted at Pandora's hostile behavior.

The other three here didn't know, but Pandora wasn't an easy opponent.

Pandora's rank was 41.

She was the only survivor of the Three Precious Children and had a lower rank than her, who was 95.

'I definitely didn't see her on the participant list.'

Pandora was an unexpected variable.

Tsukuyomi had the intention of using force if she faced difficulties recovering the Three Sacred Treasures.

Fortunately, the opponent with the Three Sacred Treasures was not a major Player.

However, the variable named Pandora stood in her way.

"Do you trust her?"

"Don't talk to YuWon about it."

"It seems they are closer than I thought."

She wouldn't be a simple bodyguard. She had heard rumors about Pandora several times. She belonged nowhere and teamed up with no one.

The fact that she, practically a retired Player, entered the world should have been a big problem, but at this moment, she was just a thorn in Tsukuyomi's eyes.

"Do I have to fight?"

Crunch~.

The temperature in the room dropped, and it froze.

She was slowly preparing for battle. She couldn't guarantee that she could win a fight against Pandora, but she couldn't back down now that she had the coveted Three Sacred Treasures in front of her.

Just as the two were about to clash...

"How did you know I had the Three Sacred Treasures?"

YuWon stood between them, and the battle that was about to erupt stopped for a moment.

Crunch~.

The frozen air followed Tsukuyomi's gaze towards YuWon.

An expression of doubt.

However, she knew it too.

That the possibility of obtaining the Three Sacred Treasures by fighting now was not so high.

"I had a method."

"If you know that method, it means you also know how to combine the Three Sacred Treasures."

Tsukuyomi's eyes widened at YuWon's words.

Her expression was as if asking how he knew.

And from that expression, YuWon made a decision.

"Then I'll give them to you. All three."

"Really?"

Tsukuyomi got unusually excited. Smiling radiantly, she approached YuWon and took his hand tightly.

"I will definitely reward you. Points, lands, or properties belonging to the Three Precious Children, whatever, just name it..."

"Though I'm rich, well, if you give it to me, I'll take it."

No one dislikes money.

And YuWon was no different.

Although they were now bankrupt, it was easy to imagine the amount of wealth that the Three Precious Children, composed of double-digit High-Rankers, had accumulated so far.

"Add one more to that."

"One more?"

Tsukuyomi nodded as if she were willing to do anything if he just gave her the Three Sacred Treasures.

Anyone who knew the value of the Three Sacred Treasures wouldn't easily hand them over.

That's why Tsukuyomi had come here, thinking of handing over most of what she had.

"What would the opponent ask for?"

YuWon looked at the three people around him and told Tsukuyomi with a serious expression:

"You also join, here."

A vague proposal.

While Tsukuyomi put on an expression of perplexity, unable to understand the meaning, Lee Seong Yun hit Hargan on the side from behind.

"Leader."

"What's up?"

"My eyes are so bright I can't open them."

Hargan looked at Lee Seong-Yun with puzzled eyes, as if he didn't understand what he was talking about.

Contrary to his unintelligible words, Lee Seong-Yun's eyes shone brighter than ever.

-----

On the way to the Tournament arena.

In the midst of the cold silence, Hargan asked curiously:

"Aren't you going to participate in the Pandora Tournament? If you participate, you'll be one of the favorites to win along with Asura."

Even a Ranker like Pandora was strong enough to be considered a candidate to win this tournament.

The strongest candidate for victory would undoubtedly be Asura, but with a bit of luck, she could achieve victory against Asura, whose resistance had weakened.

"She's on my side."

Unlike others, she had no need to participate in this tournament.

"From the beginning, it was a Tournament I participated in to create a team in the first place."

One of the few people who still remembered YuWon. And one of the few companions YuWon could trust was Pandora.

"...Really?"

But...

"You have a lump on your head, you."

In this situation, her words weren't very convincing.

A lump on YuWon's head.

That was the reason they weren't convincing.

'Why is she acting like this all of a sudden?'

The moment Hargan, Lee Seong Yin, and Tsukuyomi left the room.

Suddenly, Pandora hit YuWon's head with all her might. Pandora, who had no special strength or special abilities, could maintain her ranking of 41 thanks to her physical ability.

Although nothing else was known, Pandora's physical ability was comparable to that of High-Rankers within the top 10.

So when Pandora hit his head with all her might, even YuWon couldn't help but feel the impact.

"Well, for now."

"If what you say is true, will an Administrator appear here today?"

At Tsukuyomi's question, who had joined them at some point, YuWon nodded.

"Yes."

"And if he doesn't appear?"

"Then you can keep them. Of course, that shouldn't happen."

"You trust yourself quite a bit."

The Three Sacred Treasures passed into Tsukuyomi's hands.

She knew how to combine the Three Sacred Treasures and was the most suitable person to use the three items most effectively.

'It's a bit of a waste, but...'

YuWon stroked the Otherworld Sword hanging from his waist to calm his regret.

'At this moment, whether I have the Three Sacred Treasures or not doesn't matter.'

Actually, the only sacred weapon YuWon used was the Kusanagi Sword.

However, for YuWon, who originally had the Otherworld Sword, the Kusanagi could only be a substitute.

"Promise that you'll keep your word. If what you say is true, we don't know if we'll all come out alive from this Tournament."

She also had ears and knew about Vishnu's death.

Rank 2.

A great Deva god who had existed since ancient times for over ten thousand years.

Knowing that his death was the work of the Administrators, Tsukuyomi couldn't help but be nervous.

'Amaterasu's ranking, who gathered the Three Sacred Treasures, was within the top 20.'

The Three Precious Children had known the power of the Three Sacred Treasures for a long time and had been searching for them.

Originally, the Three Sacred Treasures were one.

Gathering and uniting those Three Sacred Treasures was the old dream of the Three Precious Children.

However, in the end, Amaterasu, who gathered the Three Sacred Treasures, couldn't find a way to unite them.

'It's curious.'

The treasures of the Three Precious Children, who had finally found their true master...

'I wonder how it will look when the Three Sacred Treasures unite.'

YuWon was sure.

Just today, the ideal Ranker that the Three Precious Children had been searching for would be born.

---

## Chapter 548

### Side Story 24

The place where the main phase of the Great Celestial War begins.

In a space dominating the view of the stadium, General Chief Lee Rangjin muttered:

"A formidable guy has joined."

The participants were revealing themselves one by one.

The selection of the 64 participants was based on who would survive until the end.

The only criterion for victory was strength.

However, in the eyes of Lee Rangjin, the winner was already evident.

"Is he referring to Asura?"

In response to the other General's question beside him, Lee Rangjin nodded.

"Of course."

"Indeed, even if he is the last, he is still a single-digit High-Ranker."

Asura's rank, originally 10th, rose to 9th after Vishnu's death.

Although the ranking ascent was due to a vacant position, the significance of a single-digit rank was different.

Moreover, the fact that Asura, not affiliated with any faction, had a single-digit rank meant he had power comparable to that of a Great Guild on his own.

"The problem is his violence."

Asura.

His name was used as a synonym.

Whether on a blood-soaked battlefield or as a killer who slays people like a demon.

The name Asura was associated with places emitting such a violent odor.



"When that guy becomes the General Chief, will it be a gain or a loss...?"

"It doesn't matter, does it?"

Crunch~

At the unexpected sound, Lee Rangjin turned his head.

A rough and somewhat hoarse voice.

Within it hid a friendly, gentle yet firm voice.

He had forgotten it for a while, as it had been too long.

"Taishang Laojun...?"

"You don't even kneel anymore."

An elder with a long white beard leaning on a staff.

Exuding an aura that made him appear like an immortal descending from the sky, it was none other than Taishang Laojun, who hadn't even appeared during the great war between The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal, and The Great Sage, Who Pacifies Heaven.

"They say you'll soon be the Jade Emperor, but it must not be the time yet."

"Greetings, Taishang Laojun-nim."

"Greetings, Taishang Laojun-nim!"

The General beside Lee Rangjin also knelt next to him.

Due to his long silence, there were currently more people in the Celestial Realm who didn't know Taishang Laojun's face than those who did.

The General who knelt beside Lee Rangjin raised his head slightly and looked at Taishang Laojun.

'That guy, Taishang Laojun?'

He was a legendary figure.

If he hadn't been listed in the rankings, most people would have been sure he was already dead.

However, Taishang Laojun's position in the Celestial Realm was not much different from the Jade Emperor's.

"It's been a long time, old man."

"That little one has grown a lot. It seems like yesterday when you became the General Chief..."

"It's a thing of the past."

"And your head has also become stiff. It's expected when you live for a long time."

It was just a few words.

By raising his head after lifting the kneeling knees, Lee Rangjin soon began to discern Taishang Laojun's intentions.

Why he had come.

Whether his intention would be beneficial or detrimental to the Celestial Realm.

Time had flown, and in Taishang Laojun, the kindness of old was no longer seen.

"Why have you come out?"

"My seclusion has ended."

Seclusion.

Taishang Laojun was not a being with an official position.

However, the reason he had as much influence in the Celestial Realm as the Jade Emperor was that he was the former Jade Emperor's Master.

He had been in seclusion for a long time. His sole purpose was to surpass his limits and reach a higher realm.

"Have you achieved a satisfactory result?"

"Yes."

A faint smile appeared on Taishang Laojun's lips.

"I have transcended my realm."

"...Is that so?"

Lee Rangjin briefly read Taishang Laojun's energy.

He couldn't sense anything around him.

If someone saw him, they would only see him as a normal old man, nothing more.

"Now that I come out and look at the world for a moment, I see there has been an event called the Great Celestial War."

As soon as he came out, Taishang Laojun looked back at the past world.

That is, what happened while he was in seclusion.

"It's ridiculous. Celestial Realm turned upside down because of two simple Yokais, the Jade Emperor died, and now you've been chosen as the next Jade Emperor."

"...It's my fault for being incompetent."

"Yes, you're incompetent. You were quite incompetent. But can a guy who isn't even fit to be the General Chief be the Jade Emperor?"

His laughter echoed through the room. In no time, Taishang Laojun turned around and left.

"Should I be happy for the old man's return...?"

Lee Rangjin's gaze followed Taishang Laojun.

'Why do I feel so uneasy?'

Lee Rangjin felt a strange unease seeing Taishang Laojun seeming to have become a completely different person.

At this moment, as the final round of the Great Tournament to determine the next General Chief begins.

Lee Rangjin couldn't discern whether he should be happy or not for the sudden appearance of Taishang Laojun.

"General Chief."

While still stunned by Taishang Laojun's appearance...

"It's time to go."

The start time of the final round was rapidly approaching.

Lee Rangjin nodded and began to walk towards the battlefield.

Whatever happens.

He must complete this tournament safely, so that the Celestial Realm has a future.

-----  
Yu Won and his group entered the battlefield of the Great Celestial War.

The stadium was in a frenzy.

Due to the cheers of the large crowd filling the place.

"Asura-!"

"I bet everything on you-!"

"I bet everything on Tsukuyomi!"

"Beautiful Tsukuyomi! Kill them! Win! Crush! Destroy! Tsuku..."

As in any tournament, the most fun was in betting.

The money wagered by each participant.

Supportive voices resonated for the championship favorites, from Asura to Tsukuyomi and Lee Ye.

"Wow, there are so many fans!"

Most voices cheered for Asura and Tsukuyomi.

It was understandable that Asura, a championship candidate with a single-digit rank, had so many followers, but Tsukuyomi's popularity seemed to be based more on the fascination she aroused.

It was natural since this was one of the few times the normally mysterious Tsukuyomi appeared at a public event.

"It's strange to receive so much attention."

Lee Ye approached Yu Won slowly.

Swoosh~

Passing his arm over Yu Won's shoulder, he asked quietly:

"Don't you think so?"

'Is it a threat?'

He didn't feel any hostility from him. Yu Won removed Lee Ye's arm from his shoulder and replied:

"It seems like you're not that popular."

"They still don't know me well. I don't mind."

"I see."

"Weren't we going to finish our previous conversation?"

"The Elixir?"

"Yes."

Lee Ye's gaze changed.

The Elixir.

Lee Ye was willing to risk his life to obtain it.

"I don't know what the conditions are, but if you tell me what you know..."

"I'll tell you after the tournament is over."

"Eh?"

Yu Won's unexpected response filled Lee Ye with doubts.

Was it a lie?

Whatever the Elixir was, it wasn't credible that Yu Won would simply reveal how to obtain that legendary potion.

Lee Ye was sure there would be some other condition.

"Do you think I'm bluffing, right?"

Yu Won's words seemed to read his mind.

"Anyway, you'll find out it's not a lie when everything is over. For now, just make sure to survive."

"What?"

Ignoring Lee Ye's impatient question, Yu Won looked down at his Player Kit.

Is there any problem? Why is there no news?

Several days had already passed.

Son OhGong, who had promised to contact him as soon as he arrived, was nowhere to be seen.

It wasn't the first time this guy had broken his promises, but this time he was going too far.

Until now, Yu Won hadn't worried too much because he trusted Son OhGong more than anyone.

But if something went wrong...

At that moment, the Player Kit vibrated.

Yu Won hurriedly checked the message that had arrived.

[Son OhGong: Sorry, I'm late.]

Yu Won let out a sigh of relief.

The fact that he had received a message meant that the situation wasn't too serious.

To use the Player Kit, the surrounding Arcane Power had to be stable.

[Son OhGong: I'm almost there. Get ready. Oh, and by the way, it's quite fun here too.]

It seemed like he could hear Son OhGong's mocking laughter through the message.

'It looks like they've already started on their side...'

A too-late message.

Yu Won felt like a fool for trusting Son OhGong and looked around the stadium, including the stands.

'It looks like it's about to start here too.'

Clang-.

His eyes shone with a golden color. The Eyes of Foreknowledge gleamed brightly.

-----

The clouds swirled in the previously clear sky.

On top of a high hill.

Son OhGong scratched his ear and stored the Player Kit that had sent the message in his inventory.

"Maybe he got scared because I contacted him late? Even though I'm just a little late..."

Son OhGong, who had worried for a moment that Yu Won would scold him, quickly brushed off those thoughts.

"Bah, it doesn't matter."

Son OhGong, who was full of complaints until yesterday, now had a cheerful expression.

It was understandable.

He couldn't remember the last time he had so much fun fighting.

"Ugh..."

Son OhGong heard a faint groan coming from the hill below where he was sitting. His ears perked up.

He stood up from the pile of Envoy corpses he had used as a seat and asked with a satisfied smile:

"Well, are you still alive?"

It was the Chief Envoy-ranked Envoy from the Administration Bureau, a guy named Horan.

The Administration Bureau without the presence of the Administrator.

The over ten thousand Envoys who had stayed there.

Son OhGong had fought alone against all of them.

Horan, the Chief Envoy, had tried to stop him alongside the other Envoys, but Son OhGong showed no signs of fatigue during the two-day battle.

"Suddenly... this... what are you doing..."

"Weren't you guys the ones who started the fight?"

Whoosh-.

Son OhGong's Eyes of Golden Cinder Eyes narrowed fiercely along with his sharp claws.

"Why did you kill Vishnu?"

Vishnu's death had reignited the flames in Son OhGong's heart, which had been extinguished for a while.

The moment he heard the news, he realized that, unlike the future, he hadn't been able to protect his comrade.

Every day, he felt an unbearable need to take it out on someone.

"I don't know what you guys want. Yu Won will take care of that. But one thing I tell you."

Crack-.

Along with his sharp claws, Son OhGong grabbed Horan's head.

"Since you've touched us, all of you will die by my hand."

"Now... soon... he... will come... then... you too..."

Crunch!

The head crushed under the force of his hand.

Son OhGong muttered as he threw the shattered body and head to the ground like minced meat.

"We'll see."

At the same time, Son OhGong raised his head.

The blue light from the sky, hidden by the dust clouds, fell upon him.

A knight in steel armor mounted on a horse appeared with the wind that cleared the dust clouds.

As expected, the appearance of the Administrators was completely different.

The corners of his lips curled up with excitement.

Through the Golden Cinder Eyes, he could clearly see the flow of Arcane Power enveloping the man's body.

Arcane Power flowing smoothly like a living being.

Seeing it, he knew for sure.

"Here you are. Administrator."

---

## Side Story 25

In Son OhGong's eyes, the figure of the Administrator resembled that of a medieval knight.

Even an idiot like Son OhGong could tell that this guy was not the Administrator of Floor 50.

Normally, an Administrator's appearance would resemble the landscape of their respective world.

However, the Administrator that appeared before him didn't fit at all with the Floor 50 ruled by the Celestial Realm.

Khihihihihing-!

The horse the Administrator rode raised its front hooves and roared.

The Arcane Power in the atmosphere resonated strongly, shaking Son OhGong's eardrums.

However, Son OhGong was not easily surprised by something like that.

"Are you threatening me now?"

Kiiiiiiing-.

His eyes opened in a long vertical slit.

"A mere horse?"

Hwaaah-!

The aura emanating from Son OhGong enveloped the Administrator's horse.

In an instant, the horse that had been threatening Son OhGong froze.

If it were Arcane Power, it wouldn't have been intimidated by the Administrator's horse, but Son OhGong's aura was different from Arcane Power.

Because the aura Son OhGong exuded was Yokai Energy (妖刀), not Arcane Power.

The Administrator patted the horse's head for a moment and then looked at Son OhGong.

He didn't seem to have any intention of wielding the long spear in his hand.

"Are you alone?"

"I don't usually walk with anyone."

"What's the reason you've done this?"

"Because you guys killed Vishnu first."

"I didn't know that The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal, and Vishnu were so close."

The eyes hidden behind the helmet glowed red.

Son OhGong had an unpleasant feeling, thinking that there must be some dirty thoughts in those eyes.

"What are you thinking so much about?"

"I was wondering if your presence here at this moment is a coincidence or if there's some plan behind it."

The eyebrows of the Administrator, seen through the Golden Cinder Eyes, visibly moved.

He seemed to be lost in thought.

It was strange that Son OhGong had attacked the Administration Bureau just when the Administrator of Floor 50 wasn't there.

"I'm not one to believe in coincidences, but I can't think of anything else. The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal, we know, wasn't that smart."

Paht-.

A vein throbbed on Son OhGong's forehead.

With that statement, Son OhGong couldn't help but feel that two people had ignored him at the same time.

"Why not? I also want to participate in that Great Celestial War! Don't they say that an Administrator will also appear there?"

"I'm not sure. That's why I need you."

"Why?"

"If there's still an Administrator in the Administration Bureau of Floor 50, it means the Great Celestial War is not their objective."

The Great Celestial War was a grand tournament involving numerous High-Rankers.

Being the competition to choose the next General Chief, it was an event that attracted the attention of various Guilds and High-Rankers.

The Administrator of Floor 50 wouldn't have missed that opportunity.

"Observe from afar with the Golden Cinder Eyes. Whether there's an Administrator in the Administration Bureau or not. If the Administrator doesn't move, just come back."

"And if there isn't one?"

"Do as you please. You can wreak havoc or join us. Of course, consider the possibility that other Administrators may join if you cause a commotion there."

"I'm not saying I'm going, right? I don't feel like it much..."

Son OhGong's goal was to fight Administrators.

Therefore, he was inevitably more drawn to the Great Celestial War, where the possibility of fighting an Administrator was higher.

"Destroying the Administration Bureau can blind and cut off the hands and feet of Administrators scattered on each floor. This is also important. And you are the right person to do it."

"Why?"

"So that the Administrators also consider it a coincidence. They wouldn't think that you entered taking advantage of the moment when the Administrator wasn't there, right?"

...Are you ignoring me now?



"Does it seem like you're a bit smarter than before?"

This was the conversation he had with YuWon.

Son OhGong's eyes narrowed, thinking that the guy's prediction was correct.

Boooooom!

Zheeeeng!

Son OhGong stepped on the corpses of the Envoys and flew upwards, wielding his Ru Yi Bang.

Looking at the Administrator who had raised his long spear to block the Ru Yi Bang, Son OhGong growled:

"Do you want to die?"

"I'm just stating the truth. If your intelligence had been at the level of a criminal, you wouldn't have been surpassed in the Ranking by Hercules."

"This damn...!"

Boooooom!

The Ru Yi Bang flew towards the Administrator's head from dozens of directions.

The Administrator, dodging all the attacks of the Ru Yi Bang with a slight movement of his spear, aimed at Son OhGong's throat.

Clang!

Sparks flew as the spear tip and the Ru Yi Bang clashed.

In that instant, the atmosphere stirred, and the sky seemed to distort.

Thus, the spear and the staff clashed several times at great speed.

Son OhGong, who propelled himself upward to create distance, balanced himself and looked at the Administrator for a moment.

"Hmm."

His anger quickly subsided.

The weight sensation in the Ru Yi Bang.

Crack!

"You're a guy worth fighting."

Fighting with just a spear, without any flashy technique.

He only used his magic to enhance his physical ability and the power of the spear.

A fighting style that was familiar to him.

The Floor ruled by the "Round Table" Guild and known as the world of Knights.

"Are you the Administrator of Floor 25?"

The Administrator's eyes lit up with a red gleam.

And at that moment...

Kiiiiing!

The magic of the sunset-colored aura swirled and gathered at the tip of the Administrator's spear.

Distorted and amplified magic.

Seeing this phenomenon, an item came to Son OhGong's mind.

'...Gungnir?'

The item symbolizing the great King of Asgard, releasing the strongest power in this Tower when activated.

The phenomenon occurring on the Administrator's spear was similar to the activation of Gungnir.

And at that moment...

Flash!

The attack launched from the Administrator's spear pierced the sky along with Son OhGong.

-----

YuWon stored the Player Kit back into his inventory.

Lee Ye looked at YuWon, who suddenly stopped talking and averted his gaze, with a displeased expression.

He began to doubt even more if he could really trust YuWon.

'For now... Is he asking me to wait?'

His heart burned with impatience.

If he didn't obtain the Elixir on time this time, he didn't know what would happen to his daughter.

He wanted to grab YuWon and force him to spit out the information.

"You've arrived."

Tap, tap.

Then, footsteps broke the clamor of the noisy crowd.

The host of this Great Celestial War and the highest general in the history of the Celestial Realm.

"Lee Rangjin-gun."

In the Celestial Realm's Sky.

Footsteps echoed in the emptiness where there was nothing.

And above it was Lee Rangjin, with his green hair waving in the wind.

"I won't talk for long."

As soon as he opened his mouth, the noisy stands fell silent.

The Chief General representing the Celestial Realm and a High-Ranker at rank 20.

The future Jade Emperor of the Celestial Realm. He continued speaking while looking at the 64 participants on the battlefield.

"The Chief General of the Celestial Realm must always fight on the front lines on any battlefield."

[The final phase of the Great Celestial War begins.]

With Lee Rangjin's words, a message announcing the start of the game resonated.

"The rules are simple. Anyone who wishes to, step forward. Fight and win, over and over. The one who survives until the end will be the winner of this tournament."

Woosh!

In the center of the battlefield.

A massive circle made of a translucent barrier formed.

[Those who wish to participate in combat, enter the circle.]

[If a challenging participant is defeated, there will be an opportunity to challenge participants outside the circle.]

[The challenge time is 5 minutes.]

[If no next challenger appears in 5 minutes, the fight will end.]

The rules were simple.

Fight inside the circle and survive.

However, simplicity in rules didn't mean simplicity in content.

'If you participate at the beginning, you'll be at a physical disadvantage. But if you wait and the 5 minutes run out, the tournament will end just like that.'

Tap, tap.

YuWon's gaze turned to the first participant who started moving.

'Does that mean if you participate at the beginning, you have to show an overwhelming difference in power.'

Asura, whose body was already starting to turn red, entered the circle with two swords in his hands.

"A participant has appeared faster than expected."

In the face of Asura's challenge, Lee Rangjin nodded as if he had expected it.

"As you know, the winner will be able to obtain the position of Chief General. If you decline, I promise you an equivalent reward."

There were people with various purposes here.

Some sought the position of Chief General.

Others sought fame.

And others had completely different objectives, such as the Elixir or the Three Sacred Treasures.

Before the eyes of the participants who had those diverse purposes was Asura, a massive wall that showed no sign of tension.

"So, let the final phase of this Great Celestial War begin."

The moment those words left his mouth...

"Uwaaaaaaah-!"

"Asura! Asura!"

"Fight-!"

The cheers of the spectators who had been silent erupted.

But...

It wasn't easy to find a participant who responded to those cheers.

Swish, swish.

One by one, the participants began to take a step back.

They looked at each other and began passing the ball.

Most of them, even if not to win, had the clear goal of leaving a good impression in the tournament to increase their ranking and value.

However...

How could they leave a good impression if they had to fight against Asura from the first match?

'I don't...'

'Someone else...'

'All the better. If the High-Rankers fight and eliminate each other...'

Sneak, sneak.

They observed each other like that.

Time passed quickly.

[3:03]

Almost two minutes had already passed.

There were three minutes left.

"If this continues, Asura will win without even fighting."

"But to be the first to challenge him..."

It wasn't surprising that no one volunteered to be the first.

No one in this place could defeat Asura, and it was evident that the first to challenge him would be the first to be eliminated.

Tick-tock.

Time didn't stop.

Now there was only one minute left.

Is this really what's going to happen?

Hargan, who like the other participants hesitated to participate, glanced at YuWon.

It seemed that YuWon didn't care much about this tournament.

From the beginning until now, his eyes hadn't been on the circle but in a completely different place.

Golden pupils that shone.

Hargan was surprised to notice those eyes.

What is that?

There weren't many types of abilities that changed the color of the eyes.

The most famous one was the Golden Cinder Eyes, but that was a unique ability of The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal.

However, there was no way to know what ability he was using now.

What is he thinking?

If things continued like this, Asura would win the tournament.

There was no way to know if that was what YuWon really wanted.

Instead of letting it end like this, I myself...

And then.

Tap, tap.

"I'll do it."

The first challenger stepped forward into the circle where Asura was.

Chapter 550

Side Story 26

The second participant enters the circle.

[The main round of the Great Celestial War begins.]

[Elimination will occur automatically upon resignation, fainting, or death.]

[There is no time limit.]

Asura fearlessly looked at the participant who had entered the circle.

A man holding a large bow in his hands began to string the empty bowstring.

"Are you Lee Ye?"

The corners of Asura's lips lifted at the sight of Lee Ye.

"Not bad for a bunch of useless people."

"I'll do my best not to be an unworthy opponent."

Lee Ye was tense.

Although he didn't emanate any aura or battle spirit, it was impossible not to feel the pressure when facing Asura.

It was natural.

Asura. A High-Ranker ranked 9th.

'It's the first time I'm facing a single-digit High-Ranker.'

It was also his first time fighting an opponent of such caliber.

Tension and fear.

However, Lee Ye took a step forward.

He wondered what would become of his promise with Kim YuHon if it ended like this.

'If I don't do it, no one will.'

Anyway, he thought victory was impossible. His goal from the beginning was information about the Elixir, not the position of General Chief or the point prize.

So, he had to prolong the battle so that the tournament wouldn't end like this.

'I don't know what that guy wants, but...'

Crunch~.

The bowstring tightened.

'At least I'll give him some time.'

The moment he released the taut string.

Piiiiuuu!

Swish!

An arrow made of Arcane Power grazed Asura's head.

"It's not my style to feel you out, so..."

Puf!

Lee Ye's body spun towards Asura's back.

"From the beginning, I'll go with all my strength."

Bum, bum, bum!

The force behind each step was comparable to the spear technique of decent High-Rankers.

Firing arrows rapidly, Lee Ye circled Asura.

Pabababababa!

Arrows rained incessantly.

Asura's figure blurred and dispersed like a mirage.

Lee Ye's eyes moved.

It's not that he had really disappeared just because it seemed like he had.

"Where are you?"

Tightening the bowstring, he changed the direction of the arrowhead.

Turning in the direction Asura had disappeared, he sought the real location of the enemy.

He listened carefully for any movement.

At that moment...

Sss.

"Not bad at all."

The cold blade of a knife grazed his throat.

Hearing Asura's voice beside him, Lee Ye quickly turned his body and wielded the bow.

Clang!

With an explosive sound that almost burst his eardrums, Lee Ye's body flew backward.

"Ugh..."

A groan escaped from his lips due to the impact that traveled through his wrists.

For a moment, he had the illusion that his neck was being cut.

If he had reacted a bit later, it probably would have been.

The idea of surrender crossed his mind for a brief moment.

'...But this is getting me excited.'

Lee Ye tightened the bowstring again.

Taking distance, he focused the strength in the vision of his eyes.

Asura, with two swords in hand, kept his distance.

His carefree attitude was evident.

A High-Ranker using swords against an archer didn't approach.

"Fine."

Kwaaaak!

Tightening the bowstring towards the sky, Lee Ye gleamed with his eyes.

"Let's see if you can dodge it all."

-----

Pabababapab!

A rain of arrows fell from the sky.

Asura, with his black sword, shot an innumerable number of arrows that could only be counted with the eyes.

For those watching, there was no other word than "amazing."

It was impressive that Lee Ye fired so many arrows alone, but even more impressive was Asura, who deflected them all without a single mistake.

"Eh, isn't it amazing?"

"Do you see that? How does he deflect them?"

"Lee Ye, shooting the bow, is amazing too. He's cornering Asura."

"He's probably slowly building up energy."

"Still, it's amazing. There's a rank difference, but he's doing this..."

Pabababapab!

The arrows poured onto the ground again.

When Asura's divine figure disappeared, Lee Ye's field of vision widened.

The battle repeated in the same way.

Now, he seemed to know where the sword would come from.

Swoosh-.

Following the direction of the cold sword, Lee Ye changed the direction of the bow.

This time, it wasn't just about blocking.

Grggrgr-.

The bowstring tightened towards Asura's head.

At that moment...

Paeaeng-!

Clang-!

The arrow shot at Asura and Asura's sword blocking it.

Lee Ye's eyes, who had been thinking of giving up meat and taking bones, widened.

'Did he block this from that distance?'

Pop-.

Lee Ye, who quickly distanced himself, tensed the bowstring again on reflex.

Kiiiiing-.

Whoosh, whoosh-.

Golden flames spread from the arrowhead.

[Starts 'The Arrow That Pierced The Sun']



[Charging 'Sunset']

Only nine shots in his lifetime.

The only skill allowed only to Lee Ye.

'I didn't think I'd use it here-.'

There's probably no better moment for this shot than now.

Lee shot Sunset, charged for the fifth time, directly at Asura.

Flash-!

With Lee Ye's arrow shot, a dazzling light burst from the stadium.

Along with it, a tsunami seized Ashura's body.

The enormous arrow made of Arcane Power pierced through Asura's body.

Crack-.

Asura's sword stood upright at a right angle.

He hadn't even used a special skill.

He simply lowered the vertically raised sword.

However...

Ssssh!

Lee Ye's arrow, seizing Asura's body, split in two.

"...Wow."

Lee Ye stood petrified in the same pose in which he had shot the bow.

That had been a critical hit, or so he had thought.

Sunset was the most powerful assassination skill Lee Ye could use.

He thought that even if he couldn't pierce Asura's neck with this, at least he could deliver a good blow.

'The doubts I had from before were correct.'

Swoosh-.

Lee Ye lowered the bow in his hand.

Then, Asura tilted his head in curiosity and asked.

"Are you giving up?"

"Stop fooling around."

A long battle of thirty minutes.

At first glance, it might seem like an evenly matched battle, with the lower-ranked Lee Ye fighting hard, but it wasn't the case.

'I knew you were looking down on me. You were just evaluating my level.'

Not a drop of sweat ran down Asura's body.

Even though he should have had to move a lot and consumed a considerable amount of focus to deflect so many arrows.

It wasn't just a matter of having great endurance.

From the beginning, he wasn't using all his power against him.

"I saw it clearly a moment ago."

The critical hit he had unleashed.

Asura's sword that was brandished when he deflected the Sunset.

"Why are you wasting time?"

There was no injury on Lee Ye's body.

Not because he had dodged them well. If the previous attack had been used to attack instead of defending, Lee Ye had no confidence in being able to block or dodge it.

The difference in skill was so evident.

However, Asura had not attacked Lee Ye until now and was wasting time.

"Isn't it the same for you?"

"Same for me... ?"

"You're wasting time."

"...?"

Lee Ye wore a perplexed expression. He couldn't understand why Asura, who seemed to be seeking victory, was wasting time.

Seeing Lee Ye's expression of doubt, Asura sat down abruptly on the ground.

"What's wrong, don't you know?"

Bam.

Lee Ye was taken aback by the sudden action. It didn't even cross his mind to shoot an arrow at his vulnerable posture.

At this moment, the only thing he found difficult was understanding Asura's intentions.

"Thanks to you, I've had fun. If I had faced a mediocre guy, it would have been boring."

"What are you doing?"

"If you don't know, wait. If you already know the skill difference, withdraw."

From the beginning, he hadn't even considered him. Asura was confident he could block Lee Ye's arrows at any time.

"What are you doing?!"

"Fight, Asura!"

"I've bet all my fortune on you!"

"What is Celestial Realm doing?! Why don't they warn that guy?!"

Boos echoed in the stands.

They had come to this place to witness the duel. They had paid between hundreds and thousands of points to enter the stadium, and some had even descended several Floors after hearing the news of the Great Celestial War.

And yet, Asura, in the main match that had started, sat without fighting.

"How annoying."

Asura frowned. Opening his narrowed eyes, he clenched his fists and struck the stadium floor.

Boom!

Rumble, rumble.

The stadium floor cracked.

Through those cracks, Asura's Arcane Power spread throughout the entire stadium.

Whoosh, whoooooosh.

Asura's presence enveloped the entire stadium.

The boos from the stands stopped.

Tens of thousands of spectators cowered before a single Asura.

'... Is he being too lenient?'

He had silenced all the spectators in this grand stadium in a single breath.

Lee Ye could have done it too if he had tried, but it wasn't something he could do as naturally as breathing.

Lee Ye felt his breath being cut off by the pressure emanating from Asura. His will to fight shattered and crumbled to the ground.

Feeling the strength escaping from the hands holding the bow, Lee Ye looked at Asura with narrowed eyes.

"Now you look a bit better."

"What are you doing?"

"Seems like the only one who doesn't realize here is that guy."

"That guy?"

Lee Ye's gaze followed Asura to the side.

The participants who were standing outside the circle.

Lee Ye's eyes widened as he followed Asura's gaze.

'Kim YuHon?'

The guy who had told him he would provide information about the Elixir.

A guy whose name couldn't even be found in the ranking, not even through rumors.

"He can't be found in the ranking. Does he have a good eye or a good nose?"

"What are you talking about..."

"You have pretty fast reflexes."

Heavy step~

Another presence felt inside the circle.

Lee Ye's gaze turned to the sound of approaching footsteps, seemingly unaffected by Asura's aura.

"How troublesome, how troublesome..."

'An old man?'

He looked quite old.

The old man with white hair, shaking his head with a puzzled expression, had already entered the circle where the battle was taking place.

Intervening with other participants couldn't be allowed.

That went against the rules of the Great Celestial War.

"If we don't do anything, what are we going to do, my friend?"

The old man scolded Asura.

At his appearance, Asura stood up from where he was sitting and slowly drew the two swords he had sheathed again.

Slide~

The two swords came out with a clear sound, different from when he fought against Lee Ye.

Asura responded to the old man's words by showing his sharp teeth.

"I'll start moving now."

Asura and the old man faced off.

Lee Ye, who had unintentionally become caught between the two, looked closely at the old man who had burst into the stadium.

'Who is he, really?'

He was an old man who gave off a mysterious feeling. With a calm expression like the sky, as if a God had descended.

A kind impression and a warm flow of Arcane Power that made your body feel relaxed as you approached.

It was a face he had seen somewhere.

Lee Ye, who had pulled that face from the depths of his memory, wore a surprised expression.

"Taishang Laojun?"