

The Return of the Disaster-Class Hero

Chapter 7 - What a crazy bastard (3)

“What the hell?”

The mood was serious. Unlike his usual self, Lee Gun glared at his opponent with a menacing expression on his face. It seemed as if he were confronting his parent’s worst enemy. Furrowing his brows, he said, “Say it again. What did you say?”

His opponent replied in a calm manner.

- Your level is too low. You aren’t qualified to use this vending machine.

- Please use it next time. Thank you very much.

In the end, Lee Gun exploded in anger. “Hey! Do you want to die? You just ate my money! Hurry up and give me the drink I chose!”

“H-hyung! Please calm down!”

“That’s right! You can’t destroy other people’s property!”

Yes, Lee Gun was in a standoff over drinks with a vending machine.

It had started around fifteen minutes after the smoking incident when Lee Gun had been investigating his enemies.

“Really? The nearest Saints are located in Incheon, China and Japan?”

“That’s right.”

The young man panted and fanned his face as he relayed the information. "What? Are you overheating?" Lee Gun asked.

"What? It's just..."

"I guess the weather is hot enough to wear short sleeve shirts," Lee Gun mumbled.

"...?!"

Mr. Hwahng and the young man were dumbfounded once again. The temperature was 40 degrees Celsius, yet this man was treating it like some ordinary summer day. Of course, that was understandable. High-rank Users didn't feel the heat. They had resistance against heat and fire thanks to the fire resistance stat.

However, were there any other high-rank Users in this world that would not shed a single sweat like this man?

'What's his deal?'

'How much innate fire resistance does he have?'

They were looking at Lee Gun as if he were a monster when he interrupted them.

"Alright. I'll buy you guys something to drink," he said. For some reason, Lee Gun acted cool and headed toward the vending machine. However, when his two companions saw Lee Gun pulling out his own money, they became frightened.

"Hey! What's he doing? Is he trying to poison us through the drinks?"

"I-is he after our wallets too?"

They thought about what Lee Gun had done to the couple who had lost consciousness. This man was someone capable of poisoning them.

Lee Gun didn't wait for their answer. He put a ten thousand Won bill into the vending machine and pressed the button. However...

- The User's level is too low.

- Please use the vending machine when you've increased your social credit.

The vending machine said something nonsensical. Moreover, it didn't give his money back. Therefore, Lee Gun got angry.

That was how the current situation came to be.

"Hey, hurry up and give me my money back," Lee Gun yelled.

- You aren't authorized to use this currency. Please use a different bill.

"Let's talk after you give me my money."

- Please do not hit me. You are committing a wrong.

"Shut up and give me my money!" Lee Gun insisted.

- Please come back after increasing your level.

When Lee Gun moved closer to the machine, Mr. Hwahng freaked out. "Hey! Don't destroy it! We'll buy it! I'll contact the temple in charge of this machine and try to get a refund!"

Lee Gun glared at the vending machine. It seemed a lot of changes had occurred in the past twenty years.

'You have to either pay a lot of money or work for a Zodiac.'

It seemed the 12 heroes had started various profitable ventures in the name of their Zodiacs. The vending machine was one of them.

<The No. 1 energy drink for three straight years!>

<If you drink this, all your eye strain will disappear! Your concentration will be increased without any problem! This beer will make you look beautiful to others!>

<This vending machine is directly owned by a Saint. The items bought in convenience stores give only 1% blessing! This is on a different level! This drink

has no side effects! Please purchase your beverage from the Choice vending machine!]

<Normal people can consume it too!>

Although the vending machine looked out of the ordinary to Lee Gun, for the current time, it was a normal vending machine. That wasn't all. Most of the modern facilities for defense, agriculture, public transportation, education, leisure, resource, and etc, were under the control of the twelve Saints.

'I'll crush all these parasites.'

While he was gone, the twelve Saints had expanded their powers as they stood atop the governments. In truth, the contempt Lee Gun felt for the twelve Zodiac Saints deepened when the young man showed him the information on how everything had gone down on his phone.

[Temple: There are 12 seats. A temple is a force made out of <The Zodiac, The Saint, and the disciples>!]

[Zodiacs: They are beings that give humans power and magical energy. They are Zodiacs. They also protect human territories.]

[Saints: Awakened beings directly contracted to the Zodiacs. They provide connection between the Zodiacs and the disciples. They are one with the Zodiacs.]

[Disciple: Awakened beings that have awakened through the Saints. They are affiliated to the temples. They are in charge of securing the temples, and they also work for the Zodiacs.]

'They basically made large guilds.'

These temples were guilds that followed the Zodiacs. Of course, their influence rivaled nations and the population within those nations. The Saints had created contracts between the Zodiacs and the humans to establish enormous organizations. Through them, the awakened beings borrowed the power from the Zodiacs.

'Anyway, it seems the regular folks provide funds for the temples.'

A form of <Donation>. Of course, these were acts usually done by gangsters.

They might act like noble saints, but most of the money was probably used for self-interest.

'Vending machines aren't that bad, but...'

Lee Gun glared at the vending machine as if he wanted to destroy it. After all, it was talking nonsense. He glared at the machine because he found the actions of the Zodiac Saints detestable. However, the meaning behind his glare was misinterpreted.

The young man next to him kept pressing the button for a refund. After calling a number written on the vending machine, Mr. Hwahng spoke, "Ah. I guess it can't be helped. The temple in charge of this machine isn't picking up the phone. Since it's ten thousand won, let's wait."

'Fuck waiting.'

Kwahng!

The two men yelled when they heard the loud sound of the machine being hit. Lee Gun continued destroying the machine without any shame.

- Beep, beep, beep

Dul-kuhng! Gee-gee-geek-

Clank, clank!

The faces of Mr. Hwahng and the young man turned pale from fright. Cans started pouring out of the machine. "Oh! It gave me thirteen drinks."

As always, the best way to fix a machine was to hit it. Lee Gun grinned. However, the other two disagreed with his method.

"Hey! You shouldn't suddenly kick it!"

"That's right. There is a police station nearby! They'll arrest you!"

After checking the thirteen beverages, Lee Gun once again glared at the vending machine. "It didn't spit out the cola that I wanted."

When Lee Gun once again started to limber up, Mr. Hwahng yelled, "Once is enough!" He then looked at his surroundings and continued, "Do you know what you're doing right now? This is a vending machine directly under one of the twelve Saints!"

Lee Gun, who had been drinking the beverages, tilted his head in puzzlement. It seemed he didn't see that as a problem.

"This is owned by the Archer," Mr. Hwahng explained.

"Huh? Then it'll be fine," Lee Gun replied.

"What?"

'Why would it be fine?' The two hunters stared at Lee Gun with flustered faces. They were also surprised that a Saint's vending machine was so easy to steal from. 'Did they skip the quality check because this is an industrial product?'

The two men looked around to see if anyone would come to arrest them when it happened.

"Ah! Excuse me!" The young man suddenly grabbed Lee Gun's arm with a concerned expression. The reason behind it was simple. He said, "Someone keeps calling from this number."

The young man showed the display screen of his phone to Lee Gun. The calls came from the number Lee Gun had dialed in the restaurant. "It says the call is from Oh Taeksoo. Isn't this a number from someone you know?"

This Oh Taeksoo was also the owner of the vending machine Lee Gun had damaged.

"You said not to answer it, so I've been ignoring it. But..." the young man said.

"Yes. You're doing good. You should continue to ignore it."

The young man rolled his eyes at Lee Gun's response. "This is the twentieth call. He's sending desperate texts asking me to contact you."

Lee Gun replied, "Ignore it. Tell him the person who had called him is dead. Cuss him out and end the call."

“What?” The young man wondered if he should really say such a thing. Lee Gun snorted. The young man had thought Lee Gun was going to buy him a drink, but now, he had to insult a Saint.

Lee Gun found it a bit unusual that his friend was desperate to contact him. Twenty years had passed, so Lee Gun had expected his friend to have forgotten him. Unexpectedly, it seemed their friendship hadn't been false. Of course, his friend might have some ulterior motive in calling him too.

As Lee Gun had that thought, he put the thirteen empty cans, which he had emptied in short order, into the trash can. “It's fine. Just ignore the call.”

“Yes. I understand... Uh? What about our drinks?” the young man asked.

However, Lee Gun wasn't concerned about that. “Let's go.”

“?!”

Lee Gun cackled as he started walking. This surprised the young man, and he asked, “Uh? Hyung! Why are you going toward the bus station?”

“I'll be right back,” Lee Gun told him.

“Alright? Where are you going?”

“Where?” Lee Gun's eyebrows arched in a wicked manner as he looked around the bus stop. He wanted the incompetent owner of the vending machine to suffer a little bit.

* * *

After the beep, a voice told the caller to leave a message on the voice mail. The monotone voice was as cold as ever. The owner of the vending machine business in question massaged his forehead. When he groaned, the man on the other side of the phone clicked his tongue.

- You still can't contact him?

The Archer let out a small sigh when he heard his subordinate's words. He still needed around eleven hours to arrive in Korea. While Hugo Otis had been waiting to

get on board the plane, he had asked his subordinate to carry out an investigation in the meantime.

Since Hugo had to exit England without anyone noticing, he couldn't use the private plane the government gave to him for his use. Therefore, he had to stuff his expensive and eye-catching Brioni suit in his suitcase.

'Shit! It took me several years to earn this first-class seat through mileage.' He was going to let his grievance known. Hugo asked his subordinate, "So the owner of the phone is a high schooler?"

- Yes. He's a low-rank disciple from a small temple. If you want, I can file a complaint. With your privilege of a Saint, we can ask Interpol to start an investigation into it.

Hugo's eyes instantly turned wide. "No. It isn't that big of a deal! Don't blow this out of proportion." His voice was a bit loud, and this surprised the man on the other end of the phone.

- Ah! I guess we don't need to bring in the police for a prank call. I'm sorry!

Hugo massaged his forehead. 'I can't bring in the police. The police are...'

It didn't matter which country they were in. The Twelve Zodiac Saints had contacts within all police departments. This incident could be related to Lee Gun. Hugo had no reason to voluntarily push this incident into the crosshair of the others. If the person who had called him was really Lee Gun, Hugo didn't dare file an official complaint against him.

'If I make a misstep, he'll kill me.' Hugo unconsciously shivered. He vividly remembered the voice left behind in the voice mail. It was so intense that he got chills whenever he listened to it. He had a hard time replaying the message.

'Shit! Only one person in the world is capable of leaving behind such a message.' Twenty years had gone by, but it seemed his friend was still temperamental. 'I can't believe I forgot how he used to act.'

Once, Lee Gun had drop-kicked the president of the United States while the camera was rolling. He was that eccentric. Hugo looked like he wanted to cry as he massaged his face.

It seemed the Korean government had also ignored a call from Lee Gun, thinking it was a prank. An uproar had broken out. According to Hugo's sources, a high-ranking official had made a mistake. The Korean government had been lax in managing the direct line to Lee Gun.

‘There's no way he'll forgive that slight.’ Hugo thought.

Hugo's subordinate accepted his silence as an answer and spoke up.

- Understood. We will personally hunt down that wicked criminal!

Hugo immediately cut him off. “No! This is our busiest time of the year. You don't have to do that.”

- This is such an insignificant matter that a Saint shouldn't—

“No! I have to take care of the insignificant details to straighten him out. That's how he'll know that the world is a scary place.”

His subordinate's mouth fell open.

- He's just a high schooler— No, please ignore that!

The subordinate cleared his throat as he spoke.

‘The temples did get into trouble regarding protection laws surrounding minors a while ago.’ Hugo came up with a half-baked excuse so that his subordinates wouldn't get involved in this matter. Then, he watched the TV in the lounge.

<Breaking news! Lee Gun's armor was found on the first floor of the tower!>

<It's the legendary armor seen in the textbooks!>

<A skeleton was found next to the armor! It's similar in size to Lee Gun!>

Hugo's eyes became restless when he saw it. The reason was simple.

[It has been a while. Why don't you pick up the phone?]

Hugo was anxious because another group of people kept sending him texts. 'The Twelve Saints.' They were his former comrades, and they had probably locked up Lee Gun in the tower. They had only one reason to shamelessly contact him after no communication for ten years.

'Lee Gun.' They probably never thought Lee Gun could be alive. Honestly, Hugo was having a hard time believing it too. If the one who had contacted him was really Lee Gun, he had been alive in the tower for the past twenty years. It meant that...

'Gun is in danger.' Hugo gulped. It was true that Lee Gun had been the strongest amongst the thirteen of them. However, in the latter stages of his life, he had to work for the other twelve to get his body repaired through their divine powers.

Lee Gun's face and body had become a mess. His body had deteriorated through age.

'How could he survive for twenty years with that broken body?' Hugo closed his eyes shut. The visuals invoked in his mind were truly terrifying.

'He might have been able to pull off such a feat in his prime, but...' Now, Lee Gun might be an old man who could barely pick up a spoon with his trembling hand. Moreover, there was no way he could've killed all the monsters and exited the tower without losing his mind. There was also a chance that he was being chased by monsters.

'The weird part is that my second sight and any tracking type skills aren't working.' Hugo was nervous since he had no information about Lee Gun.

'Anyway, I have to find him first. Then, I have to protect him from the others.... Why aren't you picking up your phone, you rude little bastard?'

Hugo stamped his foot in anxiousness.

* * *

The problematic and rude little bastard Hugo thought of was munching on an ice cream bar. “That was really fun.”

It was eight in the evening. Lee Gun didn't care if others were anxious because of him. Since he had just gone out to play, he was happy. He already knew what he had to do in the future, but he had just returned to society. For now, he wanted to recuperate a bit.

‘Anyway, it might be dangerous since my magical energy isn't as full as I want it to be.’

Lee Gun had been researching something in the PC room when his eyes flashed. The young man had mentioned this before.

‘My roommate is a high rank disciple who is very close to a Zodiac Saint.’

He was merely boasting about his friend, but Lee Gun laughed as if he had caught a prey. Of course, he ignored all the calls coming for him. Currently, he and the other two had arrived in front of a newly-built five-story villa.

“Thank you for seeing us home. I live on the first floor where the lights are still off.” Mr. Hwahng gestured with his hand. “Yes, you should go in now. A lot of Calamities are showing up in the middle of Seoul recently. The Saints have blessed this place, so I don't know why this is happening.”

As if he were taking a cue, the young man quickly lowered his head toward Lee Gun. “Hyung! Even after saving my life today, you went out of your way to walk me home. Thank you very much! I'm doubly thankful since this region has been dangerous lately... I don't know where you live, but please take care of yourself. I'll be sure to pay you back... Uh?”

When the young man raised his head, the sight left him surprised. “Uh? Where did he go?”

Lee Gun was gone. However, it remained like that for only a moment.

“!” The young man became frightened when he caught sight of something. It was to be expected.

Lee Gun was picking his ears in front of his home. “Aren't you heading in? I'm sleepy.”

“What?”

Lee Gun let out a burst of slightly shameless laughter. “Well, I did save your lives, and I’m already in your care. I’m fine if you pay me back by letting me use your bed.”

“What?”

“Ah! It would be great if you have a memory foam pillow.”

‘What?’