

## Overgeared 1011

### [Chapter 1011](#)

The better the skill, the higher the potential. The higher the potential, the harder the application difficulty. It meant that a user's competence was important in pulling out all the potential of a skill. Nevertheless, there were skills that couldn't be solved with the problem of competence alone.

Super Sensitivity was a representative example of this. It was a skill to predict upcoming crises and the behavioral patterns of targets. It predicted when someone became a target of a skill already used, when to target the opponent, when they would encounter the opponent, when to move to a specific place, and so on.

The skill functioned under all conditions and was given the 'system assistance.' The system alerted users to the predictions through a notification window or voice message. It was hard for even a genius to handle the flood of information that came in real time. How many people would tolerate the voice guidance or notification windows in a sober manner?

As such, there were restrictions. A great swordsman's Super Sensitivity only had a duration of a few seconds while Kraugel's Super Sensitivity had many functions limited. Every time the stat increased, the limits of the functions would gradually unlock, giving the player time to adapt.

The same was true for the Shadow Technique that belonged to Lantier's Methods. This top-rated skill that had to partially control the shadows and their weapons reduced the player's burden by limiting the number of weapons and shadows that a player could raise. Previously, Faker studied the skill from Kasim, and only six shadows could be raised when the skill was level 3.

However, Kasim was different. Just as Mercedes could handle Keen Insight which was the higher version of Super Sensitivity, Kasim was able to control the shadows perfectly. It was the ability of the named-grade NPC with the setting of 'King of Shadows.'

Hundreds of thousands of shadow troops filled the battlefield. They emerged from the feet or from the back, stabbing the imperial soldiers' necks and backs. The basic characteristic of the Shadow Technique where the 'power is weakened when summoning a large number of soldiers' also applied to Kasim, and it was rare for an imperial soldier to be fatally wounded or killed by the shadows.

"Uh... Uwahh..." Still, the morale of the imperial forces sank completely. The sudden appearance of hundreds of thousands of troops was more shocking than any natural disaster.

Just one person... The center of the stage, which had been naturally created, contained the calm Drunk Duke Diworth. No, he was amused. He precisely captured Kasim's image hiding in the darkness.

"You were a black cat survivor."

Diworth threw Noll, who was held in his hand, to the ground. Noll coughed up blood. He was unable to recover. The unidentified alcohol absorbed into his body prevented his magic power and organs from functioning.

Tong! Diworth kicked Noll in the direction of the knights and shook his head.

“There weren’t any duty officers at headquarters at the time, so it was my job. I used my brain. Unfortunately, I was too excited and made a mistake. You will die by my hands and won’t be able to get revenge on the empire...”

“Take back those words,” Kasim interrupted Diworth in the middle of his speech. Kasim’s stealth disappeared, and his eyes shone with killing intent.

Diworth scratched his head. “What words?”

“Don’t call me black cat!”

‘Black cat’ was the name the empire used to refer to the Nero. The skin of the Nero was black and their actions were clandestine, so they were nicknamed ‘black cat’. There wasn’t a ‘demeaning’ intention behind it. Why would they demean insignificant beings? It was just easy to call them by this name.

“We aren’t black cats but the Nero! We are humans, not beasts! Humans!”

Then the empire trampled on the Nero, brutally murdering them regardless of whether they were adults or children. Only Kasim survived. Kasim’s shout rocked the battlefield. In the midst of the imperial soldiers, the shadow soldiers poured toward Diworth.

Diworth swung his hand. “Trivial things.”

The magic shield destroyed all the shadow weapons that flew at it. The scattered shadows returned to their places.

“In order to deal with a duke of the Saharan Empire, did you increase the number of shadows to this point?” Diworth didn’t know Kasim, but he knew the King of Shadows. The empire’s intelligence network which spanned the entire continent was well aware of the fact that the King of Shadows was Lantier’s disciple and that he used shadows. “The more shadows that are dispersed, the more cloudy they become. If you intend to kill a duke of the empire and get revenge on the empire, you should’ve gathered all the shadows at one point and aimed for my heart. Like this.”

Magic power condensed around Diworth’s fingertip and aimed at Kasim. Goosebumps appeared on the skin of Noll, who got caught by the imperial knights.

“A human has such power...!”

The desert split apart. A straight line of magic power pierced Kasim’s heart and didn’t stop as it disappeared beyond the desert horizon. No one knew where it flew to. There was no sound. Then Kasim fell to his knees. He looked like a broken doll.

“Kasim!!” Chris, who had been hopeful after Kasim appeared, shouted desperately. He belatedly realized things had gone wrong and used the Tyrant’s power. Chris hoped that Kasim would be alive and that Noll would escape while he attracted Diworth’s attention. He rushed through the imperial forces toward Diworth. Then a hand protruded from a gap between the soldiers and stopped Chris.

A voice rang out, “Teacher didn’t die.”

Kasim lived due to his desire to get revenge on the empire. He had protected a baby’s side for years while only thinking of revenge, and it wasn’t easy for him to lose his composure. Kasim’s fury when

creating the shadow army was an act. It was a sacrifice to announce that there was a Nero survivor. He attracted Diworth's attention and didn't reveal that this was a falsehood. It was all for one purpose.

"...?"

It was to rescue Noll. Knights fell from a few flashes of light as Kasim appeared among them to grab Noll.

"Catch him!"

The great knights fought back against Kasim. The magicians also supported them. However, Kasim was the best assassin, and ordinary knights and magicians couldn't stop him. Kasim was faster than anyone else as he held Noll in his arms. The Shadow Technique combined with the Nero characteristics meant it was more covert than normal shadow skills.

"Disappeared?"

Kasim appeared and disappeared like a ghost. He rescued Noll and hid in the shadows, making it hard for even Duke Diworth of the Seven Dukes to detect him.

"I was tricked." Diworth was less intoxicated after releasing his magic power. Once his drunkenness was gone, he lost interest and handed matters over to Marquis Fulbas. "Catch the one you can grab."

He was going to do it anyway. Marquis Fulbas' gaze turned toward Chris. He didn't intend to miss capturing Chris.

"Commander Chris of Reidan, you are valuable as a hostage." Marquis Fulbas swung his sword and so did the four earls by his side. Every one of them was more powerful than Chris. They were leaders who led hundreds of thousands of troops. In the first place, there was no way for Chris to break through hundreds of thousands of troops.

'I can't be a hostage.'

If he was a hostage, he would be grabbing at his teammates' ankles. The time wasted would also increase. It was better for him to die neatly. Kasim and Noll had escaped safely, so there was no need for regrets.

Chris judged and released all of his armor. He intended to passively die from the enemies' next attacks without letting them capture him alive. The death of the commander would greatly reduce morale, but it was better than being a hostage.

At this moment, the wind blew. There was a gust of wind that made the imperial soldiers split apart like the Red Sea and form a barrier in front of the marquis and the earls. There was only one magician Chris knew who could completely control the wind.

"Zednos!"

He was an early member of the Overgeared Guild. Zednos, former Tzedakah member and 1st ranked wind magician, sent a whisper to Chris.

-I can only maintain it for three seconds! Use this gap to escape!

A miracle didn't happen easily. Zednos squeezed out all his mana, but only managed to tie up the feet of a few of the troops. One of the earls was gathering aura at the end of his sword. The wind barriers were already losing momentum and were destined to shatter.

-I understand!

His colleague had risked himself to come help, so Chris couldn't passively die. Chris wore his armor again and rushed through the rain of arrows. The soldiers' gazes were dispersed as Chris saw his companions everywhere. Jishuka and Yura covered him with arrows and bullets. Pon, Regas, and Peak Sword attacked the enemies while Vantner and Toban used wide-range taunt skills. His other colleagues like Zirkan and Laella were doing their best to secure the path of retreat.

"Chris! This way!"

"Run away!"

"In any case, I'm foolish." Chris laughed as he swung the greatsword to the side and sliced the enemies. The members of Overgeared were positioned in oasis around the desert. Those who pursued guerrilla warfare or physical strength and maximum efficiency now entered the battlefield. They were trying to save Chris, just as Chris tried to save Noll. They didn't think life was worthless. They just believed that their colleagues' lives were more important than their own.

This was all because of Grid. It was all learned from watching Grid.

Magic rushed toward Chris' back as he rushed to escape. The imperial army didn't miss this gap when Chris' body was reeling from the powerful force. Spells quickly poured out and reduced Chris' health. If the marquis hadn't given the order to capture him, Chris would've already died. Chris felt the earls approaching and shouted with all his might, "Give up on me and run away together!"

"No."

"...?"

Then Chris' shadow moved. The shadow spoke, "The commander shouldn't die."

The shadow grew, and black hair fluttered.

"Faker!"

One of the earls reaching out to Chris fell down. Faker jumped out and inserted a dagger into the earl's side. It was a destructive technique linked to speed. The move was reminiscent of the living Doran who only Grid knew.

"Not a chance!" The fallen earl rose again. A total of four earls stabbed at Faker at the same time. Faker avoided one knife in exchange for thrusting a dagger into one person's abdomen. His body was torn apart. The sight of Faker's blood was unfamiliar to Chris. Faker was strong even to Chris.

"F-Faker!"

"Go."

However, Faker didn't look back. He summoned six shadow soldiers to protect Chris. Faker had to disperse his mental power in order to control the soldiers. This meant that his body was weakened, but he didn't care. He was the shadow that protected the Overgeared Kingdom. It was his duty to serve and sacrifice himself for the light while not letting others know him. His death wouldn't affect the war.

"Eclipse." Faker completely assimilated with the darkness, but he didn't have full control due to the six shadow soldiers. The earls didn't lose sight of Faker, and Faker continued to grab their ankles while being cut.

"Next time... Next time, I will protect you!" Chris was escorted by the shadow soldiers and barely escaped the enemy's encirclement. The members of Overgeared gathered in one place and helped him.

However, Marquis Fulbas was closely chasing Chris. "It isn't a bad situation."

It was the opportunity to strike down the enemy commander. Marquis Fulbas welcomed the golden opportunity and was about to release his ultimate technique, only to stop. It was because Noll appeared with Kasim from the shadows and threatened him. "Get lost!"

Marquis Fulbas realized that Noll had removed most of the alcohol and quietly lowered his sword. He had to give up the chase as the Overgeared people fled neatly. Then he resented Diworth.

'If Sir Diworth fought to the end, we could've wiped out the enemies.'

Diworth was lazy when he wasn't drunk. He didn't show passion toward any particular situation. Diworth wasn't in a position to condemn the young nobles for being cowards. The grim truth was that most of the Seven Dukes were like Diworth. The empire that had been prosperous for so long was decaying from the top.

Marquis Fulbas sighed and commanded the entire army, "Get sufficient rest."

"Wahhhh!" It was an order to take a few days of rest. The soldiers cheered upon hearing the command of the marquis, who judged that the Overgeared members and Noll wouldn't attack again today.

At dawn on that day, a strong wave of magic power was detected over Reidan Castle.

"Mass Teleport?" Marquis Fulbas rushed out of the barracks and felt a strange apprehension.

Earl Baget approached him. "I guess reinforcements have arrived."

The earl had been seriously wounded by the Overgeared Kingdom's young assassin during the battle.

"I was worried, but I'm glad you are healing well."

"Thank you for your concern."

The smell of chicken poop coming from the earl's body as he answered. He must've sweated a lot on the battlefield.

## [Chapter 1012](#)

"What is this?" Grid was startled when he arrived at Reidan. He was heading to the place where the guild members were gathered, only to see a huge hole in one wall. Several houses 500 meters away

from the wall were also damaged. This wasn't a great sight considering how much of the kingdom's finances had been used to strengthen the wall. There was a neat hole in the 30-meter-thick wall. This was a result that the Overgeared Cannon couldn't make.

Grid was nervous and asked Chris, "Isn't Reidan at max level? Did the empire develop a new cannon?"

"It is a remnant of the magic power fired by Drunk Duke Diworth."

"A duke! He is already marching this way?!"

"No, not yet. The imperial camp is roughly 11 kilometers away. Diworth fired his magic power from there."

"...Eh?"

Chris asserted that Diworth's magic power made the concept of distance meaningless. Grid found it strange, but he knew there was no exaggeration in Chris' words. It was because the sweat on Chris' face reminded Grid of the power of the Seven Dukes which he had experienced personally.

'I couldn't defeat the weakest Rigal by myself.'

The skills of the other Seven Dukes must be powerful beyond imagination. Grid frowned and was about to speak, but...

"I-I'll fix it quickly." Three middle-aged men then rushed to the damaged wall, grabbing heavy tools. The other people didn't care much about them. They were technical colleagues who belonged to Overgeared Two.

"Wait a minute," Grid called out to them. "15th ranked builder Delleon, 29th ranked Shell, and 42nd ranked Delont."

"...?"

"You are older than me and don't need to use honorifics. Aren't we colleagues? Please feel comfortable. I will treat you comfortably like you're my uncle. Ah, I heard that Delont's granddaughter entered elementary school recently? Congratulations."

"..." The hundreds of Overgeared members watching were surprised. Were the guild members surprised at Grid's personality? No. There were many guild masters who yearned for talent. It was also easy to find masters who treated the guild members like family.

However, it was uncommon for a guild master to remember more than one hundred people. Not only did Grid know details such as the face, occupation, and name, he also remembered details such as age and family information. The surroundings became quiet, and Grid scratched his cheeks. "I shouldn't have mentioned private matters..."

It seemed that he had studied too much. No, the study itself wasn't a problem. The problem was that he spoke about personal information in front of others. It happened because he didn't pay attention. Grid was greedy and wanted to show off his studies. These were the woes of someone who lacked social interaction. Grid was smiling bitterly when Delont grabbed his hand.

"T-Thank you! My granddaughter will jump with joy when I tell her about today. She is a fan of King Grid!" Delont's eyes shone brightly like lanterns as he watched Grid. It was an unbelievably pure and passionate gaze for a 60-year-old man. The strained atmosphere in Reidan, which was caused by Duke Diworth's skill, was instantly ventilated.

"Hey, Grid is really great. The busiest person in the world has always been paying attention to the guild members."

"Truly God Grid! He is the man that I acknowledge! Hahahat! Come join the Korean Patriotic Association! I'll give you a 50% discount!"

"..."Grid was embarrassed. Without Lauel's advice, he still wouldn't know much about the guild members. He would've kept thinking of them as people who moved according to his wishes. Yes, he only studied the guild members out of necessity. Everyone misunderstood and looked at him warmly.

'My conscience is stabbed...'

He was sorry that he hadn't cared earlier. Lauel sent a whisper to the distressed Grid, -If your heart wasn't true, you wouldn't be able to remember the faces of 1,000 guild members in such a short time. Well, unless you are a genius like me.Huhut.

-...

-It is great.You deserve praise and respect.Be confident.

"Move quickly!"

Just then, a group of people came running from the distance. They were also Overgeared Two members, and they were carrying many stones. This group had the miner class. Before Grid arrived, Chris had given an order for them to obtain materials to repair the wall.

"Ah! G-Grid!"The man in his mid-20s, running at the forefront of the miners, was startled. He felt sorry for Chris since Grid arrived before they could repair the wall. The man imagined a subordinate being scolded by the boss and lamented that his mining speed was too slow.

'I wanted to get slightly better stones and ruined things because of my greed... I should've finished the wall repair before Grid arrived!'

The man shrank back as Grid approached. He observed the stones that the man was carrying and said, "They are the best stones. You must've had a hard time obtaining it, Lion."

"Of course, it is something I had to do!"

The young miner's name was Dolce.He was called 'Lion' because of his ridiculous hair that resembled a lion's mane. The only people who knew Dolce's nickname were naturally Dolce's acquaintances. The nickname 'Lion' wasn't known because the miner class didn't receive the light. Yet Grid knew Dolce's nickname. Dolce was thrilled.It meant that Grid had been watching him.

"I-I will work harder in the future!"

The people who joined the Overgeared Guild were divided into two major types. First, there were those who wanted to piggyback on the massive guild or wanted the items that Grid made. The second type were those who aspired to be like Grid. Dolce was the latter. He was touched that the object of his admiration paid attention to him. The fact that he could stand next to Grid was like a dream, and he was happy.

“Grid, do you perhaps know me? I am a mere baker...”

“Naturally, I know you. The bread you make gives a small buff. Should I not know you?”

“No. I think that Grid knows all of us. You have always been paying attention to us.”

“Even though you are busy fighting or making items every day...”

The atmosphere was warm. Lauel smiled at the satisfactory result and gazed at Grid in a warm manner. Grid looked at all his colleagues standing here, including Lauel. It was a blessing that they believed in him. Grid promised that he would do better for them in the future.

“Let’s stop talking and quickly repair the wall. We also need time to prepare for the welcome of the fourth guild.” Toban clapped his hands and blew away the excited atmosphere. He had a cool side, unlike the overall emotional Overgeared members. It was due to his presence that the projects of the Overgeared members could progress rapidly. Simultaneously, he was one of the best tankers, so Grid liked him. He had long forgotten the mistake Toban had made against him. After all, Grid had gotten payback for it at the time.

‘Huroi was disgusted after learning that Toban pointed his sword at me...’

It was the same with Euphemina. Originally, Huroi liked Euphemina. Then as they spent more time together, he became aware of the mistakes she had committed against Grid and started to distance himself from her. Recently, he was told she had interacted with Agnus and went on to express his hostility. It was due to his excessive loyalty toward Grid.

‘I’ll have to talk to him.’

Grid was both happy yet troubled by Huroi’s heart. It was necessary to maintain the balance. The moment Grid thought this, there were shouts.

“Aura Master!”

“H-Hurent!”

“The rumor that Hurent joined our guild is true!”

The cries burst out from everywhere. Gazes were directed at a man holding a hand plow. The appearance of his rolled up trousers and dirt on his boots made him look like a field worker.

“I’m here because you called...” Hurent faced Grid and made an uncomfortable expression. Having retired from public view for three years, Hurent had gotten used to the quiet life and felt awkward in front of the people’s interest. However, the other person was Grid. He was the one who willingly accepted Hurent despite the fact that he had invaded the Overgeared city with the Eternal Kingdom.



(Although, Grid didn't know.) Grid even had Hurent's lifelong benefactor, Piaro by his side. (Grid still didn't know this.)

Hurent respected and acknowledged Grid as the leader, so he couldn't deny his request. The moment he heard Grid's request to attend the new guild creation ceremony in Reidan, he ran to this place.

"..."

He felt the attention of the Overgeared members who were famous for being strong—Jishuka, Pon, Regas, and so on—focused on himself, but he didn't feel particularly conscious. After all, Hurent wasn't weak-minded. There was no need to be conscious when he didn't have the right to respond to their good wishes.

"Thank you for enhancing the national prestige." Grid held out his hand for a handshake.

Then Hurent muttered, "What enhancing? I am lucky that I didn't harm it."

In the meantime, Grid hadn't intervened in Hurent's matters at all. Hurent merely devoted himself to farming and training as ordered by Administration Rabbit and Piaro. Then he got an order to gather in Reidan today. It was ostensibly a celebration of the creation of Overgeared Four, but... the real reason was something else. There was no reason to celebrate a new guild in Reidan, a city caught in a war.

'Grid is planning a massive war. Eventually, I will fight.'

Hurent was worried. As he pointed out to Grid, he hadn't been active for several years. He wondered if a weak person like him would be of help in the war, particularly when the opponent was the empire—the strongest country in the West Continent. Hurent might be able to kill a few soldiers, but wouldn't he die if he met a knight?

'I will be disgraced again...' Hurent sighed.

The 100 players gathered in the corner were staring at him with a little envy.

'Oh, my god. The Aura Master is an Overgeared member!'

'Hurent was easily beaten by Grid, but before that, he was one of the strongest.'

'The Americans are still waiting for Hurent.'

'He has been training for several years and must surely be more powerful than before.'

The 100 players were the protagonists of today's celebration. The artillerymen rankers, who had been personally invited by Lauel, were relatively ordinary people that couldn't be compared to the splendid Overgeared members. Finally, Grid's eyes turned to them.

The 100 artillerymen didn't think Grid would greet them. He must've created an artillerymen unit for a reason, but they didn't have high expectations. The artillerymen class was so garbage that they hadn't even reached level 200. It was funny that he would greet them.

...That's what they thought until now. Grid came to the artillerymen and greeted them with a smile, "It is nice to meet you."

The surprised artillerymen responded in various ways. Some people froze completely while others didn't know where to look. Someone moved their feet, and someone else looked up with surprise. None of them were confident. Grid was sad as he was reminded of his past.

He extended a handshake to a beautiful woman standing by idly. She was Lost Justice.

"It is a pleasure. I am honored to have the 1st ranked artilleryman join the Overgeared Guild."

"N-No, what honor? I am the honored and grateful one!" Lost Justice grabbed Grid's hand with both hands.

In fact, Grid didn't like her very much. Lost Justice—the ID showed she was pessimistic about the world. Grid thought that she might have a past like himself and would be dark and sly. He would have to pay attention to her, but of course, he didn't express this outwardly. Instead, he would watch from behind and manage her. He hoped she would be a good colleague.

"You will realize that there are many good people in the world and that justice is still alive. I hope you'll find happiness with us in the future."

"...?"

Grid laughed at his own words, and the Overgeared members were puzzled. It was an expression that showed they didn't understand. Only the Korean members like Peak Sword seemed to know. The reason was simple.

For Koreans, the ID of Lost Justice was marked as 'Lost Justice (Hangul)', but for players of other nationalities, it was labeled as 'Genuine Boutique'. (TL Note: Basically, the ID is 정의상실 in Korean. However, the author wrote it 정 의상실 for other nationalities, which has a space between the first and second characters and 의상실 means boutique.)

Boutique. That's right. Lost Justice's ID wasn't Lost Justice but Genuine Boutique.

"..."

Grid saw the atmosphere becoming cold and coughed belatedly. "It is a joke, a joke."

"Ah, yes..." Lost Justice, who had been stiff the whole time, burst out laughing. She was Korean and knew that Grid had really misunderstood.

"You are cute," Lost Justice involuntarily expressed her appreciation.

"...Heok?"

It was because Yura, Jishuka and Ruby directed killing intent at her. Sexy SchoolgirlYerim, who was a high school student and now a university student, clicked her tongue. "A popular man is more attractive."

Yerim had been aiming for Grid for several years already. She was like a beast waiting for her prey.

Simultaneously, a disturbing air appeared on the battlefield where the Rebecca Church, Yatan Church, and Valhalla's army were fighting. Everyone who died during this war was being 'sacrificed.'

“This time, I must do it at all costs.”

Gamigin would descend. Looking up at the blackened sky, 3rd Imperial Prince Benoit prayed earnestly.

### [Chapter 1013](#)

Prince Benoit—one of the three sons of Empress Aria—had been different since his birth. He explored knowledge instead of harboring ambition, enjoyed mingling rather than exerting his status, and was more interested in talent than pedigree.

The words he had spoken during his youth were famous. For him, politics wasn't something he had to do but something he had to watch, listen to, lament about, or clap for. It was an irresponsible remark that abandoned his duty as an imperial prince. It stated he wasn't interested in the emperor's politics or the throne.

Certainly, 3rd Imperial Prince Benoit didn't have the qualities of an emperor. He was closer to a scholar or revolutionary. Emperor Juander was displeased with Benoit. However, Empress Aria loved Benoit.

Prince Benoit loved and respected his mother. She was benevolent and wise, and Benoit tried to emulate her. Thus, he received the greatest shock from his mother's death. Benoit had been suspicious since his healthy mother became sick, and he paid attention Empress Marie. In the end, he realized the person who assassinated his mother was the empress.

However, he couldn't find any physical evidence. It was the first time Imperial Prince Benoit was filled with the desire to kill. He felt fury for the first time since he was born. He hated his father, who depended on the wicked woman who killed his wife. He also resented his siblings who were worried about their positions more than his mother's death.

Prince Benoit dreamed of revenge. He desperately trained his swordsmanship. He stayed up all night learning magic. He became adept at controlling the 'red energy' talent of the royal family. Then he realized that trampling them with strength wouldn't be true vengeance. He hoped that his father would feel hatred and regret while his siblings would mourn.

So, he started earnestly learning the fields of magic and rituals that he had originally been interested in. Rather than praise Goddess Rebecca, he explored the reasons behind the Seven Malignant Saints' betrayal and decided to use the great demons. He peeked at the truth of the world and didn't reject the existence of the great demons. Instead, he attempted to summon a great demon.

It was the 4th Great Demon Gamigin, who could summon ghosts of the dead. He hoped that the truth flowing from his mother's lips would make his father and siblings cry.

This was the story that the 1st ranked black magician, Rose, knew well. It was the Yatan Church who used the ambition of the empress to confuse the imperial family and the Yatan Church who cooperated with the summoning of the great demons by using Prince Benoit's desire. As one of Yatan's Servants, she couldn't help knowing Benoit's position.

“...”Rose watched Benoit who was standing in front of the altar. He had offered the necessary tools and human sacrifices. Now he was chanting an unknown spell. He looked more desperate than anyone else in the world. He felt like a living human being, despite only being an NPC.

“...I understand Grid’s mind a bit.”

Rose’s mouth twisted. However, understanding and empathy were different.

“I~diot.”

It was pathetic. If she were Grid, she would’ve fulfilled more desires and lived well. Why did he cling to fleeting relationships?

“Is he a pushover?”

As she cocked her head and touched her lips, Rose’s image was beautiful. However, those who could see her empty eyes would feel creeped out. The ritual was in full swing on the cliff above the battlefield.

“I found you.”

Then someone entered suddenly. It was Luck of Valhalla. He was one of the most influential members of Ares’ army. Even Kraugel acknowledged Luck’s skills and had been wary of Luck during his sky above the sky days.

“I don’t know what you’re doing, but forget it.” Luck clenched his fists as he saw the unidentified NPC immersed in a ritual and his escort, Rose.

Rose cried out desperately, “Don’t disturb me! My sibling’s life depends on it!”

“...Eh?”

“Do you know why I am active in the Yatan Church despite the criticisms of people? It is because the big rewards are worth the criticism! I need money! I’m only playing Satisfy for money! I need to pay for my sick sibling’s medical expenses! My sibling will die if I don’t pay the medical fees!”

“..No, what is this?” Luck’s eyes were shaken.

Was there anybody in the world without a story? Rose might be an enemy, but she was arguing for the sake of a human’s life. Luck revealed a gap when there was a blast of magic. He staggered at the great power and looked up.

“Are you going to let me go?” Rose was pointing her staff at him. She had no sibling, but Luck had no way of knowing the truth.

“Why should I let you go? Tsk, just because I know about your circumstances?” Luck gave up his hesitation and punched Rose.

In the midst of the loud explosions, Benoit just focused on the ritual.

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『 This is the end of the opening ceremony of Overgeared Four. .』

『 It was a very grand opening. Tens of thousands of gold must’ve been spent on the firecrackers alone. Huhu...』

The world's best streamers, including Bunny Bunny, and the news reporters from all over the world were broadcasting live reports about Reidan. Honestly, they had found it ridiculous when they received the proposal from the Overgeared Guild a few days ago. They wanted to make an exhibition of a new guild creation while they were in the worst crisis...?

Moreover, Reidan was the main stage of the war. How could a guild opening ceremony be held in the middle of the battlefield? The most incomprehensible part was that the new guild consisted of artillerymen. Why organize a large artillerymen unit in Satisfy where cannons didn't play a big role? People couldn't understand Grid's actions. Some people even guessed that Grid had gone crazy from fright.

Surprisingly, the Overgeared Guild finished the opening ceremony safely. They set off all types of colorful fireworks and expanded their power. The result was surprising. The imperial army shrank back rather than attacking, and their morale deteriorated.

"I seem to feel a great strength from seeing the Overgeared Kingdom expand its power in the war. It is often called bluffing. It is a basic maneuver and the risk is high, but the effect was a success. 』

People belatedly realized that this was why Grid had created the new guild in Reidan despite the circumstances. Of course, it was Lauel's plan and one that could only be designed because of Noll's performance. However, the Overgeared Kingdom's king was Grid. Everything became Grid's intentions and achievements.

-I am an artilleryman and should join the Overgeared Guild...

Interest in the Overgeared Guild heated up. The artilleryman players, in particular, expressed an active interest in the Overgeared Guild. However, people regarded it as a poison.

-Does the Overgeared Kingdom really need artillerymen?The establishment of the artilleryman guild is mere propaganda.

-That's right.The only reason to make an artilleryman unit is that are cannons which can threaten the empire.

-In fact, there are no cannons that can threaten the empire. Cannons have a low hit rate and slow firing rate. They are powerful against buildings, but it is hard for them to be a threat against moving objects. They are generally worse than magic.

-Why do artillerymen exist?

-They are useless.

-Stop it.The artillerymen will be hurt.

Cannons were a weapon with few advantages. They had been used actively in the Demon King Subjugation, but that was a unique case. There was no practicality in establishing the artillerymen unit of the Overgeared Guild. This was a natural assessment made by people.

"Artillerymen, on the wall."

Now, Grid was preparing to break common sense like always. There were unique rated Overgeared Cannons made by him. Additionally, eight rare to epic rated cannons which had been made by the craftsmen were placed on the walls. He gave the order, and Lost Justice and the other artillerymen moved to the walls.

Then they saw it. The imperial army was gathered under the wall. Numerous people were filling up the desert. The hundreds of thousands of troops gave a different sense of pressure. There were lieutenants bearing the empire's flags, hundreds of cannons, 20 catapults, and thousands of shield soldiers.

"Hiik..." The faces of the artillerymen paled. They had been stuck in the closet for all their lives, and now that they finally got a chance to fight, it was against tens of thousands of enemies. They were feeling terrified when Toban shouted at them, "Hurry! Load the shells and aim at the enemy's catapult!"

Even now, thousands of soldiers were loading rocks on the catapults. The rocks were so large that it took a long time. The moment they fired, the walls of Reidan would collapse. Death would come the moment they allowed the enemies to enter.

"Hurry!"

Lost Justice regained her senses first and loaded the cannon with shells. Then she was surprised. The structure meant the shells were loaded in the back of the barrel rather than the front.

'The loading speed is really fast!'

The artillerymen didn't have time to check the details of the Overgeared Cannon. In this harsh and urgent situation, they simply acted upon orders.

"Aim!" Toban cried out.

30 artillerymen—the artillerymen rankers now called the Overgeared Artillerymen—started to readjust their positions. It was an indirect aiming. They took advantage of the flexibility to direct the barrel toward the sky. The initial velocity of the shells was slow, but the impact was greater. It was because shells that fell from a higher altitude had more destructive power. They could inflict greater damage on targets.

'I have to do well.'

'I have to unconditionally hit the target!'

The players ranked 1–30 on the artilleryman rankings. In the past few years, they didn't have a chance to be active. No one used them, but this didn't mean they wasted those years. They joined armies and didn't neglect a single day of training. In order to not forget they were artillerymen, they trained enthusiastically and didn't miss an opportunity to fire the cannons. Their skill level might be low and they were lacking experience, but they were full of enthusiasm and knew the theory.

"Launch!" Toban yelled as he raised a flag.

The artillerymen fired the Overgeared Cannons in unison. 10 cannons emitted black smoke as they fired simultaneously, and a thunderous sound filled the battlefield.

-It only sounds loud.

-It is as you say. The power is nothing.

The viewers scoffed at the weapon called a cannon. No, they weren't scoffing. They just told the truth they knew. Then at this moment, the truth changed.

-...Wow.

The shells fired from the Overgeared Cannons curved and fell down, piercing through the magicians' shields and hitting five catapults. It was ridiculous. The mountain-like catapults collapsed due to just 10 shells. It was a spectacle that couldn't be explained theoretically.

"Uwaaaack!" Thousands of soldiers who were loading rocks on the catapults screamed. The wreckage of the catapults fell and crashed into the soldiers and cannons. Casualties occurred in the formation of the imperial army. Yet only 10 cannons triggered this disaster...? The viewers, broadcasters, and artillerymen who fired the Overgeared Cannons couldn't close their mouths.

Notification windows appeared in front of the Overgeared artillerymen.

[You have succeeded in destroying the imperial army's 2nd catapult.]

[You have defeated an imperial soldier.]

[You have defeated an imperial...]

....

...

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has...]

....

...

[The Firearms Mastery skill level has risen from beginner master to intermediate level 2.]

"What?"

The notification windows conveyed good news that couldn't be imagined. The artillerymen were stunned, but they couldn't feel joy at the news. It was because Toban's roar entered their ears, "Reload!"

"R-Reloading!" The artillerymen barely maintained a hold on their senses and moved. The secondary loading speed was also fast. It was several times faster than loading an existing cannon.

"Aim!" Toban raised his flag.

The artillerymen focused on four of the 15 catapults left in the imperial army. They were catapults already filled with large rocks. The imperial soldiers, who had fallen, scrambled up to pull the ropes. They were preparing to fire, but the catapults were too big and the rocks were so heavy that it was slow.

“Launch!”

In that gap, the 10 Overgeared Cannons fired again. The power of this bombardment was greater than the previous one. It was a natural phenomenon since the artillerymen’s stats and skill levels had increased.

-T-This is ridiculous.

The viewers found it hard to distinguish between a dream and reality as they saw the big catapults crashing down. The Overgeared Cannon was an innovative and powerful weapon.

“Oh, very strong.” The Overgeared members were also surprised.

Grid explained to them, “It is stronger because the target is still. It won’t have as much power against people.”

It was a calm tone. The man who made such a monstrous cannon didn’t seem fazed at all. The Overgeared members intuitively felt that the Overgeared Cannons placed on the walls weren’t in their ultimate form.

‘Can he make it with a higher rating?’

‘If I think about a legendary cannon...’

“...!” On the walls, Grid had been staring down at the battlefield only to have his eyes widen. The smell of alcohol permeated his nose as someone emerged from the imperial army. Grid recognized him immediately. “The Drunk Duke!”

The Drunk Duke flew up. He reached the top of the wall in an instant and stretched out his hand toward an Overgeared Cannon. The Drunk Duke attacked, but Toban pulled out a shield and blocked it.

“Keook!” Toban’s shield and skills were meaningless as he was injured severely and fell to his knees. Then it happened when the Drunk Duke was going to aim at the Overgeared Cannons again. Two flashes of light flew toward him. The Drunk Duke perceived the danger and lowered his posture as a sword and hand plow grazed the top of his head.

“...What?” The Drunk Duke looked like he had seen a ghost as he made eye contact with the farmer holding a hand plow. He was so shocked that his drunkenness disappeared.

#### [Chapter 1014](#)

The Saharan Empire had a history of thousands of years and couldn’t have produced only seven heroes. There were numerous heroes in the history of the empire, 12 of whom were awarded dukeships. It meant the original empire had 12 ducal families, but time was a scary law.

Families were corrupted or weakened as generations passed while others experienced misfortune. Five of the ducal families naturally disappeared or became traitors. It was the reason why only two of the seven ducal families currently in the empire contained the lineage of the founding dukes.

“Piaro?”



He was the pillar of the empire a few decades ago, the only great swordsman at the time, one of the most prestigious names, the emperor's ally... and finally, the traitor.

"I must be hallucinating." Diworth loosened his clothing as he stared at the farmer in front of him. The farmer's eyes, nose, and mouth—they were all like they had been in the old days. His strong physique was the same. Only the wrinkles around his eyes were different. Additionally, the huge pressure that was like a great mountain had disappeared.

Diworth was able to glimpse the winds of time but not the energy. The farmer's aging aura was no different from the wind, sand, and trees. He looked different yet the same. Diworth, who was trying to distinguish the difference between Piaro in his memories and the farmer in front of him, soon accepted reality.

"That's right."

It was the same person. The farmer was Piaro.

"I see. You're not dead."

In the days when Piaro led the Red Knights, the Red Knights were the symbol of imperial power and all the people raised them up. Diworth was the same. He hated Piaro but was forced to acknowledge him. When the empire sent a team to capture Piaro, stating Piaro would be punished for betraying the empire, Diworth was one of the people who failed to catch him.

"I thought you had left this world because I hadn't heard about you for so long. I didn't know you would be in the Overgeared Kingdom."

Diworth thought the emperor might be pleased to know that Piaro was alive. His Majesty the Emperor still hated yet missed Piaro. Then there was a question.

'Does His Majesty the Emperor know about this?'

The emperor had always been submerged in darkness after the death of the empress and Piaro's betrayal. However, he had become bright again one day. He regained his energy. It had been around the time when Legendary Knight Mercedes was exiled.

'Why did he banish Mercedes who became a legend?'

Did he know that Piaro was alive, and so he gave Mercedes a separate command to protect him?

'It is possible.'

The emperor probably knew that Mercedes had gone to serve the Overgeared King. The emperor was more informed than the Seven Dukes. Despite this, the emperor hadn't placed any restraints on Mercedes and wasn't active in conquering the Overgeared Kingdom. He had only belatedly declared war to quell the complaints of the angry nobles after the Overgeared King accepted the evil eyes. The emperor didn't force the Seven Dukes to participate in the war. It was why Rachel didn't participate in the war.

'Yes, he already knows.'

Piaro was alive.

'Additionally, he has forgiven Piaro's betrayal.'

Or perhaps as Rachel, Grenhal, and Morse claimed, Piaro's betrayal might've been a falsehood. If this was assumed, then all circumstances were correct.

"Hrmm..." Diworth glanced down from the wall. Hundreds of thousands of allied soldiers in the desert were looking up here. Thousands of artillerymen units were still struggling to reload the cannons and catapults.

'If they know about Piaro's survival...'

They would be greatly agitated. The confusion would weaken the army.

'Is it possible that the relationship between the empire and the Overgeared Kingdom will improve because of Piaro?'

Of course not. It was an unrealistic story. In the first place, Piaro would never forgive the empire. It was the empire that had killed his family.

'Additionally, if we leave the Overgeared Kingdom that doesn't recognize the empire as the master of the continent, it will harm the empire.'

Thus, Diworth made a decision. He should kill Piaro right now. It was the only way to thwart the chaos, win the war, and allow the empire to rise again as the master of the continent.

"Piaro, do you know? I hated you for a long time. Every time I saw you clearly being better than me, my self-esteem was damaged. Now they are all old memories. I have no evil feelings for you." Diworth was serious. "I will consider the old days and kill you without any pain."

He would cut with a single move. Diworth made up his mind and drank from a bottle. He was in a hurry. Aside from Basara, the other dukes had tried to stop the execution of Piaro's family. They were clear on the fact that Piaro had been framed, and they petitioned to stop the execution. If Diworth didn't kill Piaro before they arrived, there would be plenty of room for complications.

'I am glad that the other dukes are chasing Skunk who is doing something crazy.'

Skunk was an explorer they had met accidentally in Galest. He was a talent who was being watched by the empire. The dukes' eyes had shone when they heard Skunk say he would cross the Red Sea. It didn't mean they had forgotten they were in the middle of a war. They just looked down on the Overgeared Kingdom.

Diworth's magic power boiled, and the alcohol scent vibrated. Diworth was prepared to eliminate Piaro in an instant.

'Please die without pain and be freed from the sufferings of life.'

Diworth would be merciful to the old hero—a hated but respected man. He pulled out a bright and glowing weapon that didn't fit with his appearance and swung it at Piaro. Then Diworth was surprised.

Piario didn't give off the same strong atmosphere that he did in the past. So, he thought Piario was weak. Yet the hand plow easily stopped his strike.

"You still have a personality where you judge and act one-sidedly. Do you still hurt the soldiers when you get drunk?" Piario clicked his tongue as the air surrounding him started to disappear.

The wind, the air, the ground, the sand, and the weeds—all the surrounding nature lost their energy. The cause of that was Piario. Nature gave him their energy.

"No way, this..." Diworth's fingers trembled as he hurriedly pulled back his sword. He had heard of Natural State before. "It is a transcendent Natural State!"

The weakened Piario was actually stronger than before. The form of swordsmanship had transformed into farming, but it had evolved instead of degenerating.

"Free Farming."

The moment nature lost all its energy, the space became weightless and the floating Piario raised the hand plow over his head.

"Wait." Grid appeared and stopped Piario. "Piario and Mercedes, destroy the catapults."

In Satisfy, there were often scenes where weapons and weapons or magic and skills collided and offset each other's power. It could be called the singularity of the virtual reality game. All weapons, skills, and magic had a shape, establishing a formula they could respond to and counterattack. Of course, if one of the two forces colliding with each other were unilaterally strong, it couldn't be offset. In any case, a person could try defending by colliding with an incoming attack. This was why in a fight between masters, they kept striking each other with their weapons.

However, there were some exceptions. One was the attack of a super large weapon. The size and dimension of the attack were different because it carried a heavy weight. It couldn't be offset by ordinary weapons, skills, or magic. The system judged an attack with a 'much larger weight and area of attack' as a one-sidedly strong attack.

That's right. The moment the catapults of the empire fired, Reidan would be in danger. The Overgeared Kingdom had no way to stop the flying rocks, and the walls had to be preserved. The most rational thing was to break the catapult itself like the Overgeared Cannons had attempted to do.

However, Grid didn't have the ability to break the catapults placed in hundreds of thousands of troops. Long-ranged skills such as 100,000 Army Swordsmanship or Fly Up were virtually impossible. A general weapon exerted weaker strength to siege weapons, buildings, and facilities.

"Thus, I will leave it to the two of you." Grid approached Piario and Mercedes and gave them confidence. "Don't die."

If he hadn't met Chreshler, Grid would've never risked his knights dying. Now Grid had a sense of transcendence. He realized that wrapping the knights in his arms was detrimental to their growth.

"I believe that you will complete the mission and come back safely."

He would believe in and rely on them.

“I will keep that in mind.”

His Majesty’s trust in them deepened. Piaro and Mercedes were thrilled and jumped straight toward the enemy. Before that...

“Take this.” Grid handed the Enlightenment Sword to Mercedes and Lantier’s Cloak to Piaro.

“I can’t accept this!”

“I can’t take it either.”

Piario was panicked, and Mercedes was also reluctant. They couldn’t receive Grid’s favorite sword and the cloak that protected him. There were Jude, Noll, Kasim, and the Overgeared members by Grid’s side, but Duke Diworth was a tough opponent. Consequently, they couldn’t help worrying.

Grid smiled while attaching the Blade Aiming at the Gods to a sword using the Pulling Device. Then he patted Valhalla of Infinite Affection and declared, “I have plenty of good weapons left.”

Grid favored the Enlightenment Sword over the Sword Aiming at the Gods because of the explosions of the black flames. He was able to accumulate damage to the enemies without interruption, causing the damage to be higher than that of the Sword Aiming at the Gods. It wasn’t weaker than the Sword Aiming at the Gods because it had been successfully enhanced to +4.

That’s right. At the present time, the Enlightenment Sword was better than the Sword Aiming at the Gods. The reason why Grid gave the Enlightenment Sword to Mercedes at this time was that the Enlightenment Sword was specialized for ‘slaughter.’ The sight of Mercedes wielding the Enlightenment Sword against hundreds of thousands of troops... It was scary just imagining it.

‘The Sword Aiming at the Gods is better when dealing with the duke.’

Additionally, Grid was looking forward to the options of the Sword Aiming at the Gods.

[\* 50% bonus damage to transcendent beings such as gods, angels, great demons, boss monsters, and named NPCs.]

As noted, the system recognized boss monsters and named NPCs as transcendents. So, as long as it was a named NPC like Drunk Duke Diworth, the Sword Aiming at the Gods would be stronger than the Enlightenment Sword. This was despite the fact that the skill Contempt of the Weak, which reduced a non-transcendent’s health by 80%, wasn’t activated. As Grid and his knights were talking, Drunk Duke Diworth gritted his teeth.

“Overgeared King. The king of a small country dares to deal with a duke of the empire? Stop talking bullshit and get lost!” Diworth drank more alcohol. He could no longer control his body and staggered. “Piario! Mercedes! I can’t let you go!”

One was the hero of the former age, and the other was the hero of the new age. The moment Piario and Mercedes appeared in the imperial camp, the imperial soldiers would feel great confusion. They wouldn’t be able to fight properly. However, the moment Diworth flew toward Piario, the orange flags signaling retreat rose from the imperial camp.

“What?”

Calling a retreat...? When they just arrived in front of the enemy? Without even saying anything to him? The bewildered Diworth focused his eyes and heard Marquis Fulbas crying out with his magic power, "Duke Diworth! I received an imperial order to retreat completely!"

"An imperial order?!"

"An imperial order?"

Drunk Duke Diworth, Grid, and the Overgeared members were all shocked. Why were they retreating now? Of course, everyone soon knew the reason. It was due to the world message that appeared.

[A great explorer has found a new island in the Red Sea.]

[The name of the new island is 'Ruins of the War God.']

"...!!" Diworth's eyes widened. He could understand the reason for the emperor's retreat order.

"A ruins exploration...!"

Moreover, those were the ruins of a god. They had to occupy it and collect the relics first. Diworth leaped down from the walls. Piaro and Mercedes tried to grab him, but Diworth's movements were too irregular and they missed him. Meanwhile, Grid didn't care about Diworth.

It was due to Lauel's whisper, -The ruins are valuable. The value of the relics no one has obtained yet will exceed our imagination. We must immediately dispatch an expedition force.

They couldn't just suck their fingers and let the emperor obtain them. Lauel's judgment was the same as Grid's.

### [Chapter 1015](#)

The emperor had negative feelings about the war against the Overgeared Kingdom. Was it because he hoped that Piaro wouldn't be swept up in the war? No. The emperor wasn't foolish enough to allow private feelings to affect the nation. There were several reasonable factors that caused him to have a negative view of the war.

Firstly, he appreciated the value of Overgeared King Grid, who was Pagma's Descendant and had received the title of Hero King. He was a means to help the emperor fulfill his ancestors' desires to enter the East Continent. Additionally, he found out that Grid had gained Piaro. The emperor acknowledged Grid's power in many ways and wanted to treat him magnanimously rather than be enemies.

Secondly, there was the fact that 3rd Imperial Prince Benoit was a variable. He couldn't tell the Seven Dukes that he was worried about his son's well-being, but Prince Benoit was currently wandering the continent while conducting suspicious rituals. At first, the emperor didn't know what the rituals were. Then he realized that Belial's summoning had a direct connection with Benoit. Why was this child so obsessed with summoning the great demons? They were a big threat to the entire continent.

The previously summoned Belial had been relatively low in rank and easily stopped by the Overgeared members. However, if Benoit summoned a high ranking great demon, then it was highly likely some parts of the continent would be destroyed and there was no guarantee the empire would be safe from the threat. He wanted to avoid a depletion of power just in case.

Mercedes in the Overgeared Kingdom wasn't easy to deal with either.

'Chensler needs to bring Benoit back quickly.'

Thirdly, he didn't want to provide an opportunity for 4th Imperial Prince Edan's magic machines army to be active. Thanks to successfully mining the magic machines, Edan's faction was growing and the emperor couldn't leave him unchecked. It was a fact that Edan would make a great achievement if his magic machines army participated in the war. With his birth trauma, it would be the worst if Edan gained a higher position. There was room for him to start a revolt if he became the crown prince.

Fourthly, there was the problem of finances. The empire had many borders because it had territories all over the continent. Many large nations were still loyal to the empire, but the ethnic minorities were rebelling across the continent. Just as the Nero had greatly damaged the empire in the past, the ethnic minorities that survived decades after the empire's subjugation policy have grown tough. They were like weeds that wouldn't die. Too many resources would be consumed to ignore them and concentrate on the war with the Overgeared Kingdom. In particular, the giants were a problem.

"...I have a headache."

The emperor wondered since when the dream of conquering the continent had become so distant. Was it due to the Overgeared Kingdom suddenly being founded one day? Or was it because the empire relied on the existing power structure and failed to respond to the sudden changes? No. Was it because of the indifferent grandmaster? Was it due to the flimsy Five Pillars? Was it because of the boredom of the Seven Dukes?

That also wasn't it either. It wasn't something that could be blamed on anyone else.

'It is all my fault.'

The emperor had been shocked and disheartened by the death of Empress Aria and Piaro's betrayal occurring in succession, so he hid in the skirts of Empress Marie and turned away from the painful reality. He left behind all of the emperor's responsibilities. Thus, the empire lost decades.

"I'm not qualified."

He wasn't emperor material. He was guilty of betraying the family members who had believed in him and made him the heir. How much would the first emperor lament if he saw the present empire? The emperor rebuked himself and opened the map of the West Continent, which was supposed to be painted in one color by now.

"A carrier pigeon has arrived from Duke Grenhal."

"A carrier pigeon?"

It was an age where communication with magic was possible. What was the meaning of using a carrier pigeon? Was there an area on the battlefield where magic power was blocked? The emperor admired the magical skills and thorough readiness of the Overgeared Kingdom and confirmed the contents of the carrier pigeon.

There was a brief description about the discovery of the war god's ruins in the Red Sea. The writer argued that the value of the site was highly appreciated and it was necessary to focus on exploration.

“Hah... Haha.”The emperor was delighted. He believed that the heavens had given him an opportunity to end the meaningless war with the Overgeared Kingdom. By the way, it was a bit absurd. Why was Duke Grenhal in the Red Sea instead of on the battlefield?

‘...Even Duke Grenhal.’

Duke Grenhal was a person who had helped to reduce the excessive expansion of the empress’ faction. Yet he wasn’t aware of the power of the Overgeared Kingdom and fooled around.

“Aish.”

It was disappointing because the emperor’s trust in him was greater than the others. The emperor crumpled the letter in an annoyed manner and ordered Bain, “Bring back the advance troops who marched on the Overgeared Kingdom and prepare for the exploration of the Ruins of the War God.”

There would be enormous treasures hidden in the historical site of the war god’s ruins, as well as more dangers lurking. Yet there was no objection to the emperor stopping to war to concentrate on ruins exploration.

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It was a voyage that could be described with several words.

‘Extremely lucky.’

Skunk knew the empire had a great interest in him, but he never imagined the dukes would personally participate in the voyage. Moreover, they willingly gave him the best ships. He read the route with the help of the Compass of Truth, got past the water clan with the resourcefulness of Gold Crown Basara, and then handled the sea monsters with the help of Beast King Morse.

[You have found the Ruins of the War God!]

[It is an achievement that will remain in history!]

[The achievement rewards...]

Skunk achieved a new feat again. It was a great achievement gained a short time after fully exploring the West Continent. Skunk’s heart was full. The companions who believed and followed him along with the Seven Dukes—Skunk saw their faces and felt like the protagonist of his father’s movie. He felt like this was how Grid always felt.

“First...” Skunk confirmed the compensation for discovering the Ruins of the War God and planted a seedling. It would grow into a tree in one year and become his eye. He was cautious. “I heard that are many dangerous traps and guardians in the ruins. How about waiting here until reinforcements arrive?”

Skunk’s companions were ready to set up barracks at a beach where beautiful white sand shone. They based it on the premise of exploring the ruins with the empire. Skunk’s expedition group wasn’t strong enough to explore the site, and it was likely that all types of players would come here after the world message. It was ideal to cooperate with the imperial forces to explore the site and obtain as much compensation as possible before uninvited guests arrived.

There was a woman with a small crown on her head. The mysterious beauty called Basara, who always had her eyes closed, nodded. "Sir Skunk is right. We should wait and avoid the guardians' eyes before reinforcements arrive."

It was a reasonable opinion, but Beast King Morse thought differently. "Me, you, Duke Grenhal. The three of us together should be enough to go against the guardians. I would rather explore the ruins and monopolize the treasures."

Immortal King Grenhal nodded. "Duke Morse is right. There is danger in the ruins of the war god, but we can overcome it if we join forces."

The reason why Morse and Grenhal were impatient was that these were relics of the war god, not an ordinary god. War God Zeratul, the sword and shield of Goddess Rebecca, was regarded as the only one capable of dealing with the absolute power of Evil God Yatan. His transcendent power which was given to his 'followers' was indirectly described in the war against the Seven Malignant Saints.

[Those who were most active in the subjugation of the Seven Malignant Saints were the followers of the war god. Their martial arts were overwhelming, and the Seven Malignant Saints couldn't be idle.]

The war god didn't come personally, but his followers threatened the Seven Malignant Saints. Of course, there were many exaggerations in myths, but it was still great. Grenhal and Morse coveted the war god's secret techniques that were likely to be sleeping here. They didn't want to hand them over to anyone else. In particular, Grenhal's eagerness was great.

'I can keep the grandmaster in check if I can get a secret technique.'

A person whom even the Seven Dukes couldn't grasp—the grandmaster was believed to have lived for hundreds of years without dying and that he had stood by emperors of successive generations, making him a threatening existence. The empire might exist now because of his many accomplishments, but his recent activities were far from showing loyalty to the imperial family.

'It is a problem when a monster with other interests has greater authority than the Seven Dukes.'

The presence of the grandmaster was enough to trigger the bored dukes. No matter how hard they tried to figure it out, a monster whose identity was still unknown was by the emperor's side. There was no meaning in it if a monster was the one holding the national flag. The existence of a vague risk factor caused them to feel anxious and chaotic, turning away from their complacency. Now things would change.

'I will become stronger, drive out the grandmaster, and be a new stimulus for the dukes. I will protect the emperor fully.' Duke Grenhal was determined and vowed this. It was different from when he dealt with a small country called Overgeared.

Basara sighed. She knew there was no way to stop Grenhal. "Okay. We will explore it. Still, let's look slowly from the outskirts. It will be harder the deeper we enter."

"That is a good idea. Understood."

"..."



The members of Skunk's expedition group were upset because the dukes only consulted each other and decided on their own. Dog Woman whispered to Skunk, who didn't dare intervene in the conversation, "Isn't this good? They are the Seven Dukes. We can never get rid of them, and we will be able to go through this small island quickly."

"These are the ruins of the war god, not someone else." Skunk's face was pale as he recalled the war god follower who had learned two secret techniques from the Galgunos Temple. "If there are three or four... Perhaps even a duke won't be able to cope with a war god follower who has learned more secret techniques."

"There is nothing we can do. Will we be able to cope with an overwhelming enemy that even three of the Seven Dukes can't handle?"

"Indeed, you are correct."

In any case, there was no point in talking among themselves. The dukes were already moving into the jungle. Since the knights and soldiers were escorting Skunk, it seemed true that Skunk was important. They had only taken a few steps into the jungle when a fist suddenly flew toward Grenhal, and he defended with his shield. A single punch of the fist struck four times. Every time a strike overlapped, the power doubled. Eventually, the two-headed hippopotamus took a step backward.

"Hah." Grenhal couldn't help admiring it. The two-headed hippopotamus was nearly 2.5 tons in weight and had a strength of two ogres. This was the first time Grenhal saw it being pushed back. Grenhal scattered some energy blades. It was a swift counterattack. However, the targeted guardian climbed up the tree to escape and folded his arms. The name over his head was war god follower who had learned five secret techniques.

"Crazy..." Skunk murmured to himself. The two secret technique followers were stronger than high rankers, so it was unclear how strong those who had learned five secret techniques would be. To think that such a monster would appear at the beginning...?

'Even the name is white.'

This meant it was classified as a regular monster. It showed how high the overall difficulty of the historical site would be.

"He is like a monkey!" Beast King Morse was growling. The sharvel tiger he always carried with him jumped forward and swung its paws at the follower. The moment the body of the sharvel tiger touched the branch, a net unfolded and tied up the tiger.

Gold Crown Basara, who still had her eyes closed, muttered, "There are traps in every corner."

It was a dense jungle. There were countless trees. The leaves and branches were crossed like a spiderweb. Basara sensed the traps installed all over them. As a few troops screamed because of the traps, Basara spoke to Grenhal and Morse, "We have to retreat."

The traps were the problem. Grenhal decided to follow Basara's judgment. "That would be good."

Morse was different. "I'm going to punish this guy!"

He avoided the war god follower as he rescued the sharvel tiger before turning and kicking out. There was a burst of wind. The kick was sharp, but the war god follower succeeded in defending his knees. Morse didn't stop. He used his feet like hooks and grabbed the follower's knees. The follower in the high tree was forcibly pulled by Morse and crashed to the ground. As his hard face touched the ground, the follower flinched.

Skunk's group watched the process and couldn't close their mouths. They hadn't expected the dukes to be so great.

'I thought it was somewhat exaggerated because Rigal was hit by Grid.'

No. Grid was just too strong. Skunk deeply admired Grid and told Duke Basara, "A few trees have a keyhole. They seem like devices to stop the jungle's traps... It is a priority to find keys that fit."

Skunk had thoroughly observed the surroundings during this short period of time. As an explorer who was becoming a legend, he had all types of observation skills and quickly grasped how to escape the jungle traps. The problem was how they were going to get the keys.

'It will hurt to find clues.'

It wouldn't be easy as long as there wasn't a 'master key' in the world. In fact, it seemed like this process would take a very long time.

#### [Chapter 1016](#)

At the port city of Galest, the imperial army was preparing to sail through the route in the Red Sea that Grenhal had left behind. Earl Baget was moving among the bustling soldiers. "Only three flour bags? You pathetic bastards! Can you call yourselves soldiers of the empire?! Can you defend your country with this much strength and passion? Stop talking nonsense! It must be hard for your parents!"

"...!"

Earl Baget had long been famous for his military discipline, but there were no cases when he had cursed at soldiers who were doing well. Now he even mentioned their parents? The soldiers suffered great shock and hurt. Those soldiers—who were working hard to prepare for the journey—lost their motivation as Earl Baget's words continued, and their overall work efficiency was lowered. Marquis Fulbas ran after hearing the news and tried to stop Earl Baget. "I understand that your heart is impatient, but do it moderately. Why are you cursing the soldiers who are doing well instead of praising them?"

"It is funny they are reacting like this from being yelled at! Do you think it makes sense that those who swore to sacrifice themselves for their country can't take a bit of cursing?! Marquis Fulbas, you are the problem! People are always talking behind the scenes that you are sensitive to public sentiment and don't have a backbone! There is a rumor that it is the aftereffects of a domestic violence incident when you were young!"

"W-What?" Marquis Fulbas' gaze sank. The fact that Earl Baget raised his voice to the marquis was a secondary issue. The family of Marquis Fulbas was famous for being kind and generous. There was no such thing as domestic violence. Yet there was a rumor going around that he was a victim of domestic violence...? It insulted his parents and his entire family.

“You dare...! You dare say that?!” Marquis Fulbas, who had always shown a gracious appearance in front of his men, was enraged. He shouted while stomping his feet, “Who dares to spread such rumors?”

“...I can’t tell you. I will never speak about who it is, even if there is a blade against my neck. I’m not an unscrupulous person who will sell out my colleagues. However, the act of insulting one’s superiors and destroying your position is no different from treason. I will give you a hint out of loyalty. It was one of the earls.”

“Earl...? Earl!!! I...! I have been doing so well that now they want to hit me in the back of the head?!” Marquis Fulbas’ neck was red from anger as he stumbled away from his position.

A soldier approached Earl Baget, who looked 10 years older. The man was called Serun, and he had the Disguise skill. “How come you don’t even miss a day? It is really great.”

“...I don’t feel too comfortable. I have to do it because of my duty.”

“You seem to be enjoying it...”

“...” Earl Baget looked restlessly at Serun. In other words, Huroi wanted to say something, but he refrained from doing so. The duration of the Disguise skill was three days. Without Serun’s active help, Huroi wouldn’t have progressed so far in this infiltration mission.

Serun was smiling. “In any case, it is thrilling and fun. I want this to be a real adventure. I’m glad I listened to Euphemina and followed you.”

“...” Huroi was dying of nervousness. He had dreamed of being captured and executed at least 10 times, but it was a risk he took for Grid’s sake.

‘I need to get the route as soon as possible... Marquis Fulbas isn’t giving me a gap.’

\*\*\*

“It feels bad when I think about it.”

Three days had passed since the imperial army retreated without looking back.

The Overgeared members praised the soldiers who suffered during the war, comforted the people, and devoted themselves to Reidan’s restoration. They had to join in the exploration of the Ruins of the War God, but could they afford to intrude on the empire? They had to do it. The empire couldn’t be allowed to monopolize the ruins. However, they didn’t have the route. It wasn’t simple to find the Ruins of the War God. They had to concentrate on saving their energy while the empire was in the process of exploring the ruins.

The Overgeared members, who had been exchanging information while running around for three days, suddenly became enraged. They had risked their lives in the war against the empire. They put everything into the war. Yet for the empire, the war with them was just a game. The moment they discovered the ruins, they left without looking back.

There was now an empty desert. The vacant spot left by the imperial army was a great disgrace.

“These XX dogs.” Blood Warrior Katz—a Japanese player—cursed in a Korean style. None of the curse words he knew in Japanese fit better than the Korean word.

“I’m really furious.” Katz slammed a fist against the table.

“...”

It was a place where Grid and the 10 meritorious retainers were gathered. No one could stop Katz as he forgot his manners and recklessly expressed his anger. The number of enemies Katz had killed during the war was 4,891. He had fought the opponents advancing to Reidan and given his life three times. He was able to gain a bigger achievement than anyone else by demonstrating his strength in large-scale battles.

In the Overgeared Kingdom, he felt a sense of belonging for the first time, and it was the best organization in the world for him. He was also proud. He didn’t want to make sacrifices.

However...

However...!

“The XX guys weren’t serious? How ridiculous and insignificant would our desperate fighting seem? Eh? Kuso! Kuso! Kusoo!!!” (Shit)

Katz punched the round table again and again. He couldn’t control his anger until the round table half-collapsed.

“I’m sorry.”

The others in the 10 meritorious retainers felt the same as Katz. Thus, no one could stop Katz.

“I’m sorry.” Grid stopped Katz. Then he deeply bowed to all his companions. “I was incompetent. I was lacking, and the Overgeared Kingdom ended up like this. That’s why the empire arbitrarily came and left. I’m sorry. I’m really sorry.”

There were no pretenses. The 10 meritorious retainers knew everything about him. They were true friends he shared many memories and mental rapport with. They weren’t people he needed pretenses with. Therefore, he apologized sincerely.

“On the day I was invited by the empire, I should’ve shown a more powerful look to the empire. Maybe these things wouldn’t have happened.”

The players held Grid up as the peak, but he was actually lacking. He was too lacking. He was weak. Grid was daunted by the spirit of the Seven Dukes. That’s why he looked easy.

“The moment the empire declared war, I should’ve discussed things with you and prepared for all the variables. If I did, we could’ve avoided a lot of damage. But I didn’t do that.”

He should’ve checked the soldiers’ armed condition and made more weapons. However, he hadn’t understood the concept of war and made only swords and armor, which was the worst mistake. In large-scale combat, the armed status of the soldiers wasn’t the most important factor. It would’ve been better to concentrate on strengthening the equipment of the 10 meritorious retainers, who had the ability to kill thousands of enemies.

Yet Grid had been greedy. While he was at the smithy, he thought it would be better to make himself stronger and sometimes turned a blind eye to his colleagues. This was the result. His colleagues who believed in him and chose production materials as the reward for the National Competition—most of them had remained stagnant and made great sacrifices during the war with the empire.

“...It’s all my fault.”

“What are you saying all of a sudden? Did you receive an arrow in the head?”

It happened while everyone was confused by Grid, who couldn’t lift his head.

“Why is it your fault? It’s our fault we aren’t as strong as you,” Jishuka sprang up and spat out coldly.

“The bastards who think Grid was wrong, come out. I’ll kill them.”

The words weren’t based on her feelings.

Jishuka was able to grasp the situation more soberly than anyone else and accept it.

“In particular, those from the Tzedakah Guild. You should apologize to Grid. I thought I gathered a group of geniuses. Ever since being with Grid, have we ever helped Grid? We’ve always been helped!”

Clang!

Jishuka was different from Katz. Rather than the table, she struck the more expensive and easily broken glass window. It wasn’t just one. Every step she took, she broke a window and repeated this over and over. Finally, a wind swept through the meeting room.

“Look. No one can say a word. Grid, it isn’t your fault. It is our problem that we are more incompetent than you expected.” Jishuka broke the last remaining window before smiling and sweeping back her hair. Her brilliant hair blazed like the sun as it fell on her beautiful collarbone and chest bone.

“...” Jishuka was more imposing than anyone else.

Yura was envious of Jishuka, who could scold everyone and comfort Grid. Unlike Jishuka, Yura was late in joining the Overgeared Guild. She couldn’t actively defend Grid like Jishuka. The period of time in which Yura had been a member was too short for her to rebuke her colleagues. Yura clenched her hands into fists, and her eyes shook as she alternated before the proud Jishuka and the blank looking Grid.

‘Did Youngwoo-ssi delay the answer to my confession because...’

...He was more drawn to Jishuka than Yura? It wasn’t because of the difference in breast size but the difference in heart. She was a woman, but she also thought Jishuka was cool. How radiant would Jishuka be in the eyes of Grid, who had been with her since the days of the Tzedakah Guild?

Lael, who had been silent throughout the meeting, suddenly muttered to himself, “Kukukuk... This, this. Things are turning out very well.”

Everyone’s eyes focused on him, and he raised his chin to the fullest extent, revealing white teeth as he grinned. “I got the route to the Ruins of the War God from Huroi. Since we are all here, let’s set up an expedition.”

Lael didn't care about the aftermath of the war or the empire's arrogant attitude. He was only interested in the historical ruins. If the 10 meritorious retainers' trust in Lael hadn't been so deep, they would've misunderstood that he didn't understand their position since he didn't fight directly in the war or make sacrifices.

However, the 10 meritorious retainers trusted Lael. They also knew that he struggled more than anyone else behind the scenes. Thus, everyone waited for Lael's next words. What did the genius who raised and led the Overgeared Kingdom with Grid have in mind now?

In the silence, Lael brought out words that revived everyone's expectations, "Once the ruins emerged, the empire withdrew the army without any hesitation. This suggests something big. In the first place, the empire didn't want to fight against the Overgeared Kingdom."

"What...? The empire doesn't want to go to war against us?"

"Yes. We have to interpret that as the reason for the empire leaving without stationing any troops behind the moment a plausible excuse popped up."

Lael's gaze turned to Mercedes, who was guarding Grid. "Maybe... From the time the emperor sent Mercedes away..."

The emperor's heart was projected into Lael's violently spinning mind. "The emperor probably wants to be allies rather than enemies with the Overgeared Kingdom. This war wasn't the result of the emperor's desire."

The listening Vantner scratched his bald head. "So what? The emperor wants to be on the same side as us?"

"Yes, to be precise, they covet Grid. The emperor seems to be looking at a bigger world rather than unifying the West Continent and being a frog in a well."

"A bigger world? You mean advancing to the East Continent?"

"Probably. However, many nobles demanded that we be punished for the evil eyes incident, forcing the emperor to declare war."

"Hrmm..."

The room was silent. The emperor's favor...

This was good news. In fact, a war with the empire wasn't beneficial to the Overgeared Kingdom. Due to the huge power gap, the longer the war lasted, the more likely it was that the Overgeared Kingdom would have its resources consumed first. There would be a loss, even if the Overgeared Kingdom won. If they took away the empire's land, it was unrealistic to place troops to defend the land. Moreover, there was still the most important thing...

'Grid never said he wants to be emperor.'

That's right. Grid didn't covet the emperor's throne. It was natural. How could he be emperor when he couldn't even digest the role of king properly? There was an order to everything, and the status of an

emperor was currently something that Grid couldn't handle. There was no room for the desire to fight and win against the empire.

"The expedition should be a small number of elites. Due to the nature of the ruins, the level of the monsters will be very high and mid-ranked people won't be able to help," Lauel kept talking. "We also have to prepare for an empty house, so we need to leave enough power behind in the Overgeared Kingdom."

"Then who are you going to send?"

"King Grid and the 10 meritorious retainers."

"All of us?"

"Yes. Let's respond with sending the best. Additionally, there will be Hurent."

Peak Sword, who had been absent-minded for three days after failing to adjust to the rapidly changing situation, suddenly rose. "Then let's go!"

This was exciting. It had been a long time since Grid and the 10 meritorious retainers formed a party together, and the presence of the Aura Master was also reassuring.

"If we take this opportunity to get rid of the dukes and gain the treasures, it will be killing two birds with one stone," Faker muttered.

"Imperial bastards, I will kill you," Katz responded.

Lauel calmed them down, "Let's go and see the situation."

Simultaneously, in Reidan's fields...

"Why me..." Hurent, who had been called during the field work, sighed.

Why did Grid want to take a weak person like himself to a historical site with a high difficulty? He guessed Lauel's intelligence had decreased.

### [Chapter 1017](#)

Kirinus and Rachel—their confrontation, as the best spearsmen of the continent, was as fierce as expected. Still, the dignity and majesty of the duel between the absolute best couldn't be seen. They fought for days and nights across two mountains, and it eventually turned into a dog fight. There were times when they grabbed each other by the collar and rolled across the ground.

'It is one month as of today.'

Both sides would fight until they were exhausted. Then after having a break, they would start again. Kirinus and Rachel had already done this for the seventh time. The confrontation between them had continued for a month.

'The result can't be concluded.'

Both of them were masters who had reached enlightenment with the spear. Since their attack and defense had reached unity, it wasn't easy to come to a conclusion. It was difficult for them to fatally injure each other because their attack and defense were linked by a single action.

This was Kraugel's insight, but it was a meaningless interpretation. The game system recognized Kirinus and Rachel as the best in their class and gave them great health and defense in recognition of the fact that 'the absolute person shouldn't die easily.' They could eliminate players with a strike, but against each other, the damage was only enough to expose each other's gaps but not come to a conclusion.

If this were a world of fantasy or martial arts novels, the two people would receive all types of descriptions. Unfortunately, this was reality. It was a reality confined to the framework of the 'game', so they couldn't escape the absolute value of the system. Nevertheless...

'I can learn a lot.'

A month would be tedious and irritating for both parties involved, but for Kraugel, it was a time that couldn't be traded for any amount of gold. Kraugel's knowledge expanded after watching the two people fight for a month. Kraugel was watching the duel with full concentration.

"..."

Behind him, Rachel's knights were kneeling down politely. The 30 of them, each with skills of a Red Knight in the 20s, had been completely overwhelmed by Kraugel. Of course, it wasn't like this from the beginning. On the first day, the 30 knights overpowered Kraugel and were on the verge of taking away his life. Then Kraugel did something and poured out blue clouds. The clouds covered the knights, and they failed to take his life.

Kraugel recovered during this gap and fought the knights again. He did the same thing over and over for a fortnight, until the knights couldn't overpower Kraugel anymore. Finally, a week ago, the 30 knights were defeated by Kraugel and raised the white flag. Kraugel didn't—or couldn't—take away their lives because of two reasons. It was because the knights who held the spear specialized in protecting each other and because they were told that the imperial army invading Reidan had retreated several days ago.

Kraugel received news about the war and was amazed and thrilled. Grid was truly amazing. He had caused the empire to retreat.

'The discovery of the ruins is a good opportunity for the empire.'

It was a justification to retreat from the situation where they would have been trampled on by the Overgeared Kingdom.

'It is a pity. If the ruins hadn't shown up, the Overgeared Kingdom could've fought the empire to the end.'

Kraugel watched all the war videos of the Overgeared Kingdom.

There were the active players—Katz, Chris, Faker, and the other 10 meritorious retainers—and the transcendent abilities of Noll, Piaro, and Mercedes. Additionally, there were the variables of the water clan, evil eyes, and UI Clan, as well as the Overgeared Cannon.



Each one was awesome. The empire might have the advantage of troops, but Kraugel saw the endurance of the war-torn empire as poor compared to its physique. As time passed, the Overgeared Kingdom would gain the advantage and Grid would swallow up the empire. However, the discovery of the ruins ruined that scheduled process.

‘Grid, don’t be too discouraged. You still have the historical site.’

Kraugel would tie up the feet of Rachel and her knights so that they couldn’t go to the ruins. He could help at least that much, and Grid would gain a new treasure in the meantime, getting closer to the dream of being an emperor. Kraugel supported Grid in the depths of his mind. It was a cheer that was possible because Kraugel appreciated his strong rival who continuously defeated him.

Simultaneously, at Cork Island...

“...Who is talking about me?”

This was the place where Grid had defeated Hell Gao and met Noe. Grid stood on the shore of the special island, which previously belonged to the Overgeared Kingdom, and felt his ears prick up. Katz approached and told him, “I have obtained a ship. Let’s depart.”

“Wow...” Grid once again realized the greatness of financial power. There was a large-scale warship that couldn’t be built yet with the Overgeared Kingdom’s shipbuilding technology. It cost an astronomical amount, and the average person couldn’t afford to see it, let alone buy it. Grid clicked his tongue.

Then Katz said casually, “This is nothing. The items you make are treasures that no amount of money can buy.”

“Hrmm... By the way, what did the captain say?”

“He read the route and thinks it will take at least 10 days to reach the historical site.”

“Even with a ship like this? I heard this ship is really fast?”

“The captain’s opinion is that it can’t be helped because the Red Sea is so dangerous. If we encounter sea monsters along the way, the journey’s duration might increase exponentially or even fail.”

The time would be greatly shortened if they departed from Galest, but unfortunately, Galest was an important point in the empire. They wouldn’t be able to conceal their identity easily.

“In any case, isn’t there still time?”

Grid boarded the warship with the 10 meritorious retainers. He summoned Randy, Noe, Tiramet, and the Overgeared Skeletons, placing them all over the deck to be lookouts. Then he handed Katz a mineral.

“What is this?”

[Iron Ore with the Power of Transcendence]

[-An iron ore imbued with the power of an existence that isn’t subject to death.

Anyone who can cope with the evil influence of the iron ore can obtain the hidden strength behind it.

\* There is an option to add stats when using it as an item-making material.

However, there is a high possibility that all types of restrictions will arise due to the evil influence.

Weight: 5 ]

Grid explained to the confused Katz, "You see, it is a very good production material. It is just that nobody can handle it because it is cursed."

"..."Katz noticed what Grid was trying to say.

A Blood Warrior...

A warrior who craved blood...

In the Satisfy setting, the existence of this class itself was a curse. In fact, Katz was immune to all types of curses, and he could convert them into a beneficial effect. A characteristic of the class was transforming a curse into a beneficial effect. It was a power that even Grid didn't have. His title of First King had the effect of 'reflecting' debuffs when all conditions were met, but he couldn't turn them into an advantage for him. After agonizing over it for the past month, Grid determined that Katz was the right owner for this transcendental iron ore.

"I'll make you a sword with this."

"..."

"Don't you still have the gold medal reward? Did you pick the White Tiger's Breath for your reward?"

"You..."

"Eh?"

"It is worth so much..."

"This? It isn't worthwhile if I don't use it for you. Besides, it is something I can get again later."

"..."

Katz was an extremely arrogant person. Born into money, power, fame, and even appearance, Katz had come to believe that the world was under his feet. He lived life like he was the master of this world. Then through Satisfy, he realized there was a limit to his own strength. After joining the Overgeared Guild, he realized there were many people better than himself.

A typical example was Grid. Others didn't know it, but Katz had learned humility from Grid. Grid was like a teacher to him. So, Katz was thrilled that Grid was giving him a big present.

Katz bowed his head and blushed, with his body twisting on its own.

"What are you doing?" Grid burst out laughing. "Quickly give me the White Tiger's Breath."

Grid pulled out his portable furnace, anvil, and hammer. There was also the white phosphorus wood. Now he only had a few pieces of wood left. In any case, it was possible to do blacksmithing work on the ship.

'I have to go back to the East Continent soon.'

Piario was struggling with growing the white phosphorus tree and golden walnuts. As expected, mass production would be difficult since they were items with a high value. Grid would eventually have to go back to the East Continent to replenish his white phosphorus wood.

'...It is scary.'

He shuddered as he thought about Yangban Garam before starting to make the item. Grid refined and strengthened the White Tiger's Breath and then smelted the transcendent iron ore. He tried to repeat this process many times to strengthen it like the White Tiger's Breath, but it didn't change. The strengthening of the transcendental iron ore wasn't systematically possible.

'As expected, the breaths of the sacred creatures are special.'

Ttang!Ttang!

Grid had hundreds of item production methods. Among them, the method of making 'Muksabal (White Tiger Sword)' he had created with Kraugel was at the top.

'If I replace the metal used in the White Tiger Sword with the transcendent iron ore...'

What would happen?

Ttang!Ttang!

Grid was full of anticipation as he kept hammering. His expectations were higher than those of the owner, Katz who was watching from the side. It was an expectation he could have because he precisely grasped the value of the materials.

'By the way, Katz is also very clever.'

The reason why Katz chose the White Tiger's Breath as the gold medal reward was that he knew its characteristics of resilience and defense were suitable for him. Katz, who had the ability to absorb blood like a vampire, was right to pursue tanking rather than damage. Thus, the White Tiger's Breath was a wise choice.

Ttang!Ttang!

Three days passed since Grid started making the item.

[You have completed the item production!]

[White Tiger Sword Full of Craving]

[Rating: Normal (Growth)]

Durability: 390/390 Attack Power: 307 Defense: 65

\* Attack speed is reduced by 10%.

\* Physical attack power is increased by 3%.

\* Physical defense is increased by 3%.

- \* Magic resistance is increased by 3%.
- \* Maximum health is increased by 6%.
- \* 8% bonus earth attribute damage.
- \* There is a low chance of the sword's weight increasing when attacking. At this time, the physical attack power that ignores the target's defense will increase by 33%. However, the speed of retrieving the sword is increased by one second.
- \* The wearer's three highest stats will increase by +30.
- \* There is a corrosion effect caused by the evil influence.

If the target is classified as an 'item', 'building', or 'weapon', its durability will greatly reduce and the power temporarily reduced.

- \* There is a curse effect caused by the evil influence.

Causes a decrease in the stats of the target hit.

- \* The skill 'Howl!' is still inactive.

A sword that will become a myth beyond legends.

...Omitted...]

"..."

Grid's and Katz' eyes widened after they checked the finished product. Katz was amazed by all the options for the normal item, even if it was a growth type. Meanwhile, Grid was impressed when he compared it to the Still Crouching White Tiger Sword. Its attack power was low compared to the White Tiger Sword he had made for Kraugel, but it was highly defensive and had three more options.

'Furthermore, there is a new skill.'

This meant that the transcendent iron ore exerted a great effect. It was also a possible result because Grid's techniques had improved. Grid hadn't met Hexetia yet when he made Kraugel's sword. Knowing the items increased in value due to his improved blacksmithing skills gave Grid confidence.

'As expected, it was better to leave the two skill points.'

It had happened when Pagma's Swordsmanship was promoted to Great Swordsman Pagma's Swordsmanship. Grid hadn't tried to use his skill level up points on Pagma's Swordsmanship. This was because the blacksmithing skills could be upgraded through certain opportunities, and there was room for the level to be reset. It was harder to raise the level of a production skill which accumulated experience value every time an item was made, compared to combat skills that accumulated experience in every battle.

Grid's judgment was reasonable. He thought about the skill points while handing the new White Tiger Sword to Katz.

"Do you have anything you want?" Katz asked after accepting the sword with a blank expression.

“What do I want? A private plane?”

“I understand.”

“...?” Grid had responded after a moment’s thought. He didn’t expect that Katz really would give him a private plane as a present. Meanwhile, on the deck...

“Kiyong!”

Clack!Clack clack!

Clack clack clack clack clack clack!

Noe and the Overgeared Skeletons, who had been watching the sea to the east, suddenly made a fuss. Noe’s tail and fur were raised while the Overgeared Skeletons were dancing.

“That is a sea monster!”

The 10 meritorious retainers ran after hearing the fuss and were dismayed to see the monster blocking the route. It was an octopus that was larger than a 30-floor-high building. They couldn’t check the octopus’ name because it was so huge that they couldn’t see the top of its head. The situation was truly daunting.

Suddenly, thunder and lightning hit the sea. It was such a violent storm that the huge warship shook.

“Gulp.” Vantner was tense as he took a defensive stance. He watched the octopus closely to make such the octopus’ attacks didn’t damage the ship. Meanwhile, Jishuka and Yura fired the Red Phoenix Bow and sniper rifle. The fire arrows and jade bullets flew through the storm and pierced the octopus’ skin...

“Eh?”

...They bounced off. The octopus’ skin was very thick and sticky, causing it to resist physical attacks.

“Start with cutting the sticky film.”

Faker and Chris moved through the air while Peak Sword took the posture of drawing the sword. Three sharp swords started to cut at the octopus. However, the octopus’ defense was incredible, and it was difficult to accumulate damage because the eight legs waved randomly, causing waves to shoot up. The interference of the storm was also tricky.

“Hrmm...”

The 10 meritorious retainers failed to intercept the octopus and stepped back on the deck.

“The attack pattern is simple so the difficulty isn’t high.”

“The defense is too fraudulent.”

The eyes of the 10 meritorious retainers and the octopus intertwined in the air. The battle entered a lull.

“You were here?”

“...?”

At this moment, Hurent appeared on one of the octopus legs. He alternated looking between the 10 meritorious retainers and octopus before muttering to himself, "Indeed... Leaving the clean-up jobs to me..."

"...?"

"Aura Festival."

Hurent used the skill Grid had presented to him in commemoration for joining the Overgeared Guild. Dozens of auras spread out in the air. They flew around the octopus and exploded like firecrackers. The pained octopus started floundering, and its sticky film was stripped off. The defensive power was meaningless before aura, which ignored the defense and resistance of the target and dealt fixed damage.

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It was a frenzied ritual that lasted dozens of days.

"No more... We can't stop the summoning from happening."

Rebecca's Daughters, who used the three treasures to interfere with the ritual, fell down out of exhaustion. Even Isabel, who stayed standing up to the end, finally fell to her knees. Numerous notification windows popped up in front of Damian's eyes.

[The ritual of summoning a great demon is back on track.]

"N-No...!"

The masses dismissed the summoning of Belial as a small event. It was an event that was only for a few high rankers. Many people criticized the Overgeared Guild, Kraugel, and Damian for monopolizing Belial and the rewards. This was natural. It was because they hadn't tasted Belial's power. They were able to yell because they hadn't received any damage from Belial.

On the other hand, Damian had participated in the Belial raid and was well aware of it. The advent of evil was a disaster, not an event. If a great demon were summoned here without Grid, the Overgeared Guild, Kraugel, and Piaro being present, it would be a huge disaster. Damian was reflecting on this when he heard someone's laughter in his ears.

It was God of War Ares. "Is the event finally starting?"

"Ah..." Damian's apprehension grew. The current Ares Army was far more powerful than the Overgeared Guild had been in the past. Just like the general public, they weren't afraid of the great demon.

[The door to hell has opened.]

This world...

[The 22nd great demon Berith has appeared.]

It turned into hell.

[A vast knowledge of the past, present, and future defines you as insignificant.]

[All stats are reduced by 32%.]

[All skills and magic power are reduced by half.]

[All magic casting speed is reduced by 50%.]

It happened while the Overgeared Guild and empire left the continent.

[A cunning tongue that mixes a single truth in a thousand lies will ruin you.]

[The resistance to the 'confusion' state is fixed at 0%.]

[All skills and magic that deceive or mislead the target, such as hiding skills or cloning skills, are blocked.]

Countless people would experience nightmares.

### [Chapter 1018](#)

[Bare Octopus Head]

[Rating: Unique

Durability: 120/120 Defense: 250

\* Lights up in a bright place. Interferes with the enemy's vision.

\* The surface is slippery, reducing the damage of all physical attacks by 19%. There is an additional 20% reduction in the damage of stabbing and cutting attacks.

\* Once it touches water, it will swell and the defense will increase. The more water it absorbs, the greater the effect. It can increase up to 35%.

The head of a light octopus that inhabits the Red Sea.

A bald person will feel a comfortable sense of unity when wearing it.

Condition of Use: No hair.

Weight: 80]

"This is for Vantner."

"Shut up."

"Do you hate it?"

"Ah, no. I don't dislike it. I'm not too sure. S-Sorry."

Grid and Katz belatedly came running after hearing the commotion. The octopus' sticky film was already completely stripped. Hurent's aura blades made the octopus' strength useless. Katz asked his colleagues if he could monopolize the monster. It was to build up experience with his newly acquired weapon.

The attack power of the normal rated White Tiger Sword Full of Craving was very low and didn't deal much damage to the octopus, but this was good for Katz. He used the Blood Warrior's unique persistence and engaged the octopus as long as possible, greatly increasing the experience of the White Tiger Sword. The loot he obtained was the Bare Octopus Head and the Delicious Piece of Octopus Leg.

[Delicious Piece of Octopus Leg]

[-A part of the light octopus' legs that has a chewy texture.

If consumed without being cooked, there is a low probability of food poisoning and an average probability of one stat rising by 0.5 points.

However, this doesn't apply to special stats.]

Katz and Hurent had secured two octopus legs. There were 12 servings per leg, so Grid, the 10 meritorious retainers, and Hurent were able to eat equally. Everyone successfully gained a total of one stat point.

[You have received food poisoning.]

[You have resisted.]

Everyone... except for Grid.

"No, this..."

Where was his good luck stat? Did it go on strike?

"..."

On the ship sailing on the Red Sea, Grid crouched in the corner and ignored the sympathetic looks of his colleagues. At this time, a giant pufferfish popped out of the sea. Katz gained the opportunity to increase the experience of his White Tiger Sword again, and his eyes shone.

"Transcended Link! Linked Kill Flower Pinnacle! 100,000 Army Massacre Sword!"

Before Katz could move, the pufferfish had turned to ash. Unfortunately, it was the punching bag of Grid's anger. Hurent's eyes widened.

'It took me so long for one octopus...'

He was too weak. Hurent bowed his head and squatted in a corner. This lasted until they reached the Ruins of the War God.

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What type of karma was owed to souls? The ritual was completed, and the gate consisted of numerous human faces. There were hundreds of thousands of faces that were different in sex, age, and race, but they all had one thing in common. They wept with pain.

"Oof...!"



People paled at the bizarre and creepy scene. Someone sat down and started to vomit. The Ares Army, who regarded the great demon summoning as a mere event, lost their momentum from the beginning.

“T-The great demon that the Overgeared Guild raided was ranked 32nd. The 22nd great demon is stronger than that. Can we deal with it?” Oasis asked while covered in mud and sweat.

His trembling eyes caught something squeezing out of the door of wailing. It was an existence with a corroded gold crown on its head which proved its age. The man sat on a diseased horse and looked around with eyes that didn’t have pupils. His skin was red like meat in a butcher’s store. Then it became a rotten color, before becoming blue again. His body was thin and dull, but his torso was long enough to have at least 50 rib bones. Even without the weight of the name of a great demon, the man’s ghastly and strange features were enough to cause horror.

“You should step back. Leave before the raid starts.”

“Huh...?”

There was no room for rejection. Ares’ hand pushed Oasis away. Then Sima Hui used a spell and left this place with Oasis. Ares smiled bitterly and recalled his earlier conversation with Sima Hui.

“High morale and ignorance are part of a story of a different realm. Your army is very powerful, but it is still inferior to the empire and the Overgeared Guild. However, your soldiers are fearless and think they’re the best. Thus, it is dangerous. They need a painful defeat.”

“We need defeat?”

“It is the foundation to emerge victorious in every battle. Defeat is an essential experience. The great demon summoning ritual can’t be stopped forward, and a great demon will definitely descend. Your Majesty, lead your army against the great demon. Then train the army using this defeat.”

“You are telling me to sacrifice my people? You might be my military adviser, but I can’t tolerate this. Valhalla won’t engage in the great demon subjugation.”

“No. You have to come forward. It is a chance to gain insight into what you are lacking. This is an opportunity for Valhalla to mature and spread the name of Valhalla throughout the world. You can gain the favor of the Rebecca Church by fighting against the great demon, and by sacrificing yourself for the continent, you can gain the hearts of the people of the continent.”

“...It is an act of betraying my people.”

“It isn’t a betrayal but a teaching. Justice can sometimes be medicine or poison. Please trust me and make a cold choice this time.”

“...I understand. Still, I am telling you, my army will never lose easily. You might think our Valhalla is inferior to the Overgeared Kingdom and will be easily defeated by the great demon, but I don’t think so. I will surely destroy the great demon and secure victory.”

He was persuaded. Although he didn’t agree with the idea that he should ‘grasp the subject’, he couldn’t overlook the fact that he could raise recognition with the Rebecca Church and the awareness of Valhalla through the great demon raid. Ares stepped forward. He had to maintain morale against the evil influence.

“Enjoy the event.”

So, he downplayed the great demon.

“Let’s go.”

He trusted his troops.

“Let’s show everyone that we can do the same as the Overgeared Guild.”

They would challenge the great demon raid. God of War Ares’ buffs fell down like rain. All of his allies’ morale and stats rose, offsetting the debuffs caused by Berith’s appearance. In addition to that...

“We will cooperate this once, although I don’t know what will happen.”

Pope Damian’s buffs overlapped with God of War Ares’, and the stats of the Ares Army and Rebecca priests increased significantly. It was a scene watched by hundreds of cameras. The Ares Army and Rebecca priests had determined expressions as they took combat postures.

It was a total offensive. They were the main players in the Berith raid and were determined to go all-out while the buffs were maintained. Hundreds of ultimate abilities were loaded simultaneously and waiting to be re-used. No matter how strong the great demon was, it wouldn’t be safe if hundreds of people in a buffed state released attacks at once.

The viewers ate popcorn as they envied the Ares Army and Rebecca priests, who would monopolize the great demon raid. At this moment...

“Everyone. I am your companion, not an enemy of humanity.” Berith turned his gaze to the Ares Army and priests, before his eyes curved in a half moon. Then something amazing happened.

[Great Demon Berith is an ally!]

Berith’s black-gold name turned green, and he wasn’t recognized as an enemy. It was the ally protection system that often applied to some quests.

“Eh?”

The ultimate techniques of the Ares Army and Rebecca priests were canceled. The fierce energy disappeared without being able to be triggered. Only some skills that didn’t distinguish between enemies and allies were barely maintained.

“The companion of humanity?” Damian asked on behalf of the dumbfounded people.

“Yes,” Berith, whose skin color was still changing, scratched his head and replied. In contrast to his first appearance, his voice was gentle and his expression was good. “Not all of us are against humanity. We also have intelligence. Like humans, we have different values.”

“...!?”

It was exceedingly outlandish. Berith’s appearance caused the Yatan followers, who had been shivering with excitement, to be thrown into confusion. They sided with the great demons over the humans,

hoping to create a foothold to fight against the gods. To the Yatan followers who believed in such a destiny, Berith's declaration caused great shock and chaos.

"What is going on?"

"Is a great demon not an enemy?"

The Ares Army and Rebecca priests found it difficult to grasp the situation. Since the system recognized Berith as an ally, it was impossible to dismiss Berith's words as false. At the same moment, Berith became the color of rotten lungs and he lowered his head. "It must be hard to believe. For a long time, 'we' have been a threat to humanity. My attitude must be unfamiliar and unbelievable. I fully understand your position. This is the karma we have to deal with. I apologize deeply for the old sins we have committed."

"...!" Everyone was shocked. This was because Berith was bowing. It wasn't just those gathered at the scene. All the viewers were also surprised. A great demon declared he would stand on the side of humanity and then apologized to the humans. It was unthinkable. This was a completely new variant.

In the middle of this strange atmosphere...

"...\$#^~%#" A strange sound emerged from the mouth of the bowing Berith. It was a noise that stimulated terror. This was clearly a language, and Berith was laughing. "Humans are truly foolish."

Simultaneously, Berith's green name returned back to black-gold.

[Berith isn't an ally!]

Berith was once again recognized as an 'enemy.'

"What...?"

The flustered Ares, Damian, and their colleagues deployed defense skills. The diseased horse carrying Berith raised one hoof up high. Then it slammed hard against the ground. The wavelength it created was huge. The earth was smashed, and stones and dust scattered randomly. They turned into gold and silver thanks to Berith's magic power.

As for the Ares Army and Rebecca priests...

The duration of the first buffs was over, and the Ares Army and Rebecca priests weren't able to cope with the gold and silver storm.

[You have suffered catastrophic damage!]

[You have received too much damage from one blow and have fallen into a 'confused' state.]

[Your wound has started turning into metal.]

[Your skin, flesh, muscles, bones, and blood are hardening.]

"U-Uwaaaack!"

Someone's arms and someone else's legs, as well as the face or torso of some people, started turning into metal. The metal parts were heavy as lead and impossible to be controlled. A person whose eyes

turned into metal became blind, a person whose nose and mouth turned into metal couldn't breathe, and a person whose heart turned into metal received instant death. Fear was greater than pain.

The people looked on in an appalled manner.

"You look great in the shape of a worm." Great Demon Berith laughed.

It was a lie that had deceived even the system. Berith overwhelmed humanity, unlike the 32nd great demon Belial. Only one person was different.

"Berith!" It was the imperial prince Benoit. "I will ask you one thing, in accordance with the oath of summoning!"

Despite seeing people dying from fear and suffering or even knowing the despair humanity would face in the future, Imperial Prince Benoit didn't care. He only wondered about one truth.

"Is my mother's murderer the current empress?"

"Yes, that's right. She poisoned your mother," Berith replied passively and picked up a piece of gravel, turning it into a sheet of paper. It was the ultimate alchemy that had already been shown. "This lists the poison she received and those who cooperated with her to poison your mother. Every detail is described on this."

The sheet of paper flew into Imperial Prince Benoit's hands. Benoit was filled with a deep killing intent as he confirmed its contents. It was a prelude to the imperial family's blood-stained revenge drama. However, this wasn't a problem for the average player.

『 22nd Great Demon Berith has started slaughtering the Ares Army...! 』

The people were captivated by the horrific scene that started to unfold in front of their eyes. Berith neutralized the enemy's ultimate weapons and buffs with a single lie and then used alchemy to create metal from nothing. After that, Berith's slaughter began.

It wasn't an event or a festival. Watching the collapsed continent, the people started to despair as if their future had completely disappeared.

### [Chapter 1019](#)

From the moment they entered the Red Sea, whispers and other communication systems were prohibited and the use of teleport-type magic was also blocked. Still, the Overgeared members were aware of Berith's emergence.

[22nd Great Demon Berith has appeared somewhere on the continent...!]

It was thanks to the world message. Grid and the 10 meritorious retainers knew the strength of the great demon, so they were forced to feel nervous. Everything would be over if the great demon invaded the Overgeared Kingdom. It was the right move to return home now. There was a flurry of impatient and negative opinions.

Lauel calmed them down, "I have been talking to Damian since the ceremony started."

Damian had told Lauel that if he couldn't stop the great demon from ascending to the ground, he would lead the great demon as far away from the Overgeared Kingdom as possible. It was certainly possible. The battlefield between the Rebecca Church and Yatan Church was the furthest place from the Overgeared Kingdom. Damian always acted with the Overgeared Kingdom in mind. He was a really strong ally.

'However, I didn't think he would fail to stop the ritual.'

This summoning ritual was different from the one with Belial. Belial's summoning ritual had been carried out in secret while Berith's ritual had gotten exposed in the middle. The Rebecca Church had converged on the scene of the ritual. When he first heard the news, Lauel thought that Damian and the Rebecca Church would be able to stop the appearance of the great demon. The Rebecca Church was a force that obstructed the ambitions of the Yatan Church. It was expected they would have many means to prevent the summoning ritual.

'Yet they failed...? Was it not possible to stop the great demon ritual once it started?' Lauel was filled with doubts.

In the last few decades, how had the Rebecca Church been able to suppress the Yatan Church? Comparing the powers of the two religions, the Yatan Church was far stronger, and the Rebecca Church didn't have the means to stop the great demon ritual. There was absolutely no reason for the Yatan Church to be suppressed by the Rebecca Church. However, in history, the Yatan Church had been consistently beaten by the Rebecca Church. They had worked secretly to avoid the eyes of the Rebecca Church.

'All nations on the continent support the Rebecca Church and are hostile to the Yatan Church...'

Yet it wasn't enough.

'It is likely there is a power hidden within the Rebecca Church.'

It was a reasonable guess. Only with that could the balance be accepted.

'I'll have to discuss it with Damian in detail one day. By the way...' Lauel sealed off the complicated thoughts for a while and turned toward the sea again. All types of monsters appeared in these magical waters and were beaten by Grid and the 10 meritorious retainers.

'The route to the historical ruins itself is quite rewarding.'

The rewards given by the sea monsters were quite good. The 10 meritorious retainers recovered the experience they had lost from dying several times in the war. They received all types of unusual items. It was hard to say if the items were good or bad, but they were estimated to be very valuable in terms of rarity.

'Grid has reached level 398... In the future, the Red Sea will be part of our hunting grounds.'

It was hard to believe the day would come when the Red Sea was used as a hunting ground. This was possible thanks to Katz buying a warship. With a ship of this size, it wasn't impossible to sail through the disaster-ridden Red Sea.

"I can't kill the octopuses when I look at them. They are like Vantner's brothers."

"..." Vantner was wearing the octopus head. It was a remark that would make him furious if he had his original personality. Now he couldn't say a word because the speaker was Jishuka.

It was Yura as well. "Yes."

Considering Yura's personality, she didn't intend to make fun of him. She sincerely agreed with Jishuka's words.

"..." Therefore, Vantner couldn't say anything.

'Their relationship is getting better.' Grid had a warm expression on his face. The biggest harvest of this voyage was the relationship between Yura and her colleagues. Yura, who had been awkward with everyone, developed a more comfortable relationship with them during the journey. In particular, she seemed to have come to a consensus with Jishuka.

"Doesn't this make you realize that Grid is older than you?"

It happened after a tough hunt of a whale that was overwhelmingly bigger than the octopuses, pufferfish, and so on. Yura and Jishuka sat next to each other and chatted in a relaxed manner. There was a consensus that they liked the same man, so the conversation didn't stop.

"Youngwoo-ssi has a tendency to get angry, but he doesn't make fun of other people."

"I agree. He just looks at me like I am cute whenever I tease Vantner. It is a reaction that is shown when kids play well together. Ah... This score must be completely bad." Jishuka was trying to be recognized as someone more than a friend, but instead she was like a child. This was a disaster. It was the end. She was afraid she would seem more like a sister and not a friend.

"Dammit, Vantner... Why are you so funny?"

"When?"

"You and the octopus together is too funny."

"..." Vantner was tearful because of Jishuka's words. Then the silent Yura spoke after agonizing over it. In fact, she didn't want to say it. It was disadvantageous to her to give courage to Jishuka. Nevertheless, Yura confessed, "It is me, not you, who Youngwoo-ssi thinks of as a friend. Youngwoo-ssi's eyes toward you are very different from when he looks at me. So don't worry too much."

"That's right. He only sees my chest." Jishuka spoke so seriously that Vantner found it funny.

Then the usually calm and gentle Yura gritted her teeth. "Vantner, do you want to spar?"

"...I'm sorry."

If they fought, he would lose. After all, Yura was a National Competition PvP finalist. He still vividly remembered it. A white giant with a classic name... Yura had fought fiercely against Zibal who boarded the magic machine, which had a different physical ability and vitality to players. She went against the predictions that she would lose easily. Yura was strong. She was one of the top five in the Overgeared Guild and several times stronger than Vantner.

Vantner coughed and changed the topic, "By the way, what should we do if others catch the great demon?"

There were many strong guilds beside the Overgeared Guild. Of course, they couldn't compare to the Overgeared Guild that had numerous named NPCs. There was the Ares Army, the former Seven Guilds, and the forces that had been expanding their power since the collapse of the Seven Guilds. They might fail the great demon raid alone, but it might be different if they cooperated.

"Grid, Mercedes, and Piaro, the three of them could raid something like the cave cricket which is on the level of a great demon raid. What about when hundreds of people join together to raid one great demon? It is a pity that we are handing over the great demon to others for a long time."

Other members of the 10 meritorious retainers agreed with Vantner's statement. However, Grid was calm. "They won't raid it."

When it came to the cave cricket and great demon, the premise of multiplying numbers was wrong. It was true that the physical abilities of the cave cricket were comparable to the great demon, but the skill level and intelligence was inferior to the great demons. Furthermore...

"The high rankers can't be compared to Mercedes and Piaro."

"...Ah." Vantner scratched his head. The current Grid could kill hundreds of high rankers alone. Mercedes and Piaro were super-strong powers who could beat even Grid. Just because the three of them could raid the cave cricket didn't mean that hundreds of high rankers could catch the great demon.

Lauel smiled. "We should let the people know it..."

The public had been envious of the Overgeared Guild for monopolizing the rewards of the Belial raid. They should know.

"...The fact that we have saved the world."

A great demon raid wasn't a blessing. They had won after overcoming life and death. He couldn't forget that sight of Piaro's back as he prepared to die. A few days later...

"We are arriving soon!" The captain shouted.

Far away, they saw an island that was larger than expected. Surprisingly, the sky near the island was sunny. It was the first clear sky they had encountered during their 10 days of sailing. The Red Sea always had bursts of magic power and thick fog and storms occurring without a break.

[You have found the Ruins of the War God!]

"We've finally arrived..."

"Apart from the coast, it's all a jungle...? There is less open space. It will be tricky to use a greatsword."

"Based on my experience, the followers of the war god move lightly and quickly. Fighting in the jungle will be a disadvantage, so we should use the coast well."

Could they get some secret techniques here? The expectations of the 10 meritorious retainers swelled up.

'I think the relationship with the empire can be improved depending on the situation...' Lauel considered the political part.

Meanwhile, Grid was wondering about the sin of the war god. 'It is pride?'

Grid's quest about the Seven Malignant Saints wasn't related to the war god, but it didn't prevent his curiosity. The war god was the strongest god, while pride was the ultimate sin among the seven sins.

'I think I'll be screwed if we meet... Well, I don't think it will happen.'

It was the war god. He wasn't a local neighbourhood dog that Grid could encounter wherever he went.

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"I have been burning for a long time."

"It is stimulating."

"That's right."

Grenhal, Morse, and Basara—they had been suffering for the past fortnight. They protected Skunk from the followers while Skunk's expedition group found stones and murals. Simultaneously, they encouraged the soldiers who were growing anxious and hunted sea monsters to secure food. The level of the ruins was too high, and they had to take care of all the important work and the chores.

However, the dukes didn't feel regret. They were willing to suffer. The experience erased the laziness caused from everyday life and provoked their enthusiasm.

"I am too lacking... I'm sorry."

The number of times their lives were saved by the dukes couldn't be counted. The dukes had suffered for a fortnight, and Skunk felt sorry for them. The level of his archaeological and decoding skills meant it was hard for him to solve the mystery of the ruins.

On the first day, he knew that they needed a key for the exploration, but the method to obtain the key was still unknown. Skunk blamed himself for his incompetence, causing the dukes to suffer more.

'How much longer until I obtain a hint? I can't guarantee it.'

For a true exploration, they must break through the jungle. However, it was impossible to enter the jungle because there were tens of thousands of traps installed, as well as the war god followers. The keys to unlock the traps were absolutely necessary. They just didn't know where to get the keys.

"Don't take it to heart. Many scholars and explorers have been sent from my country, and they will be a great strength to you."

"It is reassuring to hear. I understand. I will work hard." Skunk felt more comfortable after hearing Grenhal's words and finally relaxed. It meant the situation was so bad that Skunk welcomed the help of others despite enjoying the process of solving mysteries.



Another day passed.

Then the next day.

“Uh...?” Skunk observed the contents of the mural he found two days ago and felt like he had been hit by a lightning bolt. His gaze was fixed on the booklet depicted in the mural. The booklet existed in every mural he found so far. Skunk had interpreted it as the symbol of the war god’s secret techniques. It was natural for it to be present in the murals of the Ruins of the War God. However, now it seemed more meaningful.

‘I thought the reason for the booklets being drawn differently in every mural was that they depicted different types of secret techniques...’

The shape of the keyhole passed through Skunk’s mind. He crossed it with the booklets drawn on the seven murals he had found so far. It fit perfectly with the shape of the keyhole.

‘The key is divided into pieces.’

The murals were a hint telling him where the pieces of the key were.

‘Good.’

Skunk clenched his fists. He knew the exact meaning of the murals and hoped the interpretation would make things easier.

## [Chapter 1020](#)

The followers who protected the Ruins of the War God had a completely different way of fighting depending on what they learned, but there was something they had in common. They were strong enough to escape the common sense of the imperial soldiers, no matter what secret techniques were learned.

However, their range of activities was very narrow. They only focused on patrolling the inside of the jungle and didn’t come out to the outskirts or approach the coast. Thanks to this, the imperial soldiers were able to operate relatively freely. Then one day, a problem arose.

“I think we’ll run out of drinking water in three days...”

The drinking water, which had been loaded on the warship, was starting to run out. This was natural since it was difficult to find drinking water on the coast. They had to go through the jungle to find lakes or valleys.

“Hrmm...”

Grenhal, Morse, and Basara fell into distress for a moment. They might be able to get sufficient drinking water from the reinforcements, but their arrival was delayed. Given the dangers of the Red Sea, there was no guarantee the troops would arrive within three days. It was impossible to confirm since communication wasn’t allowed.

“We’ll have to go and get drinking water directly.”

They had to enter the jungle. It was a considerable burden on the dukes. If there were six followers who learned five secret techniques coming at them simultaneously, wouldn't they be able to pressure the dukes? It was naturally a big threat. The dukes would be eliminated if they were surrounded by dozens of followers.

There was an even greater risk. It was the traps. There were all sorts of traps that the dukes couldn't bear. It would be hard to deal with the followers while paying attention to things that couldn't be bypassed without the keys. However—

"Let's go."

They were responsible for 5,000 soldiers, the private soldiers brought from their respective families. They couldn't let the people who contributed to the revival of their families die of thirst. It was a duty and pride they felt as the noble and lord of an estate.

"M-My Lord." The soldiers' eyes reddened. After all, they had eyes and brains. They knew the dukes were acting unreasonably because of them.

Morse clicked his tongue as he watched the soldiers who felt guilty and anxious simultaneously. "Have we fallen to the point where you are worried about us? I've demonstrated a few times that the followers aren't that strong, but you didn't show such a response."

"We will correct it!" The soldiers' eyes shone brightly. Morse's confidence gave them an optimistic view of the situation. The dukes could still afford to act.

"..." Nevertheless, the expressions of the knights were dark. The knights had been trained by the dukes and were aware that the dukes were tense.

It was a conflicted atmosphere.

"I'm going. Protect Sir Skunk and the barracks well while we are absent."

"Attention!"

"Attention!"

The knights and soldiers responded mightily.

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[You have entered the Ruins of the War God.]

[You can find traces of the war god.]

[Warning! There is no resurrection spot in the Red Sea. If you get killed, you will be banished to outside the Red Sea.]

"Pretty."

The shiny gold caught their eyes. The sandy golden-white beach shone under the sunlight, blending beautifully with the crystal clear emerald-like sea. Grid and the 10 meritorious retainers jumped off the warship, which was 10 floors high, and appreciated the scenery in front of them.

They felt all types of emotions from the beauty of nature that was hard to see in reality. This did not include Hurent though.

'I have butterflies in my stomach.'

The people he was with were too splendid. He still didn't understand. Why was he with them when he wasn't qualified?

'Am I supposed to learn from watching them?'

During the 10-day voyage, the Overgeared members had shown amazing images.

Katz had defeated a sea monster with a normal rated weapon while Regas had made crazy noises to maintain his fighting spirits and asked to PK with his colleagues as he fought the sea monster. Hurent didn't know how many times he had clicked his tongue at the sight of Regas avoiding the attacks of his teammates while he damaged the sea monster.

Lael had created a few waves to disperse the swarms of fish while Chris had struck the octopus and other sea monsters with force. Grid had even made his cute cat and skeleton soldiers fight the sea monsters, saying they should level-up. Hurent seemed to have been watching the great demons train until they became half-dead. Euphemina had done nothing but suck her fingers, yet her colleagues had shared their experience with her.

"..."

Looking back, it appeared even more absurd. Hurent didn't know what the hell he had seen. It was clear that no one would believe him if he told them about everything he witnessed during the voyage.

'I'm certain. I have to watch them and learn.'

The world-class players of the new era—he would learn by watching them. Grid's intentions were clear. He was looking forward to Hurent's potential as someone from the old era.

'He wants me to grow up and become his strength.'

However, Hurent felt sorry. He had just been playing and eating and wasn't in the right shape.

'...I have already done my best.'

He had achieved unprecedented growth through his meeting with Piaro yet he was still just like this. Hurent was evenly matched with Haster, who had been devastated by Grid in the 4th National Competition. Despite his efforts, Hurent hadn't improved at all since the old days.

'It is a mistake to expect anything from me.'

Just as Hurent was smiling bitterly, Lael's voice entered his ears, "The inside of the jungle is suspicious, but at least it is quiet around the coast. The followers of the war god use martial arts and care about footwork. They will be reluctant to fight on the sandy beach where their feet will sink. This place is safe."

Lael's primary class was a qigong master. His senses were developed, and he was extremely talented at reading the monsters. He wouldn't be wrong if he declared the coast as a safe area.

“First, let’s not enter the jungle and explore the coast. We need to find the right place to build our camp. The empire’s camp should be somewhere here, right? Let’s scatter and scout the area. We’ll meet here again in two hours.”

“Yes.” Grid nodded obediently. As expected from the bold ruler, he seemed to entrust this trivial matter to Lauel.

“Should we kill if we meet people from the empire?” Katz wondered.

Lauel shook his head. “Please hide and try to avoid as much friction with the empire as possible. Our numbers are few, and it isn’t good to be spotted by the empire.”

“Hmm, I understand. We have to move stealthily.” Katz nodded passively. Grid and the 10 meritorious retainers scattered everywhere. Some people moved alone and others in pairs. It was extremely unlikely that monsters would appear on the beach. Their purpose was to search the area. It was inefficient to go around as a group.

“Would you like to go with me?” Lauel approached the lonely Hurent. The two people had been paired together in the 1st National Competition, so they were familiar with each other.

Hurent shook his head. “Don’t worry about me. Go alone.”

“Yes. I’ll see you back here at the promised time.”

“Yes...” Hurent started walking.

How far did he walk? Hurent was moving along the waterfront and admiring the calm waves when he suddenly stopped. He saw something in the distance.

“W-Why is a follower here?”

There was a group making a fuss. There were around 10 people who were players. Based on their armed status, they were non-combat classes.

‘It isn’t the empire. They are a small expedition who sailed after seeing the world message like us.’

There were no signs of hostility, so the relieved Hurent hid and watched the situation. A woman with the funny ID of Dog Woman was leading her colleagues.

“Jaguar and I will buy time while you run away. You must tell the captain that the range of the followers’ activities seems to have expanded.”

‘There is a war god follower.’

It was a muscular man wearing old clothes. The name ‘war god follower who has learned five secret techniques’ was floating over the man’s head. The name was white. This meant it was a normal monster.

‘I heard the followers were elite monsters yet this is normal grade?’

A lot of information was shared with Hurent. There were very strong humanoid monsters called war god followers at the Galgunos Temple. Two of the 10 meritorious retainers had to work together to knock them down. They were really scary.

'By the way, this one is a normal monster. It will be different from the followers that Pon and Regas talked about.'

In the first place, Lauel said the coast was safe. It meant this follower with five secret techniques wasn't a dangerous opponent.

'Hmm...' Hurent was silent for now. He had no intention of coming forward because Lauel told him to act as stealthily as possible. It wasn't his business if this group was in danger or not.

"Kyak!"

"D-Dog Woman!"

"Fools, I told you to run away!"

It was great to see people wield wooden shields and sacrifice themselves to save their colleagues. They were in a critical condition from one kick. These people were really terribly weak.

'...Is it okay if I help out a bit?' Hurent was also weak, so he now understood the feelings of the weak. He felt uncomfortable looking away when weak people like him were in pain. In the end, he made a decision after much struggling.

"It doesn't matter if they don't find out who I am." He pressed the straw hat he had received from Piaro deep over his head. Then he entered the battlefield. "Hey."

"...?"

"...?"

Both the war god follower and Dog Woman cocked their heads. A mysterious figure wearing a straw hat who didn't show any tension had appeared. It was enough to attract everyone's attention.

"W-Who are you?"

Have the empire's reinforcements already arrived at the Ruins of the War God? It was much faster than expected. Dog Woman was vigilant and asked for the man's identity.

"A farmer," Hurent gave a short reply before pulling out the sword at his waist. The follower of the war god responded immediately. He kicked off the ground and rushed to Hurent. Hurent barely managed to raise a shield and was stunned.

'Isn't this stronger than I thought?'

He could only sigh. Now he was in a crisis from a normal mob.

'I heard that the level here would be high.'

Still, even normal grade monsters weren't easy?

'My pride is hurt.'

The follower's kicks and punches bombarded Hurent. It was a destructive power that the aura shield's damage absorption couldn't handle. Hurent operated aura around his body to amplify his movement speed, and he immediately left his position.

"...Wow." Dog Woman and her companions were impressed. Maybe it was the sandy beach that made the follower slightly weaker than the ones in the jungle, but it was literally only a little bit weaker.

The followers of the war god were monsters. Even the Seven Dukes were helpless against their martial arts. Now, an unidentified man had appeared and was fighting convincingly well against the follower. It was particularly impressive to see the man move at a speed comparable to the dukes'. It was a tremendously fast speed. He was surely one of the highest ranked players.

Dog Woman's group gulped. The war god follower, who belatedly caught up with Hurent, rotated and kicked at him. Hurent was hit in the chin and almost entered the 'stunned' state, but he was able to regain his mind due to his high resistance. Then he used his ultimate technique.

[Aura Impact is being used.]

[Accurately imagine the shape of the aura within 2 seconds. If there is even a small error in the image, the skill will fail.]

A gap of two seconds—it was too long against a war god follower. The follower's elbow struck Hurent's heart. Hurent coughed up blood. It was great that he maintained his concentration to the end.

"Rain." Then a miraculous scene unfolded. Rain started to pour down over the head of the follower. The follower struggled with the pain. This was the limitation of a humanoid monster. The deadly limit of low health was the target of Hurent—one of the Five Miracles, a Sword Saint candidate, and Aura Master.