

Overgeared 1191

[Chapter 1191](#)

Grid only recently recognized the importance of breathing. It was the type of enlightenment based on the accumulated experience of competing with masters seeking a moment's gap between breathing in and breathing out.

Grid took only 27 seconds to fuse the two smelted breaths into one. It was the fastest record ever. The time was two seconds faster than Grid's theoretical maximum speed. It was an achievement that was attained due to the combination of highly developed technology and concentration.

"Sigh."

Grid, who had held his breath for the sake of smooth movements, finally breathed out. There were goosebumps all over his body and his swollen muscles twitched.

'This... It is normal to fail.'

In the process of tempering and fusing the two breaths, Grid realized it. The convergence of breath and breath was inherently 'impossible.' It wasn't a matter of technique. It was clear that even God Hexetia would fail if he came out to attempt it. This wasn't a level comparable to a god.

Every one of the breaths with conflicting attributes desperately rejected each other. All the reactions that occurred at this time made the fusing itself impossible. The Red Phoenix's Breath burned and destroyed itself while the White Tiger's Breath was firmly entrenched in the ground, so there was no way to try it. It was like a providence that would never change. However—

[The 'White Tiger's Breath that has absorbed the Red Phoenix's' has been completed!]

Grid succeeded in fusing the two breaths. Was it because Grid's blacksmithing technique surpassed Hexetia's technique? Not at all. As mentioned earlier, 'technique' didn't fuse the two breaths. It was impossible. There was only one reason why Grid was successful.

He had the Red Phoenix's 9th Heart.

'The Red Phoenix's Breath sacrificed itself for me.'

The Red Phoenix's Breath that refused to fuse with the White Tiger's Breath and tried to burn itself suddenly changed its attitude. It suppressed the flames and accepted Grid's hammering. Then it gradually permeated the White Tiger's Breath.

The Red Phoenix's Breath abandoned its pride only for Grid's sake and became submissive to the White Tiger's Breath. The White Tiger's Breath was satisfied with it and absorbed the Red Phoenix's Breath. This was why the name of the merged breath was 'White Tiger's Breath that has absorbed the Red Phoenix's.' The brilliant white bead contained a flame that wouldn't go out and was technically classified as a White Tiger's Breath.

'It isn't a complete fusion...'

The result that Grid wanted was simple. It was to create a whole new breath that had the full function of the Red Phoenix's Breath and the White Tiger's Breath. However, the actual result was different from his wish. While the function of the White Tiger was more powerful than the whole, only around half the Red Phoenix's Breath's function was implemented.

[White Tiger's Breath that has absorbed the Red Phoenix's]

[It has absorbed the energy of the red phoenix and the power of the white tiger has been reborn in a stronger manner. Just by keeping it in the inventory, the earth attribute resistance will increase by 60%, fire resistance by 20%, and health recovery by 10%.

It can be used to infuse items with the powerful aura of the white tiger.]

The results differed from his intentions but Grid wasn't disappointed.

'This isn't a failure.'

No, quite the opposite. The fire resistance of the Strengthened Red Phoenix's Breath was 40% while the earth resistance of the Strengthened White Tiger's Breath was 40%. The fire resistance of the White Tiger's Breath that has absorbed the Red Phoenix's might be relatively low but it also improved the earth resistance and added the option of increasing health recovery.

'At this point, the defense option will be much higher than I intended.'

It was expected that since the Red Phoenix's Breath could be absorbed, the Blue Dragon's Breath and Black Tortoise's Breath could also absorb it.

'The red phoenix gave me so much.'

If he hadn't resurrected the red phoenix, he wouldn't have succeeded fusing the breaths together in his lifetime. Grid was once again grateful to the red phoenix and smelted the White Tiger's Breath that has absorbed the Red Phoenix's together with Greed in the furnace. From now on, it was a full-scale production.

'There are two forms of shoulder guards.'

It was divided into the wing-like shape and a rounded shape. The former felt like it covered the shoulders while the latter wrapped around the shoulders. Most of the shoulder guards circulating the market had the former shape. It wasn't as functional. It was just because it was easier to make.

On the other hand, the shoulder-wrapped shoulder guards weren't easy to make. Only craftsmen, the most skilled craftsmen, would be able to create the round shoulder guards that wrapped firmly around the shoulders. Naturally, Grid planned to produce the round shoulder guards.

Mobility, toughness, durability, etc. Compared to the winged shoulder guards, the round ones had more advantages.

'The only downside is that it isn't glamorous.'

Most nobles and royalty loved the winged shoulder guards. They used it to show off their wealth by painting the shoulder guards that stretched from side to side a gold or silver color or put various gems

on them. Even so, Grid wasn't in a position to be extravagant. He was in a position to be stronger by making more practical equipment rather than showy equipment. He was a king who spent more time on the front lines than in the palace.

A powerful recoil occurred as Grid hammered the mixture of Greed and the breath. The White Tiger's Breath, which threatened Grid by releasing thorns every time it was hit, started to emit even more ferocious thorns. The sharp stones protruded and aimed at Grid's neck, wrists, arms, and chest.

Of course, Grid wouldn't be smoothly hit. In the past, when the White Tiger Sword was first made, he had been seriously hit by these thorns. Then the years passed and Grid grew.

"Hey hey. Relax."

Grid didn't even blink as he avoided the sudden attack of the thorns. Every time the mineral was hammered, he responded to the thorns that soared at irregular points.

"..."

The mineral subsided. It was hit by the hammer and no longer fired thorns. It wasn't for such a beautiful reason like it decided to submit to Grid when he kept avoiding the surprise attacks. It was because every time Grid hammered, Greed started to show its presence. It was an absolute mineral with infinite durability, suppressing the breath and blocking the release of the thorns.

Grid's mouth curved upwards.

"You should be moderately mischievous."

The 'blacksmith' Grid wasn't tired. It might be different after it was finished but he had never collapsed in the middle of his work. As Grid's hammering increased, the breath resisted more violently but it was useless. In the face of the infinite siege of Grid and Greed, it gradually lost momentum and was encroached on by Greed.

This was it.

"Good."

Greed and the breath had become complete. The smiling Grid started to make the shoulder guards. His goal was a lifetime item. Grid wanted to make perfect shoulder guards with the specs of a king that would be used for the rest of his life.

[Chapter 1192](#)

The Five Seniors gathered in one place.

Pungsa sat on the left while Usa and Unsa were on the right. Hanul's absence was covered by his son, Sobyel, who was also a member of the Five Seniors.

"The red phoenix has been resurrected... well, it can't be helped. These things had already happened." Sobyel's expression as he raised his chin was a bit sour. It differed from when he said it wasn't a big deal after hearing the news of the resurrection of the old god, who was the real owner of the land.

Pungsa frowned. "The resurrection of the red phoenix has resulted in the loss of the south's faith. The children will weaken after a long time of hard work building up their strength. How can you be so casual?"

"You mean the yangbans who died to humans despite building up the divinity of a god? Do you need to keep those useless beings in mind?"

"Sobyeol, be careful of your words. It isn't right to slander the children Hanul made with a deep meaning."

"How is it slander when I'm just telling the truth? Pungsa, look at things objectively. In the first place, they were incompetent and killed by humans. Thus, they couldn't prevent the resurrection of the red phoenix. How can they be called yangbans?"

"Don't forget that even Hanul and us have experienced failure and were expelled to this land. Everyone will suffer from failure and grow from the scars. We aren't here to disparage the children but to discuss the punishment of the red phoenix."

"In this situation, how are we going to handle the red phoenix?"

Just then, Sobyeol's gaze turned to the entrance of the great hall.

Jingle, jingle...

They saw Chiyou entering with the warm wind from the south. He sat down comfortably in the great hall but the Five Seniors felt the pressure of being 'trapped' in the great hall. Pungsa's expression crumpled but Sobyeol still remained calm. "No matter how long it has been, don't forget the deal. In return for your help, we promise you death."

"..."

"Chiyou, you must be looking forward to this situation. You believe the man who killed Garam is qualified to kill a god. You will never tolerate our intervention. Isn't that right, Chiyou?"

Jingle.

Chiyou turned his head. "That's right, I have no intention of sending you down to the human world."

His tone sounded like the Five Seniors were completely beneath him. It was unpleasant to hear every time. Pungsa's face reddened while Unsa and Usa closed their eyes and ears. In the end, Pungsa couldn't bear it and raised his voice.

"Do you mean we should leave the human who harmed the children alone?"

"Yes," Chiyou replied easily.

Pungsa was speechless because of it. He gritted his teeth for a moment before replying, "...I understand. I'll leave the human you speak of without retribution. It is just that the red phoenix should be resealed. We'll go down to the human world and seal the red phoenix."

"I can't allow that either."

“...?”

Pungsa doubted his ears. He never dreamed that Chiyou’s attitude wouldn’t change despite Pungsa already giving in one step. Although he fully understood the intention behind protecting the human with the qualification of a god killer, he couldn’t understand why Chiyou would hinder the sealing of the red phoenix. “Reveal the reason for your rejection. I will refuse if it isn’t a convincing reason.”

“The man who qualifies to be a god killer holds the red phoenix’s 9th heart.”

“What?”

Was this the human they couldn’t touch? It wasn’t only Pungsa who was amazed. It was the same for Usa and Unsa, who had remained silent until now. Even the always expressionless Sobyel had slightly wide eyes. Chiyou spoke again, “Sealing the red phoenix will weaken the qualified human. I can’t allow the sealing of the red phoenix.”

“...”

Pungsa became speechless. However, the silence only lasted for a moment. He quickly asked Chiyou, who had an expression of triumph, “Surely you don’t mean to stop the yangbans from acting?”

Humans who had the qualifications to be a god killer also meant they were eligible to be ‘real gods.’ It meant the human was one status higher than the yangbans, who were fake gods, so Chiyou had no right to stop the yangbans. The moment he blocked the yangbans, he would show that he questioned the human’s qualifications. Since Chiyou had stopped the Five Seniors in order to protect the uncertain object, he should be held responsible for the corresponding cleanup.

“...I won’t regulate the yangbans,” Chiyou responded with the expected answer.

Pungsa’s lips curved upward. “Then it is okay.”

There was a hierarchy in every society. The same humans didn’t have the same values. Some people were superior to others while some were inferior to others. It was also true for the gods. There were highs and lows among gods and naturally, there were highs and lows among the yangbans.

The dead Garam killed by a human belonged to the high side. He was a particularly talented child and he stood out among the yangbans. Nevertheless, he wasn’t the best. He couldn’t keep calm and hone his skills. Garam had only recently started training in recent years.

On the other hand, the remaining yangbans were different. They had been training steadily for many years even though they had a talent that was comparable to Garam. In particular, Mir stood out. It was natural since Mir was the special person who would fight against archangel Lifael in the future.

‘The reason why Hanul made the yangbans is to raise them to fight against the seven archangels. Out of the seven archangels, Lifael is an enemy that even I can’t deal with.’

Pungsa remembered the adversity of the distant past while feeling hope for the future in Mir. Then he stated, “If the man who is qualified to be a god killer falls down without being able to surpass the yangbans, you can no longer stop us from acting.”

“Okay. If he is going to encounter setbacks here then it means there is no point expecting anything or being obsessed.”

The bells hanging from Chiyou’s neck made a clear sound. It was a lonely sound.

‘I am here. Come and give me the end.’

Chiyou murmured like a song before leaving the great hall.

“...?”

Grid, who had been hammering while carefully envisioning the shape of the shoulder guards, suddenly stopped his actions. It was because of a certain voice from a far away place. He couldn’t hear what the voice said but he couldn’t get over it due to the deep emotions it contained.

“Did you hear that?”

Grid was briefly puzzled and turned to Braham for help. Braham had keen senses from controlling the mana in the atmosphere and Grid expected him to have captured the words. Braham responded like he didn’t understand.

“What are you talking about?”

“You didn’t hear that person talking?”

“I didn’t hear anything.”

‘Did he doze off for a second?’

Grid wondered and turned his head to the sacred creatures. However, Blue Tiger, Kyeongja, and Tosun responded in a similar manner.

“We didn’t hear it either.”

“Are you so tired that your hearing isn’t right?”

The sacred creatures were genuinely concerned about Grid. It was natural to be worried when he had been working non-stop for two days now. For two days, Grid kept sweating and often had troubled expressions. Grid shook his head. “No, It’s fine if you didn’t hear it.”

He wasn’t hearing things. Obviously, someone had said something. Nevertheless, now was the time to focus. Grid gave up on his doubts and resumed the paused work.

The passive skills such as Blacksmith’s Patience, Blacksmith’s Breath, and the title effect of Duke of Fire were applied at the same time, dramatically improving Grid’s work efficiency. Lightning fell on the Greed that had absorbed two breaths. It was a hammer wielded by a blacksmith comparable to a god.

Greed was divided into two exact parts. Grid first smelted one piece of Greed by placing it in the furnace. He pulled out the metal and tempered it again and again.

Ttang!Ttang!Ttang!

The number of hammerings increased and Greed's appearance changed. It turned into a complete octagonal plate. It looked like dragon scales that had been separated entirely.

'It is the real thing from here on.'

Fold the iron plate to make it look like it wrapped around his shoulders. It felt like something round. It wasn't paper or a steel plate but Greed, the hardest metal on the planet. Grid's hammering became cautious. He tapped the edge of the iron plate gently like he was stroking Irene.

The God Hands were also busy. He spread out the piece of Berith's Leather that remained after making the gaiters on another anvil and started to tan them. 50% of Grid's dexterity and strength were applied to the God Hands and they had mastered Advanced Blacksmith's Craftsmanship. Thus, they were just as skilled as a craftsman. Grid had a 20% increase in his dexterity stat thanks to the Blacksmith Skill Comparable to a God so they were even more remarkable.

Bam!Ttang!Bam!Ttang!

Every time the four hammers slammed down, the damaged parts of Berith's Leather were soon repaired. By the time Grid completely created the shape of one shoulder guard, it had already been restored. Of course, it wasn't perfect. It was hard for a blacksmith's craftsmanship to fully restore Berith's Leather. Still, this alone was enough.

"Okay. Well done."

Grid retrieved the leather from the God Hands and directly started tanning. He perfectly restored the leather that had almost been completely restored by the God Hands. It took only 10 minutes. This process was 10 times faster than when Grid was working alone. It meant the God Hands helped a lot.

"Greed..." Braham murmured.

As one of the creators of pavranium, which was the originator of Greed, he felt regret every time he saw Greed. He was both glad and disappointed that the pavranium he made together with that Pagma had disappeared from the world. It was good to see the traces of his time with Pagma cleared but it was bitter that his achievement had disappeared.

As Braham was staring at the mineral, Grid's voice permeated his ears, "I was going to name it Gravurnum." [1]

"...?"

"Then I thought about it and figured that it was ill-conceived to name it Gravurnum. Gravurnum, it will be the name of our new mineral, rebuilt with Greed."

"....."

Braham's heart was pierced. It was a feeling that felt strange and still unfamiliar. However, it wasn't unpleasant just because it was strange.

"Is it supposed to be the 'G' in Grid and the 'Ra' in Braham?"

"Yes."

'Our' mineral...

Braham shrugged as he barely held back his smile.

"Well, name it whatever you want. However, I will have to study it until it has a performance that is acceptable to me. It could be a month or a year. No, it could be 10 or 100 years."

"10 years? 100 years?"

"Yes... so don't die until then."

"No, how can it be 100 years?"

Grid frowned at Braham's absurd words and hit the metal with the hammer for the last time. The shoulder guards were completed.

[The production of the 'Shoulder Guards of the White Tiger with the Protection of the Red Phoenix' is successful.]

[A myth rated item is produced, permanently increasing all stats by 30!]

[The Blacksmith's Skill Comparable to a God is a temporarily activated skill. The number of times a myth rated item is created won't accumulate.]

[The energy of the white tiger has surged and blessed Blue Tiger. Blue Tiger, the descendant of the white tiger, is stronger than ever.]

"...Blue Tiger, haven't you benefited a lot today?"

"A-Aheung. I'll give you my skin as a token of my gratitude..."

"I was joking. Congratulations, truly."

"Thank you, heung..."

The subsequent work continued. Unlike Kyeongja, who could equip a weapon, a helmet, and a cloak, Blue Tiger could only wear one equipment and Tosun only two. Grid made a durumagi [2] for Blue Tiger and a traditional bamboo hat and jeogori [3] for Tosun. Then he turned his gaze to the northern horizon.

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At the far north was the Xing Kingdom.

The Xing Kingdom was a place where the Black Tortoise Jewel was kept, which meant it was the kingdom where the black tortoise was sealed.

'I will make the remaining helmet and gloves while moving. I should go slowly.'

It was rare to lose money because of his diligence.

Grid packed up and asked Blue Tiger, "Will you gather those of the Twelve Zodiacs who served the black tortoise? I'd like to ask some questions."

[Chapter 1193](#)

[Shoulder Guards of the White Tiger with the Protection of the Red Phoenix]

[Rating: Myth

Set Item (White Tiger Set/Red Phoenix Set)

Durability: Infinite Defense: 902

* Earth attribute resistance +80%.

* Fire attribute resistance +40%.

* Dark attribute resistance +40%.

* There is a 70% reduction in the chances of a shoulder injury.

* Additional 15% defense when hit in the upper body.

* When hit in the upper body, there is a low chance of ignoring damage.]

“...!”

The shoulder guards were after all, a shoulder protector. Due to the limited protection range itself, there was a limit to the performance. Grid had seen and made countless shoulder guards but he had rarely seen one with more than 300 defense.

‘Yet this one is 902?’

Grid was astounded when he checked the details of the shoulder guards. He didn’t know the White Tiger’s Breath that has absorbed the Red Phoenix’s would produce such a great result.

‘If I made it into armor, it would’ve had at least 2,300 defense?’

It wasn’t an exaggeration at all. The armor ranks in order were armor, gaiters, helmet, boots, shoulder guards, and gloves. Of course, one couldn’t just classify it as ‘armor is the most important thing.’ There were unique effects for every area of armor and all of them were valid. The unique effect of the shoulder guards was to lower the possibility of a shoulder injury.

Considering that the part of the body most frequently impacted during combat was the shoulders, the shoulder guards’ function was highly regarded. In fact, Grid’s injuries were mostly concentrated on the shoulders. During the fight against the yangbans, he had barely supported his shoulders with the God Hands.

Grid’s heart filled with hope.

‘Perhaps I might be able to survive the rebound of 300,000 Army Swordsmanship.’

There was a 70% reduction in the chance of a shoulder injury. This was really big. It was seven times higher than normal shoulder guards. Grid smiled before checking the following information.

[*There is a high chance of releasing ‘Thorn’ when hit in the torso. The Thorn of Hot Stone will reflect 60 percent of the damage done to the target while preventing healing for at least one second up to three seconds.

- * The skill 'White Tiger's Posture Engulfed in Flames' has been generated.
- * The skill 'White Tiger's Cry Throwing Up Flames' is generated.
- * The skill 'Howling!' is generated.
- * The passive skill 'Incarnation of Earth' is generated.
- * Defense will increase by 10% in canyon terrain.
- * The power of wide-area skills will increase by 20% in canyon terrain.
- * Decreases the target's defense and magic resistance by 10% when encountering great demons weaker than rank 22.
- * If damage to the extent of destroying it is received, the durability is fixed to the minimum for 5 seconds. There is a 10% durability recovery after this effect is over (24 hours cooldown).

★The skill 'Rock' is generated.

★The skill 'Earth God' is generated.

★ White Tiger Set Effect

Once three set items are equipped, defense and health will increase by 10%.

★ Red Phoenix Set Effect

Once two set items are equipped, health recovery rate will increase by 20%. Once four set items are equipped, health recovery rate will increase by 40%.

Conditions of Use: Grid.

Weight: 450]

"..."

Since the main item was the White Tiger's Breath, there were many options that overlapped with the Gaiters of the White Tiger supporting Heaven and Earth. The durability of Greed might be infinite but the effect of recovering durability was due to the effect of the epics. Howling! and Rock were completely consistent with the same skills attached to the gaiters. Thus, the cooldown time was shared and they could be viewed as 'useless options.'

However, the story was different when it came to Earth God. In the case of Earth God which had a probability of activating while stepping on the ground, the probability of activation was raised due to the probability of the gaiters and shoulder guards overlapping. In addition, White Tiger's Posture Engulfed in Flames and White Tiger's Cry Throwing Up Flames were judged as completely different skills from White Tiger's Attitude and White Tiger's Cry.

[White Tiger's Posture Engulfed in Flames Lv. 1]

[Take the posture of the white tiger.

The Red Phoenix's Breath will create flames that inflict 6,000 fire damage per second (half the damage against players). Attack power is reduced by 80% and you are unable to move, but defense will increase by 198% and health recovery increased by 50%.

Skill Mana Cost when Activated : 50 per second.

Cooldown Time: 1 hour.

* This skill doesn't share a cooldown with White Tiger's Attitude.

* Skills attached to myth rated items can be upgraded.]

[White Tiger's Cry Throwing Up Flames Lv. 1]

[Creates an earthquake in a five meter radius and releases flames in front of it.

All targets within range are subjected to a 'loss of balance' status and there is a 15% reduction in defense, evasion, and accuracy. If the target is using a spell or skill, casting is forcibly cancelled. Any targets hit by the fire will lose stamina.

Mana Consumption: 2,000.

Skill Cooldown Time: 30 minutes.

* This skill doesn't share a cooldown with White Tiger's Cry.

* Skills attached to myth rated items can be upgraded.]

"..."

Grid read the details of the shoulder guards over and over again. It was to make sure he hadn't read anything wrong and that there wasn't a misunderstanding. Yet no matter how many times he read it, the contents didn't change. There were no misunderstandings.

Grid quietly wore the shoulder guards on both shoulders. Two sharp protrusions like the white tiger's fangs shot in the direction of the sky, putting a sense of pressure on the shoulder guards that could seem somewhat dull.

'Ah.'

Grid was thrilled. He could feel the protection of the Four Gods and the heart of Khan from the armor, gaiters, gloves, and boots enveloping him tightly and he felt his uneasiness being washed away. He vaguely felt protected.

"Human!"

It happened while Grid was moving his body around.

"Did you want to meet us?"

New members of the Twelve Zodiacs emerged. They were a horse, a chicken, a pig, and a snake. The snake was 2 meters long and she raised her waist to be eye level with Grid.

“If you wanted to see us, you should’ve come to us and politely asked for a meeting. What is with calling us to meet you?”

The snake with no limbs wagged her tongue in a threatening manner.

“You are a very nasty human. Us Twelve Zodiacs might love humans but for ignorant humans like you, it is better to start with a beating. Now, stick out your butt. Accept the punishment of love.”

“...?”

It was an unexpected reaction. Grid expected a welcome but they were surprisingly hostile. The bewildered Grid quickly frowned. Standing behind the snake, Blue Tiger could be seen smiling.

‘She is a naughty person.’

No, considering the high affinity, it didn’t seem to be a meaningless prank. There must be something. The snake’s eyes were swirling. “I told you to stick out your butt.”

A powerful magic struck Grid. The snake’s majestic voice rang out and powerful magic swept through Grid’s mind.

[‘Banguli of the Twelve Zodiacs’ is dazzling you to make you submit.]

[You have resisted.]

[The First King title has reflected the abnormal condition.]

[You have resisted all the abnormal conditions.]

Originally, the First King’s abnormal status reflection didn’t apply to targets with a certain level of reputation, status, or level. The opponent was one of the Twelve Zodiacs. Grid took the reflection failure for granted. However, Banguli didn’t easily accept her failure. She never imagined that a human could resist her magic. “H-How is this human—”

“Gul! Strange! Gul!”

The vigilant Banguli slowly stepped back and a small pink pig moved forward. Perhaps it was because she maintained her cleanliness every day but she ran forward with a refreshing flower scent and head-butted Grid.

[You have suffered 3,960 damage.]

[The Shoulder Guards of the White Tiger with the Protection of the Red Phoenix is releasing burning thorns.]

[The target has received 2,376 damage. The target has been cursed and is unable to heal.]

The aroma of roasted pig stimulated Grid’s appetite.

“Gul?” The pig was puzzled after she became half-cooked from banging her forehead against Grid’s shoulder. Her head was stinging while she thought it was ridiculous that the human was like a mountain. Of course, she controlled her force so that the human wouldn’t be seriously injured but she couldn’t understand it.

“Get lost!”

Chaos ensued. The horse ran and struck at Grid’s thighs with her hind legs, only to squat down in pain by herself. The chicken pecked at Grid’s ankle, only for her beak to be broken and she howled as if she became a rooster greeting the morning.

“.....”

Silence arrived. The four members of the Twelve Zodiacs were stunned after being brutally beaten by the human. They didn’t know...

Right now, the most surprised person was Grid.

“Why are they so weak...?”

Were they just spirits that served the Twelve Zodiacs, not the actual members of the Twelve Zodiacs? Tosun poked the side of the seriously suspicious Grid. “They aren’t weak. You’re just stronger.”

“Ah.” Grid came to his senses at these words. He hadn’t tasted it in a while so he had forgotten. Yes, this was being overheated. He had produced and equipped two myth rated armor so it was no wonder he was several times stronger than before.

“Hum hum, it is nice to meet you.” Grid reached out to the shocked members of the Twelve Zodiacs who were told they were weak. Then he formally introduced himself. “I am Overgeared King Grid.”

The legendary blacksmith, magic swordsman of the epics, Duke of Fire, Duke of Virtue, Duke of Wisdom, etc...

There were many titles but Grid’s favorite one was Overgeared King.

“G-Grid?” Banguli’s tongue shook violently. “T-The person of distinction who resurrected the red phoenix?”

Banguli and the others stared at Blue Tiger after finding out Grid’s identity. They were fiery in nature among the Twelve Zodiacs and wanted to give Blue Tiger a good beating. However, they couldn’t refuse the hand that Grid was holding out so they politely grabbed it first. Banguli had no hands and was forced to use her tongue.

“Benefactor, it is an honor to meet you.”

“You are a half-god. Shall I call you the Overgeared God in advance? Gul?”

“...Overgeared God?”

Wasn’t this good? Grid was constantly suffering from being called God of Virtue so his face became rosy at this change. “Yes, call me Overgeared God.”

It was 10 times better than virtue. Grid smiled with satisfaction and asked Banguli, “I wanted to meet you because I wanted to hear some stories. Tell me everything about the black tortoise. I don’t care if they are trivial.”

The Four Gods were all those who benefited humanity. However, each one had a different personality. Grid took a more cautious approach because he had already resurrected the red phoenix. He listened to Banguli's group because he believed it would be easier to revive the black tortoise if he understood the black tortoise as much as possible.

Up to a few years ago, Xing was an area inaccessible to players.

However, things had changed since the large community of poisonous rats was attacked by Grid. The players were able to leave Pangea more easily and then figure out how to get to Xing via Kars. One of them was 'Old Sword Demon,' the first generation high ranker who was the first ranked assassin when Faker was still a rising star. He had already left the rankings leaderboard a long time ago and was now in Xing.

'The NPCs don't know about anything south of here.'

Once he heard about the red phoenix's resurrection from an acquaintance, Old Sword Demon quietly wandered the streets that had a Chinese flavor. He flowed between the crowd like water and the place he was headed for was a small inn.

"Master, do you have cuckoo meat here?"

"You mean the meat of those who make the cuckoo cuckoo sound?"

"No, I want to eat cuckoo meat that is cuckoo."

"...!"

The owner's eyes changed. He stared at the stern-faced Old Sword Demon and gulped.

"Wanting to find new meat at a beef restaurant, you are a lunatic. Ey, I've had bad luck since the opening! Get out of here!"

"...?"

Old Sword Demon was driven out by the owner and was stunned. He stared at the owner sprinkling salt in front of the store and turned away.

"...It was next door."

Old Sword Demon—he was one of the greatest talents but failed all sorts of quests due to his bad sense of direction. Finally, he could only stay away from the rankings.

"Hey, Old Sword Demon. You are four hours late today. You haven't changed over the years."

"I'm sorry, Hwang Gildong."

In fact, he was forced to switch to being a private ranker but he was still moving toward his goal, even if it was slower than others. The quest he was currently working on was the seizure of the Black Tortoise Jewel.

[Chapter 1194](#)

The National Competition's third day.

The United States felt Lauel's absence. In the Siege event, they were devastated by the strategies of the Chinese dragon, Hao. Disturbances, fireballs, ambushes, sudden raids, etc.—Hao's operations worked together in an exquisite manner, pushing the United States to the defensive.

"....."

Kraugel, who had been isolated from the main force in the enemy camp and barely managed to return to base camp alone, stopped in place. Their castle where the star-spangled banner should be had turned into the enemy's lair. The five-starred red flag flapped like it was laughing at Kraugel.

"Surviving that trap... I truly respect you." Hao stood above the walls among the archers and advised Kraugel. "However, it's already too late. Forget meaningless resistance and surrender obediently."

There were only two people Hao acknowledged as being superior to him—Grid and Kraugel. In particular, he had long envied Kraugel and had been following Kraugel for many years. Of course, this didn't mean he was a subordinate. Kraugel had no intention of creating a faction, nor did he think Hao was below himself.

"Kraugel, make a decision."

Once Kraugel refused to discard his sword, Hao once again advised him. All the Chinese players, including him, were wearing barbed armor. It was armor with a sword breaker option. Hao had been truly impressed by Grid's Sword Breaker that defeated Kraugel last year.

"It has been three minutes since our flag has been inserted. You have only two minutes left."

The Chinese players started shouting. They were filled with a great momentum. There were 30 people occupying the castle while Kraugel was alone. It was overwhelmingly advantageous for China, who only had to hold on for two minutes. The Chinese participants calculated that there could never be a chance and no one in the world denied it.

The commentators and viewers, regardless of nationality, believed it was China's victory. Only one person was different. All except for Kraugel.

"Ugh?"

The sword that Kraugel threw flew over the wall and the scared Chinese players withdrew to the left and the right. The sword was inserted into a gap between the Chinese players only to suddenly change positions with Kraugel who was below the walls.

"...?!"

The Chinese players were flustered about allowing Kraugel to invade and failed to capitalize on their numerical advantage. However, they soon recovered their senses and poured out their skills onto Kraugel. At this point, Kraugel's 'spear' was spinning. The gentle spear flowed like water and slammed into the Chinese players' barbed armor without being damaged.

"Cough...!"

The Chinese players couldn't withstand the shock and flew into the air. Kraugel pulled out a new sword and threw it. The target was a tall spire 500 meters away. It was the location where the five-starred red flag was inserted.

"Stop him!"

The Chinese players who just landed threw their weapons as fast as they could. It was an attempt to not leave a gap for Kraugel but Kraugel was one beat faster than them. By the time they landed, Kraugel had already thrown the new weapon. By the time they threw their weapons, Kraugel's position had already been swapped with the sword.

Kraugel's new position was in front of the spire. The fluttering five-starred red flag was right in front of him. Kraugel was reaching for the red flag when a powerful force struck his back. It was a Breath shot by Hao, who had spread his dragon wings and flew to the spire from the moment Kraugel ascended the walls.

"You have to give up like Lady Mi did for Zhao Yun!" [1]

There were limits to being alone. Hao would use this opportunity to make Kraugel understand...

Hao shouted with a sense of duty and Kraugel failed to respond to the attack. It was because the surprise attack came when he was bending over and reaching out to take the flag. The timing of Hao's surprise attack was perfect. If Hao had opened the willpower stat, he would've been the first person Kraugel lost to since Grid.

"...!"

Hao's spear stopped just before it pierced Kraugel's back. An invisible sword energy was cutting at Hao. The 'cuts' were intangible willpower created by a Sword Saint's Formless Will. In terms of sharpness, it was far more intimidating than Grid's Formless Will.

"Kuek...! Kuaaaaak!"

The dragon scales on one side of Hao's wings couldn't withstand the shock as it was cut and blood spurted like a fountain. It was the moment when he lost his flying ability. In his falling vision, Kraugel's back as he pulled out the red flag could be seen. The stars and stripes once again decorated the castle.

"Kraugel!!"

Hao didn't give up. Rather than taking care of his falling body, he fired a Breath once more. Kraugel's immortality would've been consumed before arriving here. Hao was determined to make it mutual destruction. If he could take out Kraugel then his remaining colleagues meant China would win.

That's right. Like the Overgeared members, Hao was distinguishing between achievements and death. The yellow ray of light emerged from Hao's mouth and cut through the sky. The Breath was the ultimate attack of the half-draconian. Not only did it consume the user's health, there was the critical disadvantage of the skill cooldown time being random. The advantages were that the hit rate and power were comparable to a legendary skill. It might be trivial compared to the Breath of a real dragon but at the very least, it did absolute damage to players.

However, the current opponent was the worst. It was because a Sword Saint could cut the world.

“...!”

The yellow beam of light was split in half. Kraugel’s sword had cut the beam of light. His newly created swordsmanship had ‘strongest enemies’ in mind and contained the power to delete skills.

“...Hat.”

Hao laughed as he crashed into the cold ground. His body lost the dragon wings and scales as his world became grey and silent. Standing below the star-spangled banner, Kraugel exuded an overwhelming sense of pressure that was higher than when he reigned as the supreme one.

“Wow...”

Upon arriving in Yangzhou, the capital of Xing, Grid’s mouth dropped open. He was amazed by the size of Yangzhou, where 20 carriages could move side by side. He never dreamed there would be a metropolis larger than Titan, the capital of the empire.

“There is nothing small in this kingdom.”

From the food to buildings, they were all really big. Even the chests of the women were big.

Tosun poked Grid in the side as he watched the women on the street wearing cheongsams. “Overgeared God, Overgeared God. Wake up. People are looking.”

Looking?

‘Am I the only one acting like a hillbilly among so many people?’

Grid shook his head and looked around. Then he was surprised. It was because the hundreds of thousands of people passing by on the street were watching Grid’s party.

‘Ah.’

Grid realized the reason.

“Where in the world did such a group of beauties come from?”

Tosun and Kyeongja, as well as Blue Tiger, Banguli, and the others of the Twelve Zodiacs—they were currently accompanying Grid in human form and were all peerless beauties.

‘It must be eye-catching.’

Grid knew the identities of the Twelve Zodiacs and wasn’t deceived by their appearance, but the situation was different for those who didn’t know the truth. The men seemed to fall in love with the Twelve Zodiacs at first sight while the women had expressions of longing.

Grid sighed.

‘An obvious situation will occur.’

It was obvious. Now a young master would come up to the Twelve Zodiacs. If things didn’t work out well, he would provoke the ladies’ servant and this was naturally Grid.

'If an ordinary man is with these beauties then he will naturally be mistaken for the ladies' servant.'

This time, it also included Braham. Today, Braham had a plain face due to the skin mask. This meant he would be treated just like Grid.

"Can you excuse me for a moment?"

It was as expected. Someone who was obviously a nobleman in luxurious clothing approached Grid. Grid watched and waited for this third-rate extra to say his lines. Surprisingly, the nobleman spoke to Grid, not the Twelve Zodiacs. It was even in a polite manner.

"I am Qi Jian, the eldest son of the Wolong Goods Office, the representative business group of Yangzhou. Based on your clothing, you seem to be a nobleman from the Cho Kingdom. Can I ask for your name?"

"Why are you wondering about my name?"

"I see that you have travelled with such beautiful people to a distant kingdom and you look like someone who knows romance. That's why I want to get closer to you. I'm on my way to have a drink with my friends. Do you want to accompany me?"

"...!"

Grid was engulfed in great emotions. He was regarded as a nobleman rather than a servant, as well as one having a romantic affair with beauties. Grid couldn't help raising his shoulders. He had only recently been gaining confidence in his appearance and now his self-esteem rose sharply.

In his heart, he wanted to shake hands with Qi Jian and go drink straight away. However, Grid refused. "Thank you for the suggestion but I have work to do..."

Just then, Grid shook his head and closed his mouth. It was because Braham was glaring at him. Braham was very dissatisfied.

"No, what is it?" Grid whispered and Braham clicked his tongue.

"Do you want to miss out on a golden opportunity?"

"Ah..." Grid recalled the challenges facing him. First, he had to collect information. He had to figure out the exact location of the Black Tortoise Jewel and find a way to access it. The man in front of him introduced himself as the eldest son of the city's representative business group. There was no loss conversing with him. There was no room to worry. "...Okay! Let's have a drink!"

"Ohh! You really are a man of refined tastes!"

Once Grid answered vigorously, Qi Jian led Grid's party to a large inn. It was an expensive inn where a glass of wine would cost gold, not silver. Grid was guided to the largest innermost room and felt slightly strained. It was natural to have high expectations at the chance to taste delicacies from a kingdom he was visiting for the first time.

"Cuckoo meat and Galaxy Wine."

Qi Jian sat down with Grid's group and ordered alcohol and food. The names seemed a bit strange but Grid wasn't disappointed or anxious. Once he saw the storekeeper smiling while leaving, it seemed like a very expensive meal had been ordered.

'Expensive food doesn't taste bad. How delicious will this kingdom's fine food be?'

In fact, Grid liked cheap and stimulating foods such as jjampong, ramyun, pork belly, canned tuna, and sausages. However, he had stayed at the Cho Kingdom's palace for the past few days and became interested in fine dining food. The delicacies he ate at the Cho Palace had suited his taste.

Qi Jian asked with a smile, "Did you hear that God Red Phoenix has resurrected and blessed the south? Surely your living conditions have improved?"

"Of course..."

Grid was trying to answer when he felt a strange sensation and shut his mouth. He stared at the smiling Qi Jian.

"How did you hear about the resurrection of the red phoenix?"

The news of the red phoenix's resurrection was thoroughly blocked by the Hwan Kingdom. The news hadn't yet been delivered outside the south. If Qi Jian was an ordinary NPC then it was impossible for him to know about the red phoenix's resurrection. Qi Jian's smile changed sharply. "You shouldn't underestimate the information network of the Chivalrous Robbers."

Snap!

Dozens of masked people poured in through the door and windows. At the same time, Qi Jian got up from his seat and pointed a sword at Grid's neck. His movements were as fast as lightning. Qi Jian stated coolly, "The south is isolated due to the barrier installed by the Five Seniors and the people of the Cho Kingdom can't leave the south. If you were a normal person of the Cho Kingdom then it would've been impossible to come here..."

Qi Jian stopped before he finished speaking. It was because Grid used Earth God and the masked people, including Qi Jian, hardened like stone. No, they were turned into stone. Grid slowly drew his sword as he rose from his seat and pointed it at Qi Jian's neck. Once the effect of Earth God was over and Qi Jian could move again, the situation had already reversed.

"Let's move on quickly from this tedious sweet potato development [2]. I am Overgeared King Grid, who defeated the yangbans and resurrected the red phoenix. Are you on my side or are you an enemy?"

"Of course I'm on your side!" Qi Jian replied immediately.

He was stunned by Grid's presence that turned him and his companions into stone.

[Chapter 1195](#)

The reason Braham stayed quiet throughout the incident was because he was wary of the level of Qi Jian's people. Until they were escorted to the inn, Braham thought they were really civilians.

Qi Jian's people were ordinary. At least, until the cuckoo meat was ordered. Qi Jian's group showed their real strength the moment food was ordered and this brought a strong impact to Braham. In particular, the scene where the magical net launched by a pale-faced scholar squeezed all the mana in the area was spectacular. The mana flowing in the air was broken down and sealed. If Braham was an ordinary magician then he would've suffered a setback.

'There are no worms.'

It was worthy of praise that they hid their strength from the legendary great magician. Braham carefully observed and judged the strength of Qi Jian's group before quietly gesturing. Then the chaotic mana in the air gathered at his fingertips.

"...!"

It happened when the face of the pale-faced scholar turned blue...

The masked men who stormed into the room, Qi Jian, and even the Twelve Zodiacs turned to stone.

'What?'

Braham was flustered. There was no way to use magic power to suppress the aura of petrification rising from the tip of his toes. Earth God—the power of the white tiger that Grid used at this moment was completely unreasonable. Braham hurriedly opened his mental world. Likewise, he went against reason to resist the power of the white tiger.

Step.

Once everyone except for Grid and Braham became stone statues, Grid got up and approached Qi Jian. He slowly pulled out his sword and aimed it at Qi Jian's neck.

"Of course I'm on your side!"

After a while, Qi Jian was freed from petrification and shouted while raising his hands. It wasn't a lie to save his life. Knowing that Grid wasn't the enemy, he didn't feel the need to fight.

"As I mentioned earlier, my name is Qi Jian! I'm a member of the Chivalrous Robbers! It is an honor to meet the person of distinction who resurrected God Red Phoenix!"

Qi Jian didn't doubt Grid. He believed that Grid had resurrected the red phoenix. It was natural to believe this. The power of the white tiger that Grid showed a while ago was different from the breaths used by the yangbans. It was proof that Grid had been acknowledged by the white tiger.

Grid put away his sword, sat down and asked, "What is the Chivalrous Robbers?"

In fact, Grid was half excited. Qi Jian's people were skilled enough to admire Braham. Grid wouldn't have recognized the skills of Qi Jian's group. He was just deeply grateful that the effect of Earth God had been triggered.

'I really like the conditions.'

The prerequisite for activating Earth God was that he 'touch the ground.' There was a probability of the skill activating even if he was sitting or standing normally. He felt that the probability of activating it was

much more frequent than Lightning God which had a probability of activating while flying. Of course, a big reason was the overlapping options of the shoulder guards and gaiters.

Qi Jian beckoned for the masked people to step back and explained, "The Chivalrous Robbers is a righteous group established by Hwang Gildong. The ultimate purpose is to take away the wealth of corrupt officials and giving it to benefit the people, while also punishing the yangbans who are misleading people with fake myths."

"...I see."

This was the answer that Grid had expected. Grid often heard the story of Hwang Gildong and realized that Hwang Gildong was based on Hong Gildong.

'The person who gave the toothless tigers the dentures was also Hwang Gildong. I'm sure he is good.'

It was great news that Hwang Gildong was hostile to the yangbans. He would be a strong supporter.

"How are you fighting against the yangbans?"

Qi Jian's group was clearly strong. In particular, the pale-faced scholar was close to a legend in strength so the overall level of the Chivalrous Robbers should be extremely high, according to Grid. Nevertheless, it was lacking. The yangbans were too strong. Hwang Gildong himself was a legend and even if his executives were quasi-legends, it was far from being able to confront the yangbans with force.

"We are informing people about the reality of the yangbans."

'Isn't this smart?'

Hwang Gildong and the Chivalrous Robbers grasped the main point. They knew that the yangbans became stronger by becoming objects of faith and were working to suppress this.

'Without their actions, Garam and the yangbans would've been much stronger.'

He might not have won the battle against the yangbans. Grid really liked the Chivalrous Robbers. It was their first time meeting each other but he felt a sense of comradeship.

"By the way, how did you notice that the myths of this land were fake?"

"It was thanks to Hwang Gildong."

'A legend or transcendent won't easily fall for the gods' deception.'

The daoist Sabaek also knew the myths of this land were fake and was preparing for a war with the Hwan Kingdom. The problem was that Sabaek's methods were wrong. However, Grid believed that Hwang Gildong was different. Since Hwang Gildong was based on Hong Gildong, an existence of justice, Grid thought Hwang Gildong would be the same.

"Can I meet with Hwang Gildong?"

Just as Grid asked, the food came out. Fortunately, it wasn't a cuckoo dish. It was a roast duck and vegetable dish and the taste was great. The crispy duck skin was topped with vegetables and sauce, making him eager to eat it.

“We might serve Hwang Gildong but it is impossible to grasp his movements. Since he is someone who is hunted...”

“So how do you usually interact?”

“If Hwang Gildong gives us orders in a letter then we will act accordingly. All branches scattered throughout the continent operate the same way as us.”

“There is no way for you to get in touch with Hwang Gildong first?”

“No.”

“I see...”

It seemed more cautious than necessary but it was natural. The enemies of the Chivalrous Robbers were so strong that they had to be secretive in order to not be discovered. Grid ate the meal with the Twelve Zodiacs and then got to the point.

“I want to know the exact whereabouts of the Black Tortoise Jewel.”

The location of the Black Tortoise Jewel wasn't an open secret. It is known to the public that the Black Tortoise Jewel is being held in a place called Chaoxin Fortress. However, the reason why Grid came to Yeongzhou instead of Chaoxin was due to the advice of the Twelve Zodiacs.

‘Banguli told me that the location of Chaoxin Fortress is in the east.’

The black tortoise was the god of the north. It made sense that the Black Tortoise Jewel should be kept in the northernmost part of the Xing Kingdom. It was just like the Red Phoenix Bow was kept in Pangea, the southernmost part of the Cho Kingdom.

“I’ve heard that the Black Tortoise Jewel is being kept in one of three places: Boguan, Huawu, Chiaotzu. Which of the three is it?”

“...?”

Qi Jian cocked his head. He was a bit puzzled. On the other hand, the pale-faced scholar called ‘Huo Jing’ agreed.

“Person of Distinction, you are different. Contrary to what is known to the world, the Black Tortoise Jewel at Chaoxin was a fake. It is clear that the real Black Tortoise Jewel is at one of the three places you mentioned.”

“So where is it?”

“I think it is highly likely to be Chiaotzu.”

“Why?”

“It is because the troops at Chiaotzu were strengthened right after the Cho Kingdom lost the Red Phoenix Bow.”

“Ah...!”

“The loss of the Red Phoenix Bow would’ve raised the alarm of the Hwan Kingdom. I think they would’ve ordered Xing and the other kingdoms to thoroughly tighten the security around the artifacts of the Four Gods.”

“At that time, only the troops at Chiaotzu were increased so there is a good chance Chiaotzu will contain the Black Tortoise Jewel.”

“Yes, it could be a feint but I don’t think so…”

Braham interrupted. “There is a good chance the Black Tortoise Jewel is at one of these three places if a yangban is staying there.”

Since the resurrection of the red phoenix, the wariness of the Hwan Kingdom would be much higher. It was more likely that the yangbans would be directly protecting the artifacts of the Four Gods. Huo Jin nodded at Braham’s reasoning. “I also have the same idea. I will send a letter to my colleagues in those three areas to investigate right away.”

“Thank you.”

It was a long conversation.

“By the way, why are you looking for the Black Tortoise Jewel?” Qi Jian suddenly raised his hand like he was a student and asked.

Grid replied like it was obvious, “I have to take it away and resurrect the black tortoise.”

“...!”

In the past, an unknown person—Blue Tiger—was able to seize the Red Phoenix because security was negligent. However, now the Hwan Kingdom was aware there was a force that revealed its teeth and even allowed the resurrection of the red phoenix.

Was it possible to steal the Black Tortoise Jewel that the yangbans were guarding?

Qi Jian questioned but at the same time, he was full of expectations. It seemed possible if it was the man in front of him.

“It is a bad time.”

“It could have an adverse effect on the National Competition.”

The S.A Group convened an emergency meeting. It was because they caught the fact that the ‘operator’ was trying to move. Codename S-001—his name was Hanul and he was the highest-ranked NPC who could grant quests to multiple players. The biggest incident on the East Continent, the resurrection of the red phoenix, made him act again.

“Is the operator trying to get assistance?”

Chairman Lim Cheolho hurried into the meeting room and asked as he sat down. Hanul, who grew through the 'level up cycle' that the gods experienced every year, was currently looking down at the ground. He had a dissatisfied expression as he gazed at the red-colored southern sky.

"Yes, the balance set by Morpheus means the Five Seniors can't move, so he is quickly attracting players."

"This is bad... the timing of the red phoenix's resurrection was too soon."

This incident was surprising for Chairman Lim Cheolho, who valued Grid more than anyone else. He hadn't expected Grid to resurrect the red phoenix so easily.

'It is fun watching the unexpected but I can't enjoy it this time.'

Hanul closed his eyes and was slowly waving his arms. He was like a conductor against a backdrop of grand music. At the same time...

[Call of the Heavens]

[★ Hidden Quest ★]

A transcendental being needs your help.

Go to Chiaotzu in the Xing Kingdom. Those who are in danger of their treasure being stolen by an unknown evil are eager for your help.

Quest Clear Conditions: Arrive in Chiaotzu within a week.

Quest Clear Rewards:

1. Create a linked hidden quest.
2. Gain two levels.

Quest Failure Penalty: None.]

The same quest window arrived in front of all players in the top 1,000 of the unified rankings. The reward was gaining two levels. It was an irresistible quest to the high rankers.

[Chapter 1196](#)

"Two levels? Wow, the rewards are crazy."

The reaction of the top 1,000 rankers who received the Call of the Heavens quest was hot. The so-called high rankers were at least level 370. It was hard to gain 4~5% experience after a whole day of hunting and quests that gave levels as rewards were hard to clear. The sudden quest that gave two levels was like timely rain in a drought.

"Is this an event?"

"The S.A Group has finally learned how to deal with public sentiment."

It was a surprise quest that made people suspect favoritism. Reinforcement, drawing, production, etc.— every time all types of probability content were conducted, the rankers were busy swearing at the S.A Group. Now they rarely praised the S.A Group and trembled with joy. It only lasted 10 seconds.

“...The time limit of the quest is a week.”

“What? This damn thing!”

This was the period of the National Competition. There was still one day until the end of the National Competition and this was roughly three days in game time. Naturally, the majority of high-ranking players were participating in the National Competition. It was virtually impossible to reach a certain part of the East Continent in just four days.

“This event is bullshit. It is just teasing us.”

“These S.A XXXX are too much. If such a quest is released at this timing, the fairness of those participating in the competition and those absent from the competition will be different.”

“This will hurt the growth of those participating in the National Competition. Who will participate in the National Competition if we are hit like this every time?”

In the past, Grid had placed a killing order on Veradin. Rather than condemning him, the high rankers agreed or sympathized because they identified with Grid. High rankers with a high participation rate in the National Competition had to understand and defend Grid who had suffered losses during the National Competition. Only then could they avoid experiencing the same thing as Grid.

At this moment, they were struck by a similar pattern. It wasn't due to players but the tyranny of the game company. The S.A Group, who dominated the world, hadn't changed since the Veradin incident. They were still arrogant.

“Is it the S.A Group's proposition that those who participate in the National Competition should bear a penalty in exchange for the rewards they can receive? If they keep to this stance, don't they know that they'll be boycotted by the rankers sooner or later?”

“How many times has it been that the S.A Group failed to care about public sentiment? They are running the game according to their tastes so they won't listen to us no matter what we say.”

“After a few years, only the low level players will participate in the National Competition and they will regret it.”

“The biggest problem right now is the attitude of the public. No one has a problem with how the S.A Group treats the participants of the National Competition. If people stand up and protest together, the treatment of participants might improve. It is a pity that they are staying silent.”

“For ordinary players, the National Competition is like a celebration. Why would they pay attention to the welfare of the strong players when they are monopolizing the rewards of participating in the National Competition?”

“There is no answer to this. The S.A Group will never change and in the future, we will lose every time we join the National Competition.”

The problem was that the quest that rewards two levels occurred during the National Competition. The complaints of the players participated in the National Competition boiled up and the arrow of condemnation aimed at the S.A Group. Players went to the operations office to demand their rights.

“Increase the deadline for the Call from the Heavens quest.”

The answer they received was naturally as expected.

“it isn’t possible. It isn’t fair.”

“What? Don’t you know that the current situation is unfair?”

“Why is it unfair? Haven’t you participated in the National Competition and earned rewards? Increasing the deadline for your convenience will increase the dissatisfaction of those who don’t participate in the National Competition.”

“Dammit! In return for giving up the rewards, those who don’t participate in the National Competition will grow and benefit in the game! Why do they say that we are the ones benefiting one-sidedly?”

The S.A Group replied, “This quest is part of the in-game growth for the non-participants.”

“Unseemly sophistry! It doesn’t make any sense!”

“Damn! The National Competition is too dirty!”

The players were disgruntled by the attitude of the S.A Group and declared they would abandon the National Competition while it was still ongoing.

However, the S.A Group’s officials didn’t blink.

“The purpose of the National Competition is to bring the world together with Satisfy. Participants are obligated to help raise awareness of Satisfy. As a Satisfy player, you have to be an example to the world. If you give up the National Competition without a sense of responsibility, you will be deprived of all the previous medals you won and the corresponding rewards. You will also be penalized in future National Competitions.”

“This XX...!”

In the end, the swearing continued.

A difference of 1% experience was enough to change the rankings every day. Therefore, the attitude of the S.A Group, who threatened them under the name of the rules rather than caring about the position of the rankers, caused the players to let loose profanities.

The tension of the situation reached the peak.

“XX! Do what you like! Penalized? Give it to me! Do as you please! I’ll never participate again because the National Competition is too dirty!”

Surprisingly, there were many players. In particular, those who hadn’t won any silver or gold medals in the past four days gave up the qualification to participate in the National Competition. On the other

hand, the gold medal winning participants hesitated about withdrawing. Still, they left a warning to the S.A Group which was trying to keep the situation under control.

“...I understand their position.”

The players left. The gazes of all the remaining employees in the quiet office were drawn to Director Yoon Sangmin.

Yoon Sangmin showed signs of weariness. He had flown to New York to run the National Competition and was struggling for months, so it was no wonder he was tired. He was full of anticipation that his hard work would be over in one more day but he felt terrible because such a ridiculous situation had suddenly occurred. He resented the Grid he liked so much.

"I don't understand it either. Still, what can I do? Changing it would give them too much benefits compared to the non-participants and it isn't fair. In the first place..."

The principle was that management didn't intervene in what happened in the game. They had no authority to intervene. All of Satisfy's history was written by the flow of the world and the players swimming in it. Chairman Lim Cheolho had always insisted on this.

“...I'm only following the instructions of the higher-ups.”

Director Yoon Sangmin swallowed his long words and finished things. He expressed his disappointment that the current situation would have an adverse effect on the promotion of the National Competition in the future. The National Competition was only an incidental event. The value of Satisfy was within Satisfy. Director Yoon Sangmin thought that he would be satisfied as long as players didn't abandon Satisfy.

‘Of course, it is a shame...’

Yoon Sangmin turned on the monitor that had been turned off. A panoramic view of the demon king's castle filled the screen. The east, west, north, and south gates were guarded by the Four Heavenly Kings and the demon king was standing on the highest terrace of the castle.

Damian—he was a new star behind Kraugel and Grid. He had an archangel as a member of the Four Heavenly Kings and had an overwhelmingly higher health than last year's demon king. His buffs and recovery ability that were beyond common sense would be a disaster for challengers. However, he wasn't noticed.

“I don't think you're destined to be the protagonist yet.”

It was at the time when Yoon Sangmin was feeling sorry for Damian.

"Isabel-chan, please hold on.”

The white-haired man wearing a helmet that seemed to be made out of a dragon's skull was praying earnestly. After monitoring all the events of the past four days, he was completely overwhelmed by Kraugel and the Overgeared members.

“Please! Stop those horrible humans from coming here!”

“.....”

The Four Heavenly Kings looked at the demon king who appeared pathetic compared to his majestic appearance.

“Would you like to quit?”

“I don’t recommend it.”

“...?”

The players who came back from meeting Director Yoon Sangmin first visited players belonging to the Overgeared Guild.

It was to convey the seriousness of the situation to the Overgeared members, who were influential both in skill and fame. They believed that if the Overgeared members boycotted the National Competition, other players would agree with them and the S.A Group would reluctantly change their attitude.

It was twisted from the start. The reactions of the Overgeared Guild members were completely different from expected.

“I don’t like this quest.”

The Overgeared members were negative about the Call of the Heavens quest itself even if it gave two levels as a reward. The players wondered, “Why? Do you think you won’t be able to reach the destination in time?”

Then the Overgeared members replied. “I wouldn’t worry if it was that. There are some people who have been to Xing. If it is a week then the deadline can barely be met. This is just a really nasty quest.”

“No, we’re not worried about that. We have Skunk and we’re not worried about finding the way.”

The player asked, “Then what is the problem?”

“Have you heard the rumours of the blacksmith slaughter quest?”

“Eh? Yes... I’ve heard about it.”

The players nodded at Jishuka’s question.

A few years ago, a quest took place that targeted all of Satisfy’s blacksmiths. At that time, it wasn’t known how to get to the East Continent so only hundreds of blacksmiths participated in the quest.

“There were rumors that the Overgeared blacksmiths who crossed to the East Continent fell into a trap and died miserably. Is this what you’re talking about?”

“Yes. There is a good chance that the person who gave that quest and the one who gave this quest are the same person.”

“...Who is it?”

“A yangban.”

“...!”

The Overgeared members knew that Garam was the one who killed the blacksmiths. It just wasn't known that Hanul was the one who created the quest. Of course, the weight of the name 'yangban' was sufficient.

“Hey, it was a yangban?” The players' faces were white. They were high rankers and had information about the East Continent, so they knew the yangbans were gods. They were also gods who considered humans trivial.

Jishuka smiled at the players who were as stiff as statues. “They won't be involved in anything good. Isn't that right?”

“.....”

No one denied it. Once the players realized that this quest wasn't good, they stepped back and left. Soon, Lauel's voice echoed through the waiting room that contained only the Overgeared members.

-Well done.

The voice came from over the phone. Jishuka frowned. “Is this really good enough?”

It was Lauel's analysis that those who accepted the quest were likely to be in a hostile position to Grid. If the quest creator was a yangban, the 'evil' mentioned in the quest was likely Grid who was hostile to the Hwan Kingdom. The Overgeared Guild were in a position to stop the rankers from participating in the quest.

“I think it would be better to honestly persuade them not to be hostile to Grid and to give up.”

-That is a bit provocative. Jishuka, shouldn't you know better than anyone that the pride of the high rankers is as high as the sky?

“Cough...”

-If you talk about Grid while implying that they shouldn't face him, it would spark the rankers' sense of challenge. It would also crush Grid's pride if you ask them to give up for Grid's convenience.

Thus, proper coordination was needed.

-It is a quest that the yangbans are intertwined in. If there is a possibility of falling into a trap like the blacksmiths a few years ago... It is enough just to plant this level of awareness. This alone will cause a large number of people to give up on the quest.

“Then what about those who don't give up?” Jishuka trembled as she recalled the strength of the yangbans she had experienced first hand.

“It will be too difficult for Grid if even some of the high rankers join the yangbans. Even Braham couldn't knock down Garam by himself. That's why we need to help Grid right away.”

-No. The moment you give up on the National Competition in the middle, all the rankers will participate in the quest. They will think you cheated them to monopolize the quest rewards.

“...”

-In the first place, you must earn the National Competition rewards. You need to obtain as many breaths as possible to help Grid in the long run.

“So what are you going to do? Will you send Mercedes and Piaro to Grid?”

-No? *We can't force so many precious talents into a desperate situation.* We have already significantly reduced the power of the enemies. What else can we do?

“...?”

-Jishuka, be calm. You might be blinded due to your love for Grid but everyone experiences failure. The person who has suffered more failures than anyone else is Grid.

“What are you saying?”

-Grid's winning streak is over. It is time for him to return to Reinhardt.

“You...!”

Jishuka's face reddened. She felt disbelief that Lael could speak about Grid's failure so easily.

Lael told her.

-Now Grid is fighting the gods. Do you think Grid is going to win and conquer the world of the gods?

“...!”

-You have to know that faith that is beyond reason is only a burden on Grid. Grid isn't a god. He can't always win and can't always live up to your expectations.

“.....”

Jishuka bowed her head. She realized how much her vague belief had put a strain on Grid.

-Cool your head and focus on the National Competition.

Lael hung up. The atmosphere of the quiet waiting room became heavy. It wasn't just Jishuka. Yura and the Overgeared members had the same thought about Grid. When did it start? They had started taking Grid's victory and success for granted...

“There are many gold medals in the remaining events. Once Grid comes back, we will give him the breaths to encourage him.”

Chris broke the silence. All the Overgeared members nodded with resolve.

At the same time...

"This is funny."

Grid was crossing mountains and rivers. No obstacles stopped him. This was the majesty of Earth God. Every time Grid activated it and changed the terrain of the area into a plain, the intensity caused the rough mountains to become an equal height. Grid was leisurely walking with his hands behind his back.

“...Is this a person?”

Qi Jiang's group following Grid clicked their tongues. In their eyes, Grid looked more like a god than the yangbans.

[Chapter 1197](#)

A sound could be heard in the distance. Was it the roar of the world's largest beast? Qi Jian's group were still surprised by this sound despite hearing it several times and their eyes were focused on the walking Grid. A white haze was rising above Grid's body. It was the scene of a god descending.

[You have assimilated with the breath of the white tiger. Enter the 'Earth God' state and gain control of the earth.]

The world that Grid saw changed. The field, the rocks, the hills, the mountains, etc. Everything that was classified as terrain flashed with a fluorescent light. His eyes spun. Grid stared at the hills and hurriedly drew a plain in his head. Grid's mana was immediately consumed and the hills sank. The area had been turned into a plain.

It was a miracle. This was the power of a god. Grid had the protection of the white tiger and could use some of its earth power, so he could change the nearby terrain according to his own taste. The number of changes allowed was one and the duration was only 30 seconds, but this was already a significant and helpful effect.

Grid was running on the plain with pride when Braham struck a blow to his heart. “Isn't this too shabby to be called the power of the earth god?”

It was easy to do even if they weren't a god. Whether it was a hill or a mountain, he could magically smash it. Grid refuted Braham's words. “Isn't that just an act of destroying nature?”

“...?”

The advantage of this skill was to preserve nature? Grid was so adamant that the rather flustered Braham thought about it before nodding.

“Indeed... the more that nature is preserved, the stronger the concentration of mana. So you can say that the ability of the gods to turn the area into a plain without destroying the hills is great.”

It was a good result for him. He was accepting it and letting it go when Grid spoke to Braham.

“In fact, Earth God's real strength isn't turning the area into a plain. The real power of Earth God is that the area can be made into a labyrinth.”

“Then why turn it into a plain? Just now when you were chased by a group of dokkaebi [1], wouldn't you have been able to get away much easier if you made a labyrinth?”

“I have to draw the structure in my head but it is hard...”

“I understand.”

It hadn't just been a day or two when Grid's brain didn't work well. Braham didn't say anything else. Qi Jian's group and the Twelve Zodiacs didn't dare question it in order to protect Grid's dignity.

‘It is hard to do it well from the beginning unless you’re a genius.’

Until now, Grid had something in common when forming the plains. They were all made in three seconds. It seemed that selecting the terrain to change and redesigning the structure of what it was to be changed into had to be done in three seconds. It was no wonder that Grid needed time to adapt.

‘Among those who aren’t geniuses, the only one who can make full use of the power of the Dungeon Master.’

The Dungeon Master that Braham was thinking of was Eat Spicy Jokbal. Eat Spicy Jokbal had built more than 30 dungeons and helped numerous players in the Overgeared Kingdom so his prestige had reached Braham’s ears.

‘I should ask him to construct the basement of the magic tower that will be built soon.’

The moment Braham had this thought...

“Sigh.”

Once the duration of Earth God finished and the area which was turned into a plain reverted back into being hills, Grid slowed down and sighed with relief.

‘This is originally a lotto-class skill.’

Earth God could be activated once every three hours. It was a cooldown that wasn’t significantly different from the so-called ultimate skills. However, there were things that shouldn’t be forgotten. Earth God had overlapping chances of activating. If the odds hadn’t been stacked, the chances of it being triggered would’ve been significantly lower than they were now. It was terrible just thinking about it.

‘It is the right thing to make the White Tiger set. In the future, once I’ve made one more equipment out of the White Tiger’s Breath that has absorbed the Red Phoenix’s and completed the White Tiger set, there will be a higher chance of Earth God activating.’

The ideal scenario was to revive the black tortoise and receive the black tortoise’s blessing. Then the Black Tortoise’s Breath could also be fused with the breath of another of the Four Gods, just like the Red Phoenix’s Breath.

‘Finally, I will aim to resurrect all of the Four Gods.’

He would be able to combine the breaths according to his liking. Grid was in the middle of depicting a brilliant future when his vision captured something. A cloud, reminiscent of the white eyebrows of an elderly person, hung on top of a lush mountain. The river surrounding the mountain was sparkling like the Milky Way on earth.

“That is Mount Baekmi.”

“It is the entrance to Chiaotzu.”

“That’s right. It should’ve taken two more days but it arrived quickly.”

Qi Jian’s group smiled.

The mountains that should've taken them a long time to climb were easily passed thanks to Grid so it was an amazing and enjoyable experience for them. They thought they would talk about this day for the rest of their lives. Suddenly, the river fluctuated violently.

"...!?"

"It is an army."

"They must've been expecting us to come."

The river and then the ground shook. A cloud of dust was rising from far away, far beyond the river.

"We must quickly cross the river because they occupy the dock!"

Qi Jian rushed to the river, climbed onto a boat and grabbed the oars. He beckoned for Grid to board the boat but Grid's group stayed in place.

Qi Jian urged, "We have to hurry!"

The Baekmi River might be small but it wasn't easy to cross. They originally planned to rent a big ship here but they were unfortunate enough to only see a ferry boat left. Huo Jin calmed the anxious Qi Jian. "Get off the boat. They knew we were coming and sent an army. Do you think they wouldn't have prepared anything else?"

"...!"

Qi Jian belatedly realized that water was filling up at an unnoticeable rate from the bottom of the boat—a small hole had deliberately been drilled.

'It wasn't a coincidence that there were no big ships!'

He almost became a water ghost due to his desire to hurriedly cross the river by boat. Qi Jian's people jumped out of the boat and glanced respectfully at Grid. It was natural to feel respect for Grid, who not only had the power reminiscent of a god but also had the ability to recognize traps. In fact, even Grid hadn't known there was a trap.

'I can fly so why should I take a small boat like that?'

Grid focused his senses. His transcendent vision and hearing measured the number of troops approaching the river.

'There are over 1,000.'

It was too far to fathom clearly. There was a river between them so the resonance against the ground was irregular. Grid frowned and Braham declared, "There are 4,000 people."

"...?"

Aside from Huo Jin, the people of Qi Jian's group cocked their heads. Who was this man who looked ordinary at first glance yet could measure the number of troops by looking at the dust? He might not be an average person but they felt it crossed the line when they saw Grid treating him politely.

“According to the investigation by the Chivalrous Robbers, there are less than 3,000 troops stationed at Chiaotzu. Yet you say there are 4,000... I don’t think you should jump to conclusions.”

Qi Jian was expressing his disbelief when Huo Jin blocked his mouth. “He is a legend. Someone equivalent to Hwang Gildong.”

“...?!”

They were shocking words. At the same time, Braham used Fly magic and flew to the center of Baekmi River. He increased his magic power with Mana Drain and reached out across the river. “Giga Raiden.”

There was a golden flash and a storm was created. A column of water surged in the river due to the electric shock that roared through it and unconscious fish floated to the surface. The Chiaotzu forces at the front line were swept away by an explosion. Screams echoed through the dust and soon calmed down. The mountain of corpses was visible through the dust that cleared up before the fainted fish even woke up. Heavily armed soldiers were bleeding and foaming, unable to overcome the aftermath of Giga Raiden.

“One strike...!”

Qi Jian’s people were doubly surprised. It was unbelievable that the number of troops was the same as Braham’s estimation and that they were all wiped out with a single spell. The one who was even more surprised was Grid.

‘Did he use high level magic?’

Giga Raiden wasn’t legendary magic but it was clearly the highest level magic that was the exclusive possession of great people called great magicians. Braham had destroyed Talos, Yatan’s First Servant, with basic magic so it was shocking to learn that he defeated the army with high-level magic. Braham, who had just returned to Grid’s side, spoke with displeasure, “Every god has a common power. Do you know what it is?”

“Let’s see...?”

“It is to call those who serve them. An easy example is the Rebecca priests and paladins. Those who are protected by Rebecca have the miracle of recovery and reinforcement.”

“Yes...”

He understood what Braham meant but he didn’t know why that person was talking about it now. Grid nodded and Braham got straight to the point. “It seems that the Five Seniors are protecting the soldiers here. Otherwise, the level of the soldiers is so high that it is difficult to understand.”

“...!”

This meant that the Five Seniors, who seemed to have left the work to the yangbans and were observing the situation, actually indirectly intervened. It was like a bolt from the blue for Grid, who was overwhelmed by just the yangbans.

Braham informed the flustered Grid, “We came here with failure in mind. Don’t forget that and don’t overdo it.”

“...Yes, I know what you mean.”

Yes, he never expected to be able to seize the Black Tortoise Jewel straight away. For now, the goal was to gather information such as the exact location of the Black Tortoise Jewel and assessing the level of the enemy. There wasn't only one chance. They could cross continents at any time. Therefore, Grid ordered the Twelve Zodiacs and Qi Jian's group, "Everyone, go back. From here on, Braham and I will go alone."

“What...?! What are you talking about?”

The one who spoke was a blue-haired beautiful woman who was taller than Grid. It was Blue Tiger as a human.

In the process of making the gaiters and shoulder guards, Blue Tiger had become much stronger than before. In fact, most of the Twelve Zodiacs were stronger than Grid. It was hard for Grid to convince them to go back when they believed Grid needed their power. Grid asked, “Can you afford to face the Five Seniors if they come out?”

“...!”

Of course not. Forget the Twelve Zodiacs, even the Four Gods couldn't go against the Five Seniors. This was why they lost and were sealed.

“If any of you are captured and sealed by the Five Seniors and the yangbans, you might hinder the resurrection of the Four Gods. Thus, you have to stay back here.”

“.....”

The Twelve Zodiacs couldn't refute it but that didn't mean they would back down. They wondered what Braham and Grid could do alone. It was at a time when everyone couldn't back down easily.

“We have to believe in the Overgeared God.”

A cute girl with slightly protruding front teeth stepped forward. It was Tosun.

“The Overgeared God has already done something impossible. It is right to believe in him and wait for him.”

“...Don't force it.”

Blue Tiger stared straight into Grid's eyes and said, “Grid, give up whenever it is hard. Don't sacrifice yourself for this land that has nothing to do with you. You have no obligation to take responsibility for us.”

Grid smiled and shrugged.

"Of course."

The Twelve Zodiacs and Qi Jian's group remained in place until Grid and Braham completely disappeared across the river. They sincerely prayed for the safety of the two people.

At the same time, in Chiaotzu...

“Is he the one who killed Garam?”

The yangban Maru hummed when he sensed that the troops with Pungsa’s protection were killed in one blow. 20 handsome men and women were lined up behind him. They might have been eliminated in Chiyou’s test but they were aiming to re-establish themselves. As a result, they were equivalent to Hangyeol.

“So many yangbans... are we going to die?”

Old Sword Demon gulped as he was completely concealed by the straw mat that Hwang Gildong gave him. Then Hwang Gildong comforted him. “Don’t worry. Even if you do die, I’ll run away alone.”

[Chapter 1198](#)

“It’s a mess out there right now.”

“Why? What’s going on?”

“It seems that migrants have filled the territory that General Piaro conquered.”

“The territories of the Gauss Kingdom...? Already? Ah, it can’t be.”

“Truly. All villages and cities are no longer receiving migrants and are sending them back.”

“Huh... The territory was conquered in less than a month and the people filled up in another month.”

“This means our country is good to live in.”

Reinhardt’s dungeon was the darkness of the Overgeared Kingdom. There were terrible things going on that couldn’t be said and it was a place to house high-profile criminals. After giving the inmates chicks to raise to chickens, they would then threaten to cook the chicken in front of the inmate who had become attached to it. Some fatal and cruel torture methods were still discussed among the guards. If good news wasn’t heard steadily from outside then the spirits of the prison guards would’ve been destroyed over time.

“Ah... Ahh...”

The man who listened to the cheerful guards’ conversation was devastated. His name was Burang. He was the best knight of the Gauss Kingdom, which had perished two months ago. He held his face and recalled the last mission he received from King Nemesis. It was to secure the Overgeared Queen so they could negotiate with the Overgeared Kingdom. This was probably the only way to stop the war.

Burang had done his best to defend his kingdom. Half a year before the war, he left his homeland, disguised himself as a refugee and even succeeded in infiltrating the Overgeared Kingdom. Yet he eventually failed. His failure accelerated the destruction of his kingdom.

‘All... it is all because of my incompetence.’

Burang was recalling his weakness at not even being able to defeat the young prince when a strange voice was heard. The prisoner, who had remained silent since the first day Burang was imprisoned, opened his mouth for the first time. “Are you from the Gauss Kingdom?”

“.....”

“Don’t worry about the guards. They are just trying to shake you by bluffing.”

“....?”

“Gauss might be a small kingdom but it has a history of hundreds of years. The Overgeared Kingdom isn’t good enough to conquer it in a matter of weeks.”

“.....”

“What else? The territories are being filled up by a flood of new migrants? Do you think that makes sense? There are so many nations on this land, including the Saharan Empire. Who would migrate to the small nation that is the Overgeared Kingdom?”

“.....”

“The guards here are crazy. Around half a year ago, they said that the Overgeared Kingdom allied with the empire. The orc lord of the Twilight Orcs pledged allegiance to the Overgeared King? Kukuk, how about that? Isn’t only laughter possible? Those jerks... how ridiculous is it to tell a lie that wouldn’t even work on a chicken?”

“.....”

The guilt of failing to live up to the king’s expectations and the despair of losing his homeland. The frustrated Burang tried to ignore the prisoner’s wails from behind the wall. It was just that after listening, he couldn’t let it spill out the other ear. Did this person not know what was going on in the world? Where in the world was there anyone who would call the Overgeared Kingdom a small nation?

“I don’t know who you are but everything the guards said is true. The empire has claimed itself as a blood ally to the Overgeared Kingdom and the Twilight Orcs’ lord has become a faithful dog following Grid. Unfortunately, the destruction of the Gauss Kingdom would also be true.”

“...You are also with the guards.” The prisoner’s voice from behind the wall cooled down. The strong killing intent that could be felt through the thick walls made Burang nervous.

‘Is there such a big master?’

Was he a survivor from the Eternal Kingdom? “Who are you?”

The prisoner replied to Burang’s question, “My name is Reidorn. I am the 6th Knight who is considered to have surpassed Piaro, the pillar of the empire.”

“...!” Burang’s eyes widened.

‘He is someone who can cross the fortress with just one step...!’

He was alive? One of the best talents of the era was living in such a dark and stuffy dungeon in this humiliating manner!

‘All people are equal in front of the Overgeared Kingdom...!’

King Nemesis was right. From the beginning, the Overgeared Kingdom was someone they shouldn't have been enemies with. Burang only realized it at this time.

"Who is it?!"

There was a lot of noise in the corridor through the iron bars and then it became quiet.

Step. Step. Step.

The footsteps of someone unknown got closer.

"Grrrung."

Next door, Reidorn breathed like a beast and released a stronger killing intent. Then suddenly...

"Y-You...?" The killing intent disappeared like it was a lie. At this moment, Reidorn sounded like a frightened dog, not a wounded predator. "The grandmaster...!"

"Reidorn, Sixth Knight of the previous Red Knights. As expected, you haven't been returned to the empire."

"Eh...? Why do you mean by the previous Red Knights?"

"The world has changed and the empire's new regime doesn't want your return. So Reidorn, grab my hand. This is the only way for you."

It was an incomprehensible conversation. The thick walls blocked the view so Burang couldn't fathom the situation going on. The cutting sound was as clear as a bell and reverberated through the hall. The sound of metal falling on the ground continued. It was estimated that the bars holding Reidorn in the solitary cell were cut off.

'This is ridiculous!'

Cutting black iron like it was tofu? Burang trembled at the incredible situation and a shadow was cast over his eyes. The unidentified intruder approached the iron bars keeping Burang trapped. He was a young beauty. It wasn't in line with the desire in the old and tired eyes.

He watched Burang with an expressionless face. "The prime minister of the Overgeared Kingdom is a very silly person. He shouldn't have locked you up like this if he judged that you have a use."

"....."

"Choose if you will die here forgotten or if you will challenge the opposite side of the world with me."

"You... who are you?"

"Someone who will bring the expelled gods back to this land to punish the fallen gods. The incarnation of the seven malignant saints, Zikfrector."

The alchemy that caused Grid's blood pressure to rise every day and the knowledge of the Great Sage Sticks meant that the technology of the Overgeared Kingdom grew day by day. What was originally a rare magic was installed all over Reinhardt.

"It's fast." Lael muttered as he watched the situation of the dungeon through the magic crystals. He felt very good because this situation occurred the moment the dungeon's location was leaked to lure Grandmaster Zikrefector.

'From the grandmaster's point of view, Reidorn is an irresistible bait.'

From the standpoint of the Overgeared Kingdom, Reidorn was a problem. When he was initially captured, the empire was the enemy of the Overgeared Kingdom and the Overgeared Kingdom could get a lot of information from Reidorn, but the situation had changed dramatically.

Now Lael knew the empire better than Reidorn. There was no longer a reason to be greedy for Reidorn's information that he protected with loyalty and pride. This didn't mean Lael could send Reidorn back to the empire. Reidorn was the one who tried to kill Grid while all the major and minor officials of other kingdoms were watching. There would be an internal backlash if he wasn't properly punished.

Of course, the imperial side also didn't welcome Reidorn. Reidorn had been missing for many years. There would be many doubts if he just suddenly returned to the empire. In particular, Reidorn had a history of being under Limit. His actual alignment was unknown but the present imperial regime wasn't pleased with his past. He even tried to kill the Overgeared King so it was just asking for trouble if the empire accepted him back.

'I planned for him to grow old and die in prison.'

It was fortunate that he could be used as bait to lure Zikrefector.

"There were no casualties among the guards. Everyone just passed out for a moment."

Lael's heart grew comfortable when he heard the report from a soldier.

'He is closely aligned with good.'

The seven malignant saints were good, not evil. They united for humanity and fought against the gods for the peace of the world. They became evil because they were called so by the gods. Lael had trusted the essence of Zikrefector, the incarnation of the seven malignant saints.

'So go to the East Continent as soon as possible. Witness the reality of the gods who have been cast out and stand by Grid's side. I can't sacrifice the power of the Overgeared Kingdom so I'll leave it to you.'

Lael's expression was bitter as he murmured. He was prepared to sacrifice the guards and his essence was probably evil. Lael himself was aware of it but he wasn't ashamed. He wasn't afraid of people's accusations. All his choices and actions were to help Grid and the Overgeared Kingdom.

'There should be one person like me.'

A group of solely good people couldn't last long.

Lauel had no doubts.

One week after the Call of the Heavens quest.

“It is here.”

The northernmost area of the East Continent—the rankers quickly arrived at Chiaotzu in Xing. Sure enough, the top 0.00005% players were people with a huge information network and could take action.

“Have you been called by the heavens?”

The quest receivers were welcomed by the soldiers. The rankers who arrived in Chiaotzu were met by soldiers and guided to the castle. The red walls and golden tiles formed a gorgeous and intense coordination. This magnificent sight slightly suppressed the spirits of the rankers.

“I can’t see the earth, I can’t see the earth. The castle’s lord has a lot of money.”

“It is a lot richer than the Cho Kingdom.”

“Quiet.” A training ground that was decorated with large marble—the rankers chattered together when an eye-catching beauty stood on the podium. She sighed as she looked around the people in the hall with a rather dissatisfied look. “Welcome those who responded to the Call of the Heavens.”

This was just it.

The high rankers earned the promised reward just as they arrived at their destination.

[The Call of the Heavens quest has been completed.]

[You have gained two levels from the quest reward.]

[Call of the Heavens has succeeded and the quest rewards have been earned.]

[Protect the Artifacts of the Four Gods]

[★ Hidden Quest ★

An unknown wicked man has already infiltrated Chiaotzu. The treasure can be targeted at any time so be vigilant and protect it.

Quest Clear Condition: Protect the target until the unknown wicked person dies.

Quest Clear Reward: Level +2.

Quest Failure: Level -4.]

“...?!”

The system was always fair. This caused the players to be frustrated.

“Dammit! What is with the penalty of dropping four levels?!”

Someone's shout mixed with a curse echoed through the heavy atmosphere. Now it was a life or death decision.

[Chapter 1199](#)

"Is the treasure we need to protect here?"

"The treasure is an artifact of the Four Gods? It is the death god among the Four Gods so is there any care that needs to be taken when handling it? For example, should it stay away from fire?"

"Are there no enemies at all?"

"In the event of an enemy invasion, how long will it take for the troops to arrive? What and how many traps have been set up nearby to stop the enemy from invading?"

A square building—the rankers were taken to the strange building that had no exits at all and released a bombardment of questions. All their confusion and fury were subdued. A penalty of losing four levels...

They judged there was no need to be agitated when the penalty would only occur if the quest failed.

"Please answer me."

Knowing oneself before the enemy was the most basic formula for victory. However, the client didn't answer the question and remained silent. It was a serious problem when the client who should be the most cooperative wasn't motivated. It was an attitude that would reduce the motivation of the rankers trying to complete the quest.

'What are you going to do?'

The client—the longer the beautiful black-haired woman who guided the rankers to the training hall was silent, the more anxious the rankers became. A person with a ferocious personality even felt the desire to grab the beauty's collar and shake her. The reason he didn't do so was because the beauty's name was shining in gold.

Most of the rankers had already noticed her true identity. A yangban—a god of the East Continent. Someone with the power that a player would never exceed. It was a far cry from the unidentified half-god who Grid had recently defeated.

"Sigh." The blue robe flapped as the beauty pulled out a smoking pipe. She seemed reluctant, just like when she first appeared. She seemed to be skeptical of the situation. "It is embarrassing that mere humans are rushing to ask questions rather than prostrating themselves. I feel so uncomfortable."

'Bullshit.'

The rankers' expressions distorted at the beauty's disrespectful words. They knew the customs of the East Continent people where they stopped what they were doing the moment the yangbans appeared and prostrated themselves. However, this was just a custom of the East Continent.

In the beginning, the rankers knew the yangbans weren't worthy of being objects of faith. They had witnessed the yangbans treating humans as livestock several times. Even so, they were being polite in

their own way yet the beauty was asking for more. It happened when a few rankers looked like they were chewing shit.

"I'm sorry. We were ignorant and committed great rudeness because we didn't know the culture of the East." One man surrounded by a sharp, cold air stepped forward and bowed to the beauty. His identity after taking off his cloak was exactly what everyone expected. "You might not be interested in humans but I would like to sincerely introduce myself to the god I've heard about for a long time and envied. My name is Bondre. I'm a magician who deals with ice magic."

"It is ice magic..."

Bondre calmed the atmosphere that could've worsened. The beauty exhaled the smoke, put the smoking pipe away and showed interest in Bondre. "There is a separate job for you so follow me."

"What about us...?"

"You just have to protect this place. This is the face of the intruder."

The rankers left behind were feeling flustered when the beauty threw a portrait at them. It was a portrait of a white-haired old man. His wrinkled face looked like a dry old tree but his eyes were sharp and full of vitality, making him look unusual at first glance.

'Who is this?'

It was a Westerner but this was the first time they had seen this face. The rankers were shaking their heads and the beauty added an explanation.

"He is a swordsman. Pungsa said that every time he swings his sword, lightning will explode and a storm will rage."

'This skinny old man can use such destructive swordsmanship?'

One man among the rankers showed a somewhat unbelievable reaction.

"Sir Dante...!"

"...?"

Everyone's eyes focused on this man. It was the wanderer Rekrflex, 12th on the swordsman ranking and 403rd on the unified rankings.

"Rekrflex? Do you know him?"

"I know. I met him while I wandered around the Glaucian Kingdom. He was the single-digit knight of the golden era of the empire."

"Golden era of the empire...!"

"I received a lot of help from him at the time but it is strange. At that time, Sir Dante was aging..."

Dante complained that his body was old and his senses were dull, making it difficult for him to extract the full power of the sword. He even used a mace that was easier to control than a sword since a small amount of force applied to the mace could exert great power.

Yet a few years later, he used swordsmanship that created a storm? A swordsmanship that was powerful enough to receive the attention of a god?

“Did he become a transcendent?”

“...!”

It was the moment when the name Dante was engraved on the minds of hundreds of high rankers and the beautiful yangban...

As they memorized Dante’s name, the 73 year old knight Dante—in the Overgeared Kingdom—gained a healthier color.

“Sir Dante, how is it that you seem to be getting younger?” Piaro asked when he turned from field work to see Dante at the training ground. Dante just laughed.

“Um... I don’t know why but I’ve been feeling lighter for some time. It feels like my existence itself has strengthened and my body is full of motivation and strength.”

“Huh...! This is the power of farming!”

“The power of farming?”

“I hope that the people who eat the rice and wheat we sweated to grow will always be happy and healthy. All the farmers working in the field have the same wish. The farmers in Reidan are particularly enthusiastic. Dante’s great health is probably because he ate the crops of Reidan.”

“Huhu, that makes sense.”

“Right. Hahaha.”

Piaro returned from conquering the Gauss Kingdom. After a long time, he returned to the life of a farmer and his heart was healed. He became even happier when he saw Dante was healthy.

‘I can’t believe a day came when I can laugh with my old colleagues and mentors again.’

All of this was a blessing due to King Grid. Piaro was filled with deep gratitude and prayed, ‘Be well.’

[There is a rumor that the procession to your stone statue is endless!]

[Currently, the worship of Hero King Grid’s Statue is at the maximum. Over the next month, your dexterity stat will rise by 30%, and the probability of making a high rated item has increased slightly! Additionally, the speed of sword-type attack skills is 20% faster!]

It was like this everyday. Grid witnessed this notification window every few days. This meant that the dexterity and speed buffs were effectively ‘permanently’ applied. Of course, Grid wasn’t complacent. He knew that the moment he let people down, the worship would stop coming.

“.....”

Grid bowed in thanks to the prayers of those unknown before slowly raising his head and opening his eyes. Far away, a rectangular white building was visible. Looking back, it was a building that seemed very strange. It didn't match the overall scenery of Chiaotzu, which had an ancient Chinese city feel.

The security was also very tight. Every road leading to the building was full of heavily armed soldiers and the intricately arranged structures near the building gave off a suspicious amount of magic power.

"Did they plant daoists among the soldiers?"

"No, artifacts are installed on behalf of the people."

Braham pointed to the red lamps hanging from the end of every tile of all the buildings and Grid realized that different colored papers were all stuck on the red lamps.

'Amulets...'

In the battle against Hangeol, Grid had experienced the power of the amulets. The amulets were excellent artifacts where the shortcomings were difficult to find apart from the fact that they were consumables. Depending on the color of the amulet and the characters written on them, the amulets had a variety of functions such as protection, attacking, and cursing. The configuration of the amulets would also maximize their power.

'Laying thousands of such amulets...'

It must be here. In this quaint square building, the Black Tortoise Jewel was held. The confident Grid soon felt doubts.

'No, isn't this too obvious? Is it a trap?'

It was a building that gave off a strange sense of difference to anyone who saw it. The tight security seemed to be screaming out to him, 'This is the location of the Black Tortoise Jewel.' It was so obvious that it was strange.

"...This is a trap."

Grid asked Braham for help. He couldn't come to a conclusion when he thought about it himself so he relied on the advice of the Duke of Wisdom.

"In a normal situation, this would be a trap. However, the opponent is a yangban. It was hard to think that those arrogant enough to call themselves gods would've hidden the Black Tortoise Jewel in a secret place."

Braham was a timeless force, a legend. As a result, he was confident that he could better penetrate the psychology of a strong man than anyone else.

"This is more of a provocation than a trap."

"....."

The sneering voice of the yangbans seemed to enter Grid's ears.

'This is where the Black Tortoise Jewel is located. If you can take it away then take it...'

“It is a taunt that I can’t pass by.”

Grid’s motivation boiled up. He wanted to fly into the building and smash everything. However, he remained calm. Grid was reminded of something. The purpose this time was to collect information, not to win. The goal was to understand the enemy’s power as much as possible and make meaningful use of it in the future. For now, it was enough to grasp the reality of the square building.

“Braham.” Grid reached out to Braham.

Braham took off the skin mask he was wearing and returned it to Grid while saying, “I’ll open the way for you.”

Grid nodded. “Then immediately return to the West Continent,” Grid ordered Braham before he put on the skin mask.

Dante and Kentrick’s faces had already been used so he decided on Asmophel’s face. It was determined that no one would recognize Asmophel in the northernmost part of the East Continent, Chiaotzu.

‘It is hard to recognize Asmophel easily, even if there is a player.’

It was because Asmophel often dressed up as a soldier. In fact, he was less active than Piaro and Mercedes, making him the least popular of Grid’s subordinates. Even so, Grid wore the Slaughterer’s Mask as well and appeared in the air. His gaze was only on the square building. He was undaunted by the amulets installed on every building and the thousands of soldiers on each side of the road. The legendary great magician was with him.

“Meteor.”

“Eh?”

This was too excessive. This wasn’t at the level of cleaning up the enemy’s defensive forces and traps. Did he intend to destroy the city itself? Grid stared in fright at the meteorites ravaging the city when Braham urged him, “Go now.”

“...You must leave! Understood?”

There was no time to delay. Grid barely held back the words in his throat and flew toward the square building in the midst of the meteorite explosion.

Subsequently...

“This isn’t Sabaek.”

Two yangbans appeared in the place Grid had just vacated. The two yangbans nearby had found the magician who cast the magic.

Braham spoke to those unfamiliar with himself, “Who did you mistake me for? This body is the only one who can bring down the stars in the universe.”

The winds that he summoned cut at the bodies of the yangbans.

“Huh? In the end, the Black Tortoise Jewel isn’t here?” Old Sword Demon, who was running along the underground waterway following Hwang Gildong, was startled by the explosion from the ground.

However, Hwang Gildong didn’t stop running. “Cold air blocks the flow of water so the Black Tortoise Jewel should be at the place where the ice magician was taken. We shouldn’t trust what we see because the yangbans are extremely insidious.”

[Chapter 1200](#)

Six years in real time—this was the amount of time the high rankers had devoted themselves to Satisfy. It was not a short amount of time. It was enough to have unforgettable memories and experience nightmares they would never forget.

“What is this...?”

The high rankers lost their voices when a shadow was cast and then devastating meteorites started to pour down on the city. They had seen countless disasters but they never saw a city destroyed in an instant.

— —!

Was this the second coming of Belial? The high rankers recalled the appearance of a great demon who first appeared before humanity as the constant screams deafened their ears. The high rankers had been at the scene of her disaster when Belial dropped hundreds of meteorites. They thought they would never see a disaster like this again...

At this moment, they were witnessing the same catastrophe.

“...No, it is more than Belial,” a magician ranker murmured.

They saw it—the dozens of meteorites falling toward the city were ‘real.’ It was unlike the meteorites that Belial ‘formed’ using magic. No magic power could be felt. This was the extreme physical force that couldn’t be offset by magic power.

“Stars pulled from the universe... this is the real Meteor.”

Duguen!Duguen!Duguen! The hearts of dozens of magicians were pounding. Their eyes and detection magic searched everywhere. The greatest magician in history—they noticed that the legendary magician Braham, adored by all magicians in the world, was here in Chiaotzu.

“...!”

The eyes of the magicians were wide as they tracked Braham with their magic power. They simultaneously shouted, “Someone is coming!”

This was the signal. In the midst of the meteorite bombardment, the rankers took out their weapons and their shields, taking a fighting posture in front of the square building that was unharmed. They truly were experienced. The disaster didn’t disperse their concentration and their judgments and actions were swift.

“Intercept!”

Archers with 'Hawk's Eye' captured the location of the next intruder that appeared after the magician. They carefully pulled back the bowstring while assessing the distance of the rapidly approaching intruder. The bowstring was pulled back in an extreme manner. The paladins' buffs had increased the strength of the archers.

Hundreds of arrows fired from dozens of archers pierced through the aftermath of the explosions that occurred everywhere and flew toward the target. Some arrows flew in a curve while others were shot in a strong line or some moved along the ground.

Flash!

The hundreds of arrows that already flew far away were filled with a variety of magic power. The magicians added secondary attribute damage to maximize the power of the arrow."

"There!"

The intruder got close enough for the tanks and close-ranged damage dealers to see with the naked eye. This meant they were close to the intruder. Hundreds of arrows pierced the intruder's body. They were perfect shots. Not a single one of them missed. The archers who fired the arrows once again drew back their bowstring while the spells of the magicians were completed.

"Ohhh! Oh?"

The tankers who used the charge skill to rush to the intruder came to a halt in a flustered manner. The intruder maintained his original momentum despite being turned into a hedgehog by the arrows.

"Are these toy bows?" The rankers clicked their tongues as they felt disappointed by the power of the archers and set up their shields.

"Chain Strike!"

The sword singers behind the tankers used their capture skills. Dozens of stems of sword energy extended like chains to wrap around the intruder's arms, legs and neck. The intruder's body tilted forward. He was forcibly dragged into the tanker camp.

"A big fish!"

The damage dealers had smiles on their faces as they prepared their stun skills. They would stun the intruder who would soon be dragged nearby and then beat him to death.

"I don't know what transcendence is but it is nothing in front of us!"

"Keep calm! There have been reports that Braham is watching Dante's back!"

"I am calm now! No matter what, we have to beat Dante first!"

Many of the damage dealers were aggressive. They were like batters waiting for the ball and aimed their swords and spears at the approaching intruder.

'What?'

'This bad....? Gasp!'

The sword singers felt a chill as the chain strikes pulled the intruder in. They noticed that the intruder hadn't been brought in but flew here himself. As the intruder turned, the chains around his neck and limbs were torn apart. The heavy blows of the damage dealers only hit empty air.

"What?!"

The eyes of the hundreds of rankers saw the face of the ranker they thought was Dante. The rankers expected the appearance of a white-haired old man.

"Who is this?"

The intruder wasn't an old man. He was good-looking and it was hard to tell if he was young or middle-aged. The blond hair shining brightly with a lemon color gave off a beautiful feeling.

"Kuek...!"

The tankers raised their shields. It was intended to prepare for the attack of the blond intruder. It was pointless.

"...?!"

What was the most powerful defensive equipment? Most people thought it was armor. There was no equipment that protected as many areas as armor. However, reality was different. The most powerful defensive equipment by far was a shield. The shield was a barrier that blocked an attack before it hit the human body. No matter how powerful the attack, it was possible to absorb the shock without any damage as long as the shield was raised.

This was why the tankers claimed 'there must be a shield, even if there isn't armor.'

The tankers' faith in the shield was absolute and it was almost like worship. At least, until now...

"Keeoook!"

Penetration—the tankers, who raised their shields to prevent the intruder's attack, had their bodies pierced along with their shields. The shield was small to ensure ease of movement but it couldn't handle the intruder's sharp sword.

"This is why the big and thick shields are the best!"

These guys weren't tankers. Katan, fourth on the guardian knight rankings, clicked his tongue and came forward. His gaze was directed over his square shield toward the intruder's shoulder. 'Now!'

It was perfectly timed—Katan aimed for the moment when the intruder swung his sword and he set up his shield precisely then, blocking the intruder's sword with his shield. Unlike the small shields of the tankers who were greedy for the role of damage dealer and tanker at the same time, Katan's thick square shield completely blocked the attack of the intruder.

However, the weight that followed couldn't be handled.

"...?"

It was like a flying cannonball. Stone thorns soared from the intruder's sword and Katan's thick square shield shook. Then Katan flew dozens of meters away.

'Is this a charge that defies defense and resistance?'

Kata's eyes shook as he flew into the square building but the light in them didn't go out.

'Not yet!'

The 300 people here weren't colleagues or friends but they were reliable. They represented the best power of two billion people.

"Endure well!"

Magic exploded all over the place in response to Katan's urging. The magic of different attributes took many forms and struck the intruder. The intruder was unprepared. Then there was a surge of sharp attacks from damage dealers who rushed forward ahead of the magic.

"I don't know who you are but...!"

"You can't pass through here!"

The rankings were a measure of valuation. It was the world of rankers where one rise or fall in the rankings would change their value. All the rankers who participated in this quest were desperate. They didn't know where this familiar blond intruder came from but they wouldn't just stand still.

"Asmophel! It is Asmophel!" The rankers shouted after confirming the identity of the blond intruder. One of Grid's Four Heavenly Kings, Asmosphel had a low reputation compared to the other knights, but he wasn't lacking in strength at all.

"Shit! Is this related to Grid?"

For the first time, the momentum of the rankers softened. They were even more afraid of becoming hostile to Grid than the penalty of losing four levels. Grid's influence was enormous.

"Sigh..."

The blond intruder, Asmophel—to be precise, Grid borrowing Asmophel's appearance—opened his mouth for the first time, "I have no problem with you so get out of the way."

The reason why Grid took off the Slaughterer's Mask on the way here was because he discovered the existence of the rankers. There were no players who didn't know the Slaughterer's Mask so Grid was forced to take it off since he wanted to hide his identity.

"I'm only curious about one thing. What is in that building? I will step back as soon as I confirm this."

He was serious. Grid had no intention of confronting and harming the players who came here due to some circumstances. If they insisted on staying then he would cut them without hesitation but he wanted to avoid a war as soon as possible. It was because today's Grid didn't have the bad taste of bothering the weak.

"Eh?"

The faces of the rankers stiffened as they saw the square building that Grid pointed to. They found that the original white color of the building had become a dark grey color. It was a dismal and sinister color. Then the cries of a beast were heard. It was the piercing and deep cry.

The third ranked paladin, Majo spoke in a trembling voice, "The building... the building has absorbed the aura of death."

"...?!"

The gazes of Grid and the rankers moved in every direction. The moans of the soldiers dying in the aftermath of Meteor were rising. As the moans grew louder, the color of the building became darker. Grid's vision flashed red.

[Death is coming!]

The square building completely blackened and released poison. Next was the appearance of a giant snake head and tail. The identity of the existence bigger than a mountain was none other than the black tortoise.

"This is sick!"

"Shit!"

Grid and the rankers shouted with one heart.

At the deepest part of Chiaotzu Castle...

Bondre was stunned when he was ushered into a mysterious room filled with clear water. He found the Black Tortoise Jewel floating in the water.

"Was the building outside a trap?"

"No, there is a Black Tortoise Jewel there as well."

"...?"

"It is impossible to contain the duality of the black tortoise who helps with the birth of life while also being the god in charge of death. Thus, they can't be placed in one vessel." The beautiful woman sitting in the bathtub, Areum, ordered the stunned Bondre, "Freeze the water here. You will give birth to the complete god of death."