

## Overgeared 1551

### Chapter 1551

The blood of the imperial family was immortal. It didn't lose the red energy despite being diluted from being split up again and again. There was one of the reasons why the founder of the empire, Saharan, was worshipped as a divine being. He built up a millennial empire and left an immutable lineage. The empire recorded it as a myth, not history. He was the founding god.

"Saharan... Haicyen Saharan?"

Lauel doubted his eyes.

The tall man in antique clothes—Lauel was terribly familiar with this face, as well as the name. It was a face that had been seen many times in paintings and statues, or heard in oral traditions.

The words 'imperial summoning circle' passed through Lauel's astonished mind. It was a magic that had been handed down from generation to generation and only the emperor had the authority to invoke it. Basara explained that it was a last resort to save the empire in crisis.

"You dare to put this emperor's name in your mouth. It is a very distant future, but the original laws and regulations have collapsed."

The last doubts were lifted. Even before the dukes sent him a hint, Lauel immediately knelt down and bowed his head. "I greet the founder of the great empire."

"I should be the great founder of the empire."

Saharan's long red hair fluttered as he started to move. It was as if flames were swaying. The intense colors made him realize the flow of time. This red hair was a color that the current imperial family didn't have.

"Were you... resurrected?" Lauel had many questions. Before asking several questions, he pointed out the most important one.

Saharan smiled as he approached the window. "You are asking a question of this emperor. You have already committed three sins. I'm glad that the twisted old ones didn't come together with me. They would've caused a disturbance to kill you immediately. You should be grateful that this place is different from the world I live in."

"....."

Lauel's eyes twitched. He noticed something based on Saharan's remarks. The breath Saharan exhaled wasn't an illusion.

"You noticed it pretty quickly. Yes, this emperor isn't resurrected. This emperor is already dead in the history that you know, but it is a future that hasn't yet arrived for this emperor."

It was the moment when the identity of the summoning ceremony was revealed.

"From your point of view, this emperor is a man from the past."

Saharan's gaze was fixed only on the window.

"Unlike the fallen capital, this place has achieved a brilliant civilization."

"Your Majesty...! It is purely because Titan was drawn into the war...!" Duke Morse couldn't bear it and cried out.

Until the Great Human and Demon War, Titan was still the continent's largest city. Your descendants have ensured that the empire has flourished well.

This was what he wanted to say, but his words were interrupted along the way. It was by Duke Grenhal. "I have committed a sin worthy of death."

Grenhal had no excuses. Regardless of the reason, the empire had reached the stage of discussing a merger with the Overgeared Kingdom. There was no refuting the founder's assessment that they had fallen.

"This emperor had a thought when I saw the pathetic appearance of the capital. Even if this empire united the continent, the empire can't last forever. It is this emperor, not the empire, who is great. However, it is a separate matter to actually accept it."

Saharan sat down in the highest ranked seat. It was in a very natural manner. He didn't ask for permission or understanding. Even so, Lauel didn't find it unpleasant. Haicyen Saharan was one of the greatest figures in history. Just like the dukes, Lauel also felt respect for him.

Saharan nodded to Lauel, who was standing politely. "Sit down."

"Thank you for your consideration."

"The empress of this age told me this. A nation called the Overgeared Kingdom helped the empire in the crisis."

"It was possible because all the allied nations, including the empire, joined forces."

"Your humbleness is fine. I understood the post-war situation and came here. This emperor just wanted to check. What type of nation would be better than the empire? However... it is quite a disappointment."

Saharan's gaze became provocative.

"There is no center in the kingdom."

"....."

"The soldiers and knights of your kingdom are very strong. Your discerning eye pierces the sky and I think you use your brain quite well, but that is it. On the way here, I looked around various territories, but there are no unrivaled talents strong enough to support the kingdom. What makes the empire of this time want to be absorbed into your kingdom when there is no one better than these two traitors? Is it money?"

Saharan's eyes were sharp as he pointed out the dukes as traitors.

“The empire might not be eternal, but I can’t just watch as it is sold by a small number of traitors. This emperor is feeling my fate. This emperor was summoned to this era. I wonder if it is a miracle achieved by the wishes of my descendants, hoping to correct the empire that has gone the wrong way.”

Lauel looked at the dukes. He gave them a reproaching look, as if asking why they didn’t know anything.

Did you foresee such a situation?

Duke Grenhal quietly handed over a note.

In fact, we thought that Her Majesty’s summoning ceremony had failed. As it turned out, there was a time difference before it was triggered. We didn’t know this and were discussing the merger with the Overgeared Kingdom when the founder came. From then on, he was convinced we are traitors and won’t listen to anything we say.

It briefly described how the situation reached this point.

“Do you want to devour the empire? Then endure this emperor’s attack. If you can’t stand it, then the city will perish today,” Saharan said while touching the sword. It was a blatant threat.

Lauel sighed deeply. He thought it would be hard to avoid bloodshed due to the flow of the story.

‘I wanted to respect you, but...’

I think you need to be hit a few times...

Lauel’s expression was bittersweet as he looked at Saharan.

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The main focus of the Overgeared Kingdom was currently scattered between the Galgunos Temple, the Chaos Mountain, hell, and Cokro Island. Most people were focused on growth while transcendent beings like Braham and Zik provided support to reduce the number of casualties in the Hell Gao raid.

At Grid’s smithy...

“Saharan?”

Lauel’s urgent explanation excited Grid.

“The founder of the empire came through a time machine?”

“Roughly... that’s right.”

“He doesn’t want the empire to be absorbed into the Overgeared Kingdom?”

“Yes, it is a matter of pride.”

“I understand. I would’ve had the same reaction if I was him.”

If he visited the Overgeared Kingdom in the future only to hear that it would be absorbed by a kingdom he had never heard of... Grid would be burning with anger. He would naturally want to stop it.

‘I really want to meet him soon.’

Grid opened his inventory. Saharan was one of the most important figures in the history of the West Continent. He was the first man to establish an empire. He wanted to have the minimum courtesy when meeting him. He wanted to pick one of his formal clothing to wear, but...

“Are you a proxy swordsman?” Saharan suddenly came to visit before Grid could even change clothes. He couldn’t imagine that Grid was the king. It meant that the king of the Overgeared Kingdom was a blacksmith. It was natural. Saharan had no trust in the dukes who accompanied him. He was certain that Lael had bribed them. This was why they were plotting to sell the empire.

This emperor would punish them.

“Divinity...? I see. There was something to believe in.”

Saharan observed Grid and belatedly noticed.

“A kingdom that serves a human god as a guardian god. It is fully understandable why it is strong compared to the level.”

Saharan came from a long time in the past. He lived in a time where there were more kingdoms and minorities on the continent. Some of them served human gods. It was based on efficiency. Unlike the gods who stayed in Asgard, the human gods were real and by their side. Thus, they could receive direct help. It was like the current Overgeared Kingdom.

“It is a kingdom without a future.”

Saharan suddenly evaluated it. It was a tone like he was explaining to Grenhal and Morse.

“Human gods are different from the gods in heaven. They have elements that transcend humans, but they aren’t omnipotent. They are weak enough to be threatened by humans. Even if they survive tenaciously, they will eventually receive divine punishment and be destroyed. If the empire is absorbed by this kingdom, it will become the target of divine punishment together.”

Saharan established an empire by conquering many kingdoms and ethnic minorities. It meant he had a lot of experience fighting and winning against guardian gods. At first, he relied heavily on the power of his comrade called Zikrefector, but he grew up before he knew it and wasn’t afraid of human gods.

“Come. I will remove you, the main culprit of this situation, and guide my stupid descendants to the right path,” Saharan informed them before going to the vacant lot first.

He stood against a large furnace that was like a fortress, but he ignored it as he pulled out his sword.

‘Saharan’s Sword.’

It was the same weapon that Zik used. There was no special energy in the sword, but this made sense. It was only in his later years that Haicyen Saharan injected red energy into the sword at the expense of his life.

‘He is really an existence from the past.’

All types of things wrapped around Grid’s body as he followed after Saharan. They were the defense battle gears that Grid had made so far. Only the armor was Khan’s work.

“Um...”Saharan noticed that Grid’s armaments were unusual and gulped.Honestly, he was intimidated for a moment, but he didn’t show it.He had no intention of backing down.The reason why the evaluation of the Overgeared Kingdom was higher than necessary was purely due to this human god.It meant the order would be corrected as long as he got rid of this human god.

“Come.”A red wave rose from Saharan’s body as he adjusted his breathing.It was red energy.It was a force that showed different aspects depending on the individual’s competence and inclination, but the fact that it responded to all things was the same.The ‘source’ of that absolute power, that was embodied in a person of the past, responded even in the future and turned all of Reinhardt red.

‘Maybe the present Saharan doesn’t exist in Asgard.’

Grid thought about it.

Saharan—a being who made the greatest achievements in history before dying.At the very least, the imperial people would’ve worshipped him as a divine being for a long time.Grid thought it wouldn’t be strange if he became one of the gods staying in Asgard.

‘Of course, the probability of him becoming an angel is higher.’

There was no guarantee that the gods of Asgard would respect Saharan.It was more likely that they simply turned him into an angel.It was a bitter thing.A world where humans weren’t respected... indeed, this world should be corrected.

“In order to have a conversation, we should exchange blows first. I won’t refuse.”

Grid pulled out Gujel’s Dao.He naturally had no intention of yielding.He used Transcend and then Link.

“.....!”

Saharan raised his thick eyebrows and responded immediately.He hastily swung his sword and intercepted the baptism of flying sword energies.Then he rushed straight forward despite the wounds.It was because he felt an invisible wave rising up from under his feet.

This was the power of Darkness Sword.There was a 30% chance of an additional attack occurring when Grid attacked.This fraudulent skill that was rising from the blind spots in his vision was forcing Saharan’s movement.

“.....?!”

Saharan succeeded in narrowing the distance to Grid and twisted his waist just before attempting a counterattack.It was because a chill went down his spine.Grid, who was swinging an empty hand, was caught in his vision.The invisible Gujel’s Dao appeared again only after grazing past Saharan’s collar.

Grid sincerely admired it.“You are great.”

The timing of the stealth of Gujel’s Dao couldn’t even be caught by Grid himself.From the opponent’s point of view, it suddenly disappeared, but Saharan reacted to it.It was right to call him transcendent as he avoided Darkness Sword as well.

Saharan was a great talent.

“...It is better to merge.”

Saharan looked at the purely admiring Grid and put away his sword. It was an attitude of admitting defeat. Then tears suddenly fell down.

‘How angry must he be about losing...?’

It happened when Lauel and the dukes were flustered by the founder’s desire to win...

“Glad... I’m glad. My descendants have kept their promise,” Saharan spoke as he looked up at the sky. The figure of Zik, who recovered his body, filled Saharan’s vision.

## **Chapter 1552**

Haicyen Saharan—he was from the bloodline of a destroyed kingdom and was the incarnation of revenge. He devoted his life to punishing the kingdoms that persecuted his kingdom from generation to generation, and eventually destroyed it.

This was the background of the birth of the first empire in history. The empire was close to a symbol that proved the success of Haicyen’s revenge.

“If one of my descendants breaks their promise... prove your qualifications and rights with this sword and directly ascend to the throne. Turn the empire into yours in the long-term to achieve your desire. Definitely... be sure to regain your body...”

Zik recalled the end of Saharan. Having lost his passion since becoming the emperor, he chose annihilation rather than corruption. He poured his Origin True Energy into the sword that symbolized himself and fell into an eternal sleep. His last will was left only for Zik. He seemed to have no nostalgia for the empire he devoted his life to, and actually handed it over to Zik.

Zik had no choice but to misunderstand Saharan. He interpreted it as Saharan abandoning the empire after achieving his purpose. This was why Zik endured for hundreds of years while watching the descendants turn away from the promise and forget about him. Zik pitied Saharan’s descendants.

However, his feelings became dull due to the Curse of Sloth and he didn’t realize this. Yes, his emotions were dull. Therefore, he didn’t recognize it—how warm Saharan’s eyes were.

“.....”

Zik’s hasty return from Cokro Island was because he felt Saharan’s energy. He felt it naturally because the source of red energy in Saharan’s Sword responded to the same source.

Zik was angry. He thought about his deal with Saharan.

“Make me the emperor. In return, I will help you with your resurrection.”

Zik kept his promise. On the other hand, Saharan left his promise to the future generations. It was because at that time, it was impossible to keep the promise in that environment. Zik had no choice but to accept it. He let Saharan go smoothly. Then what about now? Saharan had returned. It meant he arranged his own resurrection, while failing to keep his promise with Zik.

“...I was only recently resurrected. I even got rid of the curse.”

Zik slowly descended and became eye level with Saharan. It was just like when they went to the battlefield together. Zik's anger melted away like snow. The misunderstanding was resolved when he saw Saharan's youthful appearance.

'It isn't a resurrection. I can see why the flow of red energy is so strange.'

The Saharan in front of him was a being of the past, not the second coming of a ghost. It was estimated to be around the time when Saharan had just risen to the throne.

'At this time, Saharan was so strong that he didn't need my help.'

Even though he placed Zik by his side, he somehow tried to keep his promise to the end. Zik could see facts that he didn't know in the past...

"My dull emotions have also been fully restored," Zik's voice trembled slightly as he described it.

A bright smile spread on Saharan's face when he felt it. He was still tearful and rejoiced as if Zik's resurrection was his work.

Zik realized it—the reason why Saharan chose to die wasn't because he lost his passion. In order to keep the promise, he devised a way to fully preserve his power so he could help Zik at any time.

"...You were also my friend." These were Zik's words.

"Ugh." It caused Saharan to be unable to speak. The appearance of him covering his face with a big hand because he couldn't handle the pouring tears was pure and didn't match his fierce appearance that was like a flame.

"Thank you." Zik just gave thanks.

Your descendants broke the promise...

Such truths weren't conveyed. It wasn't just for Saharan's sake. Zik didn't want the past to change. If he told the truth, Saharan would never end his life. It was clear that he would endure for hundreds of years in order to keep his promise. It meant that the past would change dramatically. No one knew how the present would be affected by the change. Therefore, Zik concealed the truth.

Saharan's red energy, which was filling all of Reinhardt, started to disperse. Red petals seemed to flutter. In the pouring petals, Saharan's gaze turned to Zik's sword. He noticed his fate based on the sword that contained his power.

'As expected, I chose death on my own.'

He wasn't ashamed or afraid. The great conqueror—Saharan, the only existence in the world, was very proud of himself. He was proud of his future self, who tried to keep his promise even if it meant committing suicide.

"The willpower of this era is pushing me out. I think I have to leave now."

"...Goodbye."

"Yes."

Saharan nodded and whispered to Zik, "It might be a shameless request, but I hope you look at the kindness of my descendants, who kept the promise, and protect the empire. I can feel that the human god is trying to swallow the empire by force, but I can't handle him."

"It isn't about taking it with force."

".....?"

"It is purely the free will of the empire and other nations to become subordinates of the Overgeared God. There is no coercion."

"Hah..." Saharan doubted his ears. Zik was one of the seven malignant saints. He was one of those who fought a war against heaven. He distrusted and hated the gods. Saharan was forced to notice this when he founded the empire and sought the blessing of the goddess.

That's right. Zik hated even one of the first gods and the creator, Goddess Rebecca. Yet now he was saying favorable things about a human god. It was hard to believe.

"There is actually a god you respect and appreciate..."

"Don't misunderstand. I don't dare to evaluate him."

"...What is this? Who is he that makes you go so far?"

"He is my only god."

"....."

Then a magic earthquake occurred behind Saharan and a portal was opened. It was a bizarrely small portal that was connected to the past. A presence that the current timeline didn't allow—in other words, it exerted its strength against Saharan.

Saharan's gaze was stuck to Grid as he was slowly sucked into the portal. His eyes had changed greatly. "Thank you."

Saharan would've noticed through Zik's attitude who truly resurrected Zik. The great conqueror was wise.

"The moment I go back in time, everything I've experienced here will be forgotten... it was nice to be happy for a while. Please..."

Please take care of my friend...

Unfortunately, Saharan couldn't continue to talk. Time didn't allow it. Even so, his heart was surely conveyed. This was why his willpower left a mark.

[The title, 'One who was Acknowledged by the Founder,' has been acquired.]

[One who was Acknowledged by the Founder]

[The founder of the empire, Haicyen Saharan, acknowledges and supports you.]

★ Easily discover the legacy of the Saharan Empire buried all over the continent.



★ The probability of discovering resources like mines in the Saharan Empire has increased significantly.

★ The effect of the dignity stat is doubled when used against the imperial family and nobles of the Saharan Empire.]

“.....”

Players must go on adventures in order to develop. It was hard to get new encounters or quests when staying in one place. Yet recently, new connections and stories came to Grid on their own. Biban, the king of the dark elves, the half-draconian lord, and Haicyen Saharan were some examples. It was the power of strength and reputation.

Now a lot of the story flowed through Grid with him as the core. The rewards for his long-time efforts were belatedly coming to him. Could he take a day off today?

“...Let’s have a drink.”

“It is an honor.”

My only god.

Grid was very happy as he realized what type of existence he was to Zik. He sincerely wanted to live up to Zik’s expectations. It was the same for Zik. The two people were strongly drawn to each other.

‘No... the Hell Gao raid will begin in a few minutes...’ Lauel couldn’t say anything. It was a fact that people often got wrong, but Lauel’s top priority was Grid, not the Overgeared Kingdom. Everything he sacrificed for the Overgeared Kingdom was just a stepping stone for Grid.

This meant it was hard for him to break Grid’s excitement.

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Cokro Island’s dungeon was filled with people. The capacity was at the limit. The group was gathered for the Hell Gao raid that would take place a short time later. It was only a small amount of money, even if a mythical item dropped. The Overgeared Kingdom had promised to distribute the items dropped by Hell Gao fairly to all participants.

“Won’t Hell Gao melt as long as all these people hit him once?”

There was no sense of tension in the expressions of those whispering to each other. They developed in the Great Human and Demon War and their self-confidence increased. However, the high rankers were nervous. It was the influence of predicting the difficulty in the process of getting familiar with the Hell Gao strategy distributed by the Overgeared Guild.

‘It is an unbelievably powerful pattern for someone who has lost his body to Muller and was sealed. Is the seal weakening? I feel he is stronger than the early rumors.’

The high rankers took deep breaths to relieve their tension. They had something to believe in. The heroes of the Great Human and Demon War including Piaro, Braham, and Zik, and the top powers of the Overgeared Guild were helping in the raid. At the very least, they wouldn’t die if they followed the instructions well.

'Yes, as long as we don't die...'

The first purpose of those participating in the Hell Gao raid was to get the title that eliminated the hell penalties. It was fatal to die in the raid because it delayed the opportunity to get a title. They wanted to hunt in hell as soon as possible. That's right. The players were very passionate about going to hell. For the sake of the future of humanity and revenge for the Great Human and Demon War. There were many elements that motivated them.

"It is in one minute's time!" Vantner's cry rang out loudly. He deployed a wide-area shield in preparation for the air strikes that would occur with Hell Gao's appearance and looked very cool. He built thousands of shields alone and was the peak of a guardian knight. There were many rumors criticizing Vantner for investing all his stat points in strength, but now they were convinced it was just false rumors.

"What?! Zik has disappeared?"

The commotion had subsided due to Vantner's call that it would start in a minute started up again at these words. Additionally, his voice was so loud. This caused his voice to echo through every corner of the dungeon. It was enough to dampen people's morale.

"There is no Zik?"

"Isn't Zik the next strongest in the Overgeared Guild after Grid and Braham?"

"I think he is better than Braham..."

"What is this? What is going on?"

It happened as there was a lot of confusion...

"It's fine. We are enough to protect you."

Jishuka, one of the rankers with the biggest growth in the Great Human and Demon War, came forward with the vestige of the red phoenix behind her. The moment some of Hell Gao's wide-attack attacks pierced part of Vantner's shields, they were intercepted by her arrows and destroyed. Additionally, the group of 50 cavalymen led by Pon broke through the wall of fire and drew Hell Gao's attention. This allowed the raid participants to glimpse the gap between them. They poured attacks toward Hell Gao.

Braham and Piaro didn't go out much. They just found people likely to be caught in the aftermath of an attack and built shields or trees to protect them.

The situation was more relaxed than the Overgeared Guild predicted. Hell Gao wasn't weakened. Rather, it was a change caused by the Great Human and Demon War. Compared to before the war, the post-war Overgeared members were several times stronger.

-Is this the market floor or something?

Hell Gao's furious voice shook the dungeon. Now anybody was coming to fight him...

He resented that he had become a punching bag. Muller faded from his memories. Rather than Muller, who destroyed his body, he was more resentful of Grid, who forced him to fall to this point.

[The Hell Gao raid has succeeded.]

“Uwaaaaahhhh!\\”After dozens of minutes of fighting, the raid participants defeated Hell Gao and cheered while hugging each other.The death toll was zero.The miraculous achievement quickly spread to communities around the world.There was a series of predictions that the players’ invasion of hell would accelerate.

At the same time, Basara received the news that the founder had acknowledged Grid before leaving.She was very pleased and discussed the merger with the nobles again. There was little backlash to the idea.In fact, there could be no backlash.Most nobles were positive about the merger with the Overgeared Kingdom, and the minority who felt negative about it were intimidated by Kyle.Behind Kyle’s threats was the desire to be seen in a good manner by Grid. It was more of a survival instinct than ambition for success.

On the other hand...

“I can’t stand by any longer.”

Damian, the leader of the Overgeared God Church, was preparing to go out.The winds of change were blowing all over the world.

### **Chapter 1553**

“Is it true that we can’t make it to Asgard even if we build up virtue during our lives?”

The leaders of the Dominion Church and Judar Church were struggling.The Overgeared King, who dared to call himself a god—he collapsed the Rebecca Church without knowing the dreadfulness of heaven, and he is now spreading false rumors.

Only a handful of chosen people who were qualified to be ‘angels’ could climb to heaven?It was a destructive sophistry. There were several things to point out.In fact, the attitude of claiming that hell was a shelter for the dead proved his abnormal mental state.

The church leaders were once again convinced that the Overgeared King was a demon.It was clear that Amoract, the 2nd ranked great demon, had disguised herself as a human being and disturbed the world using evil tricks and force.

‘Who is going to stop it? It is truly deplorable.’

The Sword Saint, Demon Slayer, and former pope originally selected by the First Holy Sword...The people who should’ve been heroes had become demons.It was a terrible reality.There was no hope if this continued...

The church leaders were genuinely worried.They instinctively felt the destruction of the world through the demons who disdained god and advocated for hell.

\\”At this time, we need to get our minds straight.”

It was several days after the end of the Great Human and Demon War.The Dominion Church and Judar Church met.Due to the rumors circulating in the streets, the number of believers who doubted the gods had increased sharply. This meeting was organized to discuss how to respond to it.

“.....”

However, the atmosphere was weird. The eyes of the elders were full of compassion as they looked at the two religious leaders sharing their opinions. In particular, the elders of the Judar Church sighed.

The leaders noticed it. 'Even the elders have fallen for the demons' tricks.'

It was too late by the time they realized it. The swords of the paladins were placed against their necks.

"This is treason. You have also been deceived by the demons."

"It isn't treason. Treason is about coveting power. We just want to face the truth in a straightforward manner."

"From the time you renounced your faith, priests will no longer be priests. Your justification is no different from that of a bandit's whining. The cause is wrong from the beginning. The truth? Do you really believe the rumors? What is different between you and the unlearned people? Your years of studying theology and praying to the gods are for nothing."

"Is it a rumor? Haven't you heard that an angel disguised as the pope tried to harm the people?"

"How many times do I have to resolve it? It is a typical rumor spread by the Overgeared Kingdom!"

"We've been trying to believe that, but aren't there too many witnesses? The Rebecca Church followers who survived the incident at the time have testified that the rumors are true."

"That... they were brainwashed."

\\\"The evidence?\\\""

"There is no way that a messenger of the goddess, who exists for humanity, will harm people."

"What is the evidence that the goddess is for humanity?"

"Don't you know? The evidence is that the existence of light, the world, and humanity are all thanks to the goddess."

"The goddess might've created all things, but is there any guarantee that it is for humans? In fact, the goddess turned away from those who died from the invasion of demons."

"That is a trial. It is the same reason for the goddess not helping the sick and the poor. Our lives are a series of trials which means a series of opportunities. Only those who overcome the trials will be qualified for Asgard."

"Is the protection of God Judar infused in the demons and demonic creatures also a trial?"

"Yes. The bigger the trials, the better it is for us. The chances of going to Asgard will increase. It is why the Overgeared King easily helps us. Originally, the more evil the temptation, the sweeter it is. He intends to make us easily overcome the trials so we become lazy and lose our qualifications to be in Asgard."

"The reason that angels attacked the Overgeared God is because they know the truth that the Overgeared God is a demon?"

"Yes. That is the clearest evidence."

“Why is the Overgeared God who has saved so many people a demon?”

“He dared to insult the gods.”

“.....”

The leaders’ repeated unreasonable claims frustrated the elders. A handful of players were among those who exchanged dark looks. It was a testament to the changed times. Now there were many players active at the center of the world. Most of them cooperated with the Overgeared Guild. They believed that the path Grid offered was correct.

It wasn’t a vague belief in a supreme existence. It wasn’t even because they were conscious of force and power. It was based on the progress Grid had achieved. He created countless achievements and the information found based on his achievements was very reliable. It was natural to use this information to support and trust Grid’s actions of making the best choice every time.

“I don’t think it is possible to save the two of them.”

The elders looked at the church leaders sadly and shifted their gaze to the back. The church leaders followed their gaze and their expressions stiffened. It was because they found a person who shouldn’t be here. The man was equipped with heavy armor that was a color that coordinated with his purple hair.

“Now is the time for unity.” It was the former pope, Damian. He once praised the goddess, but now he was a traitor who served the new god. “My heart is heavy, but I have decided to remove all obstacles that hinder the unity. It isn’t easy for the current world to embrace you.”

“How dare you come here?! You! I can’t believe a person who was the pope would become the running dog of a false god and is going on a rampage like an executioner! Don’t you feel embarrassed?!”

The church leaders fiercely criticized it. However, Damian’s expression didn’t waver at all. A sense of justice could be seen in his big shining eyes. It was a righteous attitude. The traitor wasn’t himself, but the heavenly gods. No, the word ‘traitor’ was inappropriate.

The gods weren’t on the side of humans from the beginning. Too much context supported the truth. Those who turned a blind eye to the end were abnormal. It was twisted. It was like a monster. It was to the extent that those who accepted the truth doubted their ears.

“I hope you realize that the Overgeared God is the only real one you can trust, even if it is from hell.”

Damian pulled out his sword. It was the signal. The main pillars of the three churches, who interfered with the Overgeared Kingdom at every important moment—Damian had been trying to root them out for a long time. He continued to make contact with the elders by mobilizing the virtues and connections he had built up from his time as the pope.

Of course, it wasn’t easy. He received all types of restraints and experienced danger. There were many times when he was frustrated by the stubborn people he couldn’t communicate with. However, he did it and he got here. Damian was the one who served as the pope of the Rebecca Church, the most tight-lipped of the three religions. His patience and sincerity were comparable to Grid, so he deserved to achieve results. In recent years, the angels and gods had been continuously trolling and Grid revealed the truth of hell.

“This is crazy even for someone crazy.”

The church leaders couldn't stand it and showed killing intent. They dropped hammers of light, which hit the heads of the paladins, as they glared at Damian as if to kill him with their glare.

Knights armed with black uniforms appeared on the left and right sides and lined up. This was the secret to the church leaders maintaining their composure. The Templar Knights—the Rebecca Church's strongest armed group, which had been missing for a while, were escorting the two church leaders. The clone of Sariel wasn't seen, but even so, the spirit of the church leaders soared into the sky.

“Elders, look clearly with your own eyes. This traitor is the most obvious evidence that the Overgeared King is a fake god.”

The absence of divine power. Damian didn't have the power that a priest should have. It wasn't just him. It was the same for all the members of the Overgeared God Church. This was one of the reasons why the members of the three churches didn't recognize Grid. If Grid was a god, why did those who serve him have no divine power?

Some elders reflected on the question and started to feel doubts.

“Damian! You traitor! Remember that it was all thanks to the consideration of the goddess that you could be the pope!”

The hammers of light hovering over the two church leaders combined into one. A holy, sacred light exploded and brilliantly revealed the interior of the temple. It was the proof of the existence of God. Anxiety sprouted in the hearts of the elders. They were worried about divine punishment and belatedly turned away from the light. They didn't dare to stare straight at it.

Damian was different. He still faced the light with honest eyes. “There is no law that the form of divinity has to be light.”

Thick veins twitched on the back of Damian's hand as he pulled out his sword.

“Physical.”

Damian recalled it. The destructive power of Grid that killed Gamigin, who couldn't be knocked down easily even by Braham's great magic.

“The divine power of the Overgeared God is physical force.”

It was sophistry. The leaders scoffed. The divinity became one and was fired like an arrow of light. It penetrated Damian's chest... no, it couldn't.

“.....?!”

It was cut by Damian's sword and scattered in vain. The protection and divinity of the Overgeared God—the effects attached to the sword that Grid made for Damian turned into the power to cut magic. It was greater than any divine power. Damian's stride that he had been honing described the myth of the Overgeared God. Grid's strengthened myth added power to Damian's sword dance.

“Linked Kill Pinnacle.”

Grid had proved it several times. He slashed the enemies blocking his path using items and combat strength. Damian, who served him, was also obliged to prove it.

“Kuaaaak!”

The overgeared onslaught broke through the Templars and fatally injured the church leaders. The church leader screamed repeatedly and healed each other, but it didn't mean much. Damian was the main person of the Overgeared Kingdom when it came to responding to the churches of the three gods. It was natural for the 'healing reduction effect' to be attached to his sword since he had a lot of conflicts with priests. At this moment, he showed absolute power.

Of course, the effect of reduced healing could be released through purification. Even if it was purified, he would slash again and again, repeating the same thing. After a fierce struggle—

[The leaders of the Dominion Church and Judar Church have died.]

The purge was successful. Damian's virtues, connections, sincerity, and finally, the combination of items and force, created the best results. The elders immediately elected new leaders and they were naturally friendly to Damian and the Overgeared Kingdom. They would lead the Dominion and Judar Churches, that had been floundering for a while, onto the right path.

“There wasn't a single high-level Templar.” Damian exited after making several agreements with the elders and expressed his concern.

Isabel nodded from where she was waiting for him outside the temple. “I didn't even feel the presence of the leader. Right now, they don't seem to be aiming for a revival of the Rebecca Church... it is suspicious. I think we need to search.”

Isabel was motivated after moving to the Overgeared Kingdom. She did everything on her own and it was different from her time as a Rebecca's Daughter. Damian held her hand tightly. He looked lovingly at her slightly bulging belly. “Yes, but you don't have to go out by yourself, Isabel.”

A long procession of people followed behind Damian. They were the members of the Overgeared God Church. Even though they were the elites selected by Damian, the number still exceeded 1,000. Damian gained an authority and power incomparable to his days as the pope and his performance would continue in the future.

A fortnight later...

The world was turned upside down. Empress Basara proclaimed that the empire would become a subordinate nation of the Overgeared Kingdom...

## **Chapter 1554**

The world was tumultuous even after the war ended.

The controlled zones of the Overgeared Guild relaxed their control, the Hell Gao raid where tens of thousands of people participated, the changes in the religious forces, the 7th National Competition, etcetera.

The issues that attracted the attention of people around the world hadn't ceased. In particular, people's attention was focused on the National Competition.

『 The National Competition is a stage where world-class powerhouses gather to compete with their skills. The purpose is to select the best talent of that year. However, this year, there is an announcement from the S.A Group that it will add events where players will compete under the same conditions in order to give more players the opportunity to participate. 』

『 The AoS and battle royale genres will be added as new events, right? 』

『 Yes, each country will hold an online preliminary round to select players... 』

The National Competition was a contest of national prestige. People looked forward to and cheered to see how far their rankers could prevail in the world. However, significant rewards caused unexpected problems. As the gap between those who won medals in the National Competition and those who failed to win medals widened, more and more people started to feel a sense of deprivation.

A festival that took place once a year—it was a competition that carried the national flag and it was right for it to be a stage for qualified people. It was no wonder why the rewards were so great. Even so, it would be nice to give more people a chance...

The S.A Group responded to the wishes of people like this. It was to appease the public sentiment that had worsened since the Great Human and Demon War. A total of seven new events were added to this year's National Competition. Five of these events were based on 'competing under equal conditions.'

The AoS games, FPS games, etcetera, which were popular until the release of Satisfy a few years ago. This included the battle royale games that would be held as an event. In every event, participants chose a specific profession. They started the game at level 1 and sought victory by cooperating or competing with other participants. The background of the game was naturally Satisfy. It was easy to understand it as various genres of games being played as a virtual reality version.

People had no choice but to be excited. They would have an opportunity to participate in the National Competition that was only a festival for a few people.

-Honestly, we would be rankers if we had money and time.

-That's right. If only luck had followed.

-We will be competitive if the conditions are the same.

Most people were tolerant toward themselves. They acknowledged the strength and performance of rankers, but they also believed they were qualified to stand beside the rankers. The reason they didn't become rankers was due to the differences in environment and bad luck...

Many believed so and desire ignited in them. It was similar to a person who hadn't studied properly thinking, 'If I had made up my mind to study, I would've gone to a prestigious university.' The experts pointed out their attitudes.

『 It is sad to see what public opinion is like recently. More and more people are distorting rankers into those who are privileged. They should keep one thing in mind. Rankers were also ordinary in the past. A



ranker isn't a position that can be maintained with money and time alone. Please note that if you have the opportunity to compete with them under the same conditions, you will surely experience great frustration... 』

『 Professor, are you afraid that the gap between new participants and rankers will be large? 』

『 Of course. I expect the actual rankings and result of the participants to be directly proportional to their real rankings. 』

『 An example of this... Grid will unconditionally win gold in any events he participates in, right? 』

『 Right. 』

The opinions of experts from all walks of life were similar. They predicted the overwhelming performance of the rankers. They appreciated the 'experience' of rankers rather than their 'innate talent.' They argue that the polished insights, control, and senses from experiencing countless unimaginable incidents would exceed predictions and that it would take several years to narrow the gap.

Public opinion became angry.

-It is in direct proportion? ?? Do the people who aren't rankers have no dreams or hopes?

-It is bullsh\*t. Has it only been one or two times when the experts speak X-ing bullsh\*t sentences?

-Sports players and professional gamers will eventually be pushed by rookies and disappear into history, yet the experts are prioritizing experience... a game is more about talent than experience.

-Rankers rely on their level and items. I admit that they did better than others in obtaining levels and items, but isn't it too much of a leap that the experience gained after being a ranker is so important?

-They are being overly meticulous.

Those who respected and cheered for rankers not long ago started to discredit them. It wasn't a strange thing. A person's attitude was bound to change depending on the situation and position. The proof was the readers swearing that the manhwa or novels they enjoyed reading until last week were trash today. It changed because it was worth changing. From the time when events that anyone could challenge were added to the National Competition, people's attitudes were bound to change. Rankers became competitors, not world-class existences.

『 People's interest in this year's National Competition is unprecedented. The number of participants for the online preliminaries to select players for the new events is... 』

『 Many people are curious about whether Grid, who missed several competitions, and Kraugel, who didn't participate in last year's competition, will participate this year. In response, the S.A Group has revealed that it hasn't received applications from the two people to participate. This has disappointed people... 』

『 Many rankers aren't expressing their intention to participate in the new event. In the midst of speculation over the reasons, the interview of the named ranker Peak Sword has become controversial. Did he say, 'What ranker will go to participate in a feast for the general public and light candles'? 』

『 That's right. He definitely seemed to distinguish between rankers and non-rankers. 』

『 What is the reaction of public opinion? 』

『 It is very negative. The majority of opinions say they feel the ranker's sense of authority from Peak Sword's attitude. 』

『 It is true that rankers are great. Still, it isn't an official position. 』

『 Yes, the reason why rankers are recognized is due to their skills. Most of the skills recognized here are exercised only when the specs support it. Thus, public response is colder. 』

『 I've seen many comments like that. I am sympathetic with some of them. The advantage of rankers lies in their specs. The great thing about rankers is that they built up those specs... this is what they are saying. They feel that rankers who have lost their specs aren't much different from the general public. 』

『 That's right. Additionally, there are many talented people even among the general public. The reason they can't become rankers is because the environment isn't good or they started Satisfy too late. There is no way they won't win when fighting under the same conditions as rankers. 』

『 Is it reasonable to say that the reason why rankers are absent from new events is because they are afraid of losing? 』

『 Yes, it is too risky for the rankers to give up their hard-earned qualifications to participate in events under the same conditions as the general public. They can't guarantee victory and their reputation will plummet if they lose. 』

『 Still, isn't the expression of 'general public' a bit inappropriate? If they are talented enough to break through hundreds of millions of people and advance to the finals, aren't they good enough to be called professionals? Even if a ranker loses, they aren't losing to the general public. Aren't they losing to professionals? If you think so, it isn't a big disgrace, right? 』

『 However, Peak Sword separated the participants into the general public 』

『 The keyword 'ranker's sense of authority' is becoming a hot topic... 』

\*\*\*

“Hi~”

“Good morning.”

“.....?”

Peak Sword was flustered when he connected to Satisfy. It was because the attitude of the colleagues greeting him was the same as usual. He thought they would ask why he caused another commotion.

Therefore, it was a surprise. Toban read Peak Sword's stunned expression and laughed. "There must be many people feeling relieved after hearing your interview."

There were two main reasons why the rankers were shunning the new events. First of all, there was the need to understand the meaning of the National Competition. The National Competition was a place to raise the reputation and value of the participants before it was a stage to raise the prestige of the nation. From the perspective of the rankers, they should make use of their own advantages to participate in events where they could prove their value rather than participating in new events. Image making on a big stage like the National Competition had more value in the long-term.

On the other hand, some people read the atmosphere. What was the point of engaging in slaughter and hanging a medal around their necks in events made for the public? There was nothing other than the medal rewards. Rather, it was a loss. Public opinion and the media would criticize them for being tactless and there was a high possibility that their value would seriously fall. Of course, they would forget or turn a blind eye to the fact that they provoked the rankers first.

It was judged that it was better to leave this as their own event. That's right. The gap between rankers and the general public was large. It was uncertain until a few years ago, but now it could be confirmed.

People failed to become rankers not because they were unlucky or their environment wasn't good. It was because they weren't talented. The evidence was that those who became rankers due to luck failed to maintain their rankings and eventually went down to their original positions. There was such accumulated data that rankers became aware that they were pros.

"Personally, I want Grid to participate in the National Competition," Toban said as he entered the palace.

The atmosphere of the palace was very busy. They were in the midst of preparing to welcome guests from the empire. They found Grid dressed in a cool robe, and Peak Sword nodded and raised his thumb like he agreed with Toban.

"There are too many words that cross the line these days."

Was it the experts' assessment that provoked a backlash? People's aversion to rankers was spreading to Grid. Based on the days when Grid's control ability wasn't proficient, it was argued that Grid would be disgraced if he participated in the new event. Of course, this was still only the opinion of the minority. Even so, the fact that there was a small number of people talking nonsense again, despite everything that Grid showed, angered Peak Sword.

"What? Did something bad happen?" Grid approached. He saw their bad expressions and seemed worried.

"That..." Toban explained the situation and Grid laughed.

"Why do you care about that? The earth has a population of over 10 billion. How can we get everyone's favor? A few of them might dislike us."

"I can understand why they feel competitive with rankers. Even so, it is annoying that there are people who are biting at you when you have done nothing wrong and it isn't related to you."

“There are many people who speak ill of others for no reason. Ignore what we should ignore.”

Grid’s expression became bitter for a moment as he soothed the two men. He recalled the days when he was overwhelmed by a sense of inferiority and easily criticized others. How many people in the world were like this? Anybody who was a public figure and exposed to the public would have to bear criticism. Sometimes they could only rely on the law when it came to excessive criticism.

“The empress will soon arrive. The story of the National Competition will wither the moment she announces the empire becoming our subordinates. So, stop worrying and calm your minds.”

Grid’s prediction was correct.

“The Saharan Empire has declared itself subordinate to the Overgeared Kingdom and will serve His Majesty Grid as their emperor.”

As millions of people gathered around the continent, the world was turned upside down when Empress Basara made this declaration. It was the continent’s first and only empire. Now the largest nation had appointed a player as the new emperor. Public opinion and the media no longer mentioned the National Competition.

They were busy analyzing the past moves and achievements of Grid and the Overgeared Guild, using the theme of a player becoming the emperor, an empire established by a player, and unification without war. It was almost a tribute. Public opinion criticizing Peak Sword disappeared like a lie.

It was a change of attitude like flipping the palm of a hand. It has been shown several times, so it was nothing new.

‘Then the attitude will change again as the National Competition approaches. It is a bit disgusting.’

Grid thought it would be a good idea to go to the National Competition for the first time in ages. There were many justifications such as commemorating victory in the Great Human and Demon War and the birth of the Overgeared Empire. It was also fun to participate in the new events on behalf of the angry rankers and overturn the banquet table.

\\‘...No, it is too much for me to step up.’

Wouldn’t Lael monopolize the gold medals if he was sent out to participate in the new events? The participation rate of other rankers would be low anyway and Lael’s adaptability in new environments was unmatched. He wasn’t a genius for nothing. Grid seriously considered it as he looked at Lael, who had stepped down from active duty a long time ago.

“.....?” Lael broke out in a cold sweat as he felt a chill for an unknown reason.

‘What? Is it due to yesterday’s nightmare?’

The kingdom’s rebirth as an empire required a new name.

The Overgeared Saha Empire—it was a name he heard in last night’s nightmare. However, reality would be different...

Lael earnestly prayed that it would be so. He wanted Grid to answer his prayer.

## Chapter 1555

Grid's ceremonial clothing was very gorgeous. The new silver crown made ahead of the merger ceremony was different. It was very mysterious and beautiful, shining like it was moonlight. It was in harmony even with the maidens of the forest who appeared in the human world on a rare occasion. The eyes of those mesmerized by the beauty of the elves naturally turned to Grid.

Just as they thought that the gold robe that didn't seem to touch the ground was moving slowly, Grid had already reached the throne.

"Your Majesty." Lauel politely bowed his head. He held a large glass of wine carefully in both hands, like he was worried about its spilling.

Grid lightly grabbed the glass. His wide sleeves fluttered slightly, but the glass didn't shake. There wasn't even the slightest ripple in the transparent liquor filling the glass. It was a spectacle that spread on thousands of cameras. The eyes of the viewers became wide. They looked at Grid, who showed majesty even in his small actions, and recalled the gap between themselves and Grid.

Certainly, Grid was a figure of another world. The moment he held the glass, the noble empress came over and knelt down.

"Your subject, Basara—I pledge to give my body, heart, and soul to the new emperor. My immortal loyalty will support Your Majesty and Your Majesty's descendants."

It was the largest and most sacred event in the history of the continent. There shouldn't be any mistakes, so there was naturally a script. However, Basara's oath was different from the script. The oath of loyalty should've had the premise 'as long as the emperor and imperial family don't betray me,' but it was changed to an unconditional oath.

"....."

Basara's slender, long eyes slowly rose as she was raised by the flustered Grid. Her bewitching eyes first captured Grid's appearance, followed by Piaro, who was standing behind Grid.

"Your subject, Basara, won't doubt His Majesty and His Majesty's loyal ministers."

Flinch.

Piaro's eyes twitched. The suspicions of the former emperor, Juander—it had irreversible consequences toward Piaro. It was the foreshadowing of the decline of the millennium empire. At this moment, Basara was insisting that such a thing wouldn't happen in the future empire.

"I won't be jealous."

Basara's gaze captured Asmophel's appearance this time. A man who led the golden age of the empire along with Piaro. However, his current position was different from Piaro's. He was even lower than Mercedes. He stood a long way back while these two people guarded Grid's side. Nevertheless, he wasn't jealous. He was devout because he already committed a painful sin once.

On the other hand, he silently affirmed Basara's words that he should be taken as a negative textbook example.

Singled, Amelda, and Dante, who suffered direct damage from Asmophel, looked at Asmophel. The sight caused a smile to spread on Basara's face.

"I will give you a chance to make up for it even if I am betrayed. I will remember and prioritize today's oath over the pain and anger of the moment. I will stand by Your Majesty's side."

Basara made a variation of the script rather than changing it. It was so those who would lead the new era together could sympathize and remember clearly. This intention was reliably conveyed to Grid.

"I won't disappoint you."

Was there a need for long words? Grid got rid of the lengthy speech carefully made by Lauel and Huroi. He also wanted to convey emotions, not reason.

"I exist for all of you. You just have to remember that."

Existing for others? It was hard to believe. It was close to impossible. Yet even the viewers who were a third party knew that Grid's words weren't a pretense. If Grid was one of the common people living for himself, it wouldn't match the actions he showed so far.

They didn't know what he was like at the beginning, but it was undeniable that the current Grid fought for the Overgeared Guild, the Overgeared Kingdom, and many others. Even the reason for punishing hell was for others, not for himself. He wasn't a hypocrite. It was hard to understand the reason, but at least in 'this world,' he was definitely a hero.

Everyone acknowledged it.

[The Saharan Empire has become subordinated by the Overgeared Kingdom.]

[A new empire is born.]

[The founder of the new empire is 'Grid.']

This world message appeared when Grid and Basara shared a drink.

[You are the first player to become an emperor!]

[The 'First King' title has evolved into 'First Emperor.']

Separate notification windows popped up in Grid's vision. The word 'evolution' was appropriate. The effect of the First King title was greatly enhanced. An example of a change was that the shield that occurred when '70% of the maximum health' was lost was changed to '50% of the maximum health'. Furthermore, the additional stat points earned with every level up was sharply increased from 2 to 6.

[Overgeared God Grid is writing the 16th epic.]

[The birth of a great empire was recorded.]

An epic followed.

[Those who experienced loss and are wandering the streets should be sad, but not frustrated.]

[Look at your emperor who was like you.]

[Wash away the hearts stained with wounds and anger with responsibility and justice.]

[Look at your emperor who was like you.]

[Recognize that all trials and hardships were destined from the moment your umbilical cord was cut. Unhappiness is inevitable, but happiness follows effort.]

[Look at the emperor who was like you but who cares for you.]

[See, listen, and learn from him, and spread it.]

[Unhappiness is inevitable, but happiness follows effort...]

Grid's epics were written in prose. It took the form of an epic, but it was freely used without a specific format according to the situation every time. This time, it was a song. It was a hymn of hope that people in the empire would sing when having hard times, and it was also the hymn of the emperor. Therefore, it was a narrative that wouldn't be extinguished forever.

.....

...

[The 16th page of the epic has been completed.]

[Along with the completion of the epic, your people have courage and hope. Your people are determined to emulate you and won't tire easily or give up.]

[The growth rate of NPCs belonging to the Overgeared Empire will be permanently increased by 20%.]

[Once all the stats of NPCs belonging to the Overgeared Empire grow to the maximum, there is a low probability of breaking through the limit.]

[The loyalty of the NPCs belonging to the Overgeared Empire will always be maintained at a high state.]

[The chances of named NPCs being born in the Overgeared Empire will increase.]

[The speed of all internal development in the Overgeared Empire will permanently increase by 10%.]

[Your status has risen significantly as a reward for completing the epic. The chances of a beneficial effect triggering will greatly increase.]

"....."

Grid shook with excitement. The passive skill that represented a beneficial effect, God's Command. He confirmed that the probability of triggering it had increased by a huge 10% and he once again realized the importance of 'status.'

Meanwhile, Lael's face was pale. It was due to the world message that occurred a while ago.

[Emperor Grid has declared the great name of the new empire as 'Overgeared.']

This was why the words 'Overgeared Empire' were constantly mentioned in Grid's notification windows. At the same moment that Grid was crowned emperor, the system demanded that the name be entered and Grid entered 'Overgeared.' It was natural that the name of the Overgeared Kingdom became the Overgeared Empire. At least, this was what Grid thought.

The Overgeared members and others thought the same. Only Lael couldn't abandon his lingering regret and was sad alone. The consolation was that reality was better than his nightmares. He thought that the Overgeared Empire was a very cool name compared to OvergearedSahaEmpire, which mixed the names 'Overgeared' and 'Saharan.'

'Yes, it is a great name. There seems to be a beautiful echo.'

Several cameras captured Lael shedding tears. The anchors explained how meaningful and happy it would be as the number two player in the Overgeared Empire. His tears would be full of emotions.

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The map of the West Continent changed dramatically. The red color of Saharan was turned blue to match the Overgeared Kingdom. Now more than two-thirds of the continent's territory was the territory of the Overgeared Empire and Grid. It happened overnight. There was no conflict or damage in the course of the change. It was literally an ideal unification. It was a situation that every South Korean citizen living in a divided country would have dreamed about once.

'If only I was so strong in reality.'

Could he have unified the Korean peninsula? A smile slowly spread on Grid's mouth as he thought of this. He was relieved after checking the title of One who was Acknowledged by the Founder.

'I was worried, but it went well.'

The title effect, which greatly increased the probability of finding mines in the Saharan Empire was still intact. The system set it as the former Saharan Empire. It was Saharan's territory before it was absorbed into the Overgeared Kingdom.

'The role of miners will grow in the future.'

Minor met a good companion a few years ago and got three rabbit-like children. His old mother was also at peace due to her good daughter-in-law. He was very happy these days, but Grid was worried he wouldn't want to separate from his family.

'Let's persuade him well rather than forcing him. He will be pleased if I say I will let his family move to Titan during his business trip.'

Titan's educational infrastructure was great. In some parts, it was better than Reinhardt and it was perfect for raising children.

Grid planned to make Minor a 'wild goose' father.

It was pure favor, but the slightest carelessness could cause sad results. In any case, the Overgeared Empire was going to be much richer in the future.



“We won’t be struggling with finances,” Lauel neatly spoke the conclusion.

The value of the territory and people absorbed this time was that great. In the first place, the Saharan Empire reigned for hundreds of years as the number one nation of the West Continent. It had the best foundation and it was completely absorbed. If Lauel and the Overgeared members ruled with the perspective and knowledge of modern people, an unprecedented economic power would be born.

“His Majesty, the Emperor, is entering.”

Grid entered the hall under Lauel’s guidance. The ministers and guests waiting in advance stood up simultaneously and bowed. There were tens of thousands of people. Most of the guests came from foreign kingdoms. In addition to the kings and nobles of all the kingdoms, the orcs, elves, dwarves, half-draconians, and other races were present. There were even the Twelve Zodiacs who came from the East Continent.

In fact, all the forces on the surface were gathered. All of them were connections created by Grid. They all acknowledged and blessed Grid. Therefore, they entered today’s merger ceremony and wedding as a guest.

The main characters of the wedding were Grid and Basara. It was natural. The reason why the imperial subjects didn’t oppose the merger with the Overgeared Kingdom was on the premise that the Saharan imperial family and Overgeared royal family became one.

Unification for a better future. Irene naturally agreed. No, she actively recommended it. She understood politics well as the former successor of a noble family. She had long been used to the idea of Grid having multiple wives.

“Hah...”

Grid admired the dressed Basara. Was it the blood of the great Saharan? She was so beautiful it was hard to believe she was older than Grid. Her bright expression as she lowered the crown she wore so far further highlighted her beauty.

[Overgeared God ‘Grid’ has married ‘Basara.’]

In the midst of the blessing and cheers of their precious people, Grid and Basara kissed. This wasn’t the fruit of love, but Grid vowed to cherish and respect her for the rest of his life. Of course, it was a responsibility he had to bear.

-This is really crazy.

-Is there a Korean person with two wives?

?Isn’t it an imperial person?

-Basara is really beautiful...

? Really. Rather than saying she is pretty, the word ‘beautiful’ is just right. She is also wise and kind-hearted.

-I’m envious. I’m envious. I’m envious. I’m envious. I’m envious.

-Everyone, I just imagined something terrifying. For some reason, I think I will see the same scene in real life.

?Me too ????

??????

-What are you doing not revising the Korean Marriage Act? Revise it before Grid moves to the Middle East. I want to see Grid's virtue too.

?It isn't because of the marriage law that he doesn't have a wife, right?

?Is Grid going to become a Muslim?

It had been a few years. The number of members of Grid's anti-fan cafe increased. Surprisingly, it wasn't a dramatic number. It was evidence that most people were convinced of the marriage between Grid and Basara.

People were jealous of Grid, but they didn't curse him. Then what if the other person was Mercedes? The growth potential of Grid's anti-fan cafe was enormous...

1. Refers to fathers who make seasonal visits to faraway families similar to how geese migrate every year.

## **Chapter 1556**

Sehee couldn't forget the first time she saw Mercedes. Mercedes caught her eye at once. She was so pretty that Sehee's head became blank for a moment. It was like this even though Mercedes had no clear expression. Sehee wondered if she was a doll.

Thus, she was surprised at this moment.

'Her expression...?'

Mercedes' cheeks were slightly puffed up as she looked at the backs of Grid and Basara. Her usually always calm eyes were shaken and the water in them made her feel pitiful. Unlike Yura and Jishuka, who distinguished Satisfy from reality, Mercedes seemed quite agitated by Grid's marriage.

Mercedes' expression was very vivid. It was so different from her usual appearance that she seemed to be a completely different person. Now Mercedes was absolutely a young woman. The weapons she had always carried looked heavy and awkward today.

Irene was the one who reached out to her. She smiled and soothed Mercedes, despite being the one who should feel more sadness than anyone else. "Don't be disappointed. The order of second or third doesn't matter. His Majesty's love for you won't change forever."

She had first-hand experience with Grid's love, so she could say this. Mercedes looked down at her cold gauntlets and nodded. "Yes."

I am sorry to show an inappropriate appearance for a celebration day.

I fully understood My Liege's position, etc.

Mercedes couldn't bear to say such words, so she gave a brief answer. She thought there would be tears flowing if she said anything else.

Her liege, who loved her a few days ago.

Her liege, who she believed she would be sharing with her queen, married someone else. Mercedes felt embarrassed, sad, and jealous.

That night, on the city wall illuminated by blue moonlight.

"Mercedes." Grid fell to one knee and held out a ring inlaid with transparent jewels. "Marry me."

Not long ago, Grid and Mercedes confirmed each other's hearts. The two people were so hot that they melted the ice caps of the Chaos Mountains. They heard each other's breathing, not the screams of the monsters. It was their sweat, not the blood of the beasts, that wet the bodies of the two people. How many times did the two of them do it on that day...

Omitted.

...Therefore, Grid was obligated to take responsibility for Mercedes. Even if it wasn't an obligation, he wanted to turn it into an obligation. He definitely wanted to be with Mercedes. Grid had been fascinated by her a long time ago.

"I'm sorry, but our marriage ceremony won't be grand..."

Grid's lawful wife was Irene. Basara had the status of former empress and a legitimate line of descent of the empire. Thus, he had to hold a grand wedding ceremony. Meanwhile, this was a special case. The marriage to Mercedes should be done as decisively as possible. This was the greatest courtesy toward Irene.

"If it is okay with you— no, you must marry me..."

It was even before Grid finished speaking.

Nod.

Mercedes nodded vigorously. She was looking down and her expression couldn't be seen. However, Grid felt it. Just as he felt her mood behind him during the daytime wedding, Grid's transcendent senses clearly analyzed Mercedes at this moment.

Therefore, he hugged her as hard as he could. It was to let his heart be conveyed.

"...I lob you," Mercedes felt relieved and confessed what was in her heart.

The pronunciation was blurred by her sobbing, but the appearance of her ears that were red out of embarrassment made Grid smile.

"Me too."

In response, Grid rubbed against the top of Mercedes' head with his chin. The ruler of knights was surprisingly small. The top of her head could barely touch Grid's solar plexus. It was something that

people didn't know. Mercedes usually exuded a sense of pressure which had the effect of making her look bigger.

Tens of thousands of stars shone as if to bless the two people.

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"Are you really going to just watch? You will just come back to life if you die. What are you so scared of?"

"The damage is too great. You are a legend, so you won't die easily, right? I think it would be better for you to come forward."

"Alas, it is distressing. If there was a competition to choose the best bastard in the world, you would be first."

"What about you?"

"I think I would be third place."

"You don't have a conscience."

At the East Continent...

Old Sword Demon and Hwang Gildong were still on an adventure together. Trapped in a fence made by the gods, they wandered around the entire kingdom to liberate the poor people who believed in fake faith. It wasn't known how many life or death crises they had crossed in the fight against the yangbans with innate transcendence.

However, the two of them still didn't trust each other. They didn't rashly entrust their backs to each other despite crossing so many life or death crises. This meant they understood each other well. The person they cherished most was themselves. Their definition of justice was extremely realistic.

Fight for others, but don't sacrifice themselves.

They tried to follow the path of righteousness but they turned a blind eye according to the situation. They couldn't be blamed. Just because their definition of justice was realistic didn't mean it was false. Furthermore, they had the grand goal of destroying the yangbans. They should never die until then.

"You should've fully understood it by now. Never insult the gods again."

At a city in Kaya...

The yangbans, who had been trampling the lord into a straw mat, finally relieved their anger and left. Hwang Gildong and Old Sword Demon sighed with relief from where they were hiding in the distance and watching the scene.

"They didn't kill him. Perhaps it is because they are conscious of people's eyes. I'm glad since I was worried."

"I agree."

Recently, the yangbans had become rowdy. They noticed that the seal of the red phoenix and black tortoise were released, and felt irritated. They didn't kill as recklessly as before, but they still couldn't endure it and vented their anger when they encountered something unpleasant. The unpleasant reasons were usually pretty insignificant. For example, the lord was beaten up just because he entertained them with cheap wine.

"I would've run over and helped right away if there were three less. It is a pity."

"I would've gone out if there were even two less."

"In fact, I think I could've gone out if there was only one less."

"How childish."

"Are you talking about yourself? Didn't you start it first?"

The expressions of Old Sword Demon and Hwang Gildong were dark. They were angered by their powerlessness at having to hide and watch the violence of the yangbans.

'If only this guy was a little bit stronger...'

'If only this man was a bit stronger...'

The two men, who complained and resented each other, were by no means weak. Old Sword Demon was the strongest unofficial ranker, and Hwang Gildong was a legend who represented the East Continent. One person could deal with a few ordinary yangbans alone. Hwang Gildong could handle twice as much as that.

However, the number of yangbans encountered this time was 11. In particular, five of them had taken off their gats. They were sent down as objects of new worship by the Hwan Kingdom. In the aftermath of the revival of the red phoenix and black tortoise, the yangbans's combat power wasn't as good as before, but it was natural that they couldn't come out.

"Sigh... How long do we have to stay in this city?"

The wounded lord was twitching on the dirt ground. He couldn't support his body because his limbs were broken, but no one helped him up. They were busy bowing toward the direction that the yangbans left. It was also the reason why the lord was struggling. The reason he struggled to raise his broken body from the dirt ground was to kowtow to the yangbans.

It was a very disgusting and regrettable scene. Apart from the Cho Kingdom and Xing Kingdom, which were liberated due to Grid, the people of the other kingdoms were still living a miserable life.

"It isn't far away," Hwang Gildong replied while trying to turn away from the unpleasant sight.

"It is time for the army that left to help the West Continent to return."

News of the Great Human and Demon War on the West Continent had reached the east. Many people had witnessed that a pointed-eared man had disappeared into light with the army of the Cho Kingdom and Xing Kingdom.

"Do you really think there will be demons among them?"

“Unconditionally. Even a mere yōkai can possess a human. Wouldn’t demons also have this ability? Some of them, who mixed in with the crowd to save their lives, will surely come to this land.”

“Hrmm...”

A few days later, Hwang Gildong’s prediction came true. There were a mixture of demons wearing human masks among the soldiers of the improved Cho Kingdom and Xing Kingdom. They suffered great pain from the divinity of the red phoenix and black tortoise. They fled from these two kingdoms in a hurry and scattered. A considerable number of them gathered in Kaya.

They were instinctively drawn to the power of the sealed blue dragon. They aspired to gain this power without knowing which monsters were guarding it. Moreover, the city where Old Sword Demon and Hwang Gildong were currently located was the entrance to Kaya.

“Um...?”

Hwang Gildong’s personality was trash, but he was still competent. He deserved to be a bigshot who had struggled alone against the yangbans for hundreds of years.

Old Sword Demon was marveling at Hwang Gildong, who was preparing to meet the approaching demons, only to become flustered. The demons, who were disguised as humans and giving off a stinky demonic energy—he found green hair that stood out within the group.

“Agnus...!” Old Sword Demon’s eyes were ghastly.

It was a few years ago when Agnus committed a massive massacre in the East Continent. Some of the people sacrificed by Agnus were friends of Old Sword Demon.

More than 100 people were killed by Agnus without understanding what was going on, including a father and daughter whom Old Sword Demon had barely rescued from the war, a mother and son saved from the swamp of poverty, and young boys and girls he looked after as a Daddy-Long-Legs. They were buried in the ground like garbage, rotted, and were resurrected with ugly faces to be used as soldiers.

The anger and pain Old Sword Demon felt when he heard the news during his travels were still vivid. His heart throbbed the moment he recalled it.

“Kill him...! I’ll tear him to pieces and throw him to the dogs as food!”

“Ehh? What are you doing...?” Hwang Gildong had no time to stop him. Old Sword Demon had already thrown himself toward the road. Hwang Gildong, who was about to follow, stopped.

‘Dammit!’

It was a street in broad daylight. As the startled crowd made a fuss, the energy of the yangbans scattered throughout the city immediately burst out. They seemed to be coming here with interest.

“This is dangerous... hey, Old Sword Demon! I’ll be avoiding you, so live or die on your own!”

Hwang Gildong ran away without looking back.

“You...?”

“Old Sword Demon! Shit!”

“.....!”

Agnus faced a disaster. He sneaked onto the surface during the gap when the Overgeared members and rankers were busy preparing for the hell expedition, only to immediately encounter this monster. This... he could only describe it as really bad luck.

‘Nothing has gone right these days.’

No, it wasn’t just these days. His life had gone wrong from beginning to end.

Agnus could only laugh.

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At the Tower of Wisdom...

Biban was grumbling that the size of the tower they moved to was uselessly large when his eyes widened.

Betty—she normally never left her room except to participate in the regular meetings, but now she visited Biban.

“I have to meet Grid. Take me there.”

“All of a sudden? Granny, we can’t just leave the tower casually as tower members. We have to move according to the procedures...”

“Baal’s Contractor... he is going to lose his qualifications.”

“.....!”

The flustered Biban threw the floor cloth away.

## **Chapter 1557**

“I don’t know if it is a good idea to send them away without seeing them.”

The Cho King was having a vague communication with the red phoenix, the guardian god of the land. The innate nature of the red phoenix, which existed for the people of the Cho Kingdom, responded to the blood of the Cho royal family. There was even a connection called Grid who acted as a bridge between the two of them.

The Cho King had been helping Grid, so he received the favor of the red phoenix. This brought about a strong vigilance and made him aware that some of the returning soldiers were demons, not human beings. Even so, he simply sent them away. He turned a blind eye to those who suffered from the divinity of the red phoenix flowing through the ground and ran away.

It was due to advice from the Chivalrous Robbers.

“Your Majesty, don’t worry. By now, the leader must’ve beaten them all. He has been digging a trap for a while.”

The Chivalrous Robbers was a group of people. They robbed the assets of some of the people profiting from the power of the yangbans and scattered it to the private sector, and preached the real myths of the East Continent, telling people that the Four Auspicious Beasts were the guardian gods.

There were no great achievements, but more than one or two people had been rescued by them. The Twelve Zodiacs also received their comfort. The achievements of the leader, Hwang Gildong, were particularly great. He made several plans and killed several yangbans returning to the Hwan Kingdom. He also contributed greatly to the recent resurgence of the black tortoise.

The Cho King trusted the Chivalrous Robbers.

“Um...I can rest assured if it is Hwang Gildong himself.”

It was too dangerous for the Cho King to directly subdue the demons. Demons had different individual abilities and this made it difficult to predict what variables would occur. Above all, the warriors of the Cho Kingdom weren't strong enough to overpower a large number of demons.

On the other hand, Hwang Gildong was a strong person who moved all over the world. The plan to divide the group of demons between two places, the Kaya Kingdom and Pa Kingdom, to isolate them and destroy them one by one, didn't sound like a lie. Maybe he had destroyed the demons already?

It happened the moment the Cho Kingdom had this thought...

“.....?”

The expressions of the Chivalrous Robbers stiffened as they received urgent news from a carrier pigeon.

“What is it?”

The Cho King couldn't bear to ask what had gone wrong. He was worried that the words would become seeds. He was ashamed of such a heart.

“...It says that something went wrong,” the members of the Chivalrous Robbers gave the worst answer, “There is a possibility that the demons will fall into the hands of the yangbans...”

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Agnus was still confident in his skills. His level might've dropped significantly, but Lantier grew intensively. Lantier's fighting power could overwhelm several high rankers alone. Furthermore, Agnus had inherited some of Marbas' power. This nearly doubled the number of minions he could control at once.

Nevertheless, the reason for his constant failure and defeat was simply because the opponents were bad.

Strength was relative.

Faker was too strong. The skill of using the shadow techniques was great enough to pierce the sky and he freely crossed the barrier of blades set by the undead army like he was moving in and out of his own house. Additionally, his net was always spread out because he used the Overgeared Shadows, whose number couldn't be estimated. In many ways, their compatibility was bad.



To add a bit of exaggeration, Faker was as frightening as Grid. However, this didn't mean that the other Overgeared members were weak. It was hard to see any chance of winning in places with the influence of the Overgeared Guild...

Agnus quickly came to such a conclusion. This was why he decided to base his future activities in the East Continent. Agnus needed time to grow. He was determined to stay alive until the moment when Baal hunted down Marbas and exploded his potential. Once he judged that he had grown enough, the first goal he would achieve was:

'I will pull out Chepardea's tongue.'

It was to repay the grudge. Agnus had no intention of just sitting back and watching the humiliation he had suffered from Chepardea over the past few months. The resentment he felt toward Chepardea was much greater than the resentment he felt toward Faker.

It was natural. Faker and the Overgeared Guild were originally Agnus' enemies. In particular, Agnus had antagonized them first. In other words, the humiliation he experienced from Faker and the Overgeared Guild was self-inflicted.

Then what about Chepardea? He was a colleague. It was very rare, but Chepardea once showed a liking toward Agnus. Therefore, Agnus tried. He struggled even more anxiously when he saw Chepardea disappointed in him. He tried his best to prove his qualifications. He might've longed for affection without even realizing it.

In the end, he repeatedly tasted failure. Chepardea's response to him was the worst. Chepardea despised Agnus. The more Agnus failed and the more he struggled, the more Chepardea hated and insulted him. It was an attitude that stimulated Agnus' trauma. It was greatly similar to the group that harassed him in the past and aroused anger.

That's right. Agnus was obsessed with Chepardea. As his years of clinging to the resurrection of his old lover had proved, he could be very obsessive. He could put everything else behind him until he paid back the humiliation to Chepardea. This was why he came to the East Continent and moved carefully in the East Continent.

However, this monster grabbed him by the ankle.

".....!"

Lantier's body suddenly floated in the air. He couldn't bear the weight of Old Sword Demon's sword. He immediately used shadow movements to change his position and appear behind Old Sword Demon, but even that was read. Old Sword Demon's sword smashed Lantier's ribs.

"Do you think I don't know the habits of assassins?"

Old Sword Demon emitted a sharp light from his eyes. It reminded people that at first glance, his essence was an assassin. It was very difficult to deal with the heavy sword suddenly hiding its appearance as it was falling heavily. The sword moving fast in a brilliant manner could also suddenly become a dull sword, causing confusion.

'He picked a strange skill tree.'

At this moment, Agnus realized the biggest advantage of a normal class. A skill tree that was divided according to the 'transfer' selected at every 100 levels. If players made good use of the system, which didn't apply to hidden classes, they could become as special as the monster in front of him.

'Did he strengthen his swordsmanship by picking the trap installation skill tree and getting a correction on his use of tools, rather than the stealth or assassination skill trees?'

Agnus was very interested in the specificity of the swordsmanship used by Old Sword Demon. He thought he should use a variety of skill trees when changing the classes of the skeleton soldiers. It felt like his eyes were opened. He received a clue that would greatly help him grow in the future.

However, now wasn't the time to be happy about it. Agnus' robe was torn apart by Old Sword Demon's wicked touch. It was fortunate. If the robe wasn't torn, his collar would've been caught and he would've been thrown to the ground.

'There are times when being cheap helps.'

One of the weaknesses of Baal's Contractor was their isolation from civilization. There were so many misdeeds that normal social activities were impossible. Agnus was rejected by society over time. Naturally, his authority to use the store disappeared. This meant that Agnus had to use a looting system or rely on transactions with players to purchase certain items.

However, most people loathed Agnus. They didn't easily trade with him. Even if they traded, they demanded an excessive fee. It was a considerable burden for Agnus, who had his commercial activities restricted and had difficulty securing currency. He could use the item trading sites to buy items using cash, but even this was becoming increasingly difficult. He couldn't improve his income through broadcasting like other rankers and had to be self-sufficient through hunting. Yet in recent years, he hadn't been able to hunt properly.

Therefore, Agnus was currently covered in rags. He was equipped with normal and rare items because he couldn't afford to buy new items for his dropped level.

Old Sword Demon didn't like this point about Agnus. "You have hurt so many people, yet you are like this? You are mocking the lives of those who died by making them worthless until the end?!"

"....."

The part he was angry about was subtle. At this point, he felt like making an unreasonable demand. Even so, Agnus didn't dare refute it. The source of this anger came from the loss of loved ones. He knew this mood, so he had no desire to argue.

'Stupid jerk.'

He had reached an irreversible point, but he felt the condemnation of his conscience. Agnus was disgusted with himself and laughed. He was laughing at himself, but Old Sword Demon didn't know this.

Agnus' evil deeds came from his past resentment and hatred. Other people didn't know that even this faded after losing his madness.

"You trash jerk!"

“It is the correct answer.”

Agnus accepted the accusation and used Bentao’s Mockery. It was a deliberate means to overcome the situation, but it was useless. Many of Agnus’ techniques had already been disclosed to the public. The defeats that he had suffered had exposed and weakened him.

Old Sword Demon accurately read the foreshadowing of the skill and counterattacked using a skill invalidation artifact. He crushed the high bridge of Agnus’ nose with his knee before grabbing Agnus’ neck with his rotating leg and slamming Agnus into the ground.

Agnus couldn’t even scream. He could only confirm Old Sword Demon’s sword inserted in his chest using his blurred vision.

\\‘...It is karma.’

He had maintained some of his conscience while suffering from madness, such as rejecting Baal’s quests to kill an unspecified number of people, but it was completely meaningless. The number of casualties that should be in the millions was suppressed to thousands or tens of thousands, but in the end, he was still a murderer.

He couldn’t deny that he had harmed others according to his needs and mood. Every place he went, he had no choice but to face someone who held a grudge against him. If he was going to protect himself from them, he should’ve first abandoned his clumsy conscience.

‘What the hell am I doing?’

What type of person was Agnus? He asked himself this, but he couldn’t give an answer. He used his terrible past to bury deep in his memory that he was a man with a broken but kind heart.

Agnus denied and loathed himself, but he didn’t know how to affirm himself. Just in time, his five seconds of immortality came.

Old Sword Demon maintained a sense of tension. He kept an eye on Agnus while allowing Lantier’s attacks. He held onto the sword inserted in Agnus’ heart like it was a stake. At this moment—

\\“Stop.\\”

In an untimely appearance, several people appeared and surrounded Old Sword Demon. It was the intervention of the yangbans. Old Sword Demon had woven ropes around the demons fleeing while fighting Agnus.

“We will look at that guy.”

Old Sword Demon’s expression crumpled like a piece of paper. Now there was only one second left. Agnus’ immortality was about to end, so Old Sword Demon inserted strength into the hand holding the sword. However, he couldn’t hold on. He was attacked by the yangbans and separated from Agnus.

At the end of the immortality, the yangbans reached out to Agnus.

“Your strength is very interesting. You will have to cooperate with us before we figure out how to take advantage of it...”

The eyes of the yangban who was talking opened wide. The blood that Agnus spewed burst like a firecracker and soaked his face. The shaky gazes of the yangbans caught Old Sword Demon's figure.

"You tend to look at humans too dismissively since a long time ago."

A disaster caused by carelessness. It happened the moment the anger of the yangbans soared into the sky...

"Uwaaak!" Agnus, who was attempting to become an undead to postpone death, failed and threw something up. It was a cold, black bead. At the same time, warning windows emerged in front of Agnus' blurry vision.

[Baal has sensed your death and has withdrawn even the touch of interest he left behind with you.]

[The contract with Baal is forcibly terminated.]

[The class 'Baal's Contractor' is lost.]

[You have lost all the titles, skills, and stats inherited from Baal.]

".....!"

".....!"

The yangbans reached out as if they were competing. It completely drew the interest of not only Old Sword Demon, but also the captured demons. It was understandable. It was because the black bead in Old Sword Demon's view was 'Baal's Power Fragment.'

'There is such a blunder.'

Old Sword Demon didn't know exactly what was going on, but he instinctively felt it. The fact that this bead shouldn't fall into the hands of the yangbans. Nevertheless, there was nothing he could do.

[You have died.]

It was because he was already dead.

Agnus, Old Sword Demon who died in vain, and the yangbans who were fighting like anglers...

A dark shadow covered the comedy-like spectacle. It was due to a pair of wings huge enough to cover the sky. It was the ultimate transcendent species, a dragon.

## **Chapter 1558**

"What? On the first night of my honeymoon, you ran to another woman and proposed? Is this real...? Isn't it like garbage from an affair movie?"

Vantner was straightforward. He didn't hesitate to scold his friend's transgressions. It was an attitude that came from goodwill. He was inclined to give attention and a strong warning so that his friend didn't go wrong from violating morality. This was what Grid liked.

"I couldn't sit back and watch Mers be sad. Basara also told me to go to Mers first."

Basara was much older than Grid. She was from the imperial family and a duke who ascended to the rank of empress with the will of the former emperor. She cared for all her people. She had very deep thoughts and had an excellent ability to read the situation. She read Mercedes' grief at the wedding venue and inferred Mercedes' relationship with Grid. She weighed the situation where the two of them got married or couldn't get married, and considered the best choice.

In order to breed the seeds of unity, she raised the issue with Grid. She asked Grid to go to Mercedes. She encouraged the love of the two to come to fruition.

"I think people's relationships and feelings should be a springboard, not a stumbling block."

This was what Basara said that night. She was wise and explained the importance of relationships, and this resonated with Grid. Before Mercedes' heart could fall into an uncontrollable abyss, he ran and caught her.

"Um... Mercedes was sad. Basara understood... then there is no problem... right?"

Vantner heard the explanation and had a subtle expression as he was convinced.

"Thinking positively... I'm glad that you have a sense of responsibility. Every time he meets a new lover, Pon will abandon his former lover."

"It is rude to compare me with Pon. I'm not a flirt."

"....."

It happened as his colleagues were looking at Grid with expressions of absurdity...

Grid's line of sight tilted. His clear eyes stayed at the opposite window behind his colleagues. After a few seconds, Faker's posture in the shadow shook slightly. A few seconds after that...

"What type of monsters are these...?"

Katz was agitated. His face turned white and the atmosphere became turbulent.

"Is it an invasion?"

Grid restrained the nervous Overgeared members who were arming themselves. "No, they are guests. Don't worry about it."

Grid's combination of Transcend and Shunpo was now as natural as flowing water. He had enough stamina that he wouldn't get tired even if he used it several times in a row. He calmed down his colleagues and moved out the window, flying over the spires. He also pulled down the mass of Greed above his head and used one of his powers. Greed spread out like a tent to wrap around the surroundings, enclosing the space.

"Have you been well?"

Shortly after, two people arrived. There was Biban of the Tower of Wisdom and the other tower member—

"Hello." It was Betty. Unlike Biban, Betty's outings weren't common, so Grid felt some uneasiness.

“What brings the two of you here...?”

“Baal’s Contractor of this era will lose his qualifications.” Betty was different from Biban. There were no distractions around her, so she immediately revealed her business. The contents were shocking.

“It is very serious since Baal’s power mixed in the contractor’s soul will be released and leaked.”

“Baal’s power is the source of all evil. It will seduce witnesses with strong power and malice. In particular, dragons.”

“I think Baal designed it like this intentionally.”

“The power to attract dragons...”

“Yes, when Granny Betty lost her power, Nevertan and Bunhelier flew in. It was unlucky. This incident occurred close to the lairs of those two dragons. Even if I say it is close, it was still hundreds of kilometers away.”

“There is a high possibility that the dragons will also intervene in this incident. It has to be stopped. If a dragon gains Baal’s power, a second evil dragon will be born.”

“.....”

Grid’s heart sank.

Ultimate beings with transcendence—in particular, it was difficult to guess the strength of the dragons that had existed from the beginning. It was only by abandoning the common sense accumulated previously and adding imagination that he could vaguely grasp the outline. He couldn’t hide his tension at the suggestion that he could face them directly.

“In other words, the tower should be responsible for this incident, but there happens to be a problem. Granny Betty detected that the current contractor is on the East Continent. It isn’t our jurisdiction.”

“If the tower members attempt to move between continents, the problem would become serious. We will inevitably show some signs and will be chased by dragons.”

“Every dragon in the world will notice and aim for Baal’s power, which has currently only been detected and targeted by the dragons in the east. In the aftermath, the East Continent will perish.”

“So, Grid, you should go to the east on our behalf. Be sure to destroy that power before someone obtains it and exploits it.”

[A Pioneer quest has occurred!]

[Destroy Baal’s Power Fragment]

[Difficulty: Unable to be measured.]

Betty has watched the Baal’s Contractor of this era and predicts that he will soon lose his qualifications. Destroy the fragment of Baal’s power that will be leaked at this time so that it doesn’t fall into someone else’s hands.

Quest Clear Conditions: Destroy the fragment of Baal’s power.

Quest Clear Rewards: Betty's gift. Affinity with Betty will increase.

Quest Failure Condition: Another person obtains the fragment of Baal's power.

Quest Failure Result: A new strong enemy that has absorbed Baal's power will emerge. There is a high probability of massive damage to the East Continent.]

[Would you like to accept the quest?]

It was ominous just from the difficulty level. In the first place, it was a quest that was likely to involve dragons. It was clear that it wouldn't be easy to resolve. The good news was that there would be no damage done to Grid individually if the quest failed, but this wasn't a comfort at all.

The people of Cho and Xing—he was already heavy-hearted when thinking about all the soldiers and their families who participated in and helped with the Great Human and Demon War.

“Is this something I can resolve...?”

It would be hard—even if he received such an answer, Grid would accept the quest. He didn't want the East Continent to become a ruin. The answer that came back was surprisingly hopeful.

“It is hard, but I think it is possible. I wouldn't have asked you if you couldn't handle it.”

“Grid, you know that the East Continent is the land of the gods. In the past, the Four Auspicious Beasts existed as guardian gods and exerted influence on all things. Now the expelled gods and the yangbans are directly intervening in the situation. Compared to this place, the flow of magic power is relatively limited due to the overflow of divine power.”

“It means the land is inappropriate to be used as a base by dragons, the masters of magic. This means the dragons in the east are actually close to ‘hidden losers.’ It is very likely that it has a large wound. It is relatively common for dragons to compete over lair locations and this happens once every few hundred years.”

Certainly, the words ‘hidden loser’ were appropriate. It was because the people of the east had never mentioned the existence of dragons. The only dragon they talked about was the blue dragon, who was one of the Four Auspicious Beasts.

Grid's expression became noticeably brighter.

‘A dragon that is wounded and hid itself... it is possible to discuss the odds of winning.’

It was a chance to get dragon bones and scales. Biban continued speaking as Grid clenched his fists and was delighted, “It is similar to Gujel when we hunted him. Don't try to overdo it. Even if you can't kill it, I'm sure you can drive it away.”

“.....”

Grid's jubilant expression stiffened again. The power gathered to hunt Gujel was all the tower members, including Hayate. It meant it was impossible for Grid to hunt it alone. Obtaining the dragon scales and bones became very distant...

Betty added a further warning, "That is before the dragon gets its hands on the power fragment. It will become incomparably powerful and uncontrollable if it gets the power fragment. Then give up and come back. We'll take care of it."

"...Yes." There was no further conversation. Time was short. Grid immediately left for the East Continent while the tower members saw him off from a distance.

Biban sighed and stared at Betty somewhat resentfully. "Granny, I'm disappointed. Why did you stand idly by and watch Agnus leave for the East Continent? If you had killed him yourself and made him lose his disqualification on this land, we wouldn't have needed to ask for help from Grid."

Biban shut his mouth.

Why did Baal's Contractor have to sign with Baal and why did he lose his qualifications...? He understood it by recalling Betty's past, which he heard from Fronzaltz one day in the past.

A bitter smile appeared on Betty's usually always expressionless face. "I'm sorry. I hesitated because I felt sorry for him. It is all my fault. I'll take responsibility and be punished."

"...I am also sorry."

Biban's body trembled. He noticed Betty's determination and felt anger and sadness.

'Grid, please...'

Biban's heart was eager as he looked at the remnants of the Mass Teleport Grid used to disappear.

'Please create a miracle again this time... take care of the people of the east and this poor granny...'

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[Someone is praying to you.]

This was the most common notification window after opening the prayer stat. It flashed and disappeared from a corner of his vision, giving Grid great courage.

'They must be people praying for me on this land.'

At the East Continent...

The gentle air was completely different from what he was breathing just a moment ago. The wind blew the fragrance of pine needles. His head cleared.

'Hurry.'

Usually, he would first visit the Cho King to say hello when coming to the East Continent, but he couldn't afford it today. Grid immediately moved toward his destination. He used Shunpo in succession.

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At Kaya...



Old Sword Demon died without knowing what happened and immediately revived. He was glad that his place of death and the resurrection point were the same. This allowed him to determine the cause of death.

“What is this...?”

Old Sword Demon doubted the sight unfolding in the city below the shrine.

A huge dragon was on the rampage. It was completely different from the blue dragon, one of the symbols of the East Continent. Their body was large and it had wings. It breathed out fire every time it opened its mouth and its expression was very vicious.

“A dragon...”

Why did the strongest monster of the West Continent appear in this far eastern land? Old Sword Demon naturally suspected Agnus. He was forced to interpret it as Agnus bringing the monster here.

A light flashed at the shrine behind him. It was a sign that a player had been resurrected. Old Sword Demon looked back only for his eyes to widen.

“Agnus, you!

“It has been a long time since I’ve been resurrected on the surface.”

Agnus was resurrected in hell every time he died. It was a type of penalty and one of the inconveniences that Baal’s Contractor received. Yet at this moment, he was liberated from it. There was no designated resurrection point, so he resurrected at the nearest resurrection base. He thought it was a convenient feature.

“What is that dragon? How many people do you have to hurt to make you feel better?”

“I don’t know that guy.”

After a few years, Agnus had returned to being an ordinary necromancer. His eyes, which regained tranquility proportional to the sharp decline in combat power, shone as sharply as before. His green hair reminded people of his early years when he was notorious.

“The yangbans are dying easily. A dragon... it is as awesome as rumored.”

“Dammit! This isn’t the time to marvel! The city is going to be destroyed!”

Agnus really didn’t have anything to do with the dragon. Old Sword Demon first put aside his hatred for Agnus. He calculated the timing to step out while nervously looking at the people running away in confusion.

Agnus asked him, “Do you want to save people?”

“Are you trying to mock me? That’s right! I want to save them! You easily hurt people, so you don’t understand, but I...! We...!”

The years he spent with Hwang Gildong passed by through his mind. How many people did he try to save and how many people he couldn’t save...

He wouldn't be able to save them again this time.

Old Sword Demon was holding his face with frustration when Agnus strode past Old Sword Demon. "If you want to save people, it is better to help the yangbans."

"What...?"

"That dragon covets Baal's power. If that is taken by it, the city will become dust without any time to save people. First of all, work together and help the yangbans. Then find an opportunity to destroy Baal's power."

"Haha...? Look at this guy? You want to fight with me now? You are going to help people? Who will believe your words? You are just using a trick to eat Baal's power again."

"It doesn't matter if you believe it or not. In the future, I will only do what I want to do."

It felt like Agnus' shackles were broken. In retrospect, it was Baal's Contractor, the only thing he believed in and relied on, that was actually the darkness that pushed him into a greater abyss.

"Enter the shadows, Lantier."

[Your death knight Lantier isn't responding. You don't have the authority.]

"Raise your sword, Cao."

[Your death knight Cao isn't responding. You don't have the authority.]

Nobody responded to the call. He lost his connection to the beings he had gained during his days as Baal's Contractor. The sudden solitude that made his heart throb was exposed to the cold air. Even so, Agnus proceeded firmly.

"The poor dead, reflect on your resentment."

Dozens of undead appeared around the advancing Agnus. They were insignificant skeleton soldiers holding rusty iron swords and bows. They were the default minions of a necromancer. Agnus didn't care. He reached out and pulled a weapon out of his inventory. He armed himself with the old staff used in the past that felt very far away. "I will start over."

"You...?" Old Sword Demon's eyes widened as he stared blankly at Agnus' back. Agnus' upper body, revealed through the flapping robe, had no skin or flesh. His bones and organs were nakedly exposed and he looked more hideous and shabby than the skeleton soldiers standing beside him.

It wasn't easy for most people to handle, but Agnus' expression didn't waver. He was much calmer and more powerful than before his death to Old Sword Demon. He could feel heat from the gold eyes that looked as cold as metal and it made Old Sword Demon feel strange.

## **Chapter 1559**

Feel me. See me, covet me, swallow me, and make me yours.

The will of the dark orb was amplified over and over again. The yangbans and demons on the field were instantly fascinated. They forgot the past and present, losing themselves as they started to obsess over

the future proposed by the bead. They were convinced that their future after swallowing the bead would be great. It was based on the enormous energy contained in the bead.

'I will be sure to take first place in the next trials with that power.'

'There will be no need for the worship of humans. That thing. The moment I get my hands on it, I will become a god.'

'I will return to hell and wear a crown.'

'I will get revenge. I will surely get revenge...'

Baal's fragment of power was like a furnace. It captured the desires and resentment of all living things around it.

In the surge of heat, reason and knowledge were killed. Both the yangbans and demons howled like beasts. They didn't realize that their hands extending toward the bead were digging through the brains of their colleagues. They didn't feel that their eyeballs looking at the bead were being pulled out by the colleagues' hands.

Everything was insignificant in front of the bead. They only desired the bead without recognizing anything other than the bead.

Kurarararara!

Bones and flesh melted from the flames being fired by the dragon in the sky. However, no one cared about her. On the ground that had turned into a sea of fire, the demons and yangbans seemed to be dancing. It seemed like a bizarre hell.

"They are crazy." Old Sword Demon sighed. The spirit of the world was broken. He couldn't figure out what to do first in this frightening and confusing situation.

Kyaaaak!

Agnus' skeleton soldiers were plunging into the flames. Agnus, who was watching those being killed in vain, spoke to him, "Three seconds after the flames are formed, the damage coefficient will sharply decrease. Remember the sequence of flames and move."

Step.

Agnus threw himself into the roaring barrier of fire. It seemed right that he would turn to ashes, but he crossed it unharmed. Old Sword Demon chased after him while clicking his tongue.

'What am I doing with this guy?'

He didn't like the situation.

The flames that spread like waves and formed a labyrinth, the heat of the crazy people that was as hot as flames, the back of the dragon standing tall like a mountain, Agnus calmly watching the sight, and the destruction that seemed unavoidable...

There was only despair. Old Sword Demon was frustrated, but he moved forward. He attacked the flames in the way that Agnus suggested and gave a helping hand to the people trapped in the labyrinth. Before he knew it, his body was covered with burns. He repeatedly burned his body to rescue the people threatened by flames that hadn't yet weakened.

"Laugh if you want to laugh. I won't blink even if you mock me!" Old Sword Demon made eye contact with Agnus and roared.

He was enduring the burning pain from his hands that stretched out to a boy. The isolated boy couldn't hold his hand and was becoming ashes when Agnus approached the boy's side.

"Stay still."

He didn't take off the boy's robe with fireballs stuck to it. Rather, he embraced it and grabbed the boy, pulling the boy out carefully so that the boy wasn't alarmed.

"Thank you...!"

The tearful boy relied on Agnus. It was because he didn't know that Agnus was a murderer who couldn't wash away his sins even if he saved a million more people in the future. The boy didn't see Agnus' ugly body hidden in the burning robe.

"...Disgusting guy," Old Sword Demon frowned and criticized Agnus. It wasn't until he lost his strength that he took up the pretense of good will. It was so ridiculous that Old Sword Demon scoffed.

"It is no use thinking about saving yourself until you regain your strength. Your past will never be washed away no matter what tricks you try in the future. Everyone will just remember your misdeeds and hate you forever."

"Where are your parents?"

Agnus didn't confront Old Sword Demon's criticisms that were close to a curse. He only questioned the boy and the boy answered with difficulty.

"They passed away a few years ago..."

"I might've been the one who killed them."

".....?"

Agnus took his eyes off the boy who didn't understand him and made eye contact with Old Sword Demon.

"I don't think I can erase my past. I don't intend to ask anyone for forgiveness, nor do I intend to be a good person."

It was closer to a grumble than a pledge.

"I'm simply going to live as I please, while doing the things I want to do."

They were grumpy words that had no sense of responsibility and induced a feeling of disgust. Old Sword Demon was finding this attitude disgusting when he suddenly had a thought. He didn't feel disgusted

when Agnus saved the child just now. It meant that Old Sword Demon wouldn't have liked it no matter what Agnus said.

Yes, it was an irreparable relationship. Consuming his emotions in relation to Agnus was a luxury in itself.

Just ignore it. For now, it was right to focus on the situation.

'He is trash rolling around on the side of the road. A dog's poop. There is no need to pay attention to him...'

Old Sword Demon's focus was incredible after he regained his mind. He quickly rescued people from the labyrinth of flames and drew the attention of the dragon as she gradually approached the bead. He utilized an assassin's trap installation skills and the effects of the traps were endless depending on their form. At first glance, he seemed like an all-rounder.

'It is a skill that has been practiced for more than a year or two.'

The poor condition of the dragon also played a major role. The blood that was mixed in every time she breathed out fire indicated her internal injuries.

'This fire isn't a Breath.'

Most people mistook a dragon's Breath for elemental magic. It was because a Breath had attributes. In fact, a Breath was more like a pure mass of magic power. The overlaid attributes were an additional factor and it specialized in causing abnormal statuses. The actual damage was true damage proportional to the amount of magic power. It meant that all types of resistances and tolerances were useless.

If the dragon called Ifrit had overused Breath, the yangbans on the field might've been wiped out. However, she was currently unable to shoot a Breath and was just breathing out. Even that was accompanied by blood.

Agnus was certain.

'Her judgment is blurred... the odds are good enough.'

Agnus' purpose wasn't to kill the dragon. It was impossible in the first place. It was common sense that players couldn't threaten dragons. It was the result of the information and knowledge that Agnus had accumulated so far. Agnus made destroying the fragment of Baal's power his top priority. That was the best he could do now.

Kurarararara!

The fragment of Baal's power was basically bonds of demonic energy. It was why the yangbans couldn't easily narrow the distance and the secret behind Old Sword Demon's traps utilizing artifacts with black magic attracting the dragon's attention. The yangbans and dragon were blinded by the power fragment and had become very simple. It was possible to buy time by distracting them using energy similar to the power fragment.

Meanwhile, Agnus was a necromancer. The undead he summoned basically had evil influences and demonic energy. It was possible to confuse them with amplified demonic energy if he used Corpse Explosion. The skeleton soldiers exploded everywhere and blinded the yangbans and dragon. They forgot

the location of the bead they were chasing a while ago and wandered in a completely different direction.

However, the demons were different. They had good compatibility with demonic energy. They were already close to the bead from the beginning and weren't easily deceived.

"Um...!" Old Sword Demon showed nervousness. He feared that the fragment of power would fall into the hands of a demon and attempted to break through the flames.

Agnus stopped him. "You can ignore them."

The reason was quickly known.

Kyaaaack!

The fragment of power rejected the demons. It swallowed those who came near it in reverse and increased its energy. The demons disappeared in vain.

"Baal wants a fun toy," black magic power started to flutter around Agnus as he spoke in a cynical manner. It was the aftermath of taking out one of the few powers remaining in his rune. He emitted demonic energy and became the target of the dragon and yangbans.

"It is now. Go and smash the fragment."

".....!"

Old Sword Demon belatedly noticed. The flames that filled his vision were fading. The shortest path to the power fragment was opened. Most of the breaths that the dragon belatedly fired were surrounding Agnus. It was a situation created by Agnus using Corpse Explosion.

Kurarararara!

"Give it to me! It is mine!"

The dragon's breath and the yangbans flooded toward Agnus. Old Sword Demon noticed this was his last chance and rushed forward. He felt the end of Agnus behind him as he stabbed with all his strength toward the power fragment.

A powerful shockwave occurred. Old Sword Demon's sword penetrated the bead little by little, slowly but steadily. Nevertheless, it was lacking. At some point, it was blocked by a wall. A blow containing all his power was blocked by the bead, which contained only a small fragment of Baal's power.

"Kuock...!" Old Sword Demon gritted his teeth as his body trembled. He squeezed out all his strength to push the sword even a little bit further into the bead. However, it was useless.

"...Ah."

I messed it up. I failed because I am lacking. This city will be destroyed.

A voice entered the ears of the frustrated Old Sword Demon, "I ruined it because I couldn't hold on."

It was Agnus' voice. It was a fragmented voice. They were the last words Agnus would leave before his death. He seemed to be comforting Old Sword Demon. He seemed to be apologizing for not buying enough time. It was hard to believe.

Old Sword Demon laughed at the absurdity while Agnus' vision turned gray.

'I wanted to deal a blow...'

To the one who abandoned me.

I wanted to give you a taste of regret.

Yet in the end, I couldn't do anything.

I just reinforced the fact that I am worthless.

'I have... I really don't have any value...'

Agnus had dreamed of a fresh start just a few dozen minutes ago. His eyes, which were heated up for the first time since the death of his former lover, once again lost their light and cooled down. His mental strength couldn't be intact. It hurt too much to keep his heart firm and his mind straight. It was a sandcastle. It was destined to be scattered in a fleeting manner.

Then at this moment, his fate changed.

"No, you didn't ruin it. I honestly don't know what is going on, but thank you for holding on. Really," a voice came from above his head.

Agnus felt that the voice that spoke while breathing roughly was different from usual. It wasn't uncomfortable or unpleasant. Envy, jealousy, and a sense of inferiority didn't rise. Rather, the feeling of frustration in his chest was pierced in a refreshing manner. His cold heart started to run hot again. Emotions swelled.

"...It is like this."

[You have died.]

It happened the moment his gray vision finally turned dark...

A smile spread on Agnus' face as he was covered with the blood spilled by the dragon. It was a smile that showed happiness because he regained the longing he had forgotten for a long time.

"No, what...?"

Old Sword Demon was speechless. This recent disaster occurred due to an accident. It happened when he accidentally killed Agnus, who was hiding on the East Continent. It was basically impossible for someone to foresee the situation in advance and run over to help.

Yet Grid did it. He appeared on the scene at the moment of desperate crisis like he had been waiting. At this point, it was a development like a manhwa or novel. The situation seemed miraculous to Old Sword Demon, who didn't know about the Tower of Wisdom, Betty, the Pioneer, and so on.

On the other hand, it was inevitable for Grid. He knew it was a must-happen event. He bore the responsibility that should be resolved.

"Please protect the fragment," Grid cut the dragon's long neck and spoke while standing with his back to Old Sword Demon.

He analyzed the situation based on the scene and observed hope.

Today, I am ready to kill a dragon.

A stormy fire engulfed the hellish landscape.

## **Chapter 1560**

Satisfy didn't easily discuss limits. The clear evidence was that players could become a myth. A player's potential to repeat resurrections and reach transcendence was infinite.

However, killing a dragon was impossible. First of all, the absolute defense was a problem. As the name suggested, it was a concept that was close to invincibility. Dragons received only 1 damage no matter the form of attack. Even the power of true damage was halved. It was right to assert the claim 'it can never be killed.'

Of course, Grid was the holder of the Hero King and Dragon Slayer? titles. He thoroughly neutralized a dragon's absolute defense. Yet he was more afraid of dragons than anyone else. It was because he realized the strength of a dragon through the words of the tower members and he also clearly remembered the stats of Bunhelier that he witnessed in the National Competition.

99,999—Bunhelier had reached 100,000 for each stat except for agility and intelligence. This meant that just one of Bunhelier's stats was significantly higher than the total number of Grid's combat-related stats. It was in a completely different weight class.

Grid was only an ogre in front of the dragon. Just as an ogre couldn't deal any damage to Grid with its club, it was impossible for Grid to deal big damage even if he ignored Bunhelier's absolute defense and attacked.

'...An ogre is too much. Let's go with an ogre lord.'

In any case, Grid could never win against Bunhelier. However, there was something to consider here. Bunhelier was one of the dragons that had existed since the beginning. He was particularly special and powerful among the dragons.

On the other hand, Ifrit wasn't an old dragon. Even the name was being heard for the first time. The size was at least two heads smaller compared to Bunhelier. It was clear that the stats would be far inferior. Furthermore, she was critically injured. Every time she let out a breath, she shed blood from her mouth and nose.

Based on Biban's speculation that she had fled and hid after fighting for territory with another dragon, it meant she was one of those who were beaten by fire dragon Trauka and ran away. She was weak and couldn't be compared to an old dragon.

'This isn't a hatchling.'



She was much larger compared to Nefelina. She was not an opponent that could be considered easy. Even so, Grid saw a chance of winning. The biggest basis was that Ifrit had lost her sense of reason. Baal's power fragment might exude a sweetness that deceived a dragon, but it didn't make sense that she was like a beast that didn't know anything.

Dragons were lords of magic. Putting aside their ferocious and selfish nature, they were wise. There were definitely many dragons who acted emotionally like Trauka, the fire dragon who was angered by Braham's theft, or Nevartan, who fell into Baal's trap and became an insane dragon, but most dragons were as cool-headed as the gourmet dragon Raiders. This was even if their way of thinking was twisted.

'The complete loss of reason means she is on the defensive.'

I can kill her.No, I have to kill her.

It was a great opportunity to get his hands on the Dragon Slayer qualifications.

'I have to be strong. That's the only way I can fight Baal.'

Baal was such a transcendent being that he could fight an old dragon. He was a direct descendent of the god of the beginning, Yatan, so he would have many strengths apart from pure force. It could be seen that his power was close to infinity just by looking at his skill to make humanity think of Yatan as an evil god and his distortion of hell. The dragon was obsessed with the fragment of Baal's power because she knew this.

Grid activated Storm of the Fire God.

"Please protect the fragment," he requested Old Sword Demon, who was behind him.

Old Sword Demon was astonished.

'This...'

The whole city was engulfed in fire. All the people were in a crisis and only a handful of people were rescued by Old Sword Demon. He did so by sacrificing himself and enduring great wounds. He felt a terrible sense of helplessness. Yet the moment Grid created a red storm, all the people were saved. The uncontrollably growing fire was extinguished and the new flames that appeared warmly enveloped and healed the wounded.

Old Sword Demon shook. He thought of the mental world of Hwang Gildong that he experienced in the past. Hwang Gildong's mental world that used hundreds of clones and thousands of clouds to isolate the yangbans was invincible. However, Grid's mental world at this moment felt much more powerful. It was hard to believe.

Willpower was a separate force from strength. It must be accumulated and polished with time. It was impossible for the willpower of a player to exceed the willpower of a transcendent named NPC, who had lived for hundreds of years. Yet at this moment, Grid was superior. This was different from the realm of talent. It meant that the 'experience' accumulated by Grid had surpassed Hwang Gildong's experience over the years.

'How many events and trials have you been through?'

Additionally, how many hardships had he overcome? Old Sword Demon couldn't hastily guess. He just nodded vigorously while looking at Grid's back with an envious gaze.

"I understand. I'll protect it somehow."

In fact, Old Sword Demon was going to refuse. The main culprit behind the current situation was the bead. To calm the situation, the bead had to be destroyed. Meanwhile, Grid planned to be raiding the dragon while using the bead as bait. It was a dangerous plan. If he failed and the dragon obtained the bead, the consequences would be terrible. It was right to stop it.

However, Old Sword Demon decided to trust Grid. As if in response to that trust—

Grid used Freely Move to cross the battlefield. He stabbed and slashed at the yangbans who were rushing toward the bead and quickly reached Ifrit. It combined with the theme song that made the heart feel grand and seemed like a scene produced in a movie.

'Maybe...'

Maybe a miracle would really happen today. Perhaps it would be the birth of a Dragon Slayer, who he believed couldn't exist. Old Sword Demon was looking forward to it as he watched the two swords held by Grid move like flashes of light.

Kiyaaaaaack!

The heaven and earth were turbulent. Ifrit cried out strangely and struggled as she was slashed by Grid's two swords that moved like lightning. The land received the weight of hundreds of tons and collapsed like a tsunami had occurred. Hundreds of rocks poured like bullets toward the heads of the fleeing people.

"Keuk...!"

Old Sword Demon's expression crumpled as he was admiring Grid's skill. He had to protect the bead. He was distressed that he couldn't help the people who were in a crisis. He was desperate, but there was no need for him to suffer.

Flash!

The God Hands flew toward the people and instantly transformed into magic machines. Dozens of Raiders armed with black armor blocked the falling rocks with their bodies, turning the rocks into powder. Subsequently...

Click!Clink!

They pulled out big spears. They crossed a distance of hundreds of meters with one step and rushed toward Ifrit.

Kiyaaaaaah!

Ifrit cried out again.

Gujel's Dao, which came from a killed dragon, and the Fire Dragon Sword, which had already cut the enemy dozens of times, cooperated with the attack from dozens of Raiders and forced the dragon to start bleeding.

Chiiiiik!

".....?!"

Ifrit's blood corroded Grid's armor. It penetrated his skin, melted his bones, and evaporated his blood. However, the reason Grid was flustered wasn't due to the unexpected counterattack. It was due to the noticeable decrease in Ifrit's health gauge. The five fusion sword dance might've been triggered three times in a row, but the dragon had already started to die. It was strange even considering that Ifrit had been seriously injured.

'Why?'

Of course, Grid was strong. In particular, his offensive power was strong and this allowed him to defeat the 4th Great Demon within minutes. It was just unreasonable to compare a dragon and Gamigin on the same scale.

'Something is wrong.'

It happened the moment Grid realized this...

Kiyaaaaaah!

The dozens of Raiders pulled back their arms and stabbed their spears to turn Ifrit into a hedgehog. The giant body stuck with spears turned into a chunk of flesh and collapsed.

A chill went down Grid's spine. It was because Ifrit's body started flashing transparently and she gradually became less substantive. It was like Grid was looking at a hologram.

"Wrap yourself around...!"

The Raiders immediately responded to Grid's urgent order. They threw themselves instantly and wrapped around Ifrit. Grid used Shunpo to move to Old Sword Demon's side. He didn't hesitate to stab his sword at the fragment of power that he had asked Old Sword Demon to protect. It was too late.

Ifrit exploded. It was a powerful explosion that blew up the dozens of Raiders wrapped around her.

Grid's ears became deaf. The world seemed to be submerged in silence. On the other hand, the sight of the city's buildings turning into ashes and scattering was clearly imprinted on his eyes.

".....!!"

He could see Old Sword Demon shouting something. However, Old Sword Demon quickly moved away. His shocked body was swept through the air and eventually blown outside the city. Grid's situation was similar. He was pushed back a few steps. It was while holding the sword that he had aimed at the bead.

The bead seemed far away from him. The appearance of it standing still without being swept away by the explosion was very annoying. He had the illusion of Baal's laughter ringing in his ears.

[How dare someone who can't even live for a split second...]

A voice pierced his damaged hearing. It was a voice with tremendous transcendence. It seemed to be heard from the very distant sky, right by his side, underground, or from behind him. It was impossible to identify the location.

Grid intuitively knew it. This was the real Ifrit.

There was a creepy pressure as night came. Grid looked up and saw a dragon coming down close to him. She filled Grid's entire vision as she approached the ground. It was an intentional action. She knew how to use his huge body to intimidate others.

[My illusion might not deal as much damage as I do, but... I didn't know you would push me to the point where I would self-destruct...]

The remnants of the illusion that had exploded a while ago slowly flew toward the main body and was absorbed. Ifrit's red scales developed a clearer color and flames spread from her feet as she landed on the ground. It was the unfolding of a domain. The status she had accumulated over the years was as powerful as she was. The Storm of the Fire God that entered Ifrit's domain was destroyed.

Grid broke out in a cold sweat. 'I was too arrogant.'

He should've doubted the situation. He should've crushed the bead instead of being greedy.

'Now that this has happened, I need to summon the apostles to have a chance of winning.'

He was afraid his apostles would be in danger, but it was impossible to break the bead alone. Ifrit's face arrived right in front of Grid's nose as he was caught in belated regret. Every scale on her long neck was as sharp as a sword.

[...I see, it is you.]

".....?"

Ifrit's killing intent, which caused all types of abnormal conditions, subsided like it had been a lie. Grid found it impossible to read the dragon's expression, but he could glimpse the interest in the dragon's eyes.

[Power that transcends time... you are the Overgeared God.]

"I... You know me?"

[All things are spreading your story. How can I not know you? It is just right. Me and you...]

Ifrit's eyes shook.

"What tyranny is this on Hanul's land?"

Pungsa, Usa, and Unsa—the three masters who served Hanul descended on golden clouds. They were escorted by Mir, who held the Blue Dragon Dao in one of his hands.

That's right. This was the East continent. It was even Kaya. It was the realm of the expelled gods. There was no way they wouldn't have noticed this uproar. The scale of the disturbance was too large.

Ifrit made an unexpected suggestion to the panicked Grid, [Choose. Will you help me absorb Baal's power fragment or make new weapons from my bones, skin, and blood?]

"What is this...?"

[I don't have time to convince you, so let's just do this.]

".....!"

Grid's eyes widened. It was because Ifrit tore off one of her arms and threw it at Grid.

[You should know. Killing a dragon is a curse that will grab at your ankle. The only Dragon Slayer in the world is still hiding from us. It is better for you to abandon your obsession and cooperate with me now.]

[An unexpected quest has occurred!]

[Make a dragon weapon in the next 30 minutes! If you fail, you will lose your life!]

"No, what are you saying...?"

It was an absurd development. Grid pulled out a portable furnace while clicking his tongue. The penalty of 'no space movement' occurred when the three masters started to chant certain spells. The effect was enormous since it was created with the cooperation of the three gods. Not only did his return scroll fail, but Shunpo also failed. It became impossible to flee or summon the apostles. It was also questionable whether the emergency escape system would work properly.

Now he had to trust Ifrit.

'This is also an opportunity to get a dragon weapon for free.'

The remark that killing a dragon was a curse was also reliable. If he thought about it currently, the losses were greater than the gains if the current Grid became a Dragon Slayer. Wasn't there the incident where Hayate turned the epic that was Grid's declaration of war on the dragons into secret words?

'Calm down first and think about the situation.' Grid breathed in deeply.

Then the portable fire suddenly lit up with fire. Heat equivalent to a super large furnace had occurred. It was thanks to Ifrit's breath. Any further hesitation was useless.

Grid peeled the skin off Ifrit's arm. After cutting off the flesh, he threw the bones and claws into the furnace.