

Overgeared 161

Chapter 161

Seoul Olympic Stadium was opened in 1984 and expanded in 20XX, becoming the world's fifth largest stadium that could accommodate a total of 198,000 spectators.

Currently, this huge arena was filled with many people from all over the world.

『 The opening of the First Satisfy National Competition, which the world has known about for two months, is starting in South Korea. 』

『 The criteria for selecting the participating countries is a 'country with more than 10 top players in the National Competition related quests.' So, it has been decided that 17 countries will participate in the First National Competition. 』

『 A total of 13 users are participating for each country. The team consists of 10 main players and 3 candidates. 』

『 There is a total of 221 athletes participating in the National Competition with an average level of 213, and most of the participants are within the top 500 rankings. However, it is known that some players who showed an outstanding performance in certain events are general level 100 users, not rankers. Reporter Braum is focused on the players, so let's go there together. 』

『 The 221 players from 17 countries will compete intensively in nine categories over the next five days. These categories are PvP, boss raid, labyrinth breakthrough, production competition, pet marathon, siege, target processing, sword drawing and treasure hunting... 』

『 21 of the top 50 users are participating in this competition. This is an unprecedented number of ranker participation, so it's good news for many fans. 』

『 People are disappointed that Kraugel, the no. 1 user, isn't participating, but all of the top five users except for Kraugel are participating. Many people are looking forward to seeing four of the top five in one place. 』

『 Experts predict that the United States will be the champion of the First National Competition. Among the 17 participating countries, the average level of the United States users is overwhelmingly high. With six players in the top 20 of the unified rankings, it is anticipated that they will acquire medals in all fields without much difficulty. After that, it is expected that it will be Britain and China. However, the country that Pagma's Descendant belongs to will be a variable... 』

『 Our Japan is aiming to enter the top five in this competition. On the other hand, the host country, South Korea, is expected to be at the bottom, since their team is very thin except for Yura. 』

『 It is a miracle that South Korea is included, since the criteria is having 10 top players in the quests related to the National Competition. It seems they are participating as the host country. 』

The major broadcasting companies from each country had been talking about the First Satisfy National Competition for the last few days. The hundreds of broadcasting stations were smiling widely.

The ratings were higher than expected. It was a level where the audience ratings were well beyond the Olympics and World Cup, since people these days were mainly interested in Satisfy. Then the players of the 17 participating countries entered Seoul Olympic Stadium.

'A country of Taekwondo...!'

The blond man on the British team was Regas. In his teens to early 20s, he became a British national Taekwondo player and always longed to go to Korea. He wanted to see the East, who had created the spirit of Taekwondo. He never had a chance and now he was 26 years old, so he was happy about finally visiting South Korea.

Meanwhile, Jishuka belonged to the Brazilian team and she was constantly staring at the South Korea team.

She was looking for Grid.

She was too busy with managing the guild and leveling up to participate in the competition. She wasn't standing here because of the Brazilian government's urgent request, but because she wanted to meet Grid. She wanted to meet the man who made her heart pound for the first time. But no matter how she looked, she couldn't see him in the Korean national team.

'Isn't his name on the participant's list? Surely I didn't come all the way to South Korea only to not meet him?'

And a Spanish player. Pon raised his fingers and received an oath as a representative of the users.

'I'm sorry to hear that Kraugel isn't participating... Then I will test my current skills against Zibal.'

For the past four months, the Tzedakah Guild had been raising their level at a tremendous pace with the items that Grid produced for them. Jishuka, Regas and Pon entered the top 15 of the unified rankings, so they were confident.

Korea was the country that Grid belonged to, so Korea could surely enter the top rankings. That was what they thought. However, except for them, nobody was looking at the Korean team. They didn't need to be conscious of South Korea, who only had sub-rankers except for Yura.

"...Thank you."

An American man in his early 30s, with long tied up blonde hair, finished reciting the oath.

"Waaaaahhhh!"

The 200,000 spectators cheered and stomped their feet. The atmosphere was more heated than the Olympics. The competition that would gain the participants honor and money at the same time started.

Fire stone.

It was the name of an ore containing a strong fire.

It had high affinity with the fire attribute, magic swords of the fire attribute could be used as a materials or armor against fire. There was a rare chance of the fire stones dropping when hunting certain bosses.

However, it was a material required to make the Fire Shield that Toban desired.

"Hey Toban." Grid stared at the production method and materials of the Fire Shield and eventually frowned. "What is your motive for dumping the task of finding the important fire stones on me?"

Toban carefully said, "It is impossible for me to obtain the fire stones with my abilities. That... Minor is a minerals master, so I thought he might be able to find a place to obtain the fire stones."

"What if he finds them? Do you want me to obtain them?"

"...Please. In order to succeed in the Phoenix raid scheduled in 10 days, the main tanker must have high fire resistance."

Grid snorted.

"You should've realized over the past four months that the Minerals Master skill isn't universal. Minor is worthless if you don't provide accurate clues. There are one or two minerals that he hasn't found. Then what? Fire stones? Do you think that Minor could find a place to collect such rare minerals?"

"Please try it once."

Grid laughed at the anxious Toban. "Uhh, yes, yes. I will have him try it once. And if Minor finds the location of the mineral, I will go and collect it directly."

It was because he didn't think it was possible. Grid spoke with the certainty that Minor wouldn't be able to find the fire stones location.

Then after a while...

Minor had only been studying for the past four months, despite having a mining talent. He now had an intelligence of 350 and could exert his talent as a Minerals Master. He rummaged through books for half a day before returning with shocking news.

"I have found out how to collect the fire stones from old documents. Fire stones pop up when Hell Gao, the owner of hellfire, emerges from hell."

"..."

Minor reported it with a spiteful expression. Grid frowned while Toban had a bright expression.

"Fire stones exist in Hell Gao's habitat? So where does Hell Gao appear?"

Minor informed the excited Toban. "It is a dungeon on Cork Island."

"Cork Island?"

It was a place located in the South Sea of the Eternal Kingdom. It would take a week to get to the nearest port and ride a boat there, but Grid was different. Thanks to Braham's Boots, he could use Fly magic and ignore all types of obstacles, allowing him to arrive at Cork Island three times faster than usual.

Toban's eyes started sparkling.

"Grid! Please!"

"..."

It was troublesome. He made a promise, but he didn't feel like it.

Toban tried to persuade Grid. "Think about it. Aren't fire stones a rare mineral that can be sold for money? Won't you receive enormous profits? And remember what you told me before. You gain a lot of skill experience when smelting new minerals. Yes? Grid, this is a request."

Toban made a big mistake with Grid in the past. Due to that, he always felt sorry for Grid and tried his best not to ask for unreasonable things. Thanks to that, Grid eventually forgave Toban and now he nodded.

"I understand. Be prepared to pay me a tip."

"Thank you!"

Toban bowed deeply.

Grid had grown steadily and matured over the past few months, so Toban felt a great deal of gratitude. He respected Grid for giving to others despite having a legendary class, instead of becoming more arrogant.

It wasn't just Toban, but all of the Tzedakah Guild members. There was a saying that a place made a person, and Grid interacted with them very positively. He deserved respect.

"Find out the emergence cycle of Hell Gao."

"Yes!"

Kaaang!Kaaang!

Khan's smithy.

Grid starting making the items again after Toban left. Toban was the chief of staff of the Tzedakah Guild and had access to a vast intelligence network, so it was easy to confirm Hell Gao's emergence cycle.

After a while, Toban returned with a dark expression.

"What is it? Will it be a long time until he appears?"

Toban shook his head at Grid's question. "Hell Gao will appear in two days. If you leave right now, you will be able to arrive at Cork Island in time for Hell Gao's emergence."

"Isn't that great? What's with your expression?"

"Well... Cork Island's dungeon is fully controlled by the Silver Knights Guild. Hell Gao is dominated by the Silver Knights Guild."

Grid shrugged.

"What does it matter? I don't intend to raid Hell Gao, just collect some of the minerals."

"Of course it matters. There are no guilds that will allow an outsider into the zone they control. Since you are acting as a member of the guild, you have to ask for official cooperation or else a guild war might break out."

"Don't you have to give a lot of money when asking for cooperation?"

"It can't be helped."

The Silver Knights Guild was a fairly famous guild. They had over 200 members and the guild master was a Korean user with the ID of Peak Sword, who was ranked 16th. He was one of only two Koreans in the top 100 of the unified rankings.

Their overall power might be lower than the Tzedakah Guild, but they weren't on a level to be trifled with. Grid looked at Toban silently before pulling out a hooded clothing. Then he pulled up the zipper and completely hid himself.

"Can't I sneak in like this?"

[Hooded Zip Up]

Rating: Unique

Durability: 61/61 Defense: 12

* Movement speed will increase by 30%.

* Wind resistance will increase by 20%.

A cloak designed by the legendary blacksmith G. However, the appearance is different from the normal look of a cloak.

Thanks to the sylphid scales being used as the material, affinity with wind and movement speed will increase. You can hide while wearing it, but the stealth will be turned off when an enemy is attacked.

Conditions of Use: None.

Weight: 5

More than 200 years ago, the legendary tailor Kruger made five invisibility cloaks. But now there were only two invisibility cloaks remaining, and the owners were presumed to be royalty or a noble.

The fact that a invisibility cloak was made by a user was unknown to all of Satisfy's users except for the Tzedakah Guild.

"That's right! You have the invisibility cloak!"

Toban's face brightened.

The invisible Grid spoke in a confident voice, "Believe in me. I will sneak in while the Silver Knights are busy with the raid and collect the fire stones."

"Don't relax and be careful."

The worried Toban advised, but Grid had already left the smithy.

"I'm in the mood to travel."

The big city Winston in the north. None of the thousands of users staying there were able to identify Grid who flew in the sky.

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The whole process of the National Competition was possible to do inside Satisfy.

But the Korean government invited the players to South Korea for the purpose of attracting tourists and decided to take some events offline, including the opening ceremony. The result was a great success. Since the number of foreign tourists visiting Korea was close to 800,000, the economic effect created was expected to exceed the estimates of the Korean government.

"Thanks to this, the authority of the S.A. Group has risen."

There were already many countries asking to be selected as the next host for the National Competition. The S.A. Group executives confirmed that the share prices had skyrocketed and made a toast.

"It is a win-win."

The South Korean government was able to host the National Competition with the support of the S.A. Group, and they achieved high economic growth and gained overwhelming support from the public.

The S.A. Group's stock prices rose and they could show an overwhelming influence. According to their policy of 'returning 3.6% of the profits to society,' the size of their charity businesses could be expanded and the number of poor people who benefited increased.

Rankers received an astronomical amount of money in exchange for visiting Korea, and billions of people around the world were provided with great entertainment. It was ideal for everyone, so it was understandable why they were laughing.

Satisfy was satisfying the world, like Lim Cheolho intended when he named it.

"I feel rewarded."

Just like the gods created a world where everyone could be happy, the scientist was creating a world where everyone could be happy. Lim Cheolho created a virtual reality world with no limits.

He reached the point where he would leave his name in history as a transcendent scientist.

Cheongdamdong.

"There really are a lot of beautiful ladies. Their slim bodies are to my taste."

Pon was feeling very good.

Thanks to this National Competition, he got a chance to play PvP with top ranking players, got a lot of money, and was also exposed to Oriental beauties. It was the feeling of walking on clouds.

"Girl, would you like to have a drink with me? I'll buy you expensive liquor, so spend some time with me."

Pon was just as handsome as he was in Satisfy, so he was confident as he weaved through the streets. Despite his cheesy words in awkward English, he easily caught women.

Jishuka was sitting at a cafe terrace and was startled at the sight of him.

'Is that Pon?' In L.T.S and Satisfy, Pon had never shown any interest in the opposite sex. Except when he was childishly fighting with Vantner, he was an exemplary person who only focused on fighting and levelling up.

Jishuka was embarrassed by his completely different personality in reality.

"I've known him for over three years already, but I didn't realize he was a guy like this."

Regas smiled at her from where he was sitting beside her and enjoying a parfait, "He's so busy in Satisfy that he doesn't have time for anything else, but he can relax as much as he wants in reality. There are quite a few rankers who are experiencing such a phenomenon."

"A plausible logic... Huh?"

Jishuka nodded and belatedly saw what Regas was wearing.

"What are you? Since when have you been wearing Taekwondo clothing?"

"I was wearing it since coming to South Korea? Jishuka, what? Why aren't you aware of the attire of a person who has been with you for hours? What are you thinking about that made you so preoccupied?"

Jishuka hissed at him without answering.

"Change your clothes. It's fine when the three of us are together, but your clothes are very eye catching."

Buzz buzz.

In fact, there were countless people crowded around Jishuka and Regas. The crowd wanted to get autographs and photos from both of them. But would Satisfy's top rankers, who made enough money to represent a single company, go without guards? The two people were able to enjoy themselves without worrying about the crowd due to being attended by 10 security guards.

"If I don't wear Taekwondo clothing in a Taekwondo country, what should I wear?"

"..."

Jishuka was shocked by Regas words and don't bother trying to persuade him anymore.

"Yes, yes, do your own thing and eat the parfait."

The way Jishuka saw it, there were two types of men.

Childish or wicked.

'Grid is childish and wicked...'

Her first impression of Grid was the worst. He was stupid, stubborn, and only cared about big breasts.

However, he started to mentally mature at some point and that wickedness even left after marrying Irene. He was single-mindedly devoted to Irene and wasn't swayed when he saw Jishuka's big breasts anymore.

Was it because she witnessed the process of extreme change in real time? One day, Jishuka's eyes were chasing after Grid. After she was saved at a crucial moment in the Bairan battle, she became fully aware of Grid. But the Grid she saw was just a picture in Satisfy. She didn't know how he would look like in reality.

'If I actually meet Grid... I'm afraid he will be like Pon.'

Would she be disappointed? Still, it was okay.

'I'm in South Korea and have a chance to meet him. Yes, I've decided.'

Jishuka stood up. The men shouted as her voluptuous body, hidden by the chair, was revealed.

"I'm going back to the hotel."

"Why all of a sudden? This is the first time you are in South Korea, so shouldn't you go sightseeing?"

"I can come back to South Korea at any time, right now I want to connect to Satisfy."

"That's a good attitude." Regas suddenly looked very motivated as he got up from his seat after Jishuka.

"Every moment is essential. Okay! Let's hunt and level up during our free time! In any case, both of us don't have anything on the tournament schedule today."

"You can level up alone. I am going to connect to ask for Grid's home address."

Regas questioned her, "Home address? Are you going to go there? Isn't it possible to naturally meet Grid if our schedules overlap? Isn't his ID on the list of participants? Why do you need to go visit his home? It's bad manners."

"Grid didn't even participate in the opening ceremony. Maybe he won't show up at all in this competition."

Jishuka hurried away after saying this.

'She is quite different from usual.'

He didn't know why. Regas shrugged and followed behind her with the bodyguards.

"Wait."

Pon was about to enter a store with five beauties when he noticed Jishuka and Regas.

'Are they going to level up?'

Rankings could fall quickly if a person was careless. Wouldn't his playing time shrink significantly in Korea? Pon's vigilance awakened as he left the beauties and followed the two people.

“Pant... Pant... I’ve finally arrived.”

He flew, drank potions, flew again, descended when his potion cooldown time wasn’t over, flew again and repeated until Grid reached Cork Island.

‘The good thing is that my persistence stat rose.’

He had flown for 46 hours without stopping, so his stamina had been exhausted several times. He had been tempted to rest a few times, but he didn’t want to miss Hell Gao’s spawning time. It was a hard journey that exceeded a triathlon, but he endured and was able to arrive at this place on time.

‘I feel good.’ He felt a tremendous sense of accomplishment. It wasn’t a material gain, but the sense of accomplishment was comparable to making a high rated item. ‘The sense of fullness I feel when I exceed my limits... Is this the reason why people climb mountains or do a marathon? I should climb the mountain in front of my house tomorrow.’

Grid flew in the sky with a refreshed expression. He looked over the island.

"Good city."

Cork Island was one quarter the size of Jeju Island. It wasn’t a small island and the climate was mild, so the city built in the center of the island was very developed.

‘This is a level similar to Bairan... The population of the island should be in the tens of thousands? Aren’t there a lot of useful hunting grounds and specialties?’

Grid descended to the ground and entered the city. Thanks to the Hooded Zip Up, he didn’t need to check in and could naturally emerge in the crowd. Then he stopped at a restaurant just before Hell Gao’s dungeon in order to fill up his hunger.

"Turtle and whale meat? I’ve never tried it. Is it delicious?"

The restaurant owner confidently gave Grid a recommendation.

"Of course it’s delicious. It is a delicacy to eat turtle and whale at the same time. You should try it."

He asked NPCs questions and responded the way they wanted in order to build up affinity. The most efficient way to built up affinity with a merchant NPC was to buy a lot of their merchandise.

The warrior Grid didn’t know even these basics. He built up affinity by interacting with them for a long time. But Grid now had a strong colleague called Huroi. For the several months after the sylphid scales incident, he spent a lot of time with Huroi and learned how to build up affinity with NPCs.

“I believe in you and will try the turtle and whale meat. Please give me a plate of turtle and whale meat... Yes! Just give me the food that represents this island! Let’s eat double portions today!”

"Ohh, a broad-hearted young man! Okay, I understand! I will bring you well-cooked duck!"

Grid liked grilled dishes, stir-fried dishes, fried foods and hot pot. But most of the food in the north of the Eternal Kingdom was steamed food, which didn’t fit Grid’s taste.

‘Since I’ve moved to the north, I haven’t felt the fun of eating food for a while...’

The menu of the restaurant on Cork Island was mainly fried and grilled dishes.

'I will eat until I'm satisfied!'

Grid drooled as he waited for food. Then the owner brought out the food. Due to Grid's high stamina and persistence stats, his stomach was huge and he could eat a lot. The restaurant owner's eyes widened as he saw Grid emptying the food.

"Eating enough food for three people at once... Great."

'In this case...'

What would Huroi do now? Grid thought before saying with a smile.

"I'm not usually like this, but your excellent cooking made me overeat."

"Haha..."

Grid's high dignity gave a sense of oppression to the target, but it could also inspire liking in them. Wasn't it natural for him to give off a charming and polite atmosphere? The owner of the restaurant was instantly fascinated by Grid.

"You look like a traveller, so why did you come to Cork Island?"

'I have succeeded.'

Grid responded to the owner's curious and favorable eyes, "I came to see the monster who is the owner of hellfire. Can you tell me where the dungeon is located?"

"No, are you talking about Hell Gao?" The restaurant owner was aghast. "The dungeon he appears in is located in the north of the city... No, I can't understand it. Why do you want to see him? Isn't it an act of suicide?"

"Is he that strong?"

The restaurant owner trembled and explained.

"He is the demon who ruled this island perfectly and fed on my ancestors. Legend has it that the number of people sacrificed to him was in the thousands... One day, Muller appeared and turned his body to ashes, but Hell Gao still occasionally pops up because his soul can't be sealed. The residents are nervous every day that he will be completely resurrected and will turn this island into a living hell."

There were too many ambiguous words.

'Is this the precursor to a quest? Surely he isn't going to ask me to seal Hell Gao's soul that even Muller couldn't seal?'

It was ridiculous. The restaurant owner gave some advice to Grid, who was belatedly regretting it.

"The demon's black flame is hotter than the jade flames of most demons, so you must be careful. If you go to 'Ellen' who lives on the south side of the city and say that I sent you, she will paint your armor with fire stone dyes... Before going to Hell Gao, I recommend that you meet Ellen Halmand to increase your fire resistance."

"Dyes made from fire stones?"

Grid was interested and immediately rose from his spot. He asked the restaurant owner in detail for the position of Ellen's house and headed straight there.

"Come in."

Ellen was a kind person. She heard his situation and gladly welcomed Grid. Then she pointed to the large basin in her backyard.

"It isn't that great, since it is a dye made from the fire stones. I just dip the fire stone in water mixed with my own recipe."

"Ohu..."

The big basin contained one fire stone the size of a baby's fist. But that one small fossil turned all the water in the basin red. Ellen explained to Grid, "It isn't just a color change. Armors or clothes dyed with this will obtain increased fire resistance because they are tinted with fire."

Grid pulled out the Holy Light armor and gloves.

"The material of the gloves are cloth, so they can be easily stained. But this armor is made of mithril, can it be dyed?"

Ellen easily nodded.

"Fire stones are the symbol of fusion... They can mix with anything."

As expected of a rare mineral used in magic items.

'My status immunity means I can't be burned, but this can prevent additional damage caused by the fire itself. Braham's Boots are black so the red color will match well with it... Good.'

Grid politely asked. "Can you please dye this armor and gloves?"

Ellen easily nodded. "I understand. I will dye it well if you pay me 500 gold."

"...Huh?"

Grid thought that Ellen was a hidden NPC. He believed it was an opportunity to get free benefits because of his affinity with the restaurant owner. Yet she was asking for money? As Grid was feeling confused, other users started to arrive at Ellen's house.

"Are you Grandmother Ellen? I heard about you from the grandmother at the grocery store."

"I heard about you from the blacksmith. You can increase my fire resistance?"

Grid looked at this and quickly realized.

'The tip that the restaurant owner gave me wasn't special.'

Ellen wasn't a hidden NPC. She was a mere trader, and the Cork Island residents were skilled at soliciting customers for her.

'The world is truly tough.'

Grid pulled out 500 gold with trembling hands. It wasn't bad to think of it as 500 gold to give extra options to two items. He couldn't know the numerical value of the additional options.

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"Here it is."

Grid paid 500 gold and took out the Holy Light Armor and Holy Light Gloves from the inventory. He handed them over to Ellen and respectfully said, "Please add fire resistance to these."

The two parts combined would have a 20% fire resistance, so this was an investment with huge benefits. Ellen smiled warmly at the expectant Grid.

"Hoho, I'll dye it beautifully. Huh?"

Ellen was amazed as she received the armor and gloves. Her sagging eyes, that couldn't bear the weight of the years, widened.

"How is this possible...?"

Ellen had been dyeing things since she was 15 years old, and she was 71 this year. Over her 56 years as a dyer, she had dyed many different types of clothes and armor of various colors. However, this was the first time she saw such a great white armor.

"A perfect harmony... I wondered if a better armor than this exists? So beautiful... The blacksmith who made this armor probably isn't a regular person. Is this the skill of a master who surpasses dwarf craftsmen?"

Grid felt interested as he saw Ellen's admiration.

'This grandma's eyes are more discerning than normal.'

Trust started to fill him. A person with this level of insight would surely dye his items well.

Ellen showed high motivation, "I will do my best not to ruin these wonderful armor and gloves."

The Holy Light Armor covered the neck, shoulders, chest, waist and right arm. The Holy Light Gloves were several layers thick and had gold thread embroidered near the wrist. It was a glamorous embroidered pattern that looked elegant. If the embroidery was dyed red as well, the armor and gloves would become too monotonous. Therefore, she had to do this work as delicately as possible.

Chwaack.Chwaack.

Every time the white gloves were immersed in the fire stone dye, they became a pale pink. As this process repeated, the pale pink became a dark pink and then gradually became a strong red. But surprisingly, the gold embroidery was preserved because not a single drop of dye touched it.

'Great skills.'

Grid observed the work without missing a single thing. Following the gloves, the armor was dyed.

1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours.

It took a considerable amount of time, but Grid didn't lose focus until the end. He didn't want to miss an opportunity to observe the craftsmanship of other fields.

[Insight has increased by 10.]

[Your dexterity has risen.]

[You have learned a little bit about how to dye cloth and paint metal.]

The Holy Light Armor and Gloves were reborn with a dark red color. Grid read the pleasant notification windows and Ellen smiled brightly.

"Please check it."

Grid received the armor and gloves from Ellen and examined the details. Then he was delighted.

'It's better than I expected!'

The armor had 19% fire resistance and the gloves had 7% fire resistance. It was great that Ellen gave new options to legendary items for just 500 gold.

"I will use it well."

Ellen was grateful to the truly delighted Grid. "Thank you for giving me the opportunity to dye such an excellent armor and gloves before I die. Thanks to you, I have achieved a higher level. Now, please wear it."

Ellen led Grid to the large full body mirror on one side. Grid didn't delay in front of the mirror as he wore the armor and gloves. Then he marvelled at his own appearance.

'I look much cooler.'

The Holy Light Armor was a legendary item made by Pagma. Despite the metal material, it was custom made and perfectly suited the lines of the wearer. The problem was that the color was pure white. Like many Asians, Grid had yellow skin and dark hair, so the pure white clothes didn't suit him. The Holy Light Armor looked more awkward than cool. But now the red armor became a good match for Grid's skin and hair.

Ellen's eyes shone as she praised, "Very cool! I want to transfer your image to a picture frame!"

She wasn't exaggerating. The harmonization of the black boots with the dark red armor and gloves with gold thread was a level that anyone would admire.

'Is this really me?'

Everyone dreamed of looking nice. It was the same for Grid. However, he was despised because of his unimpressive appearance, and the shameful experiences significantly contributed to his personality.

Grid was no longer ugly.

'...I'm not ugly.'

Grid closely observed his appearance in the mirror for a long time. Unlike the past where he always shrank back, his eyes were full of confidence and his shoulders were broad. His face had fattened, suiting the skeletal frame. From an objective point of view, he looked much better than before.

The armor looked so good that he wanted to take a photo.

‘But there is a little something missing...’

It was like a flaw in the jade. There was no gold embroidery on the lower part of his body, so it looked very monotonous. Grid thought it would look twice as nice if this part was supplemented, so he looked at Ellen. She was moving to greet the next guest.

“Pavranium.”

Grid spoke in a small voice. Then a fantastic sight was seen. Seven blades around 15cm long, 8cm wide and 3cm thick silently appeared and floated around him.

“Join together.”

Grid imagined the shape that the pavranium should form and ordered. Then the seven blades gathered together. The finished appearance was a thin sword around 1m in length. Grid made it like a wave or snake that could move to the left and right, then he fitted it onto the ring-belt that protruded near the tail of the armor.

“Kill.” The blade-like tail extending under the red armor was threatening, giving him a frightful feeling like a devil. “It is completely to my taste.”

Grid was making a happy face when he heard Toban’s voice.

-Grid, have you arrived at Cork Island? Hell Gao will appear in exactly one hour. Please take care, and I hope you find the fire stones.

Grid left Ellen’s house. He was conscious of people’s eyes as he released the armor and answered.

-Believe in me.

Cork Island was the largest of hundreds of islands in the Eternal Kingdom and was abundant in resources. The scenery was beautiful and countless guilds coveted the island.

The Sakura Guild was particularly ambitious. The guild considered only of Japanese right-wing extremists. They wanted to put a flag on Cork Island because it looked similar to Takeshima Island which ‘Korea was illegally occupying.’

When the war between the Alliance and the Yatan Church broke out, the Sakura Guild took this opportunity.

"We will join the Eternal Kingdom’s army and gain enough achievements in order to receive Cork Island as a reward!"

The Sakura Guild's plan was successful. The Sakura Guild participated in the war, gained high contributions and got a chance to receive something from the king. They hoped to become the owner of Cork Island.

But forces barred their way.

It was the Silver Knights Guild, led by the 16th ranked Peak Sword. Most of the guild members, including Peak Sword, were Koreans, and they confronted the Sakura Guild because they wanted to 'stop the insane Japanese people who can't tell virtual reality apart from reality.'

The two guilds had similar contributions in the war, so the king couldn't easily determine the owner of the island. Both guilds had to fight for a long time. In the end, the Silver Knights Guild won. The average power of the Sakura Guild was higher, but thanks to the success of Peak Sword, the Silver Knights Guild could win the war and became the owner of Cork Island.

The sword and shield, which was the original symbol of the guild, changed to the three-legged raven four months ago. The Silver Knights Guild became one of the large guilds that represented Satisfy.

Their next goal was the Hell Gao raid.

'We can grow much faster if we clear the Hell Gao raid. We can nurture Korean rankers based on items dropped by Hell Gao.'

Despite the request of the South Korean government and Yura, he didn't participate in the National Competition this year. Peak Sword was more familiar than anyone else that South Korea couldn't obtain a good ranking in the competition, even if he participated.

'But it will be different starting from next year.'

He would foster Korean rankers and regain Korea's reputation as powerhouses in games! After the extreme patriotism war with the Sakura Guild, Peak Sword resumed the Hell Gao raid that he had already failed five times.

"Over the past month, we have become stronger and invested our money wisely. Now we will surely be able to take Hell Gao. Have courage and let's defeat Hell Gao!"

"Ohhhh!"

The 4th floor of Cork Island's dungeon.

It was 10 minutes until Hell Gao emerged. He encouraged the morale of the 200 elite guild members, but this morale wasn't maintained for long.

Five minutes later.

Hell Gao's emergence was near, so tension and anxiety started to appear on everyone's faces.

"Four minutes left!"

They clearly remembered Hell Gao's strength. Could they really beat that monster? They couldn't help questioning.

“Three minutes left!”

After three minutes, Hell Gao would appear and this place would turn into a sea of fire. Some of them would die just due to the flames.

“Two minutes left!”

A hot heat started to slowly fill the room.

‘Shit.’

Peak Sword wanted to encourage everyone, but he was afraid. He was clearly reminded of the overwhelming appearance of Hell Gao, who was shrouded in flames and wielded a staff.

‘Are we still lacking the power to defeat him?’

It might be different if the power of the top 10 rankers were added, but he couldn’t help thinking that this expedition would fail with their current strength. However, the guild’s best ranker couldn’t show his weakness, so Peak Sword endured it.

‘Do it. We can do it. We are strong!’

Peak Sword steadied his heart and took various buffing potions, with the others following him. It was at that moment.

"One minute left... Eh? Intruder! There is an intruder!!"

“What?”

All of the guild members’ eyes headed towards the entrance. A young man had entered. It was unusual because he was covered by a cloak, with no armor or weapons visible.

‘Did he break through the defensive troops downstairs?’

Was it a highly trained assassin? No. An assassin wouldn’t openly reveal themselves in a place like this.

‘Grid?’

Peak Sword pondered on the name above the head of the black haired youth. However, no matter how much he looked through his memory, it was an unfamiliar name.

‘He isn’t a ranker?’

Peak Sword glanced at his companions, but they all shook their heads.

‘A non-ranker coming all the way here. Pathetic.’

Peak Sword came to this conclusion and warned the youth with a frown.

"This is an area controlled by the Silver Knights Guild. I don’t know how you managed to reach this point but if you don’t want to die, go back."

"My stealth suddenly disappeared. Was it because I was detected by Hell Gao?"

The young man ignored Peak Sword’s warning and threw off his cloak while talking to himself.

“Ohh!”

There were exclamations from every direction. The appearance of the armor rapidly being equipped on the body of the youth was quite cool. It was an elegant blend of red, black and gold. The particularly unique point was the one meter long tail that stretched from the vicinity of the tailbone. It was sharp like a blade, and amazingly moving on its own.

“W-What, that armor?”

"It's terrific... Unique grade?"

It was the first time they had seen such armor, so the guild members struggled to hide their interest. Peak Sword raised his voice, “That isn’t important right now! Why aren’t you throwing him out right now?”

Hell Gao would soon appear. Then no one would be able to escape from the dungeon. They had to deal with the outsider before that. The moment that the guild members interested in the armor tried to carry out Peak Sword’s order,

Kuwooooh!

[Hell Gao, the owner of Hellfire has appeared.]

[Hell Gao’s roar has applied fear, chaos and debilitating effects.]

[Hell Gao’s fire reduces heat resistance by 50%.]

[Fire pillars have risen to cover you.]

“Kuack!”

"Hiiiiik!"

Due to the silent flames that surrounded the whole area, half of the guild members fell into a dying state, or were burned to the point where they couldn’t even be recognized. Barely half of the people standing were able to hang on. Peak Sword was surprised at the notification window that popped up.

‘I raised my fire resistance to 86%, but to still receive this degree of damage...!’

They would fail again. As Peak Sword was feeling despair, he suddenly doubted his eyes. The unknown young man with the ID of Grid. While the others were surrounded by flames, he alone was moving forward. He moved freely like he wasn’t affected.

"H-how...? Heok?"

Peak Sword fell silent as he witnessed a ridiculous scene. As Hell Gao ran amok and slaughtered the guild members, the young man pulled out a pickaxe. Then he headed to the wall and started swinging the pickaxe?

Kaaang!Kaaang!

The young man swung it with good form and complained as he wiped off the sweat.

“Ugh, hot! Isn’t the labor getting worse? Why does this mineral only appear when the boss mob is present? Based on this, I might have to visit a dragon’s lair with my pickaxe!”

At that moment, a hot wind emerged from the staff that Hell Gao waved and hit the young man. Peak Sword expected the young man to receive huge damage and collapse. But unbelievably, the young man only suffered minor injuries.

‘A huge defense power...! A guardian knight?’

"Excuse me, Mister." The youth stopped his pickaxe for the first time and turned his attention to Peak Sword. Then he said with an irate expression. "Why are you just standing there blankly? It’s hot, but it will just get hotter."

What was he seeing now?

Peak Sword belatedly regained his spirit and asked, "How can you be fine?"

The young man replied like it was obvious.

“It’s the item effect.”

Chaaeng!Chaeng!

The tail on the young man’s armor moved by itself and fought against Hell Gao’s staff. Peak Sword couldn’t close his mouth as he gaped at the sight.

‘W-what is this...?’

He belatedly recalled that there were a few high level users who didn’t register their names in the rankings. They liked to play the game like hermits in a martial arts movie.

‘Is he one of those people?’

While Peak Sword was feeling suspicious, Grid couldn’t focus on his pickaxe anymore because of Hell Gao and opened his inventory. Then he pulled out the +8 Dainsleif.

“Hey, you monster. I don’t want to fight you, so don’t bother me and go away.”

Over the past four months, Grid had repeatedly disassembled, reassembled and repaired Dainsleif dozens of times, raising his understanding to 90%. He held the pickaxe in his left hand and wielded Dainsleif with his right hand.

Kwang!

Hell Gao defended against the attack, but he was pushed back a few steps. The flames grew bigger and he seemed to be at a loss. The members of the Silver Knights Guild, including Peak Sword, were speechless.

Chapter 164

‘Hell Gao, who didn’t move when the top three damage dealers of the guild attacked simultaneously...’

‘Pushing him back with one shot?’

'What is that attack power?'

'What is that tail that defended against Hell Gao's attack?'

'Why is he still holding the pickaxe...?'

It was an unbelievable and monstrous sight. The Silver Knights Guild, including Peak Sword, were confused at the sight of Grid.

'I thought he was a tank because of his high defense, but his attack power is actually higher?'

There were several classes with excellent balance. But balance-type classes had a chronic problem. It was that they didn't excel in anything. However, both Grid's attack power and defense were unreasonable.

'He must have a hidden class. In addition...'

Grid's words revolved around Peak Sword's head. Item effect. Item effect. Item effect... Item...

'...It really is the power of his items.'

In Satisfy, items could be enhanced up to +10.

However, the price of the enhancement stones was expensive, and the higher the enhancement value, the lower the probability of the enhancement succeeding.

In addition, if the enhancement was successful, the enhancement value would be +1. But if it failed, it would be -3, so the chances of ordinary users owning high enhanced equipment was like picking stars from the sky. Most rankers were using +7 items, while the +8 or higher items were for the rich or fortunate.

However, Peak Sword belatedly realized that Grid's sword was surrounded by a deep orange light that was like the sunset. It was a +8 enhanced item.

'So he is a high level hidden class, rich, and lucky?'

Grid frowned at Peak Sword's expression.

"...What is your expression?"

It wasn't a coincidence that a big shot came here. Peak Sword was alarmed and started to feel doubts.

"You look like a Chinese or Japanese person. Did the Sakura Guild send you?"

Grid had the typical appearance of a Northeast Asian. Korea and Mongolia were countries weak in Satisfy, he judged that a bigshot couldn't be hiding among the Koreans or Mongols. Therefore, this person must be Chinese or Japanese. But the answer that came back was amazing.

"Sakura Guild? I didn't even know there was such a guild. Above all, I am South Korean."

"South Korean?"

The guild members started murmuring.

"There is such an amazing person among the Koreans..."

"Apart from Yura and Peak Sword hyung-nim... South Korea has another prominent figure."

"Kya~~! As expected from South Korea!"

Most of the members of the Silver Knights Guild were patriotic. They were the type of people who always asked 'Do you know Kimchi?' when they met foreigners. So they were glad to hear that Grid was Korean.

"We are Koreans like you!"

"I realized it while watching you! The Korean's game DNA is still great!"

"I am proud that a great person like you is a Korean citizen like us!"

"Quiet!" Peak Sword calmed down his excited guild members and glared at Grid. "If you aren't commissioned by the Sakura Guild, why did you come to disturb us?"

"Disturb?"

Chaaeng!Chaeng!

Grid was shaken as he drew Hell Gao's aggro.

"Disturb? Is what I did a disturbance? Rather, I helped you."

"What help? You barged in on another person's raid!"

"What?"

Grid felt angry at Peak Sword's words. Then he threw down his pickaxe and grabbed Dainsleif with both hands.

"Ridiculous humans! I will burn you to the soul!"

Hell Gao waved his staff while shouting and a heat storm struck. Grid started dancing.

'Pagma's Swordsmanship...'

"Become ashes!"

Kuwaaaaaang!

The materials in the area were melted and a hot wind blew over Grid. Then Grid's dance finished.

"Kill."

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

It was truly an overwhelming sight. The big sword was surrounded by red and black and pierced Hell Gao's heart with a huge momentum.

"Kuheok...!"

There wasn't one person who failed to notice that Hell Gao's face shrouded in flames was disturbed for a moment.

Hell Gao fell down and scattered blood like lava, while Grid spoke to the astonished Peak Sword. "I'm sorry that I barged in on your raid but honestly, if it wasn't for me, wouldn't you guys be dead to that monster by now? The only reason I got involved was because that annoying bastard attacked me first. I didn't actually do anything?"

His words weren't wrong. But that didn't mean Grid's behavior could be rationalized.

"I acknowledge that part. But the fact that you intruded doesn't change. How can we proceed with the raid while you are watching? Would you be able to if you were us? What if you hit our backs while we are in the middle of the fight?"

Grid snorted. "If I wanted to hit your backs, I would've done it earlier. Isn't that right?"

That's right. The guild was in trouble when Hell Gao appeared. But Grid was fine. At that time, the guild would've met a disaster if Grid had attacked.

"U-Um..."

It was evidence that Grid wasn't an enemy. However, he was still disturbing. Grid had completely stabbed a wedge of doubt in Peak Sword.

"In the first place, I didn't come here for that monster. Fire stones." Then Grid placed Dainsleif back in his inventory. Then he picked up the pickaxe and headed towards a firestone again. "I have no intention of interfering, so please ignore me and go on with the raid."

"..."

Kaaang!Kaaang!

Peak Sword no longer felt motivation as he looked at Grid.

'...He isn't an opponent that can be overpowered, so let's ignore him.'

They could deal with this when it was over. Peak Sword ignored Grid and started concentrating on the raid. Then the guild members quickly surrounded Hell Gao, who was on the ground. Grid glanced at them and clicked his tongue.

'Do you really think you can raid that monster? It's useless.'

The current Grid couldn't measure Hell Gao's combat strength.

'That monstrous bastard, he was hit by Kill and didn't even lose one-tenth of his life.'

Hell Gao was a monster that Muller couldn't seal perfectly, and he was very strong. Grid speculated that he was a boss monster several degrees stronger than the Awakened Guardian of the Forest.

'He is a monster that I can't win against, even if I take advantage of my invincible passive. It's better to avoid him.'

Grid's judgment was correct.

Most users didn't know the details of the demon-related episodes yet, but Hellfire's Master Hell Gao was the 9th strongest among the 33 great demons of Hell and had members of the demonkin like Balak as subordinates. It wasn't good to associate with him.

'Hurry.'

Kaaang!Kaaang!

Grid's pickaxe speed accelerated. He planned to use the time while the Silver Knights Guild was striking Hell Gao to mine the fire stones. That behavior was the problem. What was the reason why the fire stones always appeared with Hell Gao?

It wasn't a coincidence. The fire stones were the source of Hell Gao's power. Hell Gao needed the help of the fire stones to appear in the human world. A human kept trying to mine it, so Hell Gao couldn't leave it alone.

"This damn human!"

Peeeeeeong!

Hell Gao released a black fire that burned the Silver Knights Guild and headed towards Grid.

Chaaeng!Chaeng!

The pavranium moved to protect Grid. However, it was impossible to completely block Hell Gao's attack with the present pavranium, which was attached to the armor and restricted in action.

Grid experienced a flash of heat every time the staff was wielded.

[You have suffered 2,930 damage.]

[You have suffered 3,190 damage.]

'How rotten... I've raised my fire resistance, but I've still received this much damage.'

Kaaang!Kaaang!

Grid took a potion to restore his health and quickened the pace of his pickaxe. He tried to ignore the attacking Hell Gao behind him.

'Just a bit more...!'

Five more swings would be enough to obtain one fire stone. Grid patiently relied on only pavranium to defend and Hell Gao's anger reached the peak.

"Stop right now!"

Kwaang!

Hell Gao's body was covered with blame flames, increasing the heat.

Kaang!

Hell Gao's attack power became stronger. The pavranium was hit by it and temporarily stiffened.

'This is bad...!'

Hell Gao's staff aimed at Grid's side just as there were three swings left to obtain the fire stone. Grid tried to defend with a shield but it was already too late. At that moment, Peak Sword came forward.

"Draw Sword, string."

Peak Sword stood 2m behind Hell Gao. He pulled out the sword at his waist so quickly that it was difficult to follow with the eyes. Then there was a sharp flash and blood spurted from Hell Gao's neck.

"Kuooh!"

Hell Gao's gaze angrily returned to Peak Sword.

"Insolent!"

Hell Gao approached Peak Sword and waved his staff. Then Peak Sword placed his sword back in its sheath.

"Sheath Sword, breadth."

Kwaang!

Just before Hell Gao's staff fell towards Peak Sword. A powerful wave of sword energy exploded around Peak Sword, causing Hell Gao to retreat. Peak Sword spoke to Grid with a grim expression.

"You are Korean and helped us once. With this, the debt is paid."

Subsequently, the Silver Knights Guild started their onslaught.

"Die, you monster!"

"This time we'll kill you!"

The Silver Knights were a highly trained guild. The qigong masters suppressed Hell Gao's heat, while the damage dealers attacked Hell Gao without getting injured. It was a pincer attack they could unfold due to the experience challenging Hell Gao, but the problem was that Hell Gao was too strong.

"This doesn't even itch!"

Hell Gao ridiculed before launching flames in every direction. It was the inevitable fire AOE magic. In order to suppress the force of this, the qigong masters controlled the mana in the air while the magicians built water barriers. The momentum of the flames wasn't suppressed at all and directly evaporated all the water at the water barriers.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

This caused hot steam to occur. Peak Sword and the knights defended with their weapons or shields, while the qigong masters and magicians used magic. However, everyone except for Peak Sword turned into grey light.

"What!?"

Sword Peak realized it the moment he received more than 100 messages about his guild members' deaths.

'This is impossible.'

The Hell Gao raid? It was a pipe dream. He had been confident about the guild's power over the last month, but they were just pests in front of Hell Gao.

'It was my mistake for not accurately measuring Hell Gao's strength...'

He felt sorry for the guild members wiped out because of their foolish master. It was the moment that Peak Sword lost hope in his dream of fostering enough Korean rankers to play a role in next years National Competition.

He flopped down.

"Kukukuk."

Hell Gao emitted a hot breath as he laughed and approached. He aimed his staff at Peak Sword who lost all his men and all hope. At that moment.

Kaaang!

[A fire stone has been acquired.]

Grid finally obtained a fire stone. At the same time, the black flames around Hell Gao's body noticeably weakened.

And.

Ttaak!

[You have suffered 4,200 damage.]

"...Eh?"

Peak Sword survived despite being hit by the staff. Both Peak Sword and Hell Gao were shocked.

'Weaker?'

It wasn't an illusion. Hell Gao had rapidly weakened. An awkward atmosphere flowed.

"Transcended Link."

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

20 blue and white energy blades flew and hit Hell Gao.

"Kuaaaaak!"

Blood spurted in every direction like boiling lava. Hell Gao let out a terrible scream of pain. Then he belated discovered the fire stone held in Grid's hand.

"You dare...! I will kill you!"

Pisik.

"Can you do it?"

Grid laughed before squeezing the blue sword that was reminiscent of a predator of the sea.

Peak Sword was surprised twice.

The first reason was that he figured out Grid was Pagma's Descendant who appeared in the battle of Bairan several months ago. The second reason for his surprise was the white light around the blue greatsword.

"A +9 item?"

"Take this pickaxe." Grid threw his pickaxe towards Peak Sword, whose mouth was gaping open. Then he explained to the puzzled Peak Sword. "Hell Gao's weakness is the fire stone. The more fire stones that are collected, the weaker he will be. So collect the fire stones while I block him."

This was it. Peak Sword's expression darkened, "I understand what you're saying. But I didn't acquire the mining skill. It will be hard for me..."

"Don't worry. Anyone can mine with that pickaxe."

"...?"

Grid spoke confidently. Peak Sword was curious and checked the details of the pickaxe.

[Fantastic Pickaxe]

Rating: Legendary

Durability: 155/219 Attack Power: 107

- * The chances of acquiring advanced minerals will increase by 10%.
- * The chances of acquiring the highest grade minerals will increase by 5%.
- * The skill 'Intermediate Mining Technique' Lv. 3 will be generated.

A pickaxe made by the legendary blacksmith G.

With this pickaxe, even a five year old child can collect high quality iron ore.

User Restriction: Level 200 or higher.

Weight: 45

"..."

"Why are you just watching?"

Hell Gao wasn't a fool. He couldn't let the humans touch the fire stones anymore, so he tried to get rid of the injured Peak Sword first. However, Grid wouldn't quietly let him do that. He detached the pavranium from his armor and aimed at Hell Gao's head with his fingers.

"Go."

Chwachwachwachwachwa!

The combined pavranium separated into seven blade-like shapes. Then they spread out and attacked Hell Gao from different angles.

"Kuooh!"

Hell Gao missed Peak Sword. He lifted his staff and resisted the seven blades, but they couldn't be destroyed no matter what.

'No, what is this...'

Peak Sword thought it was absurd. It felt like a feast of items kept appearing.

Item effect.

The words Grid said when he first appeared popped into Peak Sword's head. Then Grid prompted him, "What are you doing? Go and mine the fire stones."

"Ah, y-yes... That... Yes..."

The 16th ranked Peak Sword, it was the first time he challenged mining since starting Satisfy. And it was the day that Hell Gao, the master of hellfire, met the strongest enemy after the great sword saint Muller.

Chapter 165

The seven golden blades simultaneously aimed at his eyes, cheeks, head and chin. The speed was equivalent to Memphis, who was the fastest in hell, so the demonkin would be unable to react.

But Hell Gao was one of the 33 great demons, so he didn't think of it as a threat.

'The human might be skilled at throwing, but this is just at the level of a pest.'

He drew a small circle with his staff.

Chaeeeeeng!

The seven blades didn't reach the target and scattered all over the place. However, they didn't fall towards the ground. Instead, they flew up again and attacked Hell Gao.

'Huh?'

Hell Gao was amazed. He thought the seven golden blades had been thrown by the human in red armor, but they were moving by themselves?

Kaang!Kakang!

The golden blades that continued flying at Hell Gao were annoying. He decided to destroy them and firmly hit one with his staff. However, the blade was fine and didn't even get one scratch. It stiffened for a while before moving again.

‘Outstanding durability. Is it adamantium? But why are they moving on their own?’

Fast and solid gold blades! They weren’t controlled by magic, so how did they move by themselves? They didn’t tire, and gave Hell Gao a feeling of pressure.

In the end.

"Get lost!"

Hell Gao released hot wind all over the place. The golden blades were pushed by the wind pressure and could no longer approach him.

"Come back."

The human in red armor watched from a distance and gave them orders. Then the golden blades flew to him and started to rotate around him.

‘What a bizarre artifact.’

Hell Gao opened his mouth.

"I never dreamed in my thousands of years of existence that I would have a question for a human. Those blades, what are they? They have a durability comparable to the god mineral adamantium and they move by themselves? Why is an ordinary human carrying something like this?"

“Ordinary human?” The human in red armor, Grid, grinned at him. “You still think I’m ordinary?”

"What?" Hell Gao spoke cynically. "Kukuk! You only barely managed to wound this trash body! So what, you think that you are special?"

Hell Gao was the 9th strongest of the 33 great demons, but this was only applicable to hell. After being sealed by Sword Saint Muller 150 years ago, he had to borrow the body of a demonkin every time he appeared in the human world.

In other words, Hell Gao’s current body wasn’t originally his and he couldn’t exert his true strength. Grid was arrogant just because he managed to damage Hell Gao a little bit, so Hell Gao couldn’t help snorting.

"I know that you are a fairly strong human. But you aren’t particularly special." The black flames around Hell Gao’s body flashed. "I only recognize the man called Muller. You’re just a trivial existence who can’t even reach Muller’s toes."

Grid remarked, "Ah, Sword Saint Muller? Wasn’t he the one who turned your body into a rag in the past?"

Hell Gao’s eyes narrowed.

"What’s so funny?"

The smiling Grid kindly explained to him. "I am in the same class as Muller. It’s laughable that you can’t see that. Well, today you will die again."

Hell Gao thought it was so absurd that it was funny.

"Kuhahahaha! This crazy person is talking nonsense!"

Sword Saint Muller was such a great figure that he broke Hell Gao's common sense, who had lived for thousands of years. He was a mortal who transcended a great demon. His swordsmanship was enough to cut through the flames of hell, making them look like sheep.

In comparison, Grid was just plain. Grid was stronger than a normal human, but he was no match for Muller.

"A person who puts himself in the same class as Muller, he really doesn't understand... Huh?"

Hell Gao stopped laughing as his gaze turned to a corner of the dungeon. Thanks to the golden blades, he had missed the other human. That human was aiming the pickaxe at a fire stone. It was Peak Sword. The 16th ranked Peak Sword, who was a fearful person to some and a target of respect for others, was challenging the act of mining for the first time.

Hell Gao was furious.

"I don't like this pair!"

He was able to bring four fire stones to the human world from hell. He lost a quarter of his magic power when one of them was taken. He couldn't allow another fire stone to be mined.

Kuoooooh!

Hell Gao ran while the dark flames wrapped around his body like a cloak. His target was naturally Peak Sword. He wanted to smash Peak Sword's head and destroy that pickaxe. But his path was blocked by Grid.

"Where are you going during our conversation?"

Grid attacked while talking.

Chaaeng!

Hell Gao's arms shook after he defended against the blue greatsword with his staff.

'It isn't just that I'm weaker. He has grown stronger.'

Grid spoke to the somewhat shaken Hell Gao. "Of course, my current skills aren't even one-hundredth of Sword Saint Muller's skills. But it isn't a lie that I am in the same class as him. I am also a legend."

"Legend?"

Hell Gao spoke in a confused voice. Grid wielded a master weapon that had been enhanced to +9, and his utilization of it was already at 100% after several months of experience.

Jjang!Jjejejeok!Jjejeong!

Pagma's Swordsmanship (Lv.2) increased physical attacks by 30%, critical hit rate by 20% and critical damage by 10%. The power of the +9 Failure combined with Pagma's Swordsmanship was truly beyond imagination! Grid's power brought confusion to Hell Gao.

'This guy, the attack power in one blow...!'

Kwang!

"Kkuk!"

Hell Gao defended against the attack with his staff, and eventually threw up. A red light shone in the black flames and Grid grinned, revealing his white teeth.

"Can you feel it? This is strong enough to fill up the difference in abilities."

"You...!"

Hell Gao finally felt alarmed. The man in front of him, he wasn't a master of swordsmanship like Muller was. His comprehensive physical abilities were far below Muller's.

But.

'Strong.'

Why was he so strong? Hell Gao's suspicious gaze was fixed on Grid.

'It's that greatsword.'

He had lived for thousands of years, but he had never seen a weapon like this blue greatsword. Hell Gao trembled. The golden blades that moved by themselves and this powerful greatsword, how did the man in front of him gobble up such powerful items?

'Does this person have the treasures of the gods?'

Hell Gao could no longer take it easy and needed to fight with all his strength. Hell Gao made a decision and shot out hellfire.

Peeng!

The flames that wouldn't fade away once they started burning hit Grid. Hell Gao confirmed that Grid's chest was burning and burst out laughing.

"Kuhahaha! It's useless even if you jump into the sea right now. Once the hellfire has started burning, it won't fade away until the target has been turned to ashes!"

Hell Gao didn't doubt that Grid would become ashes within seconds. However...

"It turned off?"

Grid waved a few times and the hellfire was extinguished.

"What!?"

How did you turn off hellfire like it was a match fire? It was the moment when Hell Gao's common sense that 'hellfire will never go out' was broken in his thousands of years of living. Yes, the last time his common sense was broken was when he met Muller 150 years ago.

'It isn't a lie that he is in the same class as Muller...!'

Hell Gao felt a chill and reflexively took a step back.

[You have suffered 4,800 damage.]

[The black fires of hell have attached to your body. The flames won't turn off until your body is turned to ashes.]

[You will receive 2,000 burn damage per second until death.]

[You have resisted.]

Grid felt pleasure as he confirmed the warning windows and started a dance. White light moved around the blue greatsword, like a shark swimming in the sea.

"Pagma's Swordsmanship, Link."

The muscles that squeezed during the dance were released at once. At the same time, the greatsword moved explosively. 17 blue and white energy blades sped through the air at a terrible speed before compressing the air.

"..."

It was quiet.

Kaaang!

Only the sound of Peak Sword swinging the pickaxe was heard. Hell Gao had doubts.

'What?'

Perhaps it was a vain attack? And.

Susuk.

The 17 strands of energy were drawn around Hell Gao's body. This was followed by 17 sharp waves.

Pipit!Pipipipit!

The air that was compressed simultaneously exploded. At the same time, 17 wounds appeared on Hell Gao's body.

"Kuaaaak!"

Hell Gao belatedly screamed. It wasn't a missed attack. This was the true dignity of the sword of light, Link. It was the moment that Grid, who raised his stats and level to 246 during the past four months, perfectly reproduced one of Pagma's sword techniques.

"Didn't I tell you? I am also a legend."

Grid was even more impressed.

"T-This guy...!"

Hell Gao's body started wobbling. Before the fire stone was collected and Hell Gao was in perfect condition, a fatal strike barely decreased his health. Now he lost more than a tenth of his health the moment he was hit by Link.

Grid was convinced.

'It is enough to fight.'

Kaaang!Kaaang!

The sound of Peak Sword's pickaxe was heard non-stop from the rear and Grid felt more courageous. Then from a corner of his field of view, Hell Gao's staff came flying.

Peeok!

[You have been hit by a lethal blow!]

[You have suffered 7,930 damage.]

"...Kuk!"

Grid was perfectly hit by the staff that moved between the rotating golden blades. Hell Gao shouted while chanting a spell.

"You aren't Muller!"

That's right. He wasn't Sword Saint Muller. One strike from his sword had caused Hell Gao's limbs to fall off. It was true that Grid's weapons covered his deficiency, but it couldn't be denied that he was very lacking compared to Muller.

Chaaeng!Chaaeng!

The seven golden blades moved briskly to contain Hell Gao, while protecting Grid at the same time. But Hell Gao was in complete combat mode and was very fast and powerful.

Jjejeong!

The golden blades that Hell Gao struck were stuck in place for two seconds and then,

Peeok!

Hell Gao's staff moved flexibly, avoiding the other golden blades and striking Grid's abdomen.

[You have suffered 3,550 damage.]

'Damn! It hurts!'

All of Grid's armor had been enhanced to +6. He had to spend a tremendous amount to enhance Failure up to +9, so he had to be satisfied with this much for his armor. But after many tests, he thought that his current defense was enough.

A month ago, he had faced the Awakened Guardian of the Forest and found his defense quite bearable. However, Hell Gao's attack power was too strong.

'This is after he was weakened by having the fire stone mined...!'

Peeok!Peeeeok!

[You have suffered 3,590 damage.]

[You have suffered 3,480 damage.]

[You have suffered 4,900 damage.]

[You have been hit by a lethal blow!]

[You have suffered 7,700 damage.]

The chances of a critical hit were tremendous high. There was one critical hit in every three blows. Hell Gao's basic damage was also tremendous. His crazed behavior restrained Grid's actions. Grid barely survived with one-third of his health and fought back with Failure.

Kwang!

Grid used the repulsive force generated by the collision with the staff to open a distance, then he used a skill.

"Wave!"

A blue and white wave spread out around him.

[You have dealt 18,500 damage to the target.]

[The target's attack speed has reduced.]

Hesitation.

Hell Gao's overwhelming momentum that Grid couldn't overcome was noticeably reduced. Grid counterattacked a few times during this gap while shouting to Peak Sword.

"No, this damn guy! You still haven't mined one fire stone?"

Peak Sword was frustrated, "I told you that it is my first time mining! I don't know the tricks!"

"Ah, it's frustrating!"

"..."

Hell Gao was the master of hellfire, while Grid was the first legendary class. There was such a large difference between Peak Sword and them, and he was frustrated at not proving his reputation as 16th on the unified rankings.

Grid explained to Peak Sword. "Take a good look around the fire stones! There is a part around the root where the ground will be weak, attack that place...!"

"Shut up."

Pepepepeng!

Hundreds of spheres of hellfire flew. Grid took out the Divine Shield and defended with it and the golden blades.

Teook!

Hell Gao struck the ground with his staff. He leapt using the rebound and landed over Grid's shoulder.

Puuok!

The golden knives mercilessly stabbed Hell Gao. But he couldn't stop Hell Gao's actions. Hell Gao grabbed Grid's head with both hands and shouted.

"If you can't burn then I will crush you!"

"...!"

Peeng!

Black flames emanated from both of Hell Gao's hands and swirled crazily.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

"Kuhahahahaha!"

Even a rock would quickly be turned to sand from this heat, let alone Grid! Hell Gao laughed as he anticipated flesh and brains to splatter everywhere. He didn't see it. Grid pulled out a blue ring and put it on his finger.

"Okay?"

"Hahaha...! Huh?"

The voice of the man who should've died was heard perfectly. As Hell Gao was surprised, Grid used Blacksmith's Rage and cut off both of Hell Gao's hands with the +9 failure.

[Critical!]

[Failure's option effect is activated, causing the skill 'Bisect' to be generated.]

Seokeok!

[You have dealt 46,940 damage to the target.]

[You have cut both wrists of Hell Gao, the master of hellfire. Hell Gao's actions will be limited and his attack power and attack speed will be greatly reduced.]

"Kuaaaack!"

Hell Gao's terrible screams echoed in the wide dungeon.

Grid smiled wickedly.

"This is the second round."

Grid had accumulated a lot of combat experience and he learned how to take advantage of Doran's Ring. For example, he would wear the ring when the enemy used a powerful skill.

This maximized the effect of Doran's Ring and the Holy Light Armor. On the other hand, Hell Gao's health was reduced by three-tenths after Grid consecutively used Kill, Transcended Link, Link and Wave.

Then just in time.

Kaaang!

"Yes! Success! I gathered a fire stone!"

Peak Sword, who had been playing Satisfy for a year and a half, felt the pleasure of mining for the first time.

"Kuk...! You guys...!"

The black flames around Hell Gao's body lost more momentum. Grid didn't doubt it. The second round would be a KO win.

Chapter 166

Kaaang!

[A fire stone has been acquired.]

While Grid was struggling with Hao Gao, Peak Sword successfully managed to mine the fire stone.

'I did it!'

The red stone that clung deeply to the ground emerged, causing Peak Sword to feel a tremendous joy. It was like managing to pull out a fat lump accumulated in his nose for many years! Was it like pulling out the roots?

"Yes! Success! I gathered a fire stone!"

He played Satisfy for a year and a half, endured all types of trials, gained experience and earned the 16th rank on the unified rankings. He was able to raise his level through hunting, raiding a powerful boss or fighting against hostile forces. Now his eyes were opened to a new way of enjoying the game.

'I felt so much pleasure the moment I extracted a mineral. Should I learn the mining skill?'

Peak Sword felt a serious sense of accomplishment and waved the fire stone at Grid.

"How about it? Didn't I do well?"

Grid raised his thumb from where he was confronting Hell Gao. "Well done."

"Ohh!"

It was amazing. He felt good about receiving praise from that guy. Peak Sword was laughing when he suddenly frowned.

'No? What am I doing right now?'

He was 16th in the unified rankings and the master of the Silver Knights Guild, yet he was wagging his tail like a dog for someone at least 10 years younger than him?

'Wake up.'

He became more excited than necessary after realizing that the first legendary class, Pagma's Descendant, was a Korean. Peak Sword calmed his heart and watched Grid and Hell Gao. Grid looked relatively fine, while Hell Gao was wounded. He even had both hands cut off.

'Amazing.'

The monster who slaughtered 200 Silver Knights members with an average level of 140 was being pushed back?

'The dignity of a legendary class...'

He recalled the battle of Bairan, which caused an uproar in the world four months ago. One of the most powerful groups in Satisfy, the Tzedakah Guild, had been pushed on the defensive by the Yatan Church.

At the time, Peak Sword and his guild members gathered in a pub and predicted that the Tzedakah Guild would be wiped out. The Yatan servants Neberius and Balak were overwhelmingly strong, and were also superior in numbers, so the Tzedakah Guild seemed to have no hope.

Then a man suddenly appeared. He overturned the balance by throwing armor to Vantner, a weapon to Toon, and using the skill 'Pagma's Swordsmanship' against Neberius. Peak Sword felt his blood boil and the people filling the pub cheered in unison. It wasn't an exaggeration to say that the whole world was buzzing at that moment.

After the battle was over.

Pagma's Descendant might be armed with powerful items, but the public mocked him for having weak control. However, Peak Sword thought differently. Pagma might be an excellent swordsman, but he was fundamentally a blacksmith. It was right that Pagma's Descendant took advantage of his class traits to arm himself with excellent items. He expressed his strength in a manner appropriate for him.

And now.

The Pagma's Descendant that he met was making good use of his class characteristics. His armor and weapon were estimated to have a legendary rating, there were the fraudulent seven blades that moved on their own, and the ring that seemed to have a recovery skill. His control skills were still bad, but thanks to the power of his items, he was strong enough to be compared to a ranker.

But Hell Gao's strength was endless. He lost both hands, but he continued his onslaught against Grid. Peak Sword hurriedly swung his pickaxe again.

'Hurry. I still need to collect two fire stones.'

Grid was the new hope for South Korea, a country weak in Satisfy. Peak Sword wanted to help Grid in this raid. Grid grew so fast, that one day he would enthrall the Korean people. However, he still a lot of mountains to cross to reach that point.

“Begin the mining!”

Kaaang!Kaaang!

Peak Sword found a new fire stone and swung his pickaxe. At that moment, he was Peak Pickaxe, not Peak Sword.

“I’m worried... Worried.”

Bairan Village Castle’s resting room.

The Tzedakah Guild’s chief of staff, Toban, was anxious. The guild members who returned after hunting or work frowned at him.

“What happened? You have no spirit.”

Toban, who was grabbing his head, carefully opened his mouth. "Grid went to mine fire stones..."

“What about Grid?”

"...He told me to believe him twice.”

The first time was before leaving for Cork Island. Then there was one time after arriving at Cork Island. He clearly said it two times.

Kwaduduk!

Toban broke his nail from worry. And the guild members were in great shock.

“Grid...”

“He said to believe in him, twice?”

"Huh, that’s the worst.”

It was after the Yatan’s massive raid was prevented. Grid spend most of the four months afterwards making items, and produced a total of 142 items. Out of those 142 items, 25 were normal rated, 84 were rare, 30 were epic and 3 were unique.

Was it simply bad luck, or the operator’s agenda as Grid claimed?

In the early days of joining the guild, Grid had a relatively high probability of making high rated items and even produced two legendary items. However, he had been in a slump for the last four months.

The items he produced had a 20% higher performance than normal items, so even the rare rated items were good, but the guild members couldn’t help feeling disappointed. In particular, the guild members who received normal items shed tears of blood. A legendary blacksmith ended up creating normal rated items? Their disappointment couldn’t be expressed.

Then they noticed something that Grid said every time he produced a normal rated item. It was ‘Believe in me.’ Grid said it every time he believed he would produce a legendary item. So when the guild

members heard the words 'Believe in me,' they assumed the worst. In fact, it always produced the worst result whenever he said it.

But he said it again this time...

"Believe in me..."

Three fire stones were needed to produce the Fire Shield. Could Grid really collect three fire stones? It seemed like it might not happen. Toban was sad. His ominous feelings almost always came true.

The other guild members also expressed disappointment.

"If he fails to make the Fire Shield... Should the Phoenix Raid be delayed for the next time?"

"That's probably the case. It is unlikely for the raid to succeed if the main tank can't hold on."

It was a solemn atmosphere. After being armed with Grid's equipment, they were strong enough to easily raid the Awakened Guardian of the Forest. Now it was possible to raid higher level boss monsters.

The 4th floor of Cork Island's dungeon.

Jeureuk.

There was a steady stream of blood from Hell Gao's severed wrists.

Chiik!

There was smoke and an unpleasant smell as the blood touched the ground. Grid blocked his nose and suggested, "Why is a bad smell coming from your blood?"

"Shut up!"

Hell Gao's body was suddenly full of wounds. The body of an advanced demonkin was weaker than Hell Gao thought. In addition, the second fire stone was taken, so Hell Gao's magic power was weakening. More than half of the black flames that symbolized his power had turned to jade.

This was bad.

'I am going to suffer a disgraceful loss to a human again...!'

He thought that only Sword Saint Muller was special. But Muller had died over 100 years ago, and now a special human had appeared again. As other demons said, the potential of the human species couldn't be ignored.

'I will be ridiculed in hell if I lose to humans again.'

He couldn't give up yet.

"I will surely kill you!"

Hell Gao shouted and wielded his arms. Then he covered Grid with the blood pouring from his severed wrists.

[You have suffered 1,850 damage.]

[You have suffered 1,790 damage.]

'Damage is inflicted just from a drop of blood? This damn monster!'

The confused Grid flinched while Hell Gao burned his wounds with his blood. Then he made an expression of enormous hatred.

"I will take your soul to hell and make you my slave forever!"

Kwa kwa kwang!

Hell Gao changed the way he fought. He used his staff as his primary weapon when he had both hands, and hellfire as a secondary attack. Now that he lost both hands, he could only fight as a magician, launching hot winds and hellfire.

Pepepeng!

"Ugh!"

Grid tried to avoid the flames. He wasn't able to easily approach Hell Gao. Hell Gao thought.

'Yes, he's a swordsman, so I have the advantage when fighting at a distance.'

Hell Gao was two times weaker than when he first appeared. But by human standards, his magic power was still infinite. He kept generating hellfire at 0.3 second intervals and fired continuously, looking like a laser gun that ran on solar energy.

"Come and burn to ashes!"

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Three rays of fire that flew in a straight line! Grid was constrained by his air being obstructed and hurriedly tried to avoid it. Then the pavranium moved.

Chwachwachwachwachwa!

The seven blades gathered in front of Grid and took the shape of a triangular shield.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The golden shield collided with the flames. The shield stiffened and fell to the ground, while the hot winds hit the body behind it. Hell Gao aimed at the heart of the floundering Grid and declared.

"You shall soon die."

Kwaaaang!

[You have suffered 3,900 damage.]

[You have suffered 4,150 damage.]

[You have been hit by a lethal blow!]

[You have suffered 8,870 damage.]

“Ohh!”

Flop!

Grid lying on the ground was hit. He was very confused.

‘I was sure the 2nd round would be a KO win after I cut off his hands. Rather, he was more comfortable to deal with when swinging his staff.’

Hell Gao had certainly weakened since Peak Sword took the fire stone. The damage from hellfire had noticeably fallen. But he was still strong. His strength couldn’t be measured.

‘I have to narrow the distance...’

He could use Transcend to attack from a distance. But unfortunately, Transcend only lasted for 30 seconds. He had to save this means of attack as a trump card, so it was better to approach and attack.

However, Hell Gao controlled the hot wind while simultaneously launching the hellfire, so a method to narrow the distance didn’t easily appear.

Hwaruruk!

The wounded Grid was unable to properly control his body and fire spheres appeared around Hell Gao. Hell Gao completed 30 spheres in flash and burst out laughing.

"Kuahahaha! This is the end!"

Pepepepeong!

The 30 spheres simultaneously attacked from different orbits. It was practically impossible to defend against all the fire spheres with only seven blades.

‘I have to take some damage.’

Grid judged and threw three darts from his belt.

Pepepeng!

A fog spread out in the spot where Grid was standing. Then the 30 spheres hit the fog and exploded in unison.

Kwaaaaang!

“Ugh!”

Peak Pickaxe who was swinging his pickaxe in the corner... No, Peak Sword, fell down. It was because a huge explosion shook the dungeon. Peak Sword turned in the direction of Grid and his expression hardened.

The fog cleared and revealed the point of explosion. Grid couldn’t be seen at all.

“It can’t be...”

Had he turned into a grey light after suffering from that attack?

“This can’t be...!”

Peak Sword was frustrated. Hell Gao was delighted and laughed like crazy.

“Kuahahaha! That cockroach like man has finally been turned into ashes!”

Human flesh was weak, and couldn’t be unharmed after being bombarded with 30 hellfire spheres. Grid was armed with excellent armor and received the protection of the golden blades, but there was a limit. Hell Gao was convinced that Grid had died.

However...

“...What!?”

The laughing Hell Gao suddenly looked back. The center of the dungeon. Hell Gao was the only one standing there after Grid became ashes.

“...Pagma’s Swordsmanship.”

Grid pulled down the zip of his Hooded Zip Up and slowly appeared. Hatred and killing intent towards Hell Gao, one of the 33 great demons of hell, circled around the blue greatsword.

“Kill.”

Puooook!

A large wound was carved on Hell Gao’s false body.

Chapter 167

Exactly 24 seconds ago.

‘Damn.’

Grid stiffened as he saw Hell Gao create dozens of black spheres in an instant. Could he withstand the huge bombardment of spheres that did 3,700~4,200 damage each?

‘29, 30... Surely he doesn’t intend to throw them all at once?’

The flames shot by Hell Gao were fast and explosive. If 30 spheres were fired at once, it was almost impossible for Grid to completely defend or avoid them.

‘In the worst case, I might need to rely on my invincible passive.’

He thought realistically and changed his mind about concentrating on defense.

‘I heard that a crisis is an opportunity.’

Pepepepeng!

Grid concentrated on the 30 fireballs. He saw a face that was a mixture between a monster and a male human face. A thick smile could be seen on Hell Gao’s bizarre face beyond the flames.

'That monster, he will be off guard because he's certain that he won.'

Grid had been through countless battles and was aware of the moment of greatest weakness. He decided to boldly confront Hell Gao rather than react timidly to the current crisis.

'If I assume that I can't rely on the invincible passive, it's wiser to fight back rather than defend.'

This was a chance to overcome the crisis.

In his low level days, he had face the knight Leo of Winston. During his middle level period, it was Malacus and the Guardian of the Labyrinth. After that, it was Shay's party, the pope, the Awakened Guardian of the Forest, and Neberius.

Grid had faced all types of enemies, so his eyes sharpened.

'I have to take some damage.'

Pepepeng!

It was good if simple fog or poison fog was generated, not so good if it was an explosion. Hell Gao's vision needed to be blocked. Therefore, he prayed while throwing Kenen's darts and fog appeared.

'It is good.' Grid smiled with satisfaction and commanded the pavranium. 'Protect me as much as possible.'

The seven golden blades moved at his command. They defended as the 30 black fireballs penetrated the fog.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The golden blades showed superior mobility, but it was impossible to defend against all 30 fireballs. Some fireballs broke through the barrier of blades and hit Grid.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

[You have suffered 3,870 damage.]

[You have suffered 3,920 damage.]

[You have been hit by a lethal blow!]

[You have suffered 8,100 damage.]

"Ugh!"

He used the Divine Shield to minimize damage, but the areas that could be shielded were limited and his health fell sharply.

Gulp gulp. Grid hastily drank a potion and wore the Hooded Zip Up.

Suuuk.

The Hooded Zip Up perfectly reproduced the unique function of the invisibility cloaks made by the legendary tailor Kruger. As explosions occurred in rapid succession, Grid's body became completely invisible.

And.

"Kuahahaha! That cockroach like man has finally been turned into ashes!"

Grid equipped the Ideal Dagger and used Quick Movements to run towards Hell Gao at a fast pace. The weakened Hell Gao's detection ability was very different from when he first appeared.

[You have been detected by Hell Gao, the master of hellfire.]

[Stealth has been turned off.]

"...What!?"

Hell Gao detected Grid once the distance was narrowed to 3m, and the stealth was released.

"Pagma's Swordsmanship."

Grid had already summoned the red lightning bolt to surround Failure, used Blacksmith's Rage and hit Hell Gao's heart with his strongest skill.

"Kill!"

Puooook!

[Critical!]

[You have dealt 538,000 damage to the target.]

The red lightning, Blacksmith's Rage and the +9 Failure showed overwhelmingly dominant damage. Hell Gao's health gauge, which had lost three-tenths of its health, now fell to half. But Grid was disappointed. He was disappointed because neither the '5 Joint Attacks' skill attached to the Holy Light Gloves or Failure was activated.

'If both had been activated and there were 10 strikes, I could've killed him...'

It was a pity, but it had already passed. Grid was successful in approaching Hell Gao, so he shrugged his disappointment off.

"Cough! You bastard...!"

Hell Gao suffered damage that couldn't be overlooked anymore. His face stiffened as he sensed the danger.

Chwaack!

Grid twisted Failure that was in Hell Gao's chest and declared.

"Now it is your turn."

As the battle continued, the cooldown time of all his skills except for Transcended Link had ended. He just used Kill, but he still had Link left.

“Pagma’s Swordsmanship, Link!”

Pipit!Pipipipit!

Grid skillfully used Pagma’s Swordsmanship, and dozens of energy blades appeared.

[The level of Pagma’s Swordsmanship, Link has increased.]

[Your damage will increase. The number of times a target is hit will increase by 5 times.]

[Link Lv. 3]

A dazzling sword dance that is like the wings of a butterfly.

Deals 1,100% of your attack power to a single target.

Skill Usage Conditions: Have a sword type weapon equipped.

Skill Mana Cost: 500

Skill Cooldown Time: 100 seconds

It had been five months since he killed the pope. After that, he used Link hundreds of times, and the level finally rose. Grid smiled joyfully and Hell Gao’s face distorted horribly.

"Kuaaaack!"

[You have dealt 154,600 damage to the target.]

Hell Gao had been weakened two times, but 150,000 damage wasn’t enough to kill him. Hell Gao recovered his poise and fired flames all over the place at Grid.

"Where are you aiming?"

Grid got as close to Hell Gao as possible. He used Pagma’s Swordsmanship, Wave to cancel out the flames. Then he subsequently used Restraint and made Hell Gao unable to do anything for three seconds.

‘Looking back, the fusion of Transcended Link was only possible after Link reached level 2.

Grid’s brain rapidly spun at this moment. He stepped towards Hell Gao who was shrinking back from Restraint, and triggered two skills in succession.

‘Now that Link is level 3, is it possible to combine it with other techniques?’

He would give it a try. First, it was an attempt at fusion with the most anticipated Kill. If that didn’t work, he would try it with Wave.

“Pagma’s Swordsmanship...!”

Grid started to dance and killing intent once again gathered at the end of the greatsword. Meanwhile, Hell Gao escaped from the influence of Restraint and summoned a flame in his left hand and hot wind in his right hand, then he combined the two forces together.

'It is a technique that I can't stand again.'

Hell Gao fired the attack in a straight line.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The ground burned and the whirlwind of flames hit Grid. Then Grid's dance finished.

"Kill, Link."

If these skills failed to combine, Grid's current health would fall and his invincible passive would activate.

'Please...!'

It was less than a second. Grid hoped that the fusion of Kill and Link would be successful, and Hell Gao hoped that Grid would die.

And.

Kwajak!

Grid's Failure collided with the whirlwind of flames. The flames were swallowed up by Failure, while the light around the greatsword became more intense than before.

'I did it!'

Grid was delighted. It succeeded.

[The new skill fusion has succeeded.]

[Fusion skill 'Linked Kill' has been created.]

[Your intelligence has increased by 10 due to the successful fusion of a new skill.]

[Linked Kill]

It is a sword dance that combines hatred with the dazzling flapping of wings.

Due to the weight of Kill, the dazzling style is reduced, but the strength of Kill is overpowering.

A minimum of three to seven blows will be randomly generated that will deal 1500% damage per hit (the current damage of Kill -300%).

* This skill doesn't share a cooldown with Kill and Link.

* Please note that your stamina will be depleted if there are seven strikes.

Skill Mana consumption: 90% of the maximum mana.

Skill Cooldown Time: 1 hour.

It was a skill where the power of Kill was weakened.

It might not have compared to when 5 Joint Attacks was triggered with Kill, but the big advantage was that three strikes were always guaranteed, while it wasn't certain that 5 Joint Attacks would be triggered.

Duguen!Duguen!

Grid's heart beat wildly from joy. The first Linked Kill crushed the power of the fire whirlwind.

Jjejeong!

'He still has that much power left?'

The current Grid was clearly injured. Nevertheless, he unfolded powerful attacks in succession, so Hell Gao was forced to feel confused.

'Is he human?'

A tenacious vitality. Indeed, he was similar to Muller. Hell Gao was forced to acknowledge Grid as the blue greatsword penetrated through the remnants of the flames.

[You have suffered 215,000 damage.]

The second blow.

[You have suffered 219,800 damage.]

The third blow.

[You have suffered 214,600 damage.]

The fourth blow.

[You have suffered 220,100 damage.]

The fifth blow.

[You have suffered 218,700 damage.]

The sixth blow.

[You have suffered 219,200 damage.]

The end? No. Was it like a Chinese restaurant offering good service when it was just opened? Even if he ordered one bowl of jajangmyeon, they would give a second bowl for free as a service. Grid received a lot of service for his success in a new skill fusion.

[Failure's option effect is activated, causing the skill '5 Joint Attacks' to be generated.]

A notification window constantly popped up as Grid's attack hit Hell Gao.

[You have dealt 1,057,300 damage to the target.]

[Failure's option effect is activated, causing the skill '5 Joint Attacks' to be generated.]

[Critical!]

[You have dealt 2,230,900 damage to the target.]

“...!”

Hell Gao couldn't even scream. The black flames around him turned to jade and were then extinguished. The strongest skill was used and the option of the strongest item was activated, meaning Grid drove Hell Gao to death in an instant.

He once again told the kneeling Hell Gao.

“I am in the same class as Muller.”

Pisik.

Hell Gao nodded for the first time, “I admit it.”

He saw and felt this human called Grid grow in battle. He would eventually follow Muller's course.

“I lost. I will put off my purpose of ingesting the souls of humans to increase my strength for the moment.”

Hell Gao admitted his defeat. The body of the demonkin was destroyed and turned to fog.

At the same time,

Pepeng!Pepepeng!

The two fire stones that hadn't been mined yet exploded at Hell Gao's disappearance.

“T-The fire stones?”

Peak Sword panicked because he had been so busy watching the battle that he forgot about mining. Grid was looking at the notification windows and didn't see him.

[You have defeated Hell Gao, the master of hellfire, who seizes human souls.]

[Memphis' Egg has been acquired.]

[118,411,132 experience has been acquired.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has...]

He gained 11 levels at once. Now Grid was level 253. It was a level comparable to the top 300 rankers, but it was still the lowest among the Tzedakah Guild. Furthermore, the reward was a strange item.

"In the end, only two fire stones were mined... It's big damage."

Hell Gao was the most powerful boss he had ever met. Grid didn't receive enough rewards for the effort he put in, and he flopped to the ground in disappointment. His stamina was depleted and it was difficult to even lift one finger.

Peak Sword ran up to him. "Are you okay?"

"Am I okay?" Grid frowned and glared at Peak Sword. "What will you do if I'm not okay? Will you give me the fire stone you mined?"

"Of course." Peak Sword confidently replied and pulled out the fire stone he obtained. "I will give this to you."

The value of the fire stones were so high that it was difficult to price them. But Peak Sword's life and ranking were saved by Grid, so this was his way of showing gratitude.

"I need one more..." Grid grumbled as he grabbed the fire stone. "Sigh... I tied Hell Gao up for 10 minutes, so how did you only obtain one fire stone in that time? Perhaps your level isn't good enough... It is pretty pathetic."

"..."

Peak Sword was 16th on the unified rankings.

Chapter 168

Reality and Satisfy.

The 16th ranked Peak Sword had built a successful life in both worlds.

'There is someone who actually treats me like this... Grid, you're the first man since I went to the army 17 years ago.'

Peak Sword couldn't adapt to Grid's treatment of him. But he didn't feel bad. He was ecstatic on the drug called patriotism and Grid seemed beautiful, no matter how he acted.

"Were there any good items?"

"Not at all." Grid pulled out an egg. "This is the only thing that dropped. I didn't even get one silver."

"A bean?"

"It's an egg."

"What? That's an egg?"

Peak Sword was surprised. The size was two times smaller than a quail egg, and it looked more like a bean or small bead. Grid shared the details of Memphis' Egg.

[Memphis's Egg]

Memphis' egg.

Weight: 1

Peak Sword frowned.

"Hah... It's really an egg? If so, is this a pet egg?"

Hell Gao, the master of hellfire was a formidable adversary. The item he dropped couldn't be ordinary. Peak Sword didn't doubt that a monster with the name of Memphis would hatch. But Grid thought differently.

"Do you know what a memphis is?"

"No? It's the first time I've heard of it."

"Look. It's impossible to grasp what type of pet it is."

Satisfy's pets gave their owners various effects. In rare cases, there were pets that increased the amount of experience or drop rate of items, so the users' interest in pets was very high. South Korea broadcasted several Satisfy pet related programs, so Grid knew the basic information about pets.

However, the name Memphis was unfamiliar.

Even more.

"If this is a pet, there should be a hatching method in the item description."

Grid had a point. All pets had a brief explanation of the hatching method. However, Memphis' Egg didn't describe how to hatch it. Rather, it only had a short description of 'Memphis' egg.'

"Even if you are right that it is a pet, it's useless if I don't know how to hatch it."

Peak Sword agreed, "That's right. Even if that bean is an egg, it looks like you'll never see what is inside."

Grid frowned and put Memphis' Egg back into his inventory.

"I'll ask the guild members to research the identity of the egg."

"I will also use my network to find out."

"Thank you."

Grid didn't have any expectations. This egg was more likely to be a cooking ingredient than a pet.

'Considering that Hell Gao is such a strong guy... Eating it might be similar to an elixir that permanently raises my stats.'

For ordinary users, elixirs that permanently raised stats were very rare. But in the case of production class users like Grid, they didn't feel a huge need for elixirs because producing items raised their stats.

'That damn Hell Gao. He should've dropped equipment instead of this.'

Didn't the pope drop three legendary items, despite being much weaker than Hell Gao? Grid had been hoping that Hell Gao would drop legendary items. But the reality was the worst, so he felt down.

'I don't know exactly what the item is, so I can't sell it.'

As he lay on the floor and looked up at the ceiling, Peak Sword held out a hand.

"Get up. I want to invite you to my castle. You can eat delicious food and rest there."

Grid questioned him, "Why are you acting so favorable towards me? Are you hoping for something? I didn't lie about the item dropped by Hell Gao. I can't give you anything."

"I don't want anything. Didn't you save my life? I'm just grateful for that."

"But didn't I steal your guild's prey as a result? You must be angry."

"In the first place, it was a battle that we couldn't have succeeded with our strength. So I don't feel like it was taken away. It's true that you walked into an area controlled by our guild, but aren't you a Korean? I am happy and grateful to have discovered that the first legendary class is a Korean."

"I see."

Grid smiled and grabbed Peak Sword's hand. At that moment, Peak Sword made a cold expression. Grid stopped.

'Did he really have ulterior motives?'

Peak Sword shouted.

"Logout!"

"What are you saying?"

"The Sakura Guild is attacking!"

The resurrection point of the Silver Knights members was at Cork Castle. Therefore, the guild members wiped out by Hell Gao resurrected at Cork Castle. Peak Sword had commanded them to wait there and not come back.

But was someone a mole? The guild discovered that the Sakura Guild somehow knew the situation and came here, where only a minimum of troops guarded the entry. They had already reached the 2nd floor.

"Those guys received information that we were challenging the Hell Gao raid today and waited."

"What is the Sakura Guild?"

It was a power in Satisfy that Grid had no clue about. Peak Sword gave a brief description.

"They are one of the three guilds that represents Japan. Unlike the other two guilds, they are nationalists who are very malicious. Even the Japanese users avoid them."

"They have a grudge against your guild and came here to hurt you, is that right?"

"Yes." Peak Sword nodded and placed a hand on the sword at his waist. He took a fighting posture and declared. "Log out first."

"What about you?"

“I will never run away from guys like that. The guild members are coming, so I will hold on until then.”

Peak Sword denounced the Sakura Guild as nationalists, but he also seemed quite nationalistic.

‘I am tired.’

Grid tried to logout.

But.

[The remnants of the great demon Hell Gao’s magic power is scattered into the atmosphere. It is impossible to logout due to this disturbance.]

“Shit.”

This damn monster was screwing with him even after death. A chill went down Grid’s spine. His stamina was depleted after Linked Kill, and only 60 points had been recovered. With 60 stamina, he couldn’t fight for even one minute. This was a huge crisis, because stamina was a different concept from health.

‘My invincible passive might activate, but if my stamina is zero, I can’t move a single finger and will eventually die.’

Potions to restore stamina didn’t exist. Only rest was required to restore stamina, but that was slow. The speed could be slightly increased by eating. In other words, this was bad. Grid hardly ever felt the constraints of stamina thanks to his unusually high persistence stat, making this crisis unfamiliar to Grid.

He urgently shoved beef jerky into his mouth as he asked, “What is the Sakura Guild’s power? What is the level of their strongest users? How many minutes can you hold on by yourself? When will your guild members arrive?”

Peak Sword had encountered countless crises while playing Satisfy. He was able to explain calmly, in contrast to the agitated Grid.

“The Sakura Guild has 180 people. Their master Yoshimura is 2nd in the archer rankings and 98th on the unified rankings. Apart from him, there are eight more rankers in the top 300.”

‘Isn’t this formidable?’

Grid’s expression stiffened. Peak Sword made a grim prediction.

“The guild members will take 15 minutes to get here and the amount of time I can hold up alone... If I am being generous, it’s seven minutes.”

Kwaduduk.

Peak Sword finished his explanation and shouted to Grid.

“Don’t think about helping! It is a matter that doesn’t have anything to do with you! Go ahead and logout!”

“...I can’t logout.”

Originally, it was impossible to logout in raid rooms. But that was only when the boss was present. There were few cases where a user couldn't logout after the boss had died. So Peak Sword misunderstood.

"Grid... Do you want to help me because I'm also Korean? While you aren't in a perfect state? Hah, you are a true Korean..."

"No, don't talk such nonsense! What drivel are you saying when I really can't logout? I can't logout! I really can't!"

At that moment, the Sakura Guild came pouring down the stairs. Peak Sword gulped and continued to babble nonsense.

"I would like to encourage you to logout. Don't worry. It isn't shameful to logout in front of enemies."

'Why? Ah, this really sucks.'

Grid didn't know. The man Peak Sword admired since childhood was Admiral Yi Sunshin.

"How dare you guys! I will turn you into a river of blood today!"

"Bah! Peak Sword! You're the one who will shed blood on this earth today, not us! I'll pay you back for taking Takeshima from us!"

A small man emerged from among the Sakura Guild members and shouted. It was Yoshimura, the best archer after Jishuka and 98th on the unified rankings.

'It's like a drama.'

Grid was able to grasp the atmosphere of the two people with one glance. The Silver Knights Guild and the Sakura Guild. It was clear that the two people enjoyed the Korea-Japan war in Satisfy more than anyone else.

Yoshimura declared, "Since you're alive, I guess you succeeded in the Hell Gao raid? You, I don't know the jackpot you received, but that joy is short-lived. I will take away everything you obtained."

Peak Sword yelled. "Try it! And this is Cork Island, so stop calling it Takeshima!"

"Bah! You still can't grasp the situation!"

Yoshimura made a sly smile, like someone from a Japanese historical drama! He pointed fingers covered in calluses as he commanded his men.

"Kill that damn Korean person." (TL: The word Yoshimura uses is actually more like Joseon person, with Joseon being a name for a Korean kingdom in the past. It basically means Korean person but it was first used by the Japanese during the Japanese colonial period of Japan. It isn't exactly derogatory, but it is a term only used by Japanese and Koreans don't like it because of the context.)

"Ohhh!"

Several months ago, at the time of the contest over Cork Island. Peak Sword had caused terrible agony to the Sakura Guild. It was due to Peak Sword that they lost Cork Island, and many guild members died and lost experience. This was a perfect chance to pay back the grudge of that time.

Peak Sword was 'alone' so their morale skyrocketed. Peak Sword pulled out his sword from the sheath.

"Draw Sword, annihilate."

Multiple lights flashed. The eight knights of the Sakura Guild, who had been rushing at the front, vomited and collapsed.

"Your skills haven't gone rusty!"

This was the dignity of the 16th rank that made level 150 knights fall into a critical state with one blow. Yoshimura truly admired it. But there wasn't the slightest bit of tension in his expression. Only eight out of the 180 guild members were injured, so the situation didn't change.

On the other hand, Grid hadn't seen Peak Sword's swordsmanship and was amazed.

Then he heard a strange voice.

-Hungry.

"...?"

-I want to eat.

"..."

It was the voice of a young boy or girl. It wasn't a hallucination. Where did this voice, filled with a strong greed, come from? Then a notification window flashed in front of Grid.

[A memphis, the first demonic beast of hell, has hatched due to his greed for human souls.]

[You are the first user in Satisfy to become the master of a demonic beast from hell!]

[Title, 'Man who has Touched Hell' has been acquired.]

[Health has increased by 3,000 points.]

[Demonic power stat has opened.]

"What?"

"Huh?"

Grid made a surprised noise at the notification windows and Yoshimura was surprised to hear it.

"W-What? That guy?"

At this point, all of his followers except for him were struggling with Peak Sword 10m ahead. Yoshimura was nervous when he suddenly heard someone else's voice near him. Then he flinched. A long tail suddenly protruded from empty space! There was an enormous gaping mouth?

"H-Hik?"

Yoshimura reflexively tried to shoot his bow, but it was already too late. His body was swallowed by that huge mouth.

[You have lost a part of your soul to the memphis.]

[You are more likely to be affected by status conditions.]

[There will be a 50% decline in your main stats for 3 seconds.]

Suuk.

Yoshimura was spat out after being swallowed, and saw the image of a cat. It was a typical Persian cat. However, it was black, had a small horn on its forehead and small devil wings on its back.

The cat licked its paws and winked.

“Hello!”

The cat with a horn and wings was talking? In particular, the color of its fur was attractive. It was black all over, except for its four paws which were white as snow.

“K-Kawaii...”

Yoshimura was a cat lover, so he couldn't help feeling thrilled. He wanted to bring this cat into reality and raise it at home. Then the cat revealed its canines.

“Delicious!”

“Y-You?”

Yoshimura's face turned pale. It was due to the appearance of a person behind the cat. There was no one there a little while ago, but he appeared like he always existed and naturally stabbed with a black greatsword.

“Keok!”

It was a surprise attack. Yoshimura's agility was decreased by 50% so he was slow to move, while his opponent was too fast. Yoshimura lost two-thirds of his health from a single strike and fell into a confused state.

“Master!”

The Sakura Guild noticed the crisis of their master and belatedly shifted their gaze. They were able to see it. A flying cat demon. Then a black-haired man in red armor and a gold tail was cutting down their guild master.

“T-This is ridiculous...!”

Was it so easy to kill someone that was ranked 98th on the unified rankings? It was hard just going against Peak Sword. How could they deal with that monster as well? The Sakura Guild lost their willpower and retreated.

Grid and Peak Sword didn't chase after them. Meanwhile, the cat with an enlarged belly walked around Grid and rejoiced.

“My master is a killer ~~ my master is a killer ~~ killer~~ nyang!”

The cat singing the eerie song innocently was the first demonic beast of hell, memphis. It was the worst pet that stole some of the stats from the souls he ate and temporarily gave them to his master.

Grid faced an unfamiliar notification window after killing Yoshimura.

[Your demonic power has increased by one.]

[Demonic Power]

You can communicate with demonic beasts. The higher the number, the more likely you are to enter hell.

* Stat points can't be distributed to this stat.

"I want to go to heaven."

The word 'hell' wasn't very good.

Chapter 169

Hell? He never wanted to go there.

'Won't there be more guys like Hell Gao in hell?'

The demons were too strong. He also didn't want to fight them again, because the dropped items were too bad.

'No, it was a misunderstanding that the dropped items were bad.'

Grid watched the grinning memphis who was licking his fur with a red tongue.

'An amazing pet dropped. Hell Gao was the most powerful boss I've faced. I might've only obtained two fire stones, but I was able to get a tremendous treasure in return for raiding him.'

[Memphis]

The most powerful species among the thousands of demonic beasts inhabiting hell.

As an adult, their fighting abilities are superior to the higher-ranked demonkin, so they are the favorite of the 33 great demons.

But they are a species in danger of extinction, due to their lack of breeding ability.

Their natural habitat is hell.

'I managed to obtain such a precious pet and I ignored it.'

Grid reprimanded himself and brought up the status window of his pet.

Name: Not Set

Level: 1 (0/200)

Affinity: 0/100

Health: 5,000/5,000

Physical Attack Power: 60 Magic Attack Power: 30

Defense: 50 Magic Resistance: 80

Attribute: Dark

Status: Narcissistic

(As soon as I was born, I ate a human soul with my own strength! I am the best demonic beast of hell! Nyang!)

-Current Skills List-

[Fluidization]

When attacked, the body can become fluid like a slime to minimize damage. However, the damage from some attribute magic might become even greater.

[Soul Ingestion Lv. 1]

Has the ability to take away half of the target's highest stats and transfer it to your master.

Skill Cooldown Time: Your own decision.

[Scratch Lv. 1]

Your paws will attack and poison the target.

Skill Cooldown Time: Whenever you like.

'He gained zero experience points from defeating Yoshimura, so is it impossible to gain experience from PK? Anyway, his abilities at level 1 are terrific. The skill called Soul Ingestion is a complete scam.

The fact that the skill cooldown time depended on the memphis was quite annoying, but he would take it step by step. Grid laughed with joy.

"Master, do you like me? Nyang!"

The memphis was great. Grid made a pleasant expression as he looked at the cat.

'Sehee likes cute things like this. I'm worried because she has no hobby other than studying... Should I buy her a capsule?'

The memphis' eyes in the shape of a '人' looked sweet and cute even to Grid. He thought about buying his little sister a capsule, because he wanted to show her the memphis. Grid quickly nodded.

"Yes, I like you."

"Of course you do! I am elegant, beautiful, and powerful. I am the best demonic beast of hell! Nyang!"

Pisik.

The memphis' big and round eyes narrowed. Then he sniffed and spoke words that stabbed at Grid's heart.

"But I don't like Master."

"Eh? Why?"

"You are ugly! I don't like you!"

"..."

"Take a look twice~ can't~ unsee~ it~~ nyang!"

Recently, Grid hadn't been hearing that he was ugly. He had built up confidence, so there wasn't anyone who became sick or tried to run away when he smiled at them. Therefore, he was shocked to hear that he was ugly from a cat.

Then the memphis tried to comfort him. "Don't worry! I won't abandon you because you're ugly! You can be ugly! Master just needs to entertain me!"

"..."

The cat should honor and serve his master, yet he was asking for his master to entertain him?

'This damn cat, does he not know the meaning of the words Master?'

Grid's expression distorted while Peak Sword laughed at the sight.

"It looks like a cat, but its nature is different from a cat. Won't you be struggling in the future?"

"Well... I can tolerate some things if I have this pet."

The first way to build affinity with a pet was to name it. Grid worried about what he should call the memphis.

'If it was a dog, not a cat with wings, the name Dog would be perfect...'

Was there a name he could give to this prideful cat? Grid thought of an appropriate name.

"Slave."

"Nyang?"

"Your name is slave."

"Kyaak!"

Padak padak!

The memphis flapped his wings hard around Grid and bristled.

"Master's naming sense sucks! How can a noble beast of hell be a slave? Master is crazy! Nyang!"

Grid was surprised to see that the memphis had even extended his claws.

'This cat doesn't know the meaning of the word master, but it knows the meaning of slave?'

If affinity entered into the negatives then the pet could escape. Grid wanted to prevent the worst so he quickly changed the name.

"You heard wrong. It isn't slave, it is Noe, Noe." (TL: Slave in Korean is pronounced like Noye)

"Noe?" The memphis was confused. "What does Noe mean? Nyang?"

Grid replied roughly. "A slave is a slave... Noe means you are not a slave.... That is what it means."

"Oh...! Ohhhh!"

The memphis' wild eyes became lanterns again. As a demonic beast of hell, he had a lot of knowledge after being born, but he was still just a kitten. He felt like there was something wonderful and cool about Grid's words. And then...

"Good! I am Noe! Nyang!"

He felt better and rubbed his cheeks against Grid. Grid laughed at the poor little guy.

"Okay! With this, your name is Noe!"

[Do you want to set the memphis' name to 'Noe'?]

'Yes.'

[The memphis' name has been set to Noe.]

[Affinity with Noe has risen by 5.]

The memphis raised a paw to his engorged belly and shouted.

"You are Master and I am Noe!"

"Correct."

Grid made a serious expression and raised his thumb. Memphis. No, Noe was satisfied! He laughed. Peak Sword saw this and clicked his tongue.

'Giving that name to a demonic beast...'

Grid truly wasn't an ordinary person. After that, they left the dungeon and headed for Cork Castle.

"Ohh! The return of the heroes!"

"You cut down Yoshimura?"

The guild members praised Grid and Peak Sword, who had defeated Hell Gao and the Sakura Guild. They tried to question Grid, but were stopped by Peak Sword.

'He didn't register in the rankings, so he probably doesn't want the public to know that he is Pagma's Descendant.'

Peak Sword had keen insight as the head of an organization, so he didn't spill Grid's identity. He highlighted that they succeeded in the Hell Gao raid because of the fire stones weakness.

During the night.

Grid enjoyed a banquet and built up a friendship with Peak Sword and the Silver Knights Guild. Some guild members caused a fuss after they became drunk, but fortunately it ended without anything serious happening.

The next day. In the early morning, Peak Sword carefully asked Grid who was preparing to leave.

"You aren't participating in the National Competition this year?"

Grid nodded. "A strange woman put down my name on the list of participants, but I have no intention of participating. I don't want to expose my identity, and there isn't much merit to participating."

"Yes. But I hope that you change your mind next year. As a man, fighting for the honor of your country isn't a bad experience... I will participate next year, so let's join together."

"I will think about it then. As a reservist, I am already in the arduous position of striving for the security of our country."

Grid went out to the terrace. He savored the smell of salt on the wind and told Peak Sword.

"Please let me know if Hell Gao responds normally during the next cycle. I need one more fire stone."

"I understand. But as I said yesterday, Hell Gao probably won't appear for a while. He's likely to be replaced by other high ranking demonkin."

"I guess I'll have to look forward to it. Then I'm going now."

Grid immediately used Fly. Then he flew away from the island and disappeared into the horizon. Peak Sword watched Grid and thought.

'The greatsword with fraudulent attack power, the golden blades, the invisibility cloak and now the boots with Fly magic attached to them... Amazing. This game truly is about items.'

To be honest, he was really envious.

'I want to obtain items like that soon.'

Then Grid's voice entered his ears.

-If you have a request to produce an item, please contact me. I will add you to the schedule. Of course, it's a paid service.

"Ohh...!"

He could request the production of an item from a legendary blacksmith! Peak Sword shook with joy.

-Thank you Grid!

The two people rapidly became closer after sharing secrets.

“Grid!”

Toban was waiting at Khan’s smithy as Grid returned after six days. Grid’s face, which had been happy since obtaining Noe, stiffened as soon as he saw Toban.

"Good work! Did you obtain the fire stones?"

Grid looked at Toban’s expectant expression and pulled out two fire stones.

“...I am lacking one.”

“Kuk...!”

Toban had already predicted this situation since Grid said ‘Believe in me.’ However, he couldn’t help feeling disappointed as it was proven true. Grid apologized to the frustrated Toban.

"I’m sorry. I did my best, but Hell Gao was too strong. It was impossible to focus on mining."

Toban panicked. "Why are you apologizing? Is it something you should be apologizing for? I’m just grateful that you tried."

To think he would apologize. Grid really had changed. He felt like a completely different Grid compared to the one Toban first met.

‘Can people mature while playing the game?’

Anyone could become strong if they levelled up. That was all. The level up system wasn’t one designed for people to grow internally. So how could Grid change in this way?

Toban thought it was a miracle. "In the past four months, Vantner had put his stat points in stamina and he can now play the role of tanker. Even if I don’t have the Fire Shield, there’s a chance we can succeed in the Phoenix Raid with him. So don’t worry about it."

"Then I’m glad. I will keep these fire stones for the Fire Shield production."

"Yes, thank you. By the way, why did you ignore Jishuka’s whisper?"

“Jishuka?” Grid was confused. "Jishuka never whispered me?"

“On the day you left for Cork Island, Jishuka kept whispering to you, but there was no response."

Grid looked through his memories and nodded.

"Ah, I was busy with flying that day and ignored some whispers. It might’ve included Jishuka’s whispers. But why was she trying to contact me?"

“She wanted to ask for your home address..."

“My home?"

“She came to South Korea and wanted to meet you."

“Hrmm..."

Grid thought about it and was sad to miss the opportunity. The guild members who came to South Korea because of this National Competition was Jishuka, Pon and Regas, so it was a chance to meet all of them.

'I definitely want to meet them... If I don't meet them this time, I might not get another chance?'

Wouldn't he regret it someday if he missed the chance to appreciate Jishuka's fantastic body, who made hundreds of millions of won for taking pictures for a few hours? Grid checked the time.

"It will be the second day of events in reality. What events is Jishuka participating in?"

"Target processing and the siege. And it seems like the last one is treasure hunting."

"The second day... It is the day with target processing and siege."

The National Competition was everywhere when he turned on the TV, so Grid couldn't help memorizing the schedule.

"Maybe I should go there."

He said goodbye to Toban and logged out.

Chapter 170

The first day of the First Satisfy National Competition opened with the expectations of the world. The crowd cheered as the boss raid and labyrinth breakthrough proceeded.

There was nothing unusual. The United States, Canada and France were strong candidates for the championship. The three countries received medals. In particular, the 2nd ranked Zibal, the 3rd ranked Chris and the 8th ranked Bondre were remarkable.

Zibal participated in the boss raid. He played the perfect role of a defender and led his team calmly, allowing the United States to be more stable and quicker at the raid than any other country.

On the other hand, Bondre participated in the labyrinth breakthrough. He grasped the structure of the labyrinth quicker than anyone else and gave his country, France, a medal.

Finally, Chris participated in both events. As the leader of the largest guild, the Canadian had excellent leadership and succeeded in the boss raid after the United States. He also broke through the labyrinth. Based on his overwhelming combat power, he was able to defeat other rankers and break through the labyrinth after Bondre.

As a result, the United States and France got one gold medal each. Canada had two silver medals.

The Canadian people were frustrated by such results. Players could only participate in a maximum of three events, so Canada was desperate at not winning a gold medal despite the fact that Chris, Canada's strongest player, had already participated in two events.

In the end, most people predicted that the two countries competing for the general championship would be the United States and France.

Today was the second day. People were paying attention to two countries other than the United States and France. South Korea and Brazil. Who were the most beautiful women in the world? If you asked any person, they would say two names.

Yura and Jishuka. Billions of people anticipated their competition in today's target processing match.

"A long description isn't needed. Jishuka is the expert archer, expert archer. She is Satisfy's best archer. Of course she will win the target processing."

"I think Yura will win. Yura's ability to control magic power has always been well known. Her magic casting speed and accuracy are second to none. She has the ability to hit the targets."

"What? There is a limitation that she must chant the spells in order to activate the magic. Arrows are much faster than magic. Jishuka's arrows will penetrate all the targets before magic is cast."

"Hrmm, you don't know. Don't forget that the range of magic is much wider than arrows. While an arrow will penetrate through a few targets, Yura's magic will destroy dozens of targets."

Yura had maintained the 5th ranking since Satisfy opened. Jishuka started Satisfy half a year later than others but she was 13th on the unified rankings. In today's target processing, they were the ones who would win gold and silver.

The hundreds of thousands of spectators and hundreds of millions of viewers around the world predicted so. However, the opinions of the experts were different.

『 It can't be overlooked that 17 countries are participating in the National Competition. 』

『 Unless the players from other countries are stupid, they will focus on Yura and Jishuka. 』

『 Unfortunately, the target processing match isn't a solo exhibition. It's a contest of pairs. One person will focus on handling the targets, while the other one has to protect their teammate. But Korea and Brazil are countries weak in Satisfy, so they don't have the capacity to protect Yura or Jishuka. Unfortunately, it's painful, but they will certainly be excluded. 』

The rules for target processing were simple.

The S.A. Group designated nine uninhabited islands for the National Competition. Two representatives of each country would be placed on the uninhabited island called 'Tira.'

Each representative had to destroy small targets 5cm in diameter that were moving at a speed of 40m per second. Each target would give points, and the players themselves could be attacked and logged out.

Destroying one target gave one point, and no additional points were gained by logging out another user. The country that earned a total of 150 points first would win.

『 Before the event starts, let's take a look at a map of Tira. The area is 67.21km, slightly smaller than Ulleungdo, and there are two mountains standing 589m high in the centre of the island. The island is made up of dense forests, and there are areas where monsters spawn and deep cliffs, so the participants need to be careful. 』

『 Is there a point where the targets are? 』

『 No. There are a total of 1,500 targets distributed evenly throughout the island, and they continue to move. The targets are small, fast and have various movement patterns, so it is very difficult to destroy them while the enemies are interfering. 』

『 I heard that the colors of the targets vary. Are all points equal, regardless of the color? 』

『 That's right. But there is one exception. It's the gold target. Unlike the other targets, destroying the gold target will give the player 50 points. Therefore, the gold target is what we should pay attention to in this competition. It is an important target that will help a team win. However, it moves 10 times faster than normal targets... It will be very difficult to shoot at it. 』

『 10 times faster is 400m per second? Isn't that similar to the speed of a bullet fired by a pistol? How can it be destroyed? Since the targets have 100% resistance to status conditions, isn't it impossible to restrain the targets' movements with magic? 』

『 A target that is smaller than a human and faster than bullets. It's impossible in reality, although Satisfy is different. Isn't Satisfy an impossible world? Maybe Jishuka can easily handle the gold target? 』

『 As we are speaking, the players are entering. 』

Seoul Olympic Stadium. The hundreds of thousands of spectators welcomed the 33 participants who headed to the capsule room in the middle of the stadium. That's right. There were 33 people, not 34. All the countries had two people participating, except for South Korea, who only had Yura.

The crowd belatedly realized the situation.

"What? Yura doesn't have a partner?"

"Won't she be at a disadvantage if she joins alone?"

"Ohh! South Korea! What are you doing?"

"South Korea must be crazy! Are you going to bully Goddess Yura now? Huh? You deserve a scolding!"

There was booing from the stands.

Inside the capsule room. The players started laughing.

"South Korea has no one except for Yura. The second person who would participate would just be trash, so Yura has probably given up."

"I feel sorry for her."

"In the first place, it is just significant that South Korea managed to participate in this National Competition. To be honest, it was almost a miracle that South Korea was able to put its name on the list of participating counties. They should be satisfied with just that."

"Indeed... South Korea doesn't have anyone except for Yura and Peak Sword. Peak Sword isn't even participating in this competition."

"It is funny. How was South Korea able to participate in the National Competition? Wouldn't it be difficult for them to do well in the selection quests?"

"The host country is South Korea and S.A. is a Korean company. There was probably some manipulation."

"Maybe Yura entertained them? Kilkil."

Everyone was gossiping and murmuring. But Yura had a unconcerned expression on her face. She prepared to enter the capsule without caring about anyone else.

A British representative approached her. It was Regas. He was unable to hide his uncomfortable tone as he asked Yura.

"Miss Yura, why are you participating alone? It would've been hard originally, but now that you're fighting alone? Surely you aren't giving up on the competition like everyone else said?"

Regas had moderately accurate Korean pronunciation. He had studied hard to learn Korean. But there was a sense of stiffness. In order to ease his efforts, Yura replied in fluent English.

"I don't know the words 'giving up.' It might be hard when fighting alone, but I will surely win. So don't worry."

Yura was beautiful and 5th on the unified rankings. She was a remarkable commodity. Most of Satisfy's rankers had been exposed to the media. This was the first time they met directly, but Regas had seen interviews of her and knew her personality.

"You mean it. You really plan to win by yourself? But is it possible? I don't understand why you are playing alone without a partner."

"My partner can't be contacted."

"Partner...?"

What was this?

'Her teammate...!'

A representative couldn't be contacted? They were the worst. The angry Regas turned his gaze to the capsule next to Yura's capsule. Then he was surprised to see the participant ID on the badge attached to the capsule.

"...Grid? Grid was supposed to be the one to participate in the target processing with you?"

"Grid-ssi didn't agree. I registered him as a participant without telling him. I don't blame him if he doesn't come. Rather, Grid will probably grumble since I acted arbitrarily."

'Does Yura know Grid's identity? So she wanted to depend on Grid?'

Certainly, South Korea would get a high ranking if Grid participated in the National Competition. But it was regrettable. Regas was a fellow guild member, so he knew that Grid wasn't willing to participate in the National Competition.

"...It will be a struggle. The British team won't attack the lone Korean team."

Regas said with a grim expression on his face, while Yura sent him a taunting smile.

"You might get hurt if you ignore a lone woman."

"..."

This was truly the confidence of a top 5 player. Regas reminded himself.

'That's right. There is no weak person here.'

Everyone who participated in the National Competition... There might be gaps between them, but they were excellent representatives of each country. Regas was reminded of that thanks to Yura. He was delighted to be able to compete with the strongest players.

Meanwhile, Jishuka was pouting over at the Brazilian team.

'What? Grid isn't coming?'

It was a large shock when Grid ignored her whispers in Satisfy. However, she didn't despair because of her strong mental state. She grasped all the events that Grid was signed up to in the National Competition.

She was looking forward to seeing him in the target processing event. She hoped she could meet Grid. But in the end, Grid didn't come. Her disappointment couldn't be hidden.

'Really... I can't meet him despite being in South Korea?'

This was the first time she was interested in the opposite sex. She wanted to see his face, but it was too hard. It seemed too much when she was a star.

"I am angry." But she needed to separate her priorities. She calmed down and ordered her partner, Samuel. "We will enter the forest as soon as we log into the game."

Samuel had the strongest fighting power among the remaining Brazilian users, but his overall ranking was very low. Samuel questioned her.

"As an archer, isn't it better for you to occupy the top of a mountain? Isn't it easier to snipe the enemies from a high place?"

"On the contrary, it is easier to become a target. It isn't just one team participating, but 17. We'll be attacked if we stand out in the beginning. Let's hide as much as possible until the enemies are annihilated."

"Indeed...!"

Jishuka was the leader of the Tzedakah Guild, a strong group in Satisfy. She was much smarter than Samuel, so he vowed to always obey her orders. Then all the players entered their capsules.

After a while.

The large screens installed all around the stadium started to show Satisfy. 33 players appeared on the small but lushly forested island of Tira. They were logged in at regular intervals, so they could move quickly to secure their safety. Most teams ran to occupy the top of the mountains, but some teams were hiding in the forest like the Brazilian team.

Then Yura aimed at magic spell at the small targets flying around in the sky.

“Dark Storm.”

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

“...!”

It was truly an overwhelming sight. One-fifth of the forest that made up the island was swept away by the storm and completely destroyed. The commentators shouted in a trembling voice.

『 The South Korean team has acquired 28 points! The Italian team has been logged out! 』

“What...?”

The crowd was shocked and fell silent. The players participating in the game were also confused.

“What? Why are the Italian people dead?”

“They seem to have fallen off a cliff because of the storm.”

“It’s crazy.”

“Wow, look at the forest. What type of magic is that? How high is her magic power?”

“Indeed... It’s true that she’s the Eighth Servant.”

The 5th place on the unified rankings was a special place. Since Satisfy opened, many rankers tried their best, but the 5th rank never changed. It was because the wall of Yura blocking them was too high and solid. The 5th place wall was insurmountable.

When they actually faced her, it was really great. But they weren’t afraid.

‘We are also strong.’

Right now, she was just a lamp in front of the wind.

The waiting room of the United States team. Zibal smiled as he watched the live relay on the monitors.

“She is choosing a quick victory. Indeed, she’s a girl that I acknowledge.”

In the first place, she was outnumbered. If they enemies allied together and dragged out the time, Yura would be helpless. She planned to win before the other teams could block her. She judged that it was wiser to move fast and hit hard.

“But Yura. You would do well not to ignore the participants. Everyone is wise and strong.”

Zibal was sure. Yura would soon meet her end. This was her limit, despite her 5th rank.

At the same time.

"The sound of the shouts are amazing."

Youngwoo arrived at the entrance to the stadium.