

Overgeared 31

Chapter 31

"Khan, I heard the rumour. But...you aren't drinking?"

Kaaang!Kaaang!

It happened when I was working hard raising my blacksmith skills in the smithy. Khan's friend arrived and started talking.

"Not drinking? What are you saying?"

"No, if you're sober, then why are you hanging out with this unimpressive newbie every day? Tsk tsk. At first glance, he looks like someone who is ignorant of the world."

I was referred to as an 'unimpressive newbie' by this damn bastard. This damn bastard had been talking ever since he entered the smithy.

"Old Man, if you stopped drinking because of this person..."

I placed strength in the hand holding my hammer. A rapidly rising killing instinct! Khan noticed that the hammer in my hand was shaking and hurriedly told his friend.

"Hey, shut up. You're mistaken."

"Mistaken?"

"Yes, mistaken. That young man might have a garbage-like appearance, but you shouldn't judge a person from their outer appearance. That young man is actually a big person."

Garbage-like appearance? Did Khan always think like that about me? I felt betrayed.

Kwang!Kwang!

I seethed with anger and hammered the steel with more strength. Then I suddenly looked at myself. I had levelled up from the gangsters, but I was still only level 21. Since both my armor and weapon were left in the warehouse, I was just wearing beginner clothes.

The criteria that an NPC used to judge users was their level, equipment and reputation. I didn't have any equipment, my level was low and my reputation was low, so I naturally looked like crap to the NPCs.

'What about the reputation I gained when I killed the gangsters?'

As I had some doubts, I listened to Khan and his friend's conversation.

"You don't believe it? Don't be deceived by his appearance and watch his techniques closely. That isn't the normal skill for a blacksmith. Isn't it? And this is a secret, but this young man took care of Veil's gang alone."

"Uhuh! What nonsense are you talking? Yes, I admit that his blacksmithing technique is great now that I've seen it with my own eyes. That young man seems moderately good, unlike his appearance. But

taking care of Veil's gang alone? Aren't they the fiercest outlaws in Winston? It's impossible! How could a blacksmith take them out alone?"

"I saw it directly. Have you seen any of Veil's gang on the street today? Aren't they missing? It was all done by this young man."

"Huhu... this friend should really drink less. If this is true, shouldn't his reputation have already spread?"

Khan clicked his tongue. "Think about it. If rumors spread that this young man defeated Veil, the Mero Company wouldn't leave him alone. So why bother spreading it? There are no rumors because I was the only witness. Therefore, his reputation is still unknown."

"Well, you were the one who witnessed it. Is that young man so great? Huhut, now that I'm looking closely, doesn't he seem rather dignified?"

I see. There were no rumors that I defeated Veil's group, so the effect of my reputation hadn't spread yet.

"Khan! Are you here?"

At that moment, a group of people entered the smithy. They were holding flyers in their hands. A middle aged person showed Khan the flyer and asked, "Is this true?"

Khan verified the contents of the flyer and nodded. "That's right."

The people were agitated. What was this about? I was intrigued, so I moved closer and examined the details of the flyer.

'Ohu.'

(The Mero Company will compete with Blacksmith Khan in an item production game. The reason that we chose to do this is because we respect Khan as a human and admire his blacksmith skills. If the Mero Company loses to Khan in this game, our company will help Khan keep his smithy by paying off his debt. On the other hand, the smithy will get transferred to us if we win, but we will leave the operating rights to Khan. A coexistence with the residents of Winston is our ultimate goal. The date of the game will be announced in the near future, so please pay attention to it.)

These words were printed on the flyers that the people were carrying. I could feel that the day of the competition was steadily approaching.

'Heh. I'm not even the slightest bit nervous. No matter how skilled the blacksmith hired by the Mero Company is, I am Pagma's Descendant!'

As Pagma's Descendant, I had the 'Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill.' Even if the Mero Company hired a blacksmith, it was highly probably that I would produce a higher rated item.

Was the blacksmith skill so common? Even the most renowned NPC blacksmith was likely to just be at the advanced level. The opponent I would face was likely to be an advanced level blacksmith. As Pagma's Descendant, I could easily defeat an advanced level blacksmith.

The people were agitated.

"It is easy for the Mero Company to take Khan's smithy. But they didn't just forcibly take the smithy, and instead asked for a fair game. They are giving Khan a job. According to their claim, they genuinely respect Khan."

"That's right. Even if they win the game, they will allow Khan to operate the smithy? Then is the rumor that the Mero Company plans to create jobs for the residents true?"

"This seems to be the case. Maybe the Mero Company isn't as bad as we thought. They really are trying to coexist with us."

It sounded really plausible when listening to the people talking.

'The Mero Company... They hired gangsters to threaten Khan, so I thought they were bad guys. But they are actually decent. Then why were the gangsters so arrogant? Was there an error in the command system?'

My vague hostility towards the Mero Company disappeared.

'The Mero Company gave me a quest that will allow me to receive 600 gold. There is no need to think badly of them. Yes.'

Most of the people present, as well as myself, developed a slight liking towards the Mero Company. However, Khan was different.

"That's it. This is why the Mero Company asked for the game! That Rabbit, he isn't an ordinary man!"

The indignant Khan grabbed the flyer. Chwaak! He ripped it. Then he reproached the people.

"You forgot about all your humiliation and suffering just from seeing this piece of paper! The Mero Company is a villain who knew about Winston's development beforehand and used the information to monopolize our land. You were deprived of everything, becoming poor and hungry. What has the Mero Company done for us since then?"

Many people sympathized with Khan.

"That's right. The Mero Company is the enemy! Are we going to commit another mistake by being deceived by their tricks? Don't be nice to them! We will be stabbed in the back then fall to hell."

The affinity between the Winston residents and the Mero Company was bad. Their grudge against the company was quite deep.

"Excuse me." In the midst of the rage, someone held up his hand. Everyone's eyes concentrated on the man.

'A user.'

NPCs had a green name above their heads. But the name of this man was white. It meant he was a normal user who hadn't done any bad deeds.

Khan asked him. "Young man, you aren't a resident of this village."

"My name is Huroi. I am an ordinary visitor who came to Winston for the first time."

"I see. Huroi, what question do you have?"

"Yes. You might feel uncomfortable but...can you let me speak?"

"Speak."

The NPCs were acting favourable towards a person they met for the first time? Unlike me, Huroi seemed to be a high level traveller, or a traveller with a high reputation on the continent.

"According to the rumors I heard when I came here to Winston...the Mero Company, who knew about Winston's development plan, approached you and bought land and commercial areas from those who didn't know about the development plan. Right after that, Winston made great strides in its development and the Mero Company received great benefits. Is this correct?"

"That's right."

"Were you forced to sell the land to the Mero Company?"

"No."

"Then are the Mero Company's actions towards you truly unscrupulous? Weren't you blinded by money when you sold your land and stores to the Mero Company? Weren't you trying to move your homes with the money you earned? But you didn't want to leave after belatedly realized that Winston was going to be developed and the situation turned out like this. Ultimately, the ones you should blame aren't the Mero Company. It is your own ignorance and self-interest."

"What are you saying?"

"You are clearly the Mero Company's crony!"

The atmosphere abruptly changed, but Huroi didn't back down.

"A company is formed to build wealth! The act of taking advantage of information to form a monopoly is natural for them. Many of you hate them, but there is no need to be enemies. Did they actually do anything wrong?"

"This bastard is talking until the end!"

"Should we shut his mouth?"

The residents didn't like the Mero Company being defended. There were some people so enraged that they wanted to beat Huroi up. But Huroi wasn't afraid.

"I'm not hired by the Mero Company! The reason I'm saying these words is for you. Everyone! Don't try to fight with the Mero Company, but coexist with them. That is the much wiser choice."

The angry people listening to Huroi's words calmed down. It was evidence that Huroi was persuading them.

Then Khan spoke. "This young man is meddling in other people's business. What is your intention behind giving such advice?"

Khan didn't hide his suspicions. He was convinced that Huroi was sent by the Mero Company.

'Isn't it obvious? He must have a compelling reason to speak up like this.'

I was certain that Huroi had received a quest from the Mero Company. If people were persuaded, his quest would be successful. 'Most people have already been persuaded. I absolutely can't allow this to happen. I should interfere!'

It was irrelevant to me if the Mero Company was an enemy or not. So why was I bothered? The reason...

'The misfortune of others is my happiness! I don't want to see him clear his quest in front of me. I will make him fail!'

Yes, it was a simple reason. I wanted to make Huroi fail the quest.

Chapter 32

"Hey, you..."

The moment I was about to come out to disrupt Huroi, Khan restrained me.

"Leave it to me."

Khan sent me a thankful look before approaching Huroi. Then he nodded.

"Your words are right. It would be good for our future to coexist with a large company."

What was he saying?

Buzz buzz.

The people were disturbed once Khan, who was more resentful of the Mero Company than anyone else, supported Huroi's claim. Naturally, all eyes and ears focused on Khan. Then Khan spoke, "If Winston didn't belong to Earl Steim, we would've chosen to coexist with the Mero Company as you advised."

The words were meaningful. Huroi was puzzled.

"If it didn't belong to Earl Steim...?"

"Yes. The important thing is that this village belongs to Earl Steim. I don't know where you come from, but there is a local statute called the 'Rights of the People.' It is a law that Earl Steim himself imposed because he treasures the people. This is one of the provisions of this statute. 'The residents of Earl Steim's territory have the right to be informed more quickly than anyone else about their area of residence.'"

Khan explained the meaning of this provision.

"How you heard about how it is the pioneering age of the north? The north has a bad climate and many monsters. At this moment, numerous pioneers are struggling. What happens when a new land is pioneered?"

"... By default, it will have a large impact on the nearby cities and villages."

Khan nodded with satisfaction at Huroi's words.

"Yes, that's right. Then what is responsible for Winston's current development? The roads were improved and transportation supplemented. Why were the roads improved and the transportation supplemented? It is because a new land was pioneered not far from here. Winston will be the bridge between this new land and the capital. Do you understand? The north is changing every moment. The people of the north might be damaged by the sudden changes."

Khan cut to the chase.

"This is the reason for the stipulation that Earl Steim's residents have the right to be informed about their area of residence sooner than anyone else. It is so that people can be prepared for the sudden changes. We can minimize the damage or maximize the profits."

Huroi figured out the point of this explanation. "Winston's residents were supposed to benefit from the development, not the Mero Company. You suffered a loss and this is contrary to Earl Steim's will. You have the duty to fight against the Mero Company's tyranny, as well as the Winston lord who gave them the information instead of the Winston residents... Is my interpretation correct?"

"That's right. We must not compromise with the Mero Company. It isn't for our benefit alone. As his people, we also don't want to betray Earl Steim's will. We must accuse Winston's lord and the Mero Company, who are going against Earl Steim's will."

Indeed, a perfect justification. The people cried out with excitement at Khan's words. They cheered. Everyone was united in their determination to confront the Mero Company.

Huroi exclaimed in a loud voice.

"The evil deeds of Winston's lord and the Mero Company must be reported to Earl Steim! But you are under the lord's supervision and can't raise an appeal with Earl Steim. Leave it to me! I will do my duty and inform Earl Steim of the happenings in Winston! For Winston! For you! For the honor of Earl Steim, I will accuse Winston's lord!"

"Thank you. I will believe in you and wait."

Eh? It was clear. Huroi had just received a quest from Khan. But wasn't it strange? Usually, a NPC gave a user a quest. The user would passively receive the quest. However, this didn't give the impression of a passive quest. Rather, it felt like Huroi induced Khan to give him the quest.

'No way.'

I hurried after Huroi, who had left the smithy. "Hey!"

Huroi looked at me with an extremely cynical expression. It was inconsistent with his enthusiastic appearance in the smithy, so I thought I had the wrong person for a moment.

"Weren't you a folding screen in the corner? What do you want with me? I am busy."

Folding screen in the corner?

'Ah, that's right. I look like a complete beginner right now.'

Unless the person had a very good nature, it was common for ordinary users to be reluctant to deal with beginners. Beginners didn't know anything so they were always asking questions, sometimes even begging.

I immediately cut to the chase so that Huroi wouldn't ignore me and leave.

"Didn't you come to this place because you received a quest from the Mero Company? Your original plan was to convince the Winston residents to work with the Mero Company. But what is this development?"

"Hoh?" Huroi showed an interested response. "You inferred that I have a quest from my actions? You, are you not a beginner? Well, I just aimed for the larger benefit. Share the quest information."

[The player 'Huroi' wants to share the quest information. Would you like to accept?]

I accepted and Huroi's quest information appeared.

[For the Residents of Winston]

Difficulty: A

Winston's residents have been greatly damaged by the selfish lord and the Mero Company.

Originally, you were commissioned by the Mero Company. However, you couldn't turn away from the poor residents, so you betrayed the Mero Company.

Now you must avoid the pursuit of the Mero Company and head for 'Frontier,' the capital of Earl Steim's territory. Be sure to arrive at Frontier and tell Earl Steim of everything that is happening in Winston!

Quest Clear Conditions: An audience with Earl Steim.

Quest Reward: The title 'Apostle of Justice.' The affinity with the Winston residents will rise to the peak. Reputation in Winston will rise to the peak. Earl Steim's gift.

*Apostle of Justice: The 'Courage' stat will be opened. All stats +10. The skill 'Unbreakable Justice' will be generated.

Quest Failure: Level -1. Affinity with the Winston residents will decline. You can't enter Winston until the Winston lord is changed.

"W-What is this enormous compensation?"

Having the greatest reputation and affinity in a village meant that the user could buy goods cheaply and receive hidden quests. In addition, a gift from a senior nobleman would be at least an epic rated item.

Furthermore, the new stat and skill that were generated from the title were so rare that their value couldn't be converted into money. It was definitely a hidden quest. It was even better than the hidden quest I received!

'M-My stomach hurts...'

My jealousy caused dizziness, and it felt like my insides were burning. I was frustrated, while Huroi smiled at me complacently.

"Isn't it amazing? This is a hidden quest. I'm happy, since this is the first time I've seen one."

H-How annoying. But I didn't show it because of my pride.

"Hmph? This is amazing? Hidden quests are no big deal! Shit! It isn't amazing. I don't feel envious of any of those rewards. I'm not envious!"

"...Ah, is that so?"

"Yes. I'm not envious! So stop boasting about it and tell me what you did. If I'm not mistaken, you induced the NPC to give you the quest. Right?"

Huroi shrugged.

"You noticed quickly. Well, a lot of people know about it, so the information will spread soon. There is no value in keeping it secret and I received a hidden quest, so I will tell you."

Then I was told something shocking.

"The degree of freedom in Satisfy is infinite. I received the quest by taking advantage of that freedom. I don't wait until NPCs give me quests. I try to speak words that will make the NPC give me the quest. Here is a simple example. If I say 'I am quick and diligent when it comes to deliveries' in front of a restaurant owner, it is highly likely that the restaurant owner will give me a delivery related quest."

"A-Amazing... I didn't know that until now... Has anyone else received a quest like this? If so, those who don't know how to play the game have received damages?"

"Don't be discouraged. Unless you are an early player who has been playing Satisfy for a year, most users wouldn't have enough understanding of quests to apply this concept. Except for the early users, most people will be passive towards quests like you. You haven't receive any large damages. Only a small number of early users have benefited from it. Well, this information has already started to appear on various sites, so soon everyone will know about it."

"..."

"Hey, why are you pale all of a sudden? Why are you sweating?"

"...I am one."

"...?"

"I... I have been playing Satisfy for one year since it opened..."

"What? Pff! Puhahaha!" Huroi grabbed his belly. He laughed until tears fell, then raised his thumb as he barely managed to stop. "That is one of the funniest jokes I have ever heard. Isn't this a good gag? Ah, are you perhaps a comedian in real life? Do you want to be friends? Friends?"

"...Get lost."

It wasn't a joke. I really was an early user who had been playing Satisfy for one year. I even took a leave of absence from school to play Satisfy. But I had no idea about such a tip. Did I ever obtain my own know-how while playing Satisfy for a year?

No. I relied on the mundane information that anyone could get from websites. My understanding of Satisfy was so low, I couldn't believe I was an early user.

'I am pathetic... I am very ashamed of myself.'

Tears flowed down from my eyes.

"Damn! Damnnnn!! Daaaaamm~nnnnnn! Logout."

"H-Hey! What, why are you acting like this?"

Huroi was baffled after I left so suddenly.

"What is with that person?"

Huroi was stunned when the person called Grid suddenly logged out. He was an Asian user and had a good sense of humor, so it would have been nice if they could be friends.

"Pfft."

He chuckled when he thought about it again. Grid declared himself an early user while not even knowing about how to induce a quest.

"Why did he feel the need to impersonate an early user? He truly has an unusual personality. Then, shall I go?"

Huroi thought it was just a passing relationship. After meeting Grid, Huroi didn't feel anything special. It was just a funny story that he dismissed lightly.

But the two men were already approaching the whirlwind of destiny.

Chapter 33

'Let's do the quest.'

It was the very first time Huroi had received a hidden quest since he first started Satisfy almost a year ago. He had been playing Satisfy since the day it opened, but he never had such great luck.

'The skill called Unbreakable Justice isn't known so its effectiveness can't be determined. However, I've heard about the courage state in rumors. Every time the courage stat increases by 10 points, attack power and defense will permanently increase.'

Huroi trembled.

'If I succeed in this quest and receive the Apostle of Justice title, I can grow using the courage stat. Then I can become a ranker.'

Huroi was currently level 127. Compared to the average level of users, it was very high and he was treated as a high-level user wherever he went. But it wasn't so high considering that he was an early user.

He was only level 127 despite playing 18 out of 24 hours a day for one year because of his class. Huroi's class wasn't a combat or production class, it was an 'orator.'

An orator's weapon was talking!

Combat classes and production classes could raise their levels relatively easy by hunting or making items. However, an orator only competed with words so it had a weak combat ability and couldn't make any items.

The reason Huroi managed to reach this level was due to always receiving quests from NPCs through talking. But that method had now reached its limit. The higher the level, the higher the difficulty of the quest and the less experience that was gained. While other people were hunting monsters or selling items, he was going back and forth carrying out unprofitable quests.

Thus, Huroi desperately needed to gain experience through hunting.

However, the weapons that an orator could use were extremely limited. Their health was the lowest of all classes, while their basic combat stats and skills were poor. It was a cycle he couldn't escape from. It was hard for him to even catch a monster 15 levels lower than him.

One of his flagship skills, 'Spiteful Tongue', WAS a powerful skill that causes all stats of the target to decline. But it wasn't easy to use in a life and death fight, as obviously, there were limits to its use.

'The fatal weakness of my class is that my combat strength is weak... I can overcome this weakness with the courage stat.'

He had to succeed in this quest in order to earn the Apostle of Justice title and gain the courage stat. After reaffirming his determination, he arrived at the street in front of the western gate.

The gate was relatively quiet. It was because the lord of Winston strictly monitored and managed the residents, so the residents couldn't leave Winston. Even now, there were no residents of Winston going through the gate, only travelers.

"Thank you for your hard work."

Huroi approached the soldiers guarding the gate and greeted them before presenting his ID card. As a simple traveler who wasn't a resident of Winston, he could easily pass through the gate.

But strangely, the soldiers didn't let Huroi out. Huroi noticed the danger as the soldiers blocked the gates.

'Is the Mero Company already aware of my betrayal?'

It was serious. If he delayed, he would be caught by the Mero Company and fail the quest. This was the biggest opportunity he received in one year, so he couldn't miss it.

"What reason do you have for stopping me? Surely there wasn't a mistake?"

"....."

Huroi tried to talk with the soldiers. He intended to persuade or deceive the soldiers by using his weapon, his eloquence. But the soldiers kept their mouths shut and didn't speak a single word to Huroi. They blatantly avoided conversing with him.

'This is ominous.'

Huroi decided that he should leave this place at once. At that moment, he heard a familiar voice behind him.

"No matter what you say, the soldiers won't respond. I told the soldiers not to react no matter what you say until they receive a signal from me."

Huroi was so surprised it felt like his heart stopped. It was due to the sudden appearance of Rabbit, a top employee of the Mero Company and commissioned Huroi to persuade the Winston inhabitants.

Huroi tried to conceal his confusion and greeted Rabbit. "Aren't you Mr. Rabbit? Shouldn't you be busy doing business in your office?"

"I had a headache so I went out for some fresh air."

"Haha, relaxation is important. You can't work efficiently if you are in a bad condition. Rabbit, why did you instruct the soldiers not to talk to me? Are you trying to take away the joy I get from talking to other people? I feel really sad."

Rabbit grinned at Huroi and said.

"Mr. Huroi, you have an obligation to instigate the residents of Winston, according to your contract with me. It is natural to visit me after fulfilling the contract. But you didn't do anything and are trying to leave Winston, so I don't know how to take this."

Huroi calmly explained, "In order for my words to serve as a weapon, there must be a small gap in the minds of the opponent. I have to wait for the right time to incite the people. This isn't a problem that can be solved by hurrying, as I have to wait until the right time comes. The scenery near Winston is famous, so I wanted to see it while waiting. I am leaving Winston? It is just a misunderstanding."

Rabbit made a surprised expression and said,

"Is that so? I misunderstood your intentions?"

As an orator, Huroi had a passive skill called 'Persuasion' and the 'persuasive power' stat. Both his Persuasion level and persuasive power stat were currently very high, so he could move NPCs according to his will if he used it well.

"Yes, it is a misunderstanding. So Rabbit, can you direct the soldiers to let me pass through the gate?"

Huroi was sure that he succeeded after seeing Rabbit's response. However, he was mistaken. Rabbit was an NPC with very high intelligence. He had a lot of experience from growing the Mero Company to be one of the best in the north. It meant that Huroi wasn't at a level to manipulate him yet.

Rabbit made a sorry expression. "I thought that Mr. Huroi's eloquence was very good. So I believed that you could easily incite the residents. But now you look incompetent. I admit that I misunderstood your abilities."

"... Huh?"

"This morning, the Mero Company distributed flyers across the village as scheduled. There will be a big gap in the minds of the residents who read the flyers. They will be wavering and confused. Now is the right time for you to enter and dazzle them with your words, making their hearts lean towards the Mero Company. But you lack the ability to read this mood. Otherwise... you must've betrayed me."

"Kuk!"

Rabbit's eyes were like a hawk's. The sharp gaze penetrated Huroi and provided enormous pressure.

Huroi realized it. "Rabbit, did you predict my betrayal in advance? You expected me to try to escape by misleading the soldiers, so you gave the soldiers instructions not to talk to me!"

Rabbit shook his head.

"I have met and managed many people. So I never believed in anyone from the beginning. Rather than anticipating your betrayal, I just made assumptions that you might betray me and prepared for the worst. Now, come over here. You will be locked up for a while. Instead of persuading the residents, you have joined them. Therefore, I can't let you go and meet Earl Steim."

Rabbit gestured and the soldiers ran towards Huroi.

'This is the end. I can't escape from this place with my battle skills. I will clearly be trapped and fail the quest. No... I can't give up!'

He might never have another chance at a hidden quest. It was an opportunity that must never be missed.

'Forget about acting rashly. Let's log out and get rid of the immediate crisis. I need to think carefully about how to handle this crisis.'

Huroi made a swift judgment and tried to log out. In the case of a quest in a specific place, it was impossible to log out during the quest. However, this was the center of a village. There were users curiously watching the situation.

This was a public place so Huroi believed he could log out.

"Logout!"

[You can't shut down the game here.]

"What...?"

Huroi was astonished. It was due to an unexpected notification window.

"Stop your futile resistance!"

"Ugh!"

After failing to log out, Huroi was captured and tied up by the soldiers.

Rabbit said cynically, "Logout. It is a mysterious spell that takes your immortal bodies to an unknown place Don't you know that we have the power to neutralize it?"

NPCs were clearly aware of the difference between users and themselves. So Rabbit intended to keep Huroi alive. Huroi would resurrect somewhere else if he was killed, so it was better to imprison him.

Rabbit directed the soldiers.

"Lock him in the castle's dungeon. Tell the lord that he should be watched closely for a while."

"T-This..."

The first quest he received in a year, only for him to fail! Huroi was in hell. As he felt despair, a notification window flashed before him.

[The quest 'For the Residents of Winston (A)' has changed to 'Wait (S)'.]

[Wait]

Difficulty: S

Having played into the hands of Rabbit, you have failed the commission to report the Winston lord and Mero Company's evil deeds to Earl Steim. Fortunately, hope still remains.

Winston Castle's dungeon is known to be impossible to escape from! In the dark, cold and unsanitary dungeon, you must somehow survive until the end. If you can endure the cold and hunger, the Apostle of Justice will surely come and rescue you

Quest Clear Conditions: Don't log out for 50 hours in real time.

* This is an extremely dangerous quest. For the elderly and those with a weak health, please give up on this quest.

[Would you like to accept the quest?]

'What type of quest is this?'

The unfamiliar information window that popped up caused Huroi to feel confused and tense.

'I can't log out for 50 hours in real time, not Satisfy's time? What is this absurd condition?'

Huroi was confident of his physical strength in reality. Thanks to that, he could play Satisfy for 20 hours in the capsule. But the limit was 20 hours.

This was because the capsule's safety system didn't allow access for more than 20 hours. After connecting to Satisfy for 20 hours, the users would be forced to log out and they couldn't connect again for six hours.

In other words, the S.A Group that manufactured and distributed Satisfy's capsules strongly warned of the danger of connecting to Satisfy for more than 20 hours. Yet there was a quest to stay connected for 50 hours? It was also one where he was stuck in a dungeon, waiting.

'50 hours in reality is equal to 8 days and 8 hours in Satisfy. Will my spirit be able to endure staying in prison for that whole time without doing anything?'

This really was a dangerous quest. It was a quest where he might go crazy without being mentally prepared. But it was also an opportunity.

'This was an A-grade hidden quest. It is upgraded to an S-grade quest. This is an opportunity that I absolutely can't miss.'

Huroi decided to accept the quest. But before that, he decided to think about it. Did he have any unavoidable schedule in reality? No. He had no schedules recently. Did he have any family who would be concerned and forcefully shut down the capsule? No. He was single right now.

Was the front door locked? He had stayed home for four days without going anywhere. In the meantime, his front door had been firmly locked. When was the last time he went to the toilet and ate? Three hours ago. In any case, if he converted the capsule to the sleep state, his body would be able to endure for three days without eating or drinking.

Did he have a history of problems when connecting to the capsule for a long time? No. His health was second to none.

'Okay, my body is at its peak physical health. I shall challenge it once. The S.A Group made this quest, so they won't let the user die.'

Huroi made a firm decision to accept the quest.

"I won't give up the quest."

[This is the last warning. Are you really sure you want to proceed with the quest?]

"Yes."

[The quest has been accepted.]

[Wait]

Difficulty: S

Having played into the hands of Rabbit, you have failed the commission to report the Winston lord and Mero Company's evil deeds to Earl Steim. Fortunately, hope still remains.

Winston Castle's dungeon is known to be impossible to escape from! In the dark, cold and unsanitary dungeon, you must somehow survive until the end. If you can endure the cold and hunger, the Apostle of Justice will surely come and rescue you.

Quest Clear Conditions: Don't log out for 50 hours in real time.

* This is an extremely dangerous quest. For the elderly and those with a weak health, please give up on this quest.

* From the moment you accept the quest, the system will thoroughly manage and supervise your brain waves and health status in real time. If a critical level of anomalies is detected, the system will force you to log out.

* If you are forcibly logged out, the S.A. Group will send executives and medical staff to your home to prepare for the worst.

* Even if you complete the quest and log out successfully, the S.A. Group will send executives and medical staff to visit you and check your status.

* You need to endure 200 hours of Satisfy time to complete the quest. In the worst case, because you are connected to virtual reality for a long time, you can confuse reality with virtual reality. Please don't let go of your tension until the last moment and show a strong mentality.

Quest Clear Reward: A second class called 'Apostle of Justice's Partner.' Title 'One who Overcomes Hardships.'

*Apostle of Justice's Partner: The 'Courage' stat will be opened. If you are with the Apostle of Justice, all stats will increase by 20%. The skill 'Unbreakable Justice' will be generated. The skill 'Sacrifice for Justice' will be generated.

* One who Overcomes Hardships: The 'Indomitable' stat will be opened. The skill 'Strong Will' will be generated.

Quest Failure: There is no penalty.

[From now on, the capsule will switch to sleep mode.]

[It is impossible to shut off the power of the capsule from the outside.]

[If there are any external shocks or attempts to shut off the capsule, an employee of S.A. will be sent to your residence to protect the capsule.]

[We applaud your challenge. Good luck.]

"It feels like I'm a VIP customer."

That was the impression Huroi got after checking the emerging information windows.

'Don't worry anymore. My spirit can endure for 200 hours.'

Huroi's remaining worries were completely dispelled because he trusted the thorough management and supervision of the S.A. Group. He firmed up his heart.

'I'll be waiting. Apostle of Justice. If he saves me and helps me clear the quest, I will be loyal to him, even if he is an NPC.'

Huroi pledged to meet with the unknown Apostle of Justice as he was imprisoned in Winston Castle's dungeon.

Chapter 34

11:33 p.m.

Lim Cheolho, the head of Satisfy's development team and of the S.A. Group, was working all night. Satisfy was a game with over two billion users, so there were always countless variables. Satisfy's overall flow, whether small or large, depended on what each of the two billion users were doing. The system was impossible to maintain if errors kept occurring.

Lim Cheolho was always enthusiastic about building a complete system.

'I can't allow even a single error.'

He had unmatched concentration whenever he focused on his work and only heard his ringtone after 40 seconds or more. It was a call from the operations team.

"What's going on?"

(Quest B408 has been triggered. Please authorize the convening of an emergency meeting).

Lim Cheolho's mind revolved and then recalled the information about B408.

B408. It was a codename for S-grade hidden quests that needed special conditions to be fulfilled.

'The compensation for Quest B408 is a second class?'

The user who cleared B408 would be able to obtain another class. In Satisfy, they might be the first user to have two classes. But the more rewarding the quest was, the more difficult it would be.

In particular, the content of Quest B408 was very unique, as the user had to be trapped in an enclosed space for 200 hours of Satisfy time. It had a direct impact on the real world, since the user who performed the quest was at a great risk of suffering serious psychological damage. One of the reasons why the clause 'the S.A Group has permission to view user's personal information' was created was due to quests like B408.

"I give permission. I will go as well."

Lim Cheolho immediately stopped working and headed towards the conference room. He arrived in the meeting room and looked at the documents. It contained information about the user who triggered the quest.

"Amazing. A Mongolian person."

Originally, Mongolia was the world's 10th richest country when it came to resources but lacked the technology to find and use those resources. But after breaking away from communism, the Mongolian government established diplomatic ties with many countries and actively attracted foreign direct investment (FDI).

Since then, numerous governments and companies advanced into Mongolia, including both the Korean government and Korean companies. They called Mongolia the 'land of opportunity' and made investments. There was a huge inflow of foreign capital into Mongolia.

However, once Mongolia's regime changed in the 2010s, the FDIs started to slow down due to the rapid change in policy. After many years, the regime changed once again and the Mongolian officials tried to induce the FDIs again, but many had already lost confidence in Mongolia. In the end, the Mongolian

government's plans didn't proceed as planned and Mongolia remained a developing country until the 2030s.

But now it was different. Mongolia's FDIs were revitalized as the world's economy boomed, thanks to rapid technological development in the 2040s. The Mongolian government cooperated, and through some successful processes, the nation stepped into the ranks of the developed countries.

But despite this, the nomadic temperament of Mongolia didn't change. The vast majority of the Mongol people couldn't adapt to the new benefits and still wanted to wander the grasslands. As a result, Mongolia became one of the countries with the smallest number of Satisfy members.

According to statistics, more than 60% of the total population of developed countries were Satisfy players. In addition, Satisfy-related businesses created a lot of jobs. But in Mongolia, only 3% of the population played Satisfy. For the Mongols who loved wandering the grasslands, the act of being trapped in a small capsule was unacceptable.

'3% of the population is a miracle.'

The 25-year-old with the name of Allunbatar, which was hard to pronounce, was a level 127 orator. Lim Cheolho was already surprised to see a level 127 orator, a class that was weak in combat, but he couldn't believe that the user was a Mongolian.

'Quest-based leveling: by utilizing the characteristics of an orator, he could obtain relatively difficult quests, an effective way to play.'

As Lim Cheolho read the documents, the executives who had been sleeping at home rushed in for the emergency meeting. Some of them gave off the scent of alcohol. Lim Cheolho paid attention to Yoon Sangmin. Director Yoon Sangmin was obsessive about cleanliness, so this was the first time Lim Cheolho saw him with scruffy hair.

"I thought you of all people would comb your hair, even in the midst of a war. Is Director Yoon's weakness sleeping?"

The other board members had the same thought and laughed.

"We finally found Director Yoon's weakness!"

"Haha, that's right. I was suspicious that you might've been a robot that wouldn't bleed from its wounds. Fortunately, you are human."

The atmosphere lightened those few words from Lim Cheolho. The laughing executives completely woke up from their sleepy or tipsy state.

'You made me a scapegoat.'

Yoon Sangmin's face reddened as he beckoned to Yoon Nahee.

"It seems like all the executives are gathered. Have the Mongol branch president and officers come together?"

"Yes. I will connect to them immediately."

A 3D image appeared in the center of the huge roundtable. It was the appearance of the branch managers and executives of the S.A. Group's Mongolian branch. They greeted Lim Cheolho.

Lim Cheolho proceeded with the meeting.

"The agenda of this meeting is to secure the safety of the Mongolian user who triggered Quest B408, called Allunbatar. I will entrust this to Branch Manager Park."

S.A Group's Mongolian branch manager, Park Eunhyuk, had already completed the preparations as soon as he heard that the Quest B408 was triggered by a Mongolian user.

"I've tracked the IP address of Allunbatar, who is connected to Satisfy, and have confirmed that the address in the member information matches his current residence. If a situation occurs, the Mongolian government will cooperate by dispatching medical personnel and police officers. Finally, during the quest, the security team members will observe Allunbatar in real time."

Quick and efficient actions. Lim Cheolho nodded with satisfaction.

The branch manager, Park Eunhyuk, gave his opinion,

"The Mongolian branch sees this quest as an opportunity and aims to use it as a foothold into the market here. I will leak some of the quest information to the media. This will be the first user who might have two classes in Satisfy, and the fact that it is a Mongolian user will be widely reported throughout the media around the world. This is natural PR, and the Mongolians will see one of their own becoming a global star through Satisfy, increasing their interest in the game."

"Oh, that is a good idea. Once they have interest, the number of people who want to experience Satisfy will increase."

"The major media companies in each country, especially the Mongolian media companies, will definitely jump on the news. If the press builds Allunbatar into a huge person, the Mongolian pride will be triggered and the PR effect will be maximized."

Most of the executives were favorable towards this idea. However, a small number of them didn't like it.

"Is there any guarantee that Allunbatar will succeed in the quest? What will happen if we make the whole world pay attention to this quest, only for it to fail?"

Yoon Sangmin, who just finished brushing his hair, shook his head.

"It doesn't matter if the quest is successful or not. Even if it fails, the fact that he is the first user to acquire an S-grade hidden quest will make Allunbatar stand out. Still, it would be preferred if the quest were successful. Unless there is a problem with Allunbatar's personality and he logs out, it should be a success. Team Leader Yoon Nahee, have you analyzed the chances of Allunbatar's quest succeeding?"

"Yes."

Once Yoon Nahee replied, her team members handed the executives a new piece of paper. The Mongolian branch executives also received the document through email. After a while, the executives read the contents of the paper and frowned.

“What is this? The probability of success is only 9%?”

Director Yoon Sangmin was shocked. "W-What is this?"

Yoon Sangmin couldn't accept this response.

"Doesn't Quest B408 involve being rescued by a hidden NPC? Allunbatar's health condition is also very good. If we protect Allunbatar on the outside, it is unlikely for him to log out. If Allunbatar doesn't log out, he will be rescued by the hidden NPC and will clear the quest. So why is the success rate so low? I've predicted at least an 80% success rate."

"Well..." The moment that Yoon Nahee tried to explain.

"Kuhahahahaha!"

The silent Lim Cheolho suddenly burst out laughing? Everyone looked at Lim Cheolho in shock.

Tsk tsk tsk. Lim Cheolho clicked his tongue and stated, "Your nature is too frantic. Shouldn't you read the document first before asking the question?"

"....."

The executives read the document carefully at Lim Cheolho's words and were shocked at its contents. Yoon Sangmin nervously crumbled up the piece of paper and muttered,

"Again... this person..."

The normal scenario for Quest B408 was like this:

A user with high reputation would build up affinity to the maximum with the Winston residents. In the process of building affinity, the user would learn about the wickedness of Winston's lord and the Mero Company. At this time, the user would be assimilated with the Winston residents and sincerely resent the Mero Company and the lord. The residents of Winston would detect this and give the user a quest called 'For the Residents of Winston'.

Once the user accepted the quest, the story would begin in earnest. The user would try to meet Earl Steim, but they couldn't go against the powers of Winston's lord and the Mero Company. The user would be caught and eventually imprisoned in the dungeon.

At this point, the quest would change from 'For the Residents of Winston' to 'Wait'. If the user were to accept this quest, the 'Mysterious Apostle of Justice' NPC, who would be hiding in Winston due to special circumstances, would rescue the user after 200 hours.

In this case, the user would establish a relationship with the 'Mysterious Apostle of Justice' and find out their identity. Then the user would go on a journey to help the mysterious NPC. Once the user performed all the linked quests, they would receive rewards beyond imagination.

However, a variable meant that the quest didn't flow along the scheduled scenario. The variable was that Allunbatar shared the quest information with another user. The planned 'Mysterious Apostle of Justice' NPC became obsolete, and the related quests to the NPC also disappeared.

The news that Allunbatar was confined in the dungeon after failing the quest would be passed onto the user whom he shared the quest information with, not the 'Mysterious Apostle of Justice'. But that user turned out to be...

"Grid..."

Exactly 12 days ago, the Korean user who obtained a legendary class by chance. Right, it was Shin Youngwoo.

Chapter 35

"He has a legendary class, yet he's only level 21? How can he play the game like this? Amazing. His ability to not level up is truly amazing. It's a wonder that he gained the class quest."

Yoon Sangmin didn't like Shin Youngwoo. Shin Youngwoo's game history confirmed that he was a young man with no talent at playing the game. Taking the legendary class, wasn't it like a swine obtaining a pearl? Yoon Sangmin thought it was a waste of a legendary class.

'He is a person who will never become a ranker in his entire life. Thanks to his interruption, a large amount of content regarding the legendary class is consumed. Now he's about to consume another large game content...'

Director Yoon Sangmin was sure of it.

'Poison. This person is a deadly poison to Satisfy. Before he does more harm, we have to stop his account forever.'

But Director Yoon Sangmin didn't have the authority to manage user accounts. He had no choice but to keep his thoughts to himself. Yoon Sangmin inwardly cursed Shin Youngwoo, then he asked Yoon Nahee with a serious face.

"By the way, why does the quest only have a 9% chance of succeeding? There is a 9% chance of this person rescuing Allunbatar? Nonsense. Isn't it more likely to be a 0% chance?"

The other executives agreed.

"This figure is obviously wrong."

"That's right. I'm sure that the supercomputer Morpheus is infected with a virus."

This quest was a failure. There was no way that a level 21 user could rescue Allunbatar. The aggressive publicity campaign was finished. Everyone thought so and was sad.

But in the midst of this, only Lim Cheolho was happy.

'The protagonist of three big events in succession... Since becoming a legendary class, he made epic rated arrows and received the class quest, so I am somehow feeling expectant towards this young man.'

To put it bluntly, it was an incompetence so beyond common sense that it was difficult to predict. Shin Youngwoo was fun to watch because he caused many variables.

Lim Cheolho was happy, regardless of the quest results. The other executives, including Park Eunhyuk and Yoon Sangmin, were upset.

I met Khan earlier than Huroi. I protected Khan's smithy and paid for his medical treatment. I was a great benefactor to Khan.

On the other hand, who was Huroi? He only spoke a few words to Khan.

"Then why?"

Why did Khan give him the huge 'For the Residents of Winston' quest? Meanwhile, I received a quest that would only give me 600 gold.

'Isn't it normal to give me all the quests?'

If Khan was an NPC who knew how to repay favours, he would've passed all his quests to me. But he was an ungrateful NPC.

"Khan should repay the favor.. No, is he crazy? Anyway, I need to think about the contents of the story. If I want NPCs to listen to me, do I have to act better in the future?"

The more I thought about it, the worse I felt. 'For the Residents of Winston' was a massive quest that would control Winston's fate. It was natural for Khan to give it to the person he trusted most.

But his choice was Huroi! It meant I was worse than someone Khan had never met before!

"Why is a dog who rolled out from nowhere more credible than me...? Ugh!"

I was at a street stall near my house. I lamented about my life while pouring a shot of bitter shochu into my mouth. (Shochu is a Japanese alcoholic drink.)

My limit was originally one and a half bottles of shochu, but I was so disappointed in Khan and jealous of the jerk that I drank too much.

"Kuaaah~!"

I emptied my third bottle of shochu. My heart still wasn't soothed and I felt like crying.

The more I thought about it, the more hateful Khan was. I truly believed that we had become sincere friends during the time I spent with him, but Khan thought differently. Khan didn't believe in me.

"Why didn't he trust me, giving a good quest to that other guy instead? Why...why? Damnnn!"

Anyway, tomorrow it would start raining for three days. I didn't need to worry about going to work during that time.

I called out for the stall owner in a loud voice.

"Ajumma."

The middle-aged woman cutting the soondae was surprised by my call and flinched. I was able to notice that the woman's eyes shook slightly as she met my gaze.

'...Is my charm maximized by the lonely aura that I am emitting?'

The loneliness in my eyes was like a blizzard on Mount Everest. Looking at those quivering eyes, the middle-aged woman seemed to be confused about being attracted to a young man around her son's age.

'I am such a sinful man...'

I felt sorry to the middle-aged woman, but I had no interest in her. Especially if the other person was a married woman.

'I can't break apart a family.'

I cut to the chase so that the woman wouldn't have any expectations.

"One more bottle of shochu. Can I also get a refill of the fish soup? Don't forget to put a piece of radish in the fish soup as a service..."

Kwaang!

The middle-aged woman plugged the knives she was holding into the chopping block. Then she pointed at me and shouted.

"You are really too much! I don't care about the three bottles of shochu, but I already said that I won't refill the fish soup after the 9th time! Furthermore, you ask for a service every time! The total value is more than the alcohol you're drinking. How can a young man have no shame?"

"...You are very inhospitable. At the very least, you should serve your customers fish soup... This world is once again causing me great disappointment. Yes, just like Khan."

"What are you saying? I can't afford to give you any more free refills!"

The owner was stubborn. My plan to fill my stomach with fish soup was in vain.

"It is time to say goodbye and return to cruel reality..."

I gave up asking for more refills and stood up. I placed the money for the drinks on the table, said goodbye to the owner and left the stall. As I walked on in a lonely mood, an angry voice was heard from behind me.

"Hey, Young Man! You are lacking 1,000 won! Give me 1,000 won!"

Ah, I counted the money wrongly due to being drunk. Then let's try.

'This is a chance to save 1,000 won!'

In the past, I never felt like saving money. But now I was debt-ridden, so the spirit of saving was unavoidable. As the number of conservative young people grew, the future of South Korea would become brighter. For the sake of my spirit of saving and Korea's future, I needed to avoid paying this 1,000 won.

'...No, no matter how drunk I am, I can't run away. I was caught on security camera and will probably be brought to the police station.'

Wouldn't it be shameful to be placed behind bars over 1,000 won? I turned around and handed a 1,000 won bill to the middle-aged woman.

"If I was a common person of this modern society, I would've run away without paying this 1,000 won. But I returned to pay the 1,000 won. Isn't it wonderful?"

"...Don't most people act like this?"

"That...you aren't aware of the world. Do you know how many immoral people there are these days? People like me are rare!"

"R-Really? I understand. I understand already, so you should go home. You are drunk."

"Uhuh! Ajumma! Do you know how bleak my heart is? You should pack some fish soup for a young man who is nice enough to pay the 1,000 won in this chilly weather."

"..."

The middle-aged woman returned to her stall without saying anything else. I waited for her to come out again with fish soup, but she didn't return after 5, then 10 minutes.

"Haha... Once again, I have been betrayed. Both NPCs and people betray my faith!"

Yes, this was a bitter world. I went back home while realizing that I was alone in this world.

"You should contact me if you are returning late! Do you know what time it is now?"

It was one in the morning. As soon as I returned home, I was disturbed by Sehee who was watching TV in the living room.

"Have you been drinking until now? Oppa doesn't have a girlfriend or friends. Then why? Don't tell me you were drinking alone? Aren't you embarrassed?"

"...Hey, you have school tomorrow, so why aren't you asleep yet?"

"I was worried when a person who only spends time at work or in his capsule suddenly disappears... No, it is strange!"

"Eh? Are you concerned about me? So you waited up to this time?"

"What? Who was waiting? I-I was just watching a fun TV program and couldn't go sleep."

"Then why are you so mad? Your face is red as well. What did I do wrong?"

"W-whose face is red? That is ridiculous. I'm going to sleep now!"

Kwang!

Sehee turned and entered her room.

"Phew, teenage girls are really difficult."

Sehee's loud voice had broken my drunken haze. I once again became mad about missing out on the 'For the Residents of Winston' quest.

"Damn, I'm going to sleep quickly."

Then Sehee left her room again. She approached me and started nagging. "You should brush your teeth and scrub your feet. You are drunk, so don't take a shower. Well, I never expected you to take a shower because you're not the type to shower every day."

"...Aren't you sleeping?"

"I am going to drink some water before sleeping."

"Then go and drink water. Good night."

Sehee headed towards the kitchen while I went into the bathroom.

"I'm not a child who needs to brush their teeth more than once a day."

In rare cases, I did it three times a day. I stopped trying to place toothpaste on my toothbrush. I drank so much that my eyes kept closing.

"I won't die if I don't brush for a day..."

In the end, I just washed my hands and left the bathroom. Then I went straight to my room. Sehee sounded like she was screaming outside my room, but I didn't worry about it and went to sleep.

The day was over.

Chapter 36

As soon as I opened my eyes the next morning, I connected to Satisfy and headed into the smithy. Khan was waiting for me and I immediately complained to him.

"Why did you leave such a task to a stranger like Huroi? Am I worse than him? Huh? You should've left it to me!"

Khan looked like he didn't know what I was talking about, before making a belated expression of understanding. "Are you talking about the mission to tell Earl Steim about Winston?"

"Yes!"

Huhu, Khan gave a hearty laugh and explained.

"You are definitely a great young man. Despite your young age, you have great abilities and a sense of justice and sacrifice..."

"Huh?"

What was he saying?

"Aren't you willing to take a big risk for the residents of Winston that you have no ties with?"

"Eh? That wasn't what I intended..."

"You don't have to say anything. You are too modest."

"....."

Khan misjudged me and turned me into an incredibly good guy! I had nothing to say, then Khan placed a hand on my shoulder.

"I know that you are worried for Winston's residents, but how can I put you at risk? You are already precious to me, just like a son. I can't ask you to do something so dangerous."

Khan's eyes were warm.

"The Mero Company knows that you are close to me, so there will be a thorough surveillance. The Mero Company won't stay still if they see you make any movements to leave Winston. I won't be able to stand the grief if you get hurt by them."

Khan sincerely cherished me. My heart thumped. I felt bad for misunderstanding Khan.

"Khan... I didn't know your heart and thought you didn't trust me."

"How can that be? I trust you more than anyone else. Isn't that why I'm leaving the fate of the smithy to you?"

I listened to him. I had no reason to doubt Khan in the first place. I felt ashamed while Khan spoke in a spirited tone, "You have to focus on the game! Show the Mero Company!"

"The date is decided?"

"That's right. It is in two days. We have to hone your skills! Let's surprise everyone by polishing the legendary blacksmith skills that you have inherited!"

Okay! My motivation shot upwards.

"I understand. I will win the game!"

"Good spirit! I might not have the techniques but the experience I've accumulated in my life will be a great help to you! I will do my best to help!"

From that day on, Khan and I raised my training. I repeated the production techniques, causing my skills to become more proficient and polished. I thoroughly learned about efficient movements and reduced any unnecessary movements.

My probability of making rare and epic items increased slightly.

[A rare rated item was produced, so all stats have permanently risen by +2 and reputation throughout the continent has risen by +30.

[An epic rated item was produced, so all stats have permanently risen by +4 and reputation throughout the continent has risen by +80.

[Your persistence has risen.]

[Your dexterity has risen.]

It was also fun to raise my persistence and dexterity stats. But there was one drawback. It was the limitation in the materials.

Khan was totally broke and I was saving money, so I couldn't obtain premium production materials. I only used the materials piled up in Khan's warehouse, but most of the materials were inferior. Khan couldn't get good ingredients because he was impeded by the Mero Company. Therefore, I couldn't produce high-performance items.

The higher the level and performance of the items produced, the faster the experience of my production skill would rise. Items with a low-level limit and low performance, even if they had a rare rating, meant my experience gain rate was slow and the value was cheap.

'Rare items should be sold to the stores, but I can sell the epic rated items to the users.'

[Usable Iron Sword]

Rating: Epic

Durability: 19/19 Attack Power: 35~40 Attack Speed: +2%

A sword made by a craftsman with great skill and potential but lacking in experience and reputation.

It is easy to use because it has a perfect balance of length and weight. The user can attack a little faster.

The fact that this type of sword was made with meager materials is amazing.

User Restriction: Level 12 or higher. More than 30 strength. Beginner Sword Mastery.

[Unexpectedly Comfortable Rat Leather Armor]

Rating: Epic

Durability: 24/24 Defense: 22 Movement Speed: +3%

An armor made of rat leather by a craftsman with great skills and potential, but lacks experience and reputation.

It is designed and created so that the wearer won't be inconvenienced when moving. The wearer can move a little faster.

The fact that this type of armor was made with meager materials is amazing.

User Restriction: Level 13 or higher. Beginner Leather Armor Mastery.

"The names are crude but..."

Level 12 or 13 users would find hunting much easier if they wore this armor and weapon. They were items that low-level users could possess if they had enough gold.

[Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill] Lv 1 (12.7%)

[Legendary Blacksmith's Breath] Lv 1 (8.9%)

'When I made the Jaffa Arrow before, my experience increased by 3.7% and 2%. Instantly.'

Certainly, I was disappointed that the experience of my production skills was slowly rising. But I didn't care much. Regardless, my skills experience and production experience were rising, so I was satisfied.

I wasn't mistaken.

'The Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill is still only level 1, but I am now able to craft more items than I could before.'

My production speed and degree of completeness have improved. If the skill level of the Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill and my dexterity stat rose, my production ability would become even better.

'But realistically, it is impossible to raise the skill level of the Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill anytime soon. Right now, the best thing I can do is to raise my dexterity stat.'

The higher my dexterity, the higher the completeness of the item. I decided to invest my stat points into dexterity for a more solid victory.

"Status window."

Name: Grid

Level: 21 (5,350/16,700)

Class: Pagma's Descendant

- * The probability of adding additional options when making items will increase.
- * The probably of item enhancement will increase.
- * All equipment items can be worn unconditionally. However, there is a penalty depending on the rating of the item.

Title: One who Became a Legend

- * Abnormal conditions don't work well on you.
- * You won't die when health is at the minimum.
- * Easily acknowledged.

Health: 936/936 Mana: 177/177

Strength: 104 Stamina: 52 Agility: 96 Intelligence: 59

Dexterity: 99 Persistence: 60

Composure: 44 Indomitable: 50 Dignity: 44 Insight: 44

Stat Points: 130

Weight: 842/3,080

Thanks to the steady production of rare and epic items, my stats have risen dramatically. I had a huge 130 stat points. I contemplated on how to invest the stat points.

'If I invest all my stat points in dexterity, will my production skill rise significantly? Obviously, there would be a huge effect. But if I concentrate too much on only one stat, I will regret it later.'

I had to think carefully.

'I put a lot of points into strength and agility the other day, so I don't have to raise them anymore. I am currently lacking stamina, so wouldn't it be nice to raise it? When dealing with strong enemies like the gangsters, it is better to have high vitality and defense.'

I decided to start distributing my stat points.

[You have invested 60 points in stamina. Is this correct?]

"Yes."

[Once the points are invested, it can't be reversed. Do you want to proceed?]

"Yes."

[You have invested 70 points in dexterity. Is this correct?]

"Okay."

[Once the points are invested, it can't be reversed. Do you want to proceed?]

"Stop asking me and just do it. Status window!"

Name: Grid

Level: 21 (5,350/16,700)

Class: Pagma's Descendant

* The probability of adding additional options when making items will increase.

* The probably of item enhancement will increase.

* All equipment items can be worn unconditionally. However, there is a penalty depending on the rating of the item.

Title: One who Became a Legend

* Abnormal conditions don't work well on you.

* You won't die when health is at the minimum.

* Easily acknowledged.

Health: 1,536/1,536 Mana: 177/177

Strength: 104 Stamina: 112 Agility: 96 Intelligence: 59

Dexterity: 169 Persistence: 60

Composure: 44 Indomitable: 50 Dignity: 44 Insight: 44

Stat Points: 0

Weight: 842/3,080

"Kukukuk!"

I shook with joy. Anybody would be shocked if they could see my status window. How could a level 21 character have such stats? If I simply calculated the sum of all my stats, I was already beyond level 75.

Strength, stamina, agility, and intelligence. If I only calculated these basic stats, it was close to level 40!

'Now that I see it, isn't a production class great for stats?'

The benefit of raising all stats every time a higher grade item was made was common to all production-related classes, not just blacksmiths. Those who took advantage of this could overcome the disadvantage of production based jobs. Their insufficient combat skills could be supplemented with high stats. Of course, a large amount of labor was needed!

"I accept that labor is my life. My body is meant for labor! I will show you the power of labor."

I swallowed bread and immersed myself in item production again. I didn't lose any concentration until the day of the competition. As my character grew, I felt the same mental growth.

[A rare rated item was produced, so all stats have permanently risen by +2 and reputation throughout the continent has risen by +30.]

"Kuhahahahaha!"

I felt a pleasure that had never been felt when hunting and doing quests as a warrior.

"W-What...? Am I dreaming right now? You, how have you improved your skills in such a short time?"

Khan was shocked. I couldn't reply that 'my rapid growth is from raising my dexterity stat' so I just said,

"I'm not your average genius."

Khan was thrilled.

"Yes, yes! I forgot that you are Pagma's Descendant. Huhu, I have a relationship with a legend who was born again. I will have no regrets after dying. Good! Shall I try harder?"

In reality, it was raining continuously. So I always connected to Satisfy except when it was time to sleep. Thus, my growth was steady until the day of the competition.

Currently, there were three epic classes in Satisfy. But except for the most recently appeared 'Blood Warrior,' there were no details about the others. The identity of the first epic class user was unknown, while the second one was said to be obtained by Agnus, 7th in the unified rankings.

The Satisfy users wondered about the identity of the two classes there were being kept strictly confidential. The related forums and broadcasters were engaged in a constant debate about the epic classes. But unless the relevant parties disclosed the information, it was only speculation.

What type of class were the other two epic classes? Were they as impressive as the Blood Warrior that Katz got his hands on? Perhaps even more than that?

The Eternal Kingdom. Akeru Dungeon that was near Frontier, Earl Steim's capital.

"There are too many monsters here. I barely managed to come all the way here."

A beautiful blonde girl cried out. She looked like a fairytale princess, causing male users to approach her.

"Akeru Dungeon is a place where even high-level users can't hunt alone. Would you like to join our party? Our skills are very good."

"No, you should join our party. We are very familiar with this dungeon and have acquired various know-hows. Our hunting speed is unmatched. You will definitely be satisfied if you join."

"No! Come to our party! We will give you a lot of items!"

Satisfy's character wasn't perfect fiction. When a character was created, it actually reflected the user's real appearance. Only the skin tone and additional features such as hairstyle, tattoos, scars, and height could be changed a little bit.

In other words, a beautiful person in Satisfy was generally beautiful in reality. That's why the men favored beautiful girls over anything else.

'A rare beauty!'

'My ideal type!'

Hearts burst from their eyes as they looked at the girl. They seemed accustomed to competing over girls.

"Do you really want me to join the party? If so, try to hunt the monsters in front of me. I want to join a strong party. I will judge if your skills are strong and then join the party that I want."

"What is this? She isn't that special."

"I agree. I would be thankful not to have a useless person join the party."

The female users talked badly about the girl. However, the male users became more attracted to the girl as their motivation shot up.

"Ohhhhhh! Be sure to keep that promise! Heat Wave! Fire Sword!"

"Beautiful girl. I will prove my strength. Swirling Frenzy!"

"Bah, idiots. Can you do this? Steel Skin! One Point Break!"

"Your skills don't back up your bragging. Thunderbolt!"

The male users ran towards the monsters and fired off their skills.

Kwarurung!Kung kwang!Kwajik!

Strong skills such as a swirling storm, thunderbolts and flames emerged, causing the walls of the dungeon to shake. Fearsome monsters saw the strange scene and ran away.

The blonde girl, who was the cause of the confusion, watched the skills being cast.

'That wind magic isn't lacking compared to other magicians in the kingdom. It was indeed worthwhile to come here.'

She used her unusually high insight stat and Skill Observation to detect the Swirling Frenzy skill and whispered.

"Skill Duplication."

[You have successfully duplicated 'Swirling Frenzy' Lv.3.]

[The skill 'Swirling Frenzy' Lv. 3 is available to use once. You can keep it permanently until it is used.]

[Swirling Frenzy]

Lv. 3

Creates a vortex that deals 1,530~2,380 damage per second for five seconds. The agility of the target caught in the vortex will decrease by 80%.

Skill Mana Cost: 700

Skill Cooldown Time: 300 seconds

The blonde girl's name was Euphemina. Her class was Duplicator.

As a Duplicator, she used Skill Observation and Skill Duplication to instantly analyze and copy a skill used by the target. Whatever skill she copied, she could use it only once whenever she wanted.

There were disadvantages such as 'the usage frequency of Skill Duplication is limited to three times a day.' However, it was still a fraudulent skill despite the disadvantages.

'I can get Piaro with this.'

Euphemina left the men showing off their skills at the dungeon behind. Then she moved quickly and arrived at Kesan Canyon.

"I found it."

After finding a small cave at the end of the canyon, Euphemina read the contents of the quest once again in order to prepare her mind before entering.

Chapter 37

[Traitor of the Red Knights]

Difficulty: S

Piaro, a former colleague of Asmophel, has committed a terrible betrayal. Asmophel was wounded and vowed to take revenge on Piaro.

However, Asmophel has become seriously ill afterward.

In the end, Asmophel was forced to give up on his own revenge and asked you to get revenge for him.

Quest Clear Conditions: Defeat Piaro who is hiding in Kesan Canyon.

Quest Clear Reward: Title 'Agent of Revenge'

* Agent of Revenge: The 'Cruelty' stat will be opened. Attack Power +100. Skill 'Murderous Impulse' will be generated.

Quest Failure: Level -2. Asmophel's confidence will decline.

Euphemina, who was currently level 190, had one experience with clearing an S-grade quest once in the past. Therefore, she knew the terrible difficulty of an S-grade quest more than anyone else.

'Piaro... the strongest knight of the Saharan Empire.'

Asmophel had already explained how powerful Piaro was. His swordsmanship had reached the peak and when he used his ultimate technique 'Fated to Perish', death was inevitable. Euphemina couldn't overcome her tension and nervously gulped. She had taken 63 days to prepare for this quest, but she was still afraid.

"I believe it. I can do it. Skill window."

Euphemina basically only possessed nine skills. It was an unbelievably poor skill tree for a level 190 user. However, her skill window now had a total of 50 skills listed. In addition, they were all top class skills.

These were the skills that Euphemina prepared to clear the quest. She traveled all over the continent during the past 62 days, searching for top-ranked players. Then she duplicated their skills.

Only for today!

"Let's begin."

Euphemina cleared her mind and entered the cave. She was going to face Piaro, who was more powerful than a boss monster, alone. Pride? No it was proper confidence.

She was the first epic class in Satisfy. A fraudulent class that could duplicate other people's skills, the Duplicator. This was the identity of the first epic class that appeared in Satisfy.

"Someone sent by Asmophel?"

A voice in the darkness was heard from the depths of the cave. Then a notification window popped up.

[The eternal hermit Piaro has appeared.]

[You are overwhelmed by Piaro's killing intent and the fear effect has been applied.]

[The trap that Piaro installed is activated.]

Syu syu syu syu syuk!

Chachachachang!

From the land where Euphemina was standing, sharp spikes reminiscent of shark teeth rose and arrows flew from the walls on both sides. At the same time, Piaro appeared in front of them. Euphemina hastily used one of the skills that she had prepared.

“Tartan!”

Tartan was currently the strongest defensive skill known to be available only to ‘Bump’, the first ranked guardian knight.

Kuoooooh!

A huge steel giant appeared out of thin air and then embraced Euphemina’s small, delicate body. All the arrows and spears didn’t reach Euphemina’s body as they were obstructed by the giant. But Piaro’s flashy blow was enough to pierce the giant. Immediately before the sword was about to reach Euphemina’s heart!

“Counter Barrier!”

The strongest assault knight, Miared’s skill was reproduced by Euphemina.

Puok!

“Cough!”

As soon as Piaro’s sword came into contact with Euphemina, Piaro coughed up blood and flew backward in the air. The damage that Euphemina should’ve received was reflected back on Piaro due to Counter Barrier.

“How dare you!”

The brilliant Piaro turned in the air, not caring about his wound. However, Euphemina didn’t stay still.

“Swirling Frenzy!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Before Piaro could reach the ground, a fierce storm covered him. Piaro had no place to lean on, so his body couldn’t resist being swept away by the storm. However, Euphemina was well aware that he wouldn’t die. She didn’t miss this opportunity.

"Scorching Heat Wave! Tyrant’s Majesty! Mace of Light! Spear of Darkness! Prelude to Destruction!"

Euphemina had dozens of top-level skills that she had prepared for 63 days. The strong attacks of different properties shattered the cave, burying Piaro in the debris.

‘Have I succeeded? No. There would be a quest clear prompt.’

Euphemina’s intelligence stat was very high. She even prepared advanced mana potions. But nonetheless, she had a shortage of mana due to using so many top-level skills in succession.

‘I have to wait for the potion reuse time.’

Piario was still alive. She didn't know when a strong counterattack would come from the pile of stones. Until then, she had to make up for her low mana. Euphemina decided to use 'flying' magic to maintain as much distance as possible from Piario.

As she rose into the sky, Piario crawled out from the remnants of the cave. He was relatively unscathed, despite the skill bombardment that would've killed an army of hundreds.

"Female... I recognize your strength and will do my best."

Taack!

Piario jumped.

Peeng!Peeng!

Piario jumped into the air in bursts, as if he was stepping on an invisible staircase. He instantly narrowed the distance towards Euphemina.

"I'll give you an inevitable death!"

A red light emerged from Piario's sword. It was the forerunner to the skill that Asmophel mentioned, Fated to Perish. Once the skill was activated, Euphemina wouldn't be able to avoid death. It meant that her 63 days of hardship would be for nothing.

Pahat!

The distance between Piario and Euphemina was so close that they could hear each other's breathing. The reuse time for Euphemina's potions was almost over. Euphemina drank a mana potion and used the spells she prepared to stop Fated to Perish.

"Nightmare Projection!"

".....!"

The sword rushing towards Euphemina stopped. Euphemina gazed at Piario and gulped.

Kwarurung!

The red sword, which should've sliced Euphemina, cut the empty space dozens of times. It showed he had properly fallen into a hallucination. Now Piario was fighting against the most fearful nightmare in the world.

"You have come to me. Asmophelllllll!"

The flaming sword continued to swing without stopping. Thanks to him, the sky was as red as the sunset. Euphemina tried to use a bombardment of skills again while Piario was preoccupied.

But there was a variable.

[You have reached your physical and mental limits after using an excessive amount of force during a short period of time.]

[Your skills can't be used for a while.]

[All stats have fallen by 50%.]

“W-What?! No way! My quest success was in sight!”

It seemed that she had used too many top-level skills in a short amount of time, causing her physical and mental stress. It was her first experience and she couldn't deal with it because she never thought this could happen.

As she was confused, Piaro was slowly escaping from his hallucinatory state.

‘This can't continue!’

The physical abilities of a Duplicator were minimal. Once her skills were blocked, she had no way to fight against Piaro. There was only one choice remaining. Give up the quest.

“Ugh...!”

Her 63 days of effort ended in vain. The quest had already failed and the situation would be worse if she died here. Euphemina swallowed back her tears and left this place. Shortly afterward, Piaro woke up from his hallucination and realized that Euphemina was gone.

"Wicked female... I will surely repay today's disgrace."

[Quest failed!]

[Your level has dropped by 2.]

[You are now level 188.]

[Asmophel's confidence in you has fallen.]

Euphemina was frustrated at the notification windows that emerged after she barely escaped from Piaro. She tried her best for more than two months, but all her efforts returned such a horrible outcome, so her disappointment was undeniably huge.

"It was a chance to get a new title after a long time..."

The more titles, the better. It was because the effects overlapped. But gaining titles wasn't easy. Most titles were obtained through quests, but quests which gave titles were rare. Despite being a top ranker, Euphemina only had two titles.

"Ohh."

Euphemina couldn't suppress her disappointment. As she was filled with anger, a messenger from the Mero Company came to her.

"Will you take a job? Miss Erina."

Due to the nature of a Duplicator, Euphemina had multiple identities. Among them, Erina was the name she used when she copied an advanced NPC blacksmith and crafted an epic rated item.

‘Since they came with this name, is it a blacksmith related quest?’

Euphemina's guess was correct.

[The quest 'Item Production Game with the Mero Company!' has been created.]

[Item Production Game!]

Difficulty: Unknown.

The world doesn't know your true identity.

The Mero Company has approached you after hearing about your good blacksmith skills.

They want you to participate in an item making game held in Winston.

The opponent is the successor of the reputable blacksmith, Khan, who was once famous in the north. The successor is a variable who can't be measured.

Quest Clear Conditions: Win the item production game.

Quest Clear Reward: 1,500 gold. Title 'Competitor.'

* Competitor: Fighting spirit stat will be opened. Good luck stat will be opened. Skill 'Rolling Dice' will be generated.

Quest Failure: Your relationship with the Mero Company will become the worst.

[Would you like to accept the quest?]

'A title giving quest!'

She had been frustrated at missing the chance to get a new title, only to receive a quest with a title reward. It was also a title that opened the good luck stat.

'The good luck stat, I want to have it.'

The good luck stat was very famous. The higher the good luck, the higher the probability of receiving beneficial effects in Satisfy. It started with finding money on the road, to finding hidden quests and treasures.

As the name suggested, it gave good luck to the user so many people really wanted it. Naturally, this included Euphemina.

'I also wonder what the Rolling Dice skill is. Doesn't it sound interesting?'

The biggest disadvantage of being a Duplicator was that there were fewer types of skills available. Therefore, Euphemina had a huge desire to possess skills.

'The reward is also 1,500 gold... should I accept?'

The rewards were excellent. For Euphemina, this quest was an inevitable temptation. She had just failed a quest, so she felt like earning some profits back with this quest. But she shouldn't be in a hurry to accept the quest.

'The difficulty is unknown...'

Euphemina made a hypothesis.

'Khan's successor must be a blacksmith character whose level isn't open to the public. Is that why the difficulty isn't determined?'

The hypothesis was plausible.

'Well, I don't have to worry too much. Does the difficulty of a production game matter in the first place?'

No blacksmith skills existed that Euphemina couldn't duplicate. If she participated in the production game, she could copy the opponent's blacksmith skill and play with the same skill level. In other words, it was a game where she would compete with luck.

When competing with the same skill level, the luckier person would create a higher rated item and victory would be decided accordingly.

'If I am lucky, I can easily clear the quest. On the other hand, I might fail if I am unlucky.'

It was a quest where she couldn't be certain of success. The risk was big. However, she coveted the rewards. Euphemina decided to accept the quest.

"The game, please leave it to me."

The game was established to be between Grid and Euphemina. If the world knew the identities of Grid and Euphemina, their competition would be the hottest issue in the world. A confrontation between an epic class and a legendary class, the attention would've been enormous.

Unfortunately, the world still didn't know the identities of the two people. Such a significant battle spread secretly.

Chapter 38

Winston's Central Square!

It was originally crowded, but even more people were gathered today. The item making game between blacksmiths would occur here.

"I hope that Grid can win and protect Khan's smithy. That smithy is the last pride that we have left."

"That's right. If the smithy falls into the hands of the Mero Company, our place in Winston will completely disappear."

"Grid, have strength! You absolutely can't lose."

The hearts of the Winston residents gathered together. They prayed that Grid would win the game. However, the users' attitudes were different. The result of the game had nothing to do with them.

"An item production game? There isn't anything else interesting, so why don't we watch for a while?"

"I don't have anything else to do. If it isn't fun, then we can just go. Somebody win~. The winner will be on this side~."

As a result, most users just thought of the game as slightly interesting.

"Hey, isn't it funny when you think about it? Blacksmiths making items, why are so many people going to watch it?"

"Yes. It's tedious to watch a blacksmith make items, not interesting. The item created will be epic at the most, so I'm not even interested in the result."

"Where is an epic rated item? It's good if they could even make a rare rated item. I heard rumors that no famous blacksmiths are participating."

"What? Then what is the goal? Why should we care about the results? Hey, this is a waste of time, so let's just go hunting. Anyway, who cares about who owns the smithy?"

The users mocked the game as trivial and turned away.

After a while.

Once the participants of the game were revealed, the male users no longer thought of leaving.

"Now! Let me introduce the main characters of this match. From the Mero Company, Erina! And Khan's successor, Grid!"

"Ohhhhhh!!!"

The eyes of the male users widened as they saw the blonde girl climbing onto the stage and they started cheering.

"Wow. Really pretty!"

"Is this love at first sight?"

"My ideal type..."

The blonde girl was wearing a hat. However, she showed off a beauty that couldn't be hidden, even with her face not completely exposed. Her mouth was especially attractive. The male users, who weren't interested in the result of the game originally, became her avid supporters the moment they saw her.

"Erina. I will cheer for you."

"Erina, please win~."

"Erina! Erina! Erina!"

The male fan club formed in an instant. Erina, or Euphemina, shrugged as she watched their sky-piercing cheers and waved her hand gracefully.

"Thank you for your support."

"Ohhhhhh!"

She smiled softly, making her seem like a goddess to the men. It was reminiscent of the reaction of soldiers towards the visit of girl group idols.

Grid sucked in a deep breath at the sight.

'Is it my turn next?'

The male users were rooting for the female contestant. Then it was natural for the female users to support and cheer on the male contestant. Grid smiled and followed Euphemina's actions by waving towards the female users in the audience.

Grid expected the cheers of female users. But their reaction was much different than expected.

"What is that guy doing? Uhh, I feel bad."

"The bread that I ate a while ago feels like it's coming back up..."

"He looks really horrible..."

The reactions from the female users were the worst!

'This dirty society that only cares about looks! You would support me properly if I was handsome.'

None of the women supported him, but the residents of Winston shouted towards the frustrated Grid.

"Grid! You have us. We are cheering for you. We believe in you! Be sure to win."

"Khan's successor, show off your skills."

"Grid's victory! Grid's victory! Grid's victory!"

Grid trembled.

'If you are supporting me, why are your gazes directed towards her...?'

NPC males were wolves as well. Among the residents of Winston, the men forgot that the blonde girl was an enemy and couldn't keep their eyes off her. Even Khan!

'These bastards, I am now aware of your real state.'

A blonde girl who was so seductive that she even attracted elderly NPCs. Grid felt resentful towards her, as he turned into a squid just from standing next to her.

"You. I will surely win. Then I'll enjoy seeing that pretty face distort!"

Euphemina was amazed by Grid's declaration. This was a man she was meeting as an enemy, but how could he ignore her beauty?

'Unless the person is gay or blind, isn't it natural for all men to support my beauty?'

Euphemina had a proud nature.

'Taste my beauty properly.'

Euphemina lifted the brim of the hat she used to hide her identity. Her beautiful face was clearly revealed. Grid was forced to admire it.

'Looking at her like this, she is really pretty. Isn't she comparable to that wicked witch, Yura?'

If Yura was an elegant and mature woman, Euphemina was a youthful and refreshing girl. Their atmosphere was quite different, but they were similar in that both of them had a transcendent beauty.

'Is she a human or a doll?'

Grid made a stupid expression and was unable to keep his eyes off of Euphemina.

Euphemina saw it and thought. 'Yes, that's right. Once you see my face, you will fall at first sight. Now you will follow me like a dog, just like the other men.'

There was no man in the world who could go against her beauty! Euphemina had huge pride in her looks. She continued to speak to Grid in order to perfectly capture her victory.

"Grid? There is no need to be hostile towards me. Haven't we just met? Perhaps we will see each other again. In the future, we might develop a good relationship? So don't be upset and let's get along."

She had half moon eyes and a slyly flirting voice. There was no man who wouldn't be into her when she acted like this.

But Grid just snorted. "What? Develop a good relationship? Don't say such horrible things, Kid."

Euphemina's face turned red.

"H-Horrible? Why wouldn't you develop a good relationship with me? In addition, kid?"

"Yes! I don't want to develop a good relationship with a fox like you! Kid! Have you even graduated from high school? I have no interest in a little person like you. I'm not a lolicon! Shit. Do you think that I am such a slimy bastard? It might be your intention to keep me from concentrating on the game, but I won't fall for it."

Grid was firm. He had an ideal type. Her height should be at least 168cm and her chest should be a D cup! Euphemina was definitely pretty but she was far from Grid's ideal type. Her natural height was 160cm. Her chest was only a B cup.

No matter how good her face was, there was no reason for Grid to fall for her.

'Kid? Fox? What is with this person?'

Euphemina stared blankly as she listened to Grid's ridicule, before suddenly shaking. The sense of shame she never experienced before made her extremely angry.

'More than anything else, I am 20 years old!'

That's right. Euphemina wasn't a young girl. She looked younger than her age, but she was already an adult. Being called a kid was touching on Euphemina's sore spot, since she had a complex about her height.

'I will disgrace you in front of all these people!'

Euphemina decided as she was filled with anger. She smiled coldly. Then she glanced at Grid and asked.

"Since you don't realize my charm, are you gay? Okay. I will make you feel bitter about Mother Nature making you gay. Let's see who will make the better item. But I'm going to win."

“W-What? Gay? I am gay? What the hell are you saying? This unlucky brat! I’m not gay!” Grid shouted indignantly.

Euphemina heard another shock as she heard the word ‘unlucky.’ She never imagined the day would come when she would hear this from a man.

“U-Unlucky? Me? A trash-like man will never be able to match me!”

Grid was the one who insulted her first. From Euphemina’s point of view, Grid seemed like a madman. Euphemina couldn’t cope with the shame and tearfully shouted. "I want to say goodbye to you as quickly as possible! Start the game now!"

"Okay, let’s get started. I don’t care about this one-sided cheering. I will make you fail today!"

The host didn’t announce the start of the game but Grid already placed iron ore inside the burning furnace. Euphemina experienced making items in the past so she also started smelting the metal.

Hwaruruk!

A huge momentum rose from the two angry people. The temperature of the furnace rose rapidly.

The host shouted.

“The two people have started the game. I will notify the crowd! This time, the theme is to make a dagger. The one who produces the better quality dagger within the time limit will be the victor!”

Daggers were items that could be made relatively quickly. It was good to spend a long time to create a real masterpiece, but skilled blacksmiths could complete a good dagger in two hours. The time limit of this game was three hours.

“Erina, fight!”

The number of users continued to increase as they heard the turmoil, causing Euphemina’s fans to multiply as rapidly as a cancer cell. The cheers of the Winston residents were completely buried by their shouts, so Grid seemed to be fighting alone behind enemy lines.

Chapter 39

One-sided cheering! But Grid actually became more excited. A weed would grow stronger once it was trampled on.

‘I will win! Then I will make all of you shut up!’

Grid completed the smelting and started the process of making the dagger.

Ttang!Ttang!

Euphemina became nervous as he started to tap the steel with his hammer. It was because she hadn’t finished smelting yet.

‘Fast! The difference in our skills is too large.’

It was inevitable. In the first place, was Euphemina a blacksmith?

'I shouldn't be hasty. It isn't good to be too urgent.'

Euphemina calmly focused on the process of smelting. Grid had repeated the quenching and forging process several times by the time she finished smelting. Then she pulled out a hammer from her inventory. She had bought this hammer for a lot of money, in order for this quest to be successful.

[Blessed Blacksmith Hammer]

Rating: Epic

Durability: 299/300 Attack Power: 50~70 Odds of Making a Rare Rated Item: +15% Odds of Making an Epic Rated Item: +5%

A hammer user by a prestigious blacksmith. It will assist the user in creating higher rated items.

User Restriction: Level 150 or higher. More than 100 strength. Intermediate blacksmith skill.

[You can't equip it because you don't meet the item usage conditions.]

Euphemina had enough strength and her level was high enough to use the 'Blessed Blacksmith Hammer.' But she wasn't a blacksmith, so she didn't have the intermediate blacksmith skill. However, that story would change once she duplicated Grid's blacksmith skill.

Euphemina faced Grid who was concentrating on making a dagger and used Skill Observation. Euphemina smiled with satisfaction.

'If we both have the same blacksmith skill, it is likely that the person with a better production tool will win.'

The hammer Grid was using was old and shabby, much worse than Euphemina's hammer. Euphemina was confident of her victory. But the moment she thought that! She was shocked as she saw the notification window that popped up.

[The level of Skill Observation is too low.]

[You can't analyze the skill of the target.]

"W-What?"

Currently, Euphemina's Skill Observation was level 7. Her skill wouldn't fail, even if she observed a third advancement NPC. Above all, her skill was only level 5 when she analyzed and copied the skill of an advanced level blacksmith.

However, Grid's blacksmith skill was impossible to observe with the level 7 Skill Observation? Surely Grid's blacksmith skill wasn't at the advanced level?

"...It can't be. Skill Observation! Skill Observation!"

[The level of Skill Observation is too low.]

[You can't analyze the skill of the target.]

[The level of Skill Observation is too low.]

[You can't analyze the skill of the target.]

No matter how many times she used Skill Observation, the same notification windows repeatedly appeared.

"This must be a bug. Skill Observation!!"

[The level of Skill Observation is too low.]

[You can't analyze the skill of the target.]

She used the skill until her mana was low, but her face was pale as she failed to complete the analysis.

"Unbelievable..."

Euphemina had to admit it. This stupid man actually had the skills of an advanced blacksmith.

'Is he a craftsman? That absolutely can't be!'

The 1st ranked person on the blacksmith rankings was only at the intermediate level. Yet Grid, who she'd never heard of, had skills beyond a ranker. It was impossible. Craftsmen were rare even among NPC blacksmiths.

'Yes, he is a blacksmith, not a craftsman. But why would my skill fail to analyze if he is a blacksmith? D-Don't tell me?'

Euphemina made a hypothesis. Grid wasn't an ordinary blacksmith. She couldn't rule out the possibility that this stupid man might have a hidden class like herself.

'I don't want to believe it, but it is reasonable.' Otherwise, I can't explain why Skill Observation can't analyze this man's skill.'

In addition to blacksmiths, the rankings of all production classes were currently at the intermediate level. Even the most famous NPCs only had advanced level skills, and craftsman NPCs were extremely rare.

If Grid was an ordinary user, it was impossible for him to master the craftsmanship skills. Euphemina was forced to believe that Grid wasn't an ordinary blacksmith. Rather, he had a blacksmith-related class above the epic rating.

'It isn't a rare class. I can replicate the skills of a rare class since I have an epic class. The minimum must be an epic class. But except for me, the only other epic classes are Agnus and Katz... Surely that guy doesn't have a unique class? When did a unique class emerge?'

It was really the worst case scenario. She had been thinking too lightly when she accepted a quest with an unknown level of difficulty.

'Completely outrageous. I never expected to compete with a unique class!'

Euphemina fell into a confused state.

'What should I do? I can't do anything like this and will fail the quest.'

She couldn't even start making an item because she didn't have the blacksmith skill. She knew how to make it, but the end result would be absolutely rubbish without the assistance of the blacksmith skills.

'Should I give up? Again?'

She faced a situation where she had to give up another quest after 'Agent of Revenge.' Euphemina thought this was truly the worst.

Grid belatedly discovered that she wasn't doing anything and mocked her. "What? Are you completely frozen? Are you jealous of my skills, Kid?"

"Ohh!"

Anger formed on Euphemina's face again.

'I can't be defeated by a lowly man like this!'

If things continued like this, Grid would win. She needed to find a blacksmith and duplicate their blacksmith skills.

'But where can I find a blacksmith...? Ah!'

Euphemina had a good idea and suddenly glanced at the audience. Rabbit was aware of the strange turn of events and approached her.

"Is there a problem?"

Euphemina whispered into Rabbit's ears.

"Who is Grid's mentor? Call that person up on stage as well. Then make him help Grid with the dagger production."

It was an absurd demand. Rabbit's eyes narrowed. "Why? I can't understand your intentions."

Euphemina explained with an embarrassed expression.

"I can't say anymore because it is a personal matter, but please listen to my request. It will increase my chances of winning."

"Hrmm..."

It would increase her chances of winning? Rabbit wasn't easily convinced. But what could he do? The game had already begun. There would be a lot of accusations if he tried to change the competition now.

'In the first place, I have no substitute.'

In the end, Rabbit was forced to listen to Euphemina's demands.

"I will try."

Rabbit spoke to the host who yelled towards the audience.

"Mr. Khan! Come up on stage! Erina stated that she wants you to add your strength to Grid!"

"What?"

A truly shocking proclamation. Confusion appeared on Grid's face as there was an uproar.

"What? Erina wants to compete 2 against 1?"

"That guy called Grid must be very bad. Therefore, Erina felt pity and called Grid's mentor to the stage."

"Is she saying that they have to join forces for this to be a proper competition?"

"Wow, that is truly great confidence. She's a wonderful woman."

The crowd misunderstood and became more firmly entrenched on Euphemina's side. She was worshipped as a benevolent and confident queen. On the other hand, Grid's pride was dented and his hostility towards Euphemina became stronger.

'This chick dares do this...!'

Khan walked over to the agitated Grid and said, "Calm down. This is a great opportunity for us. Let's fight her together as she demanded."

Grid puffed up. "What? Do you really think I will lose to her?"

"How can that be? I believe that you can win over anyone. Aren't you Pagma's Descendant?"

"Then why are you following her demands?"

"I respect you as a blacksmith. I would like to have the honor to work with you. In addition, my blacksmith's heart wants to help instead of just watching. Grid, this is a request. I won't hold you back, so please give me this opportunity to protect my smithy with you."

Grid couldn't refuse after hearing Khan's words.

"...As long as we're together, we will succeed. Let's crush that girl in front of all these people."

"Yes!"

The two people teamed up. In particular, Khan was overjoyed at being able to work with Grid in front of so many people.

"I will demonstrate the best skills as your assistant! Give me a command."

He was definitely a blacksmith. As Khan prepared to help Grid, Euphemina activated Skill Observation.

[You have successfully analyzed 'Advanced Blacksmith's Craftsmanship' Lv.2.]

It was as planned. Euphemina smiled as an analysis of Khan's blacksmith skill appeared.

"Skill Duplication!"

[You have successfully duplicated 'Advanced Blacksmith's Craftsmanship' Lv.2.]

[The skill 'Advanced Blacksmith's Craftsmanship' Lv. 2 is available to use once. You can keep it permanently until it is used.]

In the first place, the result of the blacksmith game depended on chance. Even if Grid had superior blacksmith skills, it didn't mean he would unconditionally make a high rated item. In addition, Euphemina had the Blessed Blacksmith Hammer.

'There is still a chance.'

Euphemina became engrossed in the production of the dagger.

Chapter 40

It had been two hours since the item production game started. It was around the time that the crowd was losing interest. While Euphemina had already finished the blade and had moved on to the hilt, I hadn't even finished the outline of the blade yet. I continued to temper the iron.

Ttang!Ttang!

Thanks to Khan helping me pinch the metal with his tongs, I was able to become more involved in the hammering and forging.

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Patience skill has been activated. Concentration, stamina, and defense will rise to the extremes for one hour.]

A notification window popped up as I was concentrating. At the same time, I was able to exert an aura of sharp concentrating, making my hammer strikes more powerful and elaborate.

Kaaang!

The sound of cheering was completely diminished. I forgot that this was Winston's Central Square that contained thousands of people. Even Khan's helping presence became blurred. It was quiet. The only thing that existed in this world was the iron.

Ttaang - ttang -

The hammer and I weren't separate entities. We were fully fused. There was no resistance in the movements of the hammer. It followed my will as if it was part of my body.

Ttaaang!

The metal made a clear sound as it was shaped like a blade. Then a notification window flashed.

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Breath has increased the effectiveness of your production items]

".....!"

My spirit cleared and the calm world suddenly changed.

"Erina! Erina! Erina!"

"Khan, fighting!"

"I believe in Grid!"

The crowd cheered, the birds chirped on the fence, the second hand of the clock tower ticked, and the hammering of Erina were all types of noises that could be heard from the other side of the stage.

“Ah...”

My consciousness was dissatisfied as I returned from my own world. It was like reality was intruding.

‘I wanted to remain there a little bit longer.’

Too bad. It was the first time since the creation of the Jaffa Arrow that I became so immersed in the production process. If I could remain in that world a little more, I thought I could create a better work.

As I felt regret, Khan’s trembling voice was heard.

"I never thought iron could be so beautiful..."

Now I had finished the blade. Then I saw it. It was flawlessly sophisticated, more beautiful than any artwork! The eyes of a legendary blacksmith shouted. This work was more outstanding than the Special Jaffa Arrows.

“G-Great... amazing! To think I am able to enjoy the glory of helping with this work! I think that I was born to become a blacksmith just for this day!” Khan excitedly exclaimed.

But I remained calm. It was because I couldn’t ruin the remaining processes.

"Inventory."

I took out a minotaur horn from my inventory. It was why I spent a huge amount of 10 gold before the match. I would make a sheath and hilt with this horn. The sheath could be used as a defensive tool depending on the situation, so it was better to have a proper weight and rigidity. The hilt had to be relatively soft to minimize the fatigue of the user.

The minotaur’s horn was robust and durable, but it was surprisingly soft. It had the texture of brass casting. In other words, it was suitable to be used for the sheath and hilt.

Seuk seuk.

First, the sheath was designed based on the size of the blade while the length, width, and shape of the hilt were based on an adult male’s hand. It was completely practical. The minotaur’s horn had an artistic pattern on it, so they showed an artistry without me having to do anything. After finishing the design, I was focused on the production when I heard a tremendous cry from the stands.

Erina had completed the dagger one step ahead of me. The host checked her dagger and was impressed.

"This is a really great work! Making this in less than three hours, I can only admire this wonderful work! Now!"

"What type of work was created that could cause such surprise?"

"Don’t look alone. Show it to us!"

The crowd was in an uproar as they were curious about the finished work. After the host confirmed that their curiosity reached the peak, he focused the crowd’s attention on the display board installed at the back of the stage.

“Okay! Check it out!”

On the display board, Erina's dagger appeared. It was very sharp yet had a great balance. It was a superior dagger that would be able to exert an exceptional attack power. The handle was made of brass casting with a beautiful pattern engraved on it, making it a beautiful ornament as well.

"Ohhhh!"

"The dagger resembles the owner! I have never seen such a pretty dagger. I want to see!"

"That is a secondary matter. The performance is extraordinary just looking at it. I really want it."

The crowd was enthusiastic. Now it wasn't just the men showing a favorable opinion towards Erina, but the female users as well. The detailed information of the dagger appeared.

[Dagger of Bewitchment]

Rating: Epic

Durability: 60/60 Attack Power: 122~127 Attack Speed: +8%

* There is a certain probability of bewitching the enemy.

* The durability will be quickly consumed when blocking an attack.

A dagger produced using the delicate skills and superior aesthetics of an excellent blacksmith.

The lethal beauty can sometimes steal other people's hearts.

The sharp blade has a high attack power, but the drawback is that it lacks robustness.

User Restriction: Level 100 or higher. More than 200 agility. More than 30 strength. Intermediate Dagger Mastery.

The disadvantage was its durability, but this was a truly excellent dagger. The attack power was incomparable to a common dagger. It also had the bewitchment option. Bewitchment was a powerful skill that turned a target into a non-resistant state for three seconds. It was appropriate as an assassin's weapon.

The users were convinced.

"The result is clear! Erina definitely won this game!"

Even the Winston residents felt desperate.

"Ah... that woman is a great blacksmith. Grid is a blacksmith recognized by Khan, but is it possible for him to create something better?"

Rabbit and the other Mero Company officials looked convinced that victory was in their grasp. But I didn't shake. Khan was the same.

Khan laughed. "That girl has tremendous skills for her young age. They are excited right now. But it won't be like that in the future. Isn't that right?"

The sheath and hilt were finished. I nodded as they were combined with the blade.

"Of course. I represent the ugly people of the world. I will never stop."

Khan frowned. "Represent the ugly people? What does that mean? You are fighting on behalf of the smithy, the smithy!"

"...Ah, excuse me. I forgot. Now, shall we go and keep the smithy?"

The dagger was completed. I was thrilled to see the information about the dagger and showed my dagger to the host. The host didn't even look at my dagger properly as he spoke to the crowd.

"This team spent a lot more time than Erina, despite having two people. He can't hide the fact that the result of this game is too obvious!"

"Hahaha! Yes! It is shameful for two men to go against a woman, but it has come to an end!"

The crowd agreed.

I scoffed at all of them. "Look at my work and be careful not to have heart attacks from shock."

At that moment. Soldiers armed with swords and spears climbed onto the stage. Then they confiscated my dagger.

"W-What?"

As I was confused, a heavily armed knight shouted.

"I have received information that you are working with a criminal called Huroi, arrested eight days ago for trying to harm Winston! You'll have to be questioned about this!"

"Huroi?"

Was he talking about Huroi who received the 'For the Residents of Winston' quest? He was captured and failed the quest?

'That useless bastard. No... why am I associated with him?'

I resisted. "What are you saying? I don't know that person! Let me go!"

The knight pulled out his sword at my defiance and warned me, "I suggest that you don't resist."

"Yes..."

If I did something, this bastard really would kill me. A sword was pointed at my neck! I was unarmed and forced to follow as the soldiers dragged me down the stage.

Khan called out. "What are you doing? Why are you unfairly framing a person?"

The knights and soldiers ignored Khan. Khan eventually ran to where the Mero officials were sitting. Then he shouted to someone.

"Valmont! You cowardly wretch! You know that you won't win the game, so you are trying to finish it in this manner! You aren't afraid of the Winston residents?"

However, Khan's shouting was useless. The middle-aged man didn't respond as if he was just hearing an annoying dog's barks.

Thus, I was brought by the armed forces to the castle.

'This is impossible!'

Rabbit had spent 20 years as a merchant. In the meantime, he had handled numerous excellent products. That's why he was astonished the moment he checked the dagger made by Grid.

'This isn't an ordinary item! Erina's dagger can't be compared to it. We... we lost. I didn't think he would have that much skill!'

Valmont, sitting beside him, muttered in an angry voice. "We lost."

Valmont also noticed it right away when he saw Grid's dagger. His eyes were as good as Rabbit's when it came to seeing spectacular items.

Rabbit bowed. "I'm sorry. I should've been more vigilant."

Valmont forgave him for failing this time. There was no choice. "It isn't your fault. You hired an amazing blacksmith. But the opponent was too strong. It is different from his appearance."

Valmont had declared their victory when he first saw Grid. He guessed Grid was just a lowly blacksmith. But the result was clear and simple. This failure couldn't be blamed on Rabbit. Grid was just an amazing person.

"He disguised himself as a trash person so that he could make his opponent underestimate him... He really isn't stupid. This competition needs to be properly handled. How can I accept this result?"

Valmont wanted the smithy. It wasn't acceptable for a merchant to give up on the profit from the smithy because of a game.

Rabbit tried to persuade him. "But we have already publicly announced this. If we don't accept the result, the public sentiment will be irreversible."

Valmont raised his voice. "You are speaking nonsense. I will absolutely never give up the smithy!"

Rabbit could no longer stop Valmont. How could he be so confident in this bad situation? There must be something.

Then Valmont smiled wickedly. "In the first place, the crowd doesn't know the result yet. Unlike us, they don't have the discerning eye to see that it is a great item. Unless the details are checked, it is impossible to know that Grid's dagger is far superior to Erina's dagger. Sir Philipson!"

Philipson was the knight of Baron Lowe, the lord of Winston, and he was here as Valmont's escort. It clearly showed how great Valmont's current position in Winston was.

Valmont gave an order to Philipson. "Arrest him right away on charges of being the friend of Huroi, who was caught recently. You must confiscate the dagger that he made. This information of that dagger must not be disclosed to the public!"

"I understand."

Then Philipson's soldiers intruded on the stage. They quickly seized the dagger and arrested Grid.