

Overgeared 631

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‘What is this woman?’

An envoy had an obligation to communicate the will of their country. This ability was very important, as they were in charge of bringing back results for the country. Yes, it was fully understandable that the envoy was a named NPC. It wasn't strange if there was a named-grade diplomatic specific NPC.

‘The empire is famous for its abundant talent and named NPCs must be common there.’

However, sword energy? Mercedes' passive skill that unleashed havoc was almost at the level of a top named class. It was a skill that bypassed the absolute resistance of a legend. It wasn't possible for anyone apart from Sword Saint Kraugel.

‘I'm not sure if my memories are wrong. Kraugel was the only one to have the power that the system clearly described as ‘sword energy.’

It was a power that amplified the strength of sword related skills.

‘Having the sword energy power, does this mean that Mercedes is a master of the sword comparable to a Sword Saint?’

Was this person a bigshot? Grid's eyes became increasingly vigilant as he looked at Mercedes. In the ensuing silence, Mercedes was the first to open her mouth.

"You are more commendable than the rumors. The potential of a legend could be better than described in history." Mercedes honestly admired the skills and stats of Grid that she saw. "Our empire has somewhat underestimated the power of legends other than the Sword Saint. That evaluation will change in the future."

"..."

Grid frowned. Mercedes' attitude towards him was like an adult towards a child. It felt like she was looking down on him.

‘If she can be so casual after looking at my stats, does that mean this woman is stronger than me?’

In fact, it was easy to infer. A representative of the Saharan Empire that dominated the West Continent. It was obvious that her level would be overwhelmingly higher than named NPCs.

"What status do you have in the empire?"

Grid sat on the throne with a calm look and asked Mercedes bluntly.

“I belong to the Red Knights. The Great Emperor gave me the number ‘1.’ People call me the 1st knight.”

"...What?"

Grid was surprised. The identity of the envoy was the 1st knight of the strongest empire. It was natural to be surprised. It was much bigger than he expected.

“Isn’t this amazing? Why did His Majesty the Emperor dispatch a person like you to my fledgling kingdom?”

Grid didn’t make any mistakes. He used the proper title for the emperor. If he made a mistake, the empire could destroy the Overgeared Kingdom at any time.

‘It’s only possible to become hostile to the Saharan Empire in the future.’

Grid smiled on the outside. He was doing his best to act as the king. He never forgot that he was carrying tens of thousands of people on his shoulders. Mercedes laughed.

“His Majesty the Emperor sent me as the envoy because he respects King Grid. His Majesty the Emperor highly appreciates your ability to swallow up a kingdom with your own strength. He sent the representative of the Red Knights as an envoy.”

“A compliment...”

"His Majesty the Emperor always said that a leader shouldn’t be stingy with praise. He has a big heart like the sea.”

“I see. It is appreciated.”

Grid’s discomfort became greater as the conversation progressed. Grid judged that this conversation had no meaning and got straight to the point.

"In the end, what does His Majesty the Emperor want from me?”

At this moment, Mercedes’ friendly smile froze on her face. The pure white skin and blue eyes gave Grid a cold feeling of pressure.

“First of all, let’s discuss your sins.”

"Sins?"

"First, there is the sin of destroying the Eternal Kingdom, which offered tributes to the Saharan Empire and is its subject, without the empire’s permission.”

“...”

"Second, there is the sin of building a kingdom without the permission of the empire, the master of the Western Continent.”

“...”

"Third, there is the sin of not making a servant’s oath to His Majesty the Emperor after you became a king.”

“...”

"Fourth, there is the sin of taking the Fold Kingdom from the empire.”

“...”

Mercedes recited his sins in a cold voice. She thought that the Grid facing her would become angry. In fact, from the perspective of the empire, it wasn't wrong to lay such charges on Grid. But Grid wasn't satisfied from his position. He ended up being a sinner waiting for punishment.

Grid tried to keep calm and sent a whisper to Lael.

-The four sins being discussed. What should I do?

-It's as expected.

Lael encouraged him. He had predicted this situation and prepared countermeasures.

-From now on, recite my words carefully.

Grid delivered Lael's message to Mercedes.

"I can't acknowledge the four sins because they all originate from misunderstandings or ignorance. For the first sin, it isn't right to say that the Eternal Kingdom was the empire's subject. The Eternal Kingdom offered a tribute to the empire just like any other kingdom, but the Eternal Kingdom was officially neutral. This has been acknowledged by the empire. The Eternal Kingdom offered a tribute to the great empire out of courtesy, not because it was the empire's subject."

"..."

"Second, a bill doesn't exist on the continent that requires seeking the empire's permission to build a kingdom. If I was a smarter person, I would've let the empire know. I am sad because my ignorance meant I couldn't think about seeking permission from the empire. This mistake stems from my ignorance. It isn't a deliberate sin. I am in deep reflection."

"..."

"Third, the Overgeared Kingdom is new and in a chaotic state. How do I dare greet His Majesty the Emperor when the kingdom is still unstable? I thought it would be too arrogant. Thus, I have been putting off my visit to the empire."

"..."

"Fourth, making the Fold Kingdom a vassal of the Overgeared Kingdom was a defense mechanism to protect the safety of the kingdom. I had to show strength because all 15 kingdoms were going to prey on the Overgeared Kingdom. I inadvertently took the Fold Kingdom as a subject in the process. Naturally, the Fold Kingdom... I was going to return it to the empire."

Grid's body shook as he talked. He was lamenting his own disgrace. Mercedes listened quietly and relaxed her hard expression.

"They are just excuses. Too scandalous. But it's okay. I know King Grid's intentions. Either way, isn't it true that the Overgeared Kingdom is loyal to the empire?"

Flinch.

Grid couldn't answer immediately. However, Lael urged him to nod his head. His pride was already abandoned.

“...Right.”

“Good. You responded as His Majesty the Emperor expected. Okay, I will now convey the will of His Majesty the Emperor. Overgeared King Grid, come down from your throne, kneel, and listen.”

“What?”

Kneel? Grid doubted his ears as he stared at Mercedes.

"It's an imperial order. It's natural to show courtesy. Do you dislike it?"

“...No, no.”

This was a shameful situation. But his actions would control the fate of the Overgeared members and the people who believed in him. Above all, there was the billions of won he invested in making this kingdom. He didn't yet have the strength to confront the empire, so he couldn't lose everything due to his pride.

'Calm down. My actions aren't shameful.'

Kwaduduk!

Grid rose from his throne. He moved in a regal gait and knelt down in front of Mercedes. Mercedes' beautiful eyebrows furrowed.

'He doesn't feel humiliation?'

This Grid was a beast that was hard to tame. She had to be alert. The wary Mercedes pulled out a letter and read it.

"I, Juander, master of the earth and sky, order it. I accept Grid's sins with a generous heart and acknowledge the status of the Overgeared King. I won't demand the return of the Fold Kingdom. Overgeared King Grid and the Overgeared Kingdom will be thrilled and give their loyalty and grace to the empire forever. The Overgeared Kingdom must pay 72% of the tax revenue every month to the empire. In addition, once Prince Lord is 12 years old, he should be sent to study in the empire."

“...?”

There were still a few years left before Lord turned 12. The problem would be resolved if the Overgeared Kingdom was strengthened before that. The immediate problem was giving 72% of the tax revenue to the empire.

"I know that the other kingdoms only give 36% of their tax revenue to the empire."

"It is the price for recognizing the Fold Kingdom as under the Overgeared Kingdom. You have to pay twice as much tribute as other kingdoms. You don't want to?"

Mercedes made a taunting expression. Now that she actually saw Grid, she acknowledged Grid and was vigilant, unlike the emperor. Thus, she decided to use her own judgment and hoped Grid would cause a disturbance. However, Lauel was behind Grid. Lauel's whispers continued to calm Grid. In addition, Grid's mental strength and patience was already not normal.

"No, I will do as His Majesty the Emperor commands. I will accept."

"...You truly aren't ordinary. I understand. I will go back now."

Mercedes nodded slightly to Grid and left the audience room. Grid's eyes were bloodshot as he was left alone.

"Be prepared. I will be the one to make you kneel the next time we meet."

Strength. More strength was needed.

Grid opened his eyes and asked Lauel.

"How long can we afford to give the tribute that the empire demands?"

"Three months. After three months, the people and soldiers will be hungry and the Overgeared Kingdom will be in debt. In four months, it will completely stop functioning as a kingdom and will perish."

"How do we fix it?"

"Piaro is currently in the Fold Kingdom and his progress with their agriculture is three times faster than expected. The number of players in the National Development Quest (Grid's Set linked quest) will increase by more than five times in two months, while the taxes from the Fold Kingdom and Siren will double. Increase the production of limited-edition potions that can be produced at the alchemy facility by seven times and donate the salary of the Overgeared members to the kingdom. If this happens, we can hold on for nine months."

"The fundamental solution?"

"Of course, it's power. Become so strong that the empire doesn't dare threaten us."

Grid was reminded of Pangea.

"I will go back to the East Continent. I'll come back with the friends I made there. And give this to Piaro."

"A golden walnut?"

"It is more precious than gold. I believe that as a legendary farmer, Piaro can grow it."

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[Golden Walnut]

Also called the blessing of nature.

It is a snack and remedy enjoyed by all nobles and royalty on the East Continent.

Somewhere on the East Continent, there are creatures whose main food is this walnut.

All stats will rise by 10% for one hour.

In addition, there is a very low probability of permanently increasing one stat by 5 points. The better you shell the walnut, the more likely it is that your stats will permanently increase.

Weight: 0.1

"The strongest buff potion and elixir in one..."

Lauel was impressed as he confirmed the details of the golden walnut that he received from Grid. He was particularly surprised that the royalty and nobles of the East Continent enjoyed this walnut as a snack.

"The royalty and nobles on the East Continent basically have good stats by default. Especially if they have been eating these walnuts for years."

"Perhaps not. It's rare for people to be able to shell the walnut perfectly like me. Well, in any case, the level of the royalty and nobles on the East Continent are high. I hope that formula will be applied to the Overgeared Guild, so tell Piaro to succeed in growing the golden walnut."

"...I understand."

Lauel answered with a gloomy expression. Grid knew why.

'The probability of growing such a fraudulent item... It's close to zero.'

The S.A. Group was concerned about balance and wouldn't allow the golden walnuts to be grown to easily.

'But.'

Piaro was a legend and legends destroyed common sense. Objectively, the S.A. Group was generous to legends.

'Piaro can create new growing skills, just as I create items and Kraugel creates sword techniques.'

It was a very positive interpretation. Grid smiled bitterly and patted Lauel's shoulder.

"It's fine. I will get more golden walnuts when I go to the East Continent."

"...I will wait faithfully for you. Your Majesty also doesn't have to worry about the government. The new Lauel, my heart and soul has become stronger thanks to the encounter with my friends of the past and this will be the Overgeared Kingdom's good fortune... Huh? Your Majesty? Where are you going?"

Step, step.

It was a situation where he faced the empire as a potential enemy. Grid's feet hurried. If he didn't overcome the trial of the empire, the Overgeared Kingdom would be ruined in four months. He couldn't afford to lose the billions of won he invested.

'Hurry.'

While Lauel was talking, Grid headed to the Overgeared Academy to meet Sticks.

Grid's pace was similar to the Overgeared Kingdom's soldiers, who were famous for their good physical fitness. It was the effect of his agility stat growing steadily in order to meet the 1:1 ratio with strength and breaking through 2,700 points. He needed around 500 agility left before it was a 1:1 ratio.

The Overgeared Academy.

It was a comprehensive education school built in Reinhardt, the capital of the Overgeared Kingdom. Anybody over the age of eight could become a student here, learning swordsmanship and magic. However, the size of the school was still limited. Therefore, the total number of students accepted by the academy was only 3,000. More than half of them were taught directly by Sticks. It was a situation where everybody in all fields were overworked due to a lack of talent. It was the same for Sticks.

As a high elf and sage, Sticks was highly respected by all elves. Even the emperor of the Saharan Empire would welcome him, Yet he was teaching commoners in a small kingdom? The entire continent would be in chaos if this fact was known. However, the people of Overgeared didn't know that Sticks was such a great figure. They just thought it was easier and faster to learn from him.

"It's hard for people who constantly pursue change and elementals who desire the preservation of nature to get along. There is a very rare possibility that humans and elementals can contract with each other, a special occasion that occurs once in 100 years. Various conditions must be established..."

"Sticks!"

"...?"

A handful of talented and motivated students were selected to be educated separately. Sticks, who was teaching the basics of elementals, was surprised by Grid's suddenly appearance. There was an uproar.

"Wahhhh!"

"King Grid!"

"Your Majesty, I love you!"

The student's love for Grid was very deep, since he provided equal education opportunities without caring about status. In particular, the motivated students had a deeper love. The students who were more passionate about class especially liked Grid.

"I am Adon who took 1st place in this test! I want to work under King Grid when I finish my education and graduate!"

"I'm Shannon, who will be first in the next test. Please remember that I'm doing my best to be a talented person for King Grid."

Their words were bragging and thankful. The students' shining eyes and eager words allowed Grid to erase his fear of the empire for a while.

"I will be watching for that day."

Originally, Grid wanted to be king in order to gain more taxes from the people. He wanted to eat everything he wanted to eat and buy everything he wanted to buy. Of course, this dream was still the same. But there was a prerequisite for Grid to achieve this wish.

It was for the people to be better off. The better off his people were, the more taxes they could afford to pay. That's right. Grid was greedy, but he was fundamentally different from the emperor. He had no

intention of persecuting the poor. It was natural. Grid had been deprived for most of his life. He knew better than anyone the suffering of people in this position and couldn't behave like the emperor. Grid's selfishness wasn't in the shape of something that would be satisfied by innocents.

"I heard a envoy came from the empire... It must be something bad."

Sticks guessed after seeing how Grid ran to the academy. Grid told him.

"Send me to the East Continent. Oh, this time don't forget the scroll to return to the West Continent."

"..."

His memory was distorted! Grid remembered that Sticks was the reason when he didn't have a return scroll to the West Continent. Sticks sighed before handing Grid an East Continent movement scroll and West Continent return scroll.

"There is something you should know."

"What?"

"Reinhardt doesn't have an environment where I can make scrolls. I need to go back to the Behen Archipelago in order to make scrolls and it takes 28 days to make a scroll."

"..."

What if Sticks was away for a month? The Overgeared Academy was currently lacking teachers so the education would be stopped. In other words.

'I have to make the most of this one chance.'

Grid's original plan for the East Continent was simple. Bring back Idan, whose food would give the Overgeared members a chance to raise their stats. He could also get elite troops and support from Han Seokbong. But it wouldn't be enough based on the current situation.

'The East Continent isn't a place I can go anytime I want... This time, I need to make an army.'

[You have used the intercontinental movement scroll.]

[You have arrived at Pangea, a starter village on the East Continent.]

Grid blinked as he arrived on the East Continent. He was amazed by the greatness of Sticks' scroll, only to realize that Pangea's atmosphere was different from before.

'Why are the expressions of the people so dark?'

In the past, Grid had made a huge difference in Pangea. Not only did he reproduce the Red Phoenix Bow, he also eradicated the armored needles. Pangea's peace was restored, so it should be more energetic than before. It was strange that all the people on the streets were sad, as if someone had died. The market was as quiet as a dead rat. The merchants and passersby were all looking at the ground.

'What on earth happened?'

Sua was the first thing to come to Grid's mind. She was the lord's daughter who received the respect and love of the people.

'Did something happen to her?'

Grid had a high liking for Sua, even if she was a pervert. She was beautiful enough to be comparable to Irene? Of course, that played a part. However, it wasn't everything. Sua was a great woman. Despite being the lord's daughter, she wasn't arrogant. She fought the armored needles for the stability and peace of the people.

'...Although she's a pervert.'

Grid started moving in the direction of Pangea Castle. Then someone suddenly grabbed Grid's wrist. The slender hand belonged to Idan's restaurant employee, Yang Fei.

"Oh, it has been a while. Have you been well?"

He waved to Yang Fei. Grid's welcome made her usually expressionless face flush. But then she looked around and led Grid into an alleyway.

Tak!

Yang Fei placed a hand on the wall Grid was leaning against and approached. He was pushed against the wall by a girl who hadn't yet become an adult? Grid was embarrassed by the sudden situation and stuttered.

"W-Why are you bringing me to such a bad place? D-Don't tell me..."

Had she become a pervert?

'The East Continent women are really great.'

Grid's heart thumped as he felt expectant. Then Yang Fei shouted.

"Why...? Why did you come back?"

"Huh?"

Yang Fei's expression was serious. He couldn't believe that the always expressionless girl had become so restless and uneasy. She even shouted.

Grid made a serious expression and asked, "What happened?"

At that moment.

"Sob..."

Yang Fei's shoulders shook as she started crying. All the sadness and worries she had been enduring exploded once she saw Grid's trustworthy face.

"Lord Han Seokbong and Lady Sua have been dragged to the capital..."

“The capital? The capital of the Cho Kingdom?”

“Yes... Rumor has it that the king wanted to know Grid’s whereabouts. Lord Han Seokbong refused to answer and was branded a sinner.”

“My whereabouts?”

Grid noticed it straight away.

‘He wanted to obtain the blacksmith who created a Red Phoenix Bow better than the original.’

Why were the people in power always so selfish? Grid gritted his teeth.

Yang Fei urged him.

“Run away. If you stay here, you will be caught by the king’s soldiers.”

In fact, Yang Fei had missed Grid more than anyone. She remembered his touch every night. But she didn’t want to see Grid in danger. For someone who had only experienced feeling responsible for her family’s livelihood from a young age, Grid was... He was her joy. She wanted him to be safe.

“Don’t worry. It will be fine.”

Grid felt Yang Fei’s hand trembling and hugged her. It was to reassure her, but the excitement was too much for Yang Fei. Her face, neck, and ears were red as she blushed. On the other hand, Grid understood that this situation was a precursor to a quest.

At the same time.

[★Hidden Quest★ ‘Rescue the Han Seokbong Father and Daughter’ has been acquired.]

A new episode was presented to Grid.

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[Rescue the Han Seokbong Father and Daughter]

★ Hidden Quest ★

Han Seokbong has always been loyal to the Cho Kingdom, only to be branded a traitor.

It was because he refused to reveal your whereabouts to the king.

Rescue the Han Seokbong father and daughter who chose to be loyal to you rather than their country.

Quest Clear Conditions: Meet the Cho King. Or rescue the Han Seokbong father and daughter by force.

Class Quest Clear Reward: Unknown.

Quest Failure: Death of the Han Seokbong father and daughter.

Hidden quest. As the name suggested, it was a hidden quest. It absolutely wasn’t easy. In order to get a hidden quest, more diverse requirements needed to be met than general quests. He participated in the blacksmithing contest based on his connection with White, succeeded in making the Red Phoenix Bow,

entered the castle's dungeon, killed Arube, and saved Pangea from a crisis, etc. Without Grid's choices and actions, the present hidden quest wouldn't have happened.

'The rewards for hidden quests are usually high.'

It was good to get a hidden quest. No, he should be running with joy. But Grid's heart was heavy. He felt guilty because Han Seokbong and Sua were in danger.

'They will die if I can't save them.'

It was a quest with the life of others on the line. It placed additional heavy pressure on him.

'In particular, the perverted Sua... Eh?'

Grid pondered for a moment before belatedly realizing and blushing. He realized he was holding Yang Fei in his arms.

"G-Grid..."

Yang Fei was like a squirrel with her face buried in Grid's chest. Small, soft, and cute. Grid turned red and hurriedly pulled away from her.

'Unbelievable.'

Since when could he have such natural skin contact with women?

'A-Amazing...'

Did his hidden qualities as a Casanova suddenly bloom?

'If I maintain this momentum, I might escape being single in reality?'

Grid was filled with anticipation.

'Now isn't the time to be thinking about these things.'

It was urgent. Coincidentally, Grid didn't have a long time to stay on the East Continent.

'I need to rescue the Han Seokbong father and daughter as soon as possible and make them my allies.'

Grid decided and headed to Idan's restaurant with Yang Fei.

"What? You want me to be your exclusive chef?"

A restaurant that didn't have one guest, despite it being lunch time. Idan doubted his ears and questioned it. Grid disappeared and suddenly reappeared, asking Idan to become his own chef.

"Hrmm... You are the person who find my frying pan and one of the few gourmets who enjoys my food. I feel a great affection for you. But I can't be your exclusive chef."

"Why?"

"Why should I? I don't know your true identity. How can I become your personal chef when I don't even know what country you're from? What do you believe?"

"Does that mean you will become my personal chef if I identify myself?"

"No, it isn't just that. I have my own pride and goal as a chef. The reason I run a restaurant is because I want to show my dishes to more people. I want to see hundreds and thousands of guests enjoying my dishes every day. I'm sorry, but I can't cook for just one person."

"Hundreds and thousands of guests a day when you only get two visitors? Even those two were travelers and asked for a refund..."

Yang Fei refuted but Idan ignored her.

"Hum hum, well, in any case. I can't be your chef."

The moment that Idan refused.

"I see. Then will you become a chef in my kingdom rather than my personal chef?"

Grid's tone suddenly changed.

"Huh?"

A chef in a kingdom? It was also 'my kingdom'?

"What... Eh? Ehh?"

Idan was confused only to become astonished. Yang Fei was also surprised. It was because Grid took out a silver crown.

"Y-You?"

Grid's atmosphere changed. The look, tone and also atmosphere was also completely different. Idan and Yang Fei felt a sense of discomfort and hesitated. Grid truly faced the two people.

"I am a ruler on the West Continent, Overgeared King Grid. Idan, the best chef on the East Continent, I want you to feed my tens of thousands of soldiers. Will you agree to my wish?"

"Yes!"

Idan made his choice the moment Grid called him the best chef on the East Continent. Idan was so excited that he started to pack his things immediately. It was just some clothes and his frying pan.

"Let's go to the West Continent!"

Idan yelled as soon as he finished. Unlike Idan, who was excited about his cooking skill being acknowledged, Yang Fei was quiet. She was sad when she realized that the man in front of her was off-limits.

'He is in a completely different world.'

It was a person she couldn't be with from the beginning. Now they would part. Yang Fei dropped her head. It was an attempt to hold back her tears. At that moment.

“Raise your head.”

Grid’s big hand touched Yang Fei’s small face. Yang Fei shook at the touch and was able to smile gently at Grid.

“I also want Yang Fei beside me. Don’t you have a family to support? Will you also go to my kingdom if I provide for your family?”

“H-Hik. I’m glad...”

Idan was a chef whose food had a certain probability of giving stats. In addition, Yang Fei was excellent at working, taking responsibility and detecting people. Later, the Overgeared soldiers would experience food poisoning... No, poison master Idan would thoroughly fill the empty stomachs of the Overgeared soldiers... No, the mysterious master, ‘Demon Maid Yang Fei’ was born today.

Yakumo’s Labyrinth.

The difficulty of this dungeon was the worst since it was impossible to enter in a party. The structure of the labyrinth and the boss’ patterns changed every time someone entered. The success rate of breaking through this labyrinth was 11.6% for third advancement classes. It meant that nine out of 10 challengers failed.

However.

[You have succeeded in breaking through Yakumo’s Labyrinth!]

[The time it took you to break through the labyrinth is 39 hours, 32 minutes and 27 seconds!]

[The record has been updated! You have acquired Yakumo’s Ring (6) as a reward!]

“It isn’t the fourth ring.”

Sword Saint Kraugel. He hadn’t reached level 300, but he set a new record in Yakumo’s Labyrinth. The surprising thing was that he already acquired Yakumo’s fifth ring. Yakumo’s Ring was given every time a new record was set. There were a total of eight different types and the options were different for each type.

‘According to the information, the option I need most is attached to the fourth ring. I have to challenge it again.’

“Kraugel.”

Someone called out to Kraugel as he was about to enter the labyrinth again. It was Hao. Kraugel laughed.

“I’m sorry, but my mind is determined. No matter how you object, I will eventually move to the United States.”

The United States government presented a vision of his mother’s health and happiness. It was different from other countries who simply discussed money and honor. This attitude caught Kraugel’s heart.

"I can't respond to your wish to move to South Korea or China."

Hao nodded at Kraugel's firm opinion. "I won't argue anymore. I will respect and cheer on your choice. I came to say this."

"...?"

Kraugel knew Hao's nature. He didn't have a nature that was easy to bend. His attitude had shifted overnight?

Hao explained to the puzzled Kraugel. "I went to South Korea to meet Grid."

"Grid?"

"Yes, I wanted to ask him to stop you from moving to the United States. Then he refused. He said I shouldn't argue against a choice that will make you happy."

"..."

"Honestly, I couldn't understand. I was convinced that you would be happier moving to South Korea or China. Then Grid took me to a Chinese restaurant."

"...Chinese restaurant?"

"Yes, isn't it funny? I was honestly displeased about eating Chinese food in South Korea. But I realized the moment I ate the dish called jjampong." There was a warm smile on Hao's face as he remembered. "The charm of Chinese cuisine is reinterpreted in other countries... It's a wonderful thing."

"...?"

"I thought. The dishes called jajangmyeon and jjampong are happy in South Korea. And..."

"...??"

"Yes, like food, people don't have to be tied to nationality. You should pursue happiness in a place where you can be recognized and loved."

"..."

"Kraugel, now I fully understand and respect your choice. It's thanks to Grid giving me great enlightenment with food."

"..."

Did Grid have such a deep meaning behind treating Hao to jjampong? Kraugel was familiar with Grid's nature and could only laugh. No one knew. Grid was the decisive reason behind him not moving to South Korea.

'Grid, I'm dreaming of the day when I can compete with you again.'

Until now, the total was 1 to 1. What about the third round?

The Cho Kingdom's capital, Kars. The Lava Prison where sinners were confined was busy today. The guards were suffering due to a visit from the Cho King.

"Why is His Majesty visiting this nasty prison?"

"Well, it's because of the Han Seokbong father and daughter? Han Seokbong was famous for how he used to have the king's favor."

Hundreds of years ago, a volcano erupted and caused this lava prison. It was virtually impossible to clean this place, since their bodies would melt if they made a mistake. However, the guards had to clean as much as possible because the king was coming. They did their best to sweep the floor with a broom, wipe the dried blood in the torture room and put up fans to try and alleviate the heat from the lava.

After a moment.

"Presenting His Majesty!"

A prison created from the result of a volcanic eruption. The cry of the king's entry echoed everywhere in the huge prison created by nature. The Cho King moved through the hot heat and approached Han Seokbong.

"Seokbong, do you still have no intention of telling me Grid's whereabouts?"

"You... I can't tell you... I don't know his whereabouts..."

"Choosing to deny to the end... It makes me sadder, Seokbong. There has always been a sense of loyalty between you and I. We were childhood friends before we were servant and king."

"It's not that. I really don't know his whereabouts..."

"Yes, Seokbong. I understand your intentions. But I honestly think it's too much. I'm looking for the blacksmith purely for the Cho Kingdom's future. Yet you choose righteousness over your kingdom in crisis. Your noble heart is now cold."

"No, Your Majesty. I don't know his whereabouts..."

"You don't need to say anything else. I'll give up. I am well aware of your nature. Sigh... This is your charm, I suppose. Together, let's watch the destruction of the Cho Kingdom."

"...I don't know."

It was enough to drive Han Seokbong crazy. At first, he didn't reveal Grid's whereabouts due to concerns about his safety. But now Han Seokbong knew why the king was looking for Grid. Han Seokbong wanted to tell his king where Grid was. But how could he answer when he didn't know Grid's whereabouts? How could he tell what he didn't know?

'Is Heaven abandoning me as well as the Cho Kingdom? I want to cry.'

Han Seokbong shed tears as he lamented.

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Users ate food in Satisfy to fill their satiety and recover. Food was an essential energy source.

But the dishes made by Idan were often poisonous.

[You have eaten bad food.]

[You have received food poisoning.]

[You have resisted.]

[You have consumed something that shouldn't be eaten.]

[You have been poison (large).]

[You have resisted.]

“...”

“How about it? Isn't it delicious?”

The road to Kars, capital of the Cho Kingdom.

Grid travelled with Idan and Yang Fei, suffering terrible pain every time he ate food. He was being tortured by a torture expert.

'I want you to make food that people can at least eat, even if it isn't delicious... Nine out of ten dishes are just food waste.'

It wasn't possible to supply the current food made by Idan to the Overgeared members and soldiers. If all of them received food poisoning, it would be an unprecedented situation where the government was paralyzed.

'I have to constantly eat in order to improve Idan's cooking skills.'

Grid was determined to sacrifice himself.

Throughout the journey, he had Idan constantly make him food. It wasn't something that could be done with ordinary mental power.

Grid was placing himself in the abyss of hell for the sake of Overgeared.

“Grid, have some tea.”

Grid wanted to vomit while suffering from food poisoning.

Yang Fei made a sad expression and approached with tea.

“T-Thank you...”

[You have drunk Berenas tea.]

[Your mind and body have become calm. Health recovery rate has increased by 10% for 1 minute.]

His rotten taste buds were healed thanks to Yang Fei.

Intelligent and versatile, Yang Fei was also a tea master. The grass, flowers, leaves and twigs she gathered along the way were made into tea that showed amazing effects.

"Where did you learn this technique?"

"It is a skill I learnt from working in Idan's restaurant for several years. Sometimes the customers suffer from food poisoning and fall into a crisis..."

"..."

It was indeed an absurd answer.

However, Grid was pleased that learn that Yang Fei was kind-hearted.

'She is good at spotting talent but this child also knows that people's lives are precious.'

But it was a misunderstanding.

This impression didn't last long.

"It was only a matter of time until a customer was killed by Idan. If the restaurant closes, won't I lose my job? There are many unpaid salaries."

"...I see."

The more he looked, the better Yang Fei's compatibility with Rabbit seemed.

'If I hand Yang Fei to Rabbit, she will support him properly and his work efficiency will increase.'

First and foremost, he couldn't give Yang Fei to Lord.

'That great guy will make any girl his lover, irrespective of appearance or age.'

Of course, the young Lord still didn't know about it. He thought lover was the same as friend. The problem was that women didn't accept it.

'The maidens dream about someday becoming a prince... Wait?'

Grid suddenly imagined something when he thought about Lord.

'If the 12 year old Lord is taken to the empire as a hostage...'

Wouldn't all the women in the empire become his lover?

'My Lord is wonderful!'

Hedgehogs also said that their young were beautiful.

It was natural for Grid to praise Lord, who was the best genius of the continent.

Grid's confidence in Lord was greater than a mountain.

'In the empire, there is a lot of room for Lord to play... No, Lord can't be taken hostage.'

Clang.

Grid caressed the necklace he received from Lord.

'For Lord's sake, I need the power to resist the empire. i can't let Lord have any painful experiences.'

He could bear eating Idan's dishes if he thought of this.

Grid braced himself as Idan cooked food using the meat of a newly hunted monster.

"It isn't as easy as I thought."

Mute operated a small to medium-sized business with a monthly trading volume of nearly 10,000 gold.

He was currently the third ranked merchant and pioneering the East Continent.

He had a dream to explore the East Continent and increase his customers.

However, the East Continent was too difficult compared to the West Continent. Trading with most NPCs wasn't easy, regardless of their status. In addition, the level of the monsters in the field was so high that it wasn't easy to navigate between towns and villages.

'The reputation I built on the West Continent isn't applied here so I feel like a complete rookie.'

If he increased his number of customers on the East Continent, he would gain many special products and become more competitive.

Once his trading volume and profits increased considerably, he would rise to the top of the merchant rankings.

Muto dreamt of a brilliant future but he now became nervous. He didn't have any customers for 10 days already so his enthusiasm started to decline.

'If the people of the East Continent believe that I can move freely between the East and West Continents, I will be able to easily expand my business.'

The East Continent people didn't believe in intercontinental movement. It was believed that Muto was pulled to the east from the west due to an accident.

"Ugh, how frustrating."

In the past, Muto was someone who mainly focused on exchanges Earl Butin of the Saharan Empire. Earl Butin's territory was considered a resort for nobles and Muto often sold valuables there.

But one day, his relationship with Earl Butin was ruined. It was when the sands of Reidan started to be sold as a longevity remedy.

As the ridiculous formula of 'Earl Butin=luxury longevity remedy' started to be established, the interest of the nobles in Muto's valuables decreased. After that, Muto became insignificant.

Muto needed the East Continent to recover. If he didn't increase the account here, he could no longer be able to cope with his company's trading volume decreasing.

'Looking at the trends these days, I might end up falling to the 7th rank.'

If he lost his rank, he was likely to lose sponsors. His pride as a merchant was smashed.

'Once I arrive in Kars, I must see the Cho King. If I show the king the culture of the West Continent... Eh?'

Muto moved across the East Continent with the mercenaries he employed, only to stop in place.

A spectacular sight was unfolding in the mountain valley in the distance.

"This is the secret technique that has been passed down in my family for generations! Filleting! My skills have been trained in order to prepare today's lunch!"

"N-No, this isn't a carp but a mermaid..."

"It is still half fish. What is wrong?"

"...?"

It was a rare sight.

The level 300 mermaid monster in the valley trembled as a kitchen knife held by a middle-aged man neared them.

The most impressive thing was the black-haired man trying to hold the middle-aged man back from from the mermaid.

'Grid...?'

The first legendary class and first king.

The most famous man in the world who achieved countless feats.

'Why is he here?'

Was this a coincidence?

A smile appeared on the face of the bewildered Muto.

'This might be a fated relationship.'

In fact, Muto was a person who hated Grid.

It was because Grid was the one who started to sell the remedy from Reidan.

Strictly speaking, Muto's fall was due to Grid. It was natural to feel resentment.

But at this moment, Muto's feelings for Grid were washed away.

It was because he thought that he was bound to Grid by strings of fate.

"I was going to rest in that valley but a guest has arrived there first."

"Do you mind?"

A mercenary asked.

Muto shook his head.

"All your heads will be cut off if you ask him to leave."

"...?"

The mercenaries frowned.

They were the strongest warriors of Zentu. Muto hired them because he acknowledged this fact.

Yet that black-haired man would kill all of them?

"I can't accept it."

Zentu.

It was a village near the queen rat community that had been destroyed by someone a few months ago.

In order to survive the rats, the inhabitants of Zentu endlessly trained and gained the title of warrior. They had great pride in their skills.

"Shall we see if he is really stronger than us?"

The mercenaries were unable to hide their uncomfortable feelings.

"Oh, don't eat mermaids. It is like human flesh."

Peeng!

Pepepepeok!

"...?"

An explosion took place in the valley.

It was a phenomenon that occurred when the black-haired man used swordsmanship and magic.

"T-This is impossible."

The mercenaries were at a loss for words.

They could barely repel the mermaids of Jam Valley one-on-one. The mermaids were strong enough to be compared to the poisonous rats.

But the black-haired man took out dozens of mermaids in the blink of an eye. The dimension was different.

"How about it? Isn't he on a different class? I heard that the warriors of Zentu admire strong people. Isn't he strong?"

"Gulp."

The mercenaries didn't respond to Muto. They could only gulp. They got goosebumps.

'If we had come across him unaware...'

'By now we would be like the mermaids.'

They got goosebumps just imagining it.

'Huh?'

All of the mercenaries shook their head.

Suddenly, the black-haired man took out a needle and thread and started sewing.

“W-What?”

The mercenaries were surprised.

Muto was more surprised than them.

‘Sewing cloth? How can Grid, a blacksmith, deal with cloth?’

He really wasn’t just a celebrity.

They kept meeting by chance and Grid was a constant source of interest.

Muto was convinced.

‘This is my chance.’

Today’s accidental encounter would be the opportunity of a lifetime.

“Okay... Let’s go. First of all, let’s greet him.”

Muto took a deep breath to get rid of his tension and excitement before walking up to Grid with his mercenaries.

He could smell food waste as he neared but he didn’t care.

[Chapter 635](#)

"Yes, what was the reaction of the Overgeared King?"

The Saharan Empire, the castle of Sword Duke Limit.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The four swords that Limit deployed in the air devastated the field. It was the swordsmanship that he trained. Limit was confident that his swordsmanship transcended great swordsman Piaro and even Sword Saint Muller. But due to a lack of achievements, he couldn’t claim to be a legend or a sword saint. Mercedes knelt in the rising dust and answered his question.

“He accepted.”

“Hah... He bowed?” Limit shook his head with surprise. He gazed with hollow eyes at the kneeling Mercedes. "The rebel who faced a force of 100,000 troops alone accepted the imperious demands of the empire without protesting? He didn’t run wild?"

"Yes, he followed it very quietly. On the surface."

“Is it different?”

"That’s right. Grid is like a beast who can’t be tamed. He was kneeling, but couldn’t hide his sharp eyes."

"Asmophel’s Eyes."

'Asmophel's Eyes' was widely used among the imperial knights. It meant the eyes were filled with enthusiasm for the future without being frustrated by the trials of the moment. It was the eyes of the eternal No. 2, Asmophel, when he looked at Piaro.

"Hrmm, that's good. Yes, that's the Overgeared King."

Limit was one of the six dukes of the Saharan Empire. From a general point of view, he was the most loyal person to the empire. He wasn't angry when he heard that Grid didn't truly yield? If someone witnessed this scene, they wouldn't understand it.

But Mercedes was tranquil.

The Red Knights were a group rebuilt by Empress Marie, not Emperor Juander. On the surface, they were knights under the direct control of the empire. However, reality was different. They were no different from the limbs of the empress. Limit, chief of the Red Knights, moved according to the will of the empress.

In fact, it wasn't like this from the beginning. Limit dedicated his loyalty to the emperor when he was first appointed as chief of the Red Knights. But the emperor betrayed him.

The five pillars. Emperor Juander called them talents to support the empire and preferred them more than the Red Knights. The Red Knights were forced to feel deprived and this led to Limit turning completely away from the emperor.

"Mercedes, I want you to tell His Majesty the Emperor your thoughts about the Overgeared King. Try to convince the angry emperor to dispatch troops to the Overgeared Kingdom. In that gap, Empress Marie will have time to reorganize the political factions."

"I understand."

Mercedes responded politely and left. She struggled as she rode her white horse towards the imperial palace.

'I don't know what is best for the empire.'

Was it really right to deceive His Majesty the Emperor? The struggle between factions increased over who should become crown prince. Mercedes was worried that the empire would be torn apart. There was a person who was watching her closely.

'Ha, my goddess.'

It was Mercedes' retainer, Sky. An unofficial ranker, he had been acting in the empire ever since Satisfy opened. He joined the Black Knights and was recently admitted as a reserve in the Red Knights. His talent was enough to become a retainer of the 1st knight.

'I will stand by the goddess forever.'

A huge smile. Mercedes was a beautiful woman who made him smile just looking at her. Sky's love for her was very deep. It was equal to Damian's love for Isabel. However, it wasn't pure.

'My goddess Mercedes, I will surely make you my slave.'

“Hello, Grid?”

“Hmm?”

This was the East continent. Since the entry rate of players was still low, more than 99.9% of the population were NPCs. Unlike the West Continent, people rarely recognized Grid. No, it didn't exist at all. Yet this person recognized him with one glance. Grid turned towards the man approaching and confirmed the name above his head.

‘Muto.’

A player.

‘...He must be considerably skilled to be on the East Continent.’

Grid was alert. Muto came close without hesitation. It was even a nice expression! ‘The expression is so good that it's ridiculous. Usually these are bad people.’ It was a prejudice. But he was right to be wary. The world of Satisfy wasn't an easy place where all strangers in unfamiliar areas were friendly. In particular, Grid was concerned about the eight people accompanying Muto.

[Legendary Blacksmith's Eyes]

It was a skill that allowed him to peek at item information when observing it for more than three seconds. Based on this skill, the eight people with Muto were at least level 280.

‘A person who has such tough subordinates won't be ordinary.’

Muto spoke as Grid became increasingly alert.

"I don't have any combat power. I was able to cross to the East Continent purely due to my speaking ability. I'm a merchant. I ran the Muto Company, which is named after me."

"A man with acumen."

Grid spoke without letting down his guard. Muto scratched his head.

"Unlike Grid, I'm not at the level to be on the unified rankings. But you'll be able to find me if you check the merchant rankings."

“Oh...”

Grid immediately checked the rankings and was surprised. Muto was the third ranked merchant.

‘It isn't a bluff that he runs a company. Come to think about it, Lael said repeatedly that the market must grow in order to boost the economy.’

Lael spoke of the need to attract a large influx of merchants. However, it was difficult because most merchants were active in the empire. In particular, the Overgeared Kingdom had a clear limit on the population. From a merchant's point of view, it was a kingdom with little value.

‘For the sake of the kingdom, it's better to build a relationship with a merchant.’

Grid controlled his expression. He didn't completely get rid of his vigilance and shook Muto's hand.

"Grid."

"Ohh! It's an honor to shake hands with the prestigious King Grid of the Overgeared Kingdom!"

Indeed, he was a merchant. The cheerful Grid asked Muto a question.

"Who are these people?"

"They're mercenaries I hired on the East Continent. As you know, the monsters here are really strong, so mercenaries from the West Continent are useless. I'm currently moving to Kars. Is it the same for Grid?"

"That's right. What are you going to Kars for?"

"My goal is to meet the Cho King and make a commercial exchange with him."

"Cho King..."

Grid's expression became uncomfortable. Grid had to rescue the Han Seokbong father and daughter, so the king might become an enemy. Muto read Grid's expression, roughly noticed the situation and laughed.

"Maybe there's a bad relationship between you and the Cho King? It's surprising. I thought Grid was going to Kars to form a diplomatic relationship with the Cho Kingdom."

"I would be glad if I could, but the situation isn't simple."

Maybe he would need to harm the Cho King. Grid couldn't reveal his purpose when Muto still couldn't be trusted. Muto retreated. The conversation turned to Idan and Yang Fei.

"Who are they? They're unusual colleagues."

Rather than strong warriors, he was crossing the East Continent with a middle-aged man and a young woman? It was only possible because it was Grid. Muto watched on with admiration as Grid explained.

"They are my exclusive chef and tea master."

"Wow."

How many players in this world had a dedicated chef and tea master for adventures? A rich person would be able to hire a chef for gourmet meals. But Grid was the only one with a tea master.

'He's a king for a reason. The scale is different.'

It was a famous fact that the Overgeared Kingdom was poor. But just because the kingdom was poor didn't mean that Grid had to be poor. Grid was rumored to be quite wealthy and came up with the money to construct the kingdom himself.

'I should get close to him.'

From a trader's point of view, there was nothing wrong with exchanges with the rich. Especially if the person was the king of a country! Muto looked at Grid with shining eyes.

"Would you like a meal?"

Chef Idan handed a plate to Muto. It was a plate of soup.

"Can I really accept?"

"I have just finished preparing lunch. There's a lot remaining."

"I'll eat thankfully!"

What person could resist a freebie? Muto was thrilled by Idan's favor and gladly took the soup. At this moment, a sharp smell pierced his nose. But his stamina was low, so he put the soup to his mouth and swallowed it. Then he tasted hell.

[You have consumed something that shouldn't be eaten.]

[You have been poisoned (large).]

[1,840 health is consumed per second and your skin has started to rot.]

"Keok!"

Muto felt danger to his life. He had to take the highest grade antidote in order to treat the poison. It was an expensive antidote to pay for a free meal.

"W-What is this...!"

Was it an assassination attempt? Muto's eyes were alert as he looked at Grid, but it was only for a moment.

"You have no idea about cooking. Spitting out the best dish I made, tsk tsk."

"..."

Ah, Idan was such a character. Muto belatedly realized and looked at Grid grimly.

'To hire a potential killer as a chef... It is obvious that Grid's palate isn't right.'

Grid lived his life without knowing the pleasure of great food. Yes, a poor man. Muto felt sympathetic towards Grid. Muto frowned and suggested.

"If you don't mind, can I accompany you? Our purpose in meeting the Cho King is different, but the direction is the same. I think it would be good to be companions. I will personally be happy if I can interact with Grid."

"Okay. But a party won't be formed. I don't want to share experience."

"Of course."

"However, if the items are shared by the party leader then I am willing to offer a party. Your escorts seem quite useful."

"...No, I will pass."

"Will you refuse my favor?"

“...”

"Of course, I will distribute the items fairly."

"...I understand. The king of a kingdom wouldn't cheat a merchant..."

“...”

The two people moved together for five days before arriving in Kars. In the process, they talked a lot. Grid tried to make friends with a merchant ranker while Muto analyzed Grid's words and ideas in order to see his vision of the Overgeared Kingdom. The result?

"Is it possible for you to accept the Muto Company in the Overgeared Kingdom?"

The blessing rolled into Grid's hand. In addition, Grid got to know new facts thanks to Muto. First of all, it was possible to move between continents without using a scroll. Secondly, the economic power of the empire was great enough to far exceed his expectations. Third, an ordinary person without a passive conditional resistance would get resistance to poison if they constantly ate Idan's cuisine.

It was a beneficial companionship.

[Chapter 636](#)

TL: Changing Yang Fei's skill name from now on from 'Making a Living Detection' to 'Pushover Detection.'

"The officials are angry. I can't postpone your execution any longer."

The Lava Prison. The Cho King came back today and spoke with a somber face. Han Seokbong bowed his head.

"I'm a sinner deserving death. Brother, let your lingering attachment go and execute me."

“...”

The Cho King looked at Han Seokbong sadly. Who was Han Seokbong? He was the king's only friend since he was a prince. Han Seokbong loved and respected the Cho King beyond his status as a king.

"I will say it again. The yangbans of the Hwan Kingdom want to know the whereabouts of the Red Palace Bow maker. If you don't give them the answer they want, this kingdom will be in great danger. You really... Do you really not know his whereabouts?"

“...Yes.”

"It's really confusing..."

The Cho King believed Han Seokbong. But the officials were the problem. They fiercely accused Han Seokbong of being a traitor who abandoned his kingdom. They insisted on punishing Han Seokbong and relieving the yangbans' anger by executing him.

'There are many people who don't like Seokbong and they're taking advantage of this chance.'

Han Seokbong's fair nature created a sense of crisis for the corrupt nobles. They couldn't miss this golden opportunity to harm Han Seokbong. Due to this, the Cho King couldn't protect Han Seokbong.

"This might be presumptuous, but... Please protect my daughter's life."

"I know. I'll watch over Sua as much as possible."

She would be deprived of her status, but her life would be preserved. The Cho King said a sad goodbye to Han Seokbong.

"I won't watch Brother's execution. I don't want to see your end with my own eyes."

"Please live long and strengthen the nation."

"..."

Han Seokbong prayed for the kingdom's welfare despite it being his end. The Cho King couldn't speak anymore and hastily left the Lava Prison.

"A tremendous city."

The Cho Kingdom's capital, Kars. It had all types of cultures like Pangea. Western style houses coexisted with oriental houses, while the royal palace resembled a palace of the Silla period.

'It looks much larger than Reinhardt.'

There were only five kingdoms on the East Continent. It seemed that the size of each kingdom transcended the size of the Western kingdoms. Grid cut cloth with scissors and looked around.

Muto spoke as Grid moved his hands without a break.

"I'm going to explore the city before I see the king. I need to figure out the market situation of the Cho Kingdom and will be able to present a smarter deal to the king."

"Yes, work hard."

"What about Grid?"

"I need to find a person."

"Let me know their name and I will look for them."

"No, I already know where they are."

"I see..."

Grid wasn't planning to give him the quest details. Muto nodded and extended his hand.

"That... The loot we got from hunting monsters along the way..."

It was a trip of five days. Grid and Muto hunted hundreds of monsters until they reached Kars. The amount of items they obtained was significant. However, the item distribution methods was that the party leader acquired it. Therefore, all the loot was in Grid's inventory.

Grid gave Muto a fair split of the loot. It was a ratio of 8:2. Of course, Grid was the '8.' But Muto wasn't upset at all. He actually thought it was too much.

"Grid, didn't you take care of most of the monsters along the way? A 9:1 ratio seems sufficient."

"There were moments that would've been dangerous if you and the Zentu warriors didn't help. It's fair to divide it like this."

"I see..."

Muto was able to realize how fair Grid was.

'There's a lot of talent gathered in the Overgeared Guild. I will never lose money with Grid.'

Later, he would go to the Overgeared Kingdom when he returned to the West Continent. Muto pledged himself to Grid and left. A smile appeared on Grid's face as he watched Muto's back. He was able to smile because he had obtained Muto's confidence.

'Isn't it good that give a bit more loot for a favorable impression?'

Grid grinned at his brilliance and turned his gaze to the square. It was because the atmosphere of the square, where thousands of people were gathered, was troubled.

'What?'

Grid felt puzzled and approached the square.

"The execution of Pangea's lord, Han Seokbong has been decided! He will be executed tomorrow!"

"Isn't Han Seokbong a good noble with a high reputation? Why is he being executed?"

"He made the yangbans of the Hwan Kingdom angry."

"Heok... The yangbans..."

"He deserves to die..."

"..."

Grid became impatient after hearing that the person he wanted to save would be executed.

'Why is it so fast?'

In fact, Grid needed some time to plan Han Seokbong's rescue.

First, he had to identify the location and structure of the prison where Han Seokbong was trapped, then judge if he could be rescued or not. If it seemed possible to rescue him, Grid would act immediately. Otherwise, he would meet the Cho King.

But now he had no choice.

'If the execution is already decided, it doesn't make sense to meet the Cho King. I have to rescue Han Seokbong right away.'

Grid started collecting information about Han Seokbong and Sua. In the information gathering, Yang Fei's Pushover Detection skill was very useful. She was able to gather the information that Grid desired very quickly.

"Tsk tsk... I shouldn't be a pushover."

Grid vowed to never be a pushover. In fact, he never imagined that Yang Fei once called him a pushover.

The noble Sam Dasoo of the Cho Kingdom came to the second floor of the Lava Prison. It was to meet Sua, the daughter of Han Seokbong.

"W-What? My father's execution has been determined?"

Sua was still shining like white jade despite being trapped in a dirty prison for a fortnight. The prison was dark and Sua was like the moon. The appeal that Sua emanated wasn't something that men could reject. Sam Dasoo gulped and nodded while examining Sua's body with sticky eyes.

"Yes, it's tomorrow."

"T-That...!"

Sua couldn't believe it. Her father was a person who worked hard for this kingdom for his whole life. However, he was facing the death penalty just because he angered the yangbans. She couldn't understand it.

"Why is this happening? Aren't we the people of the Cho Kingdom and servants of the Cho King? Why are our lives in danger due to the yangbans' mood? Huh?"

"You're still young and don't know reality. The Hwan Kingdom is the sky. They are a country that we all need to serve. Anyone who angers them needs to be punished."

"..."

"Don't worry. I, Sam Dasoo, have asked to save your life. It's too harsh for your life to be stolen because of your father's mistake, although you will be deprived of your status as a noble."

"..."

"Ah, you don't have to worry too much about how to make a living. You will live forever by my side and receive my protection."

Sam Dasoo wasn't aware of how much lust was in his eyes when he looked at Sua. Sua stared at him. Her bewitching eyes were enough to make Sam Dasoo lose his soul.

"I believe in Sam Dasoo."

"Ah? Ahh, yes, yes. Huhu, believe in me. Then it will work out."

"Then I will believe you. Please let me meet my father. I want to say goodbye one last time."

"Ah? Ahh, yes... Hey, guard. Open the prison door right... N-No, no!"

Sam Dasoo unknowingly nodded only to regain himself. Sua was a warrior before she was the best beauty. He didn't know what she would do if she left the prison. Once Sam Dasoo withdrew the order to the guard to take out the key, Sua snorted.

"If only I had makeup on."

"Huh?"

Sam Dasoo doubted his ears. Sua, who had been staring at him with poisonous eyes, acted as a fragile girl again. It was a quick transition that seemed like a lie.

"It's too sad that I can't see my father before he dies."

"D-Don't worry. Tomorrow, I will give you time to say goodbye to your father before I take him to his execution."

Sam Dasoo laughed awkwardly and hurriedly left. He had made a mistake by facing Sua without being able to overcome his boiling lust. Sua was left alone and bit her nails.

'What should I do?

Father's execution had been announced. I can't allow it. The only way is to rescue my father before the execution time. But how?

"...I'm helpless."

Tears flowed from Sua's eyes as she wrapped her arms around her knees. She couldn't act as a strong woman when alone.

"The Cho King has reported. He's executing Han Seokbong, who denies knowing the maker of the Red Phoenix Bow."

"Ha? Do they think our obsession will be put to rest with that?"

"Stupid. We don't care about his life."

A VIP room in the Cho King's Palace. There were young people dressed in silks more luxurious than the palace. The Hwan Kingdom's yangbans.

"The maker of the Red Phoenix Bow was Pagma. I don't know how he's been living since leaving the Hwan Kingdom, but we have to find him."

"If Han Seokbong doesn't give Pagma's whereabouts before dying... We'll have to move ourselves."

"Ah, I want to meet Pagma. I miss his swordsmanship."

"You mean the sword dance that Hanul suppressed. It's so insignificant that it can't even be called swordsmanship. Kukuk."

"Don't make me laugh. This isn't the Hwan Kingdom. We have to keep the dignity of the yangbans in front of the residents."

Chapter 637

"It's unusual."

The Lava Prison wasn't built by human hands; the dormant volcano had instead been slightly modified into a natural prison. The black and towering mountains gave Grid a feeling of overwhelming awe.

"I'm scared because the mountain is sharp and pointed."

"Based on the lava flowing all around, it's a dormant volcano, right...? Will it suddenly explode?"

Idan and Yang Fei hesitated, lacking the courage to enter the Lava Prison. Of course, Grid had no intention of having them join him in the first place.

"It's enough to know where the Lava Prison is; both of you return to our accommodations and wait."

"I'll make delicious food."

"And I'll prepare a warm bath and tea. Please come back safe and sound."

"Um."

Grid remained alone and confirmed the time: there were less than two hours left until Han Seokbong's execution.

'The information-gathering took too long.'

He only managed it with Yang Fei's help. If it hadn't been for Yang Fei, Grid still wouldn't have known the whereabouts of Han Seokbong and his daughter.

'Then I would've had to meet the Cho King... A bloody wind is blowing.'

The hidden quest that Grid was performing had two options: Either rescue the Han Seokbong father and daughter from prison or meet the Cho King. Based on common sense, it was likely that a fight would break out if he faced the Cho King, who had imprisoned and lined up both the father and daughter for execution. Grid was very reluctant for this to happen, as his ultimate goal in returning to the East Continent was to secure allies for his kingdom.

'I have to leave room for diplomatic relations with the Cho Kingdom. I can't become hostile to the Cho King.'

He needed to rescue the Han Seokbong father and daughter as discreetly as possible! Grid made his decision and equipped both the Slaughterer's Eye Patch and mask. The moment he entered the Lava Prison.

[You are the first player to find the Lava Prison dungeon!]

[The amount of experience gained from Lava Prison will increase for the next week!]

[When hunting boss monsters, the probability of gaining unique or higher rated items will increase significantly!]

"Eh?"

The Lava Prison was actually classified as a dungeon?

'Did I come to the wrong place?'

Grid acted calmly despite his confusion. He looked at the structure of the prison in front of him and prepared for the unknown danger.

Rattle.Rattle.

He could hear the sound of chains on the floor. Grid looked around and was startled at the sight before him. The name 'Lava Prison Guard' was on top of the jiangshi. The jiangshi, with pale skin, dragged chains that bound both of its hands across the ground.

'The guards are monsters?'

He didn't know why, but it was a good thing.

'I would've felt guilty if I were hurting innocent soldiers, but there's no reason for mercy if I'm facing monsters. Let's break through this quickly and find Han Seokbong and Sua.'

The determined Grid summoned four golden hands. God Hands. They are all armed with Mjolnir.

"Sweep through them."

The moment that Grid finished speaking.

Pepeng!

Pepepepeng!

The God Hands flew off and started beating the jiangshi with Mjolnir.

'What?'

Grid flinched as he was about to take action. The jiangshi beaten by Mjolnir were 'immune' to the stiffness state? They didn't even receive physical damage. The jiangshi were monsters with both high resistance and defense.

'Is this why they are used to safeguard national facilities?'

Grid pulled out a blue greatsword that resembled a shark. A glittering glow filled the darkness that dominated the prison. It was the +9 Failure that became more powerful in darkness.

The reason why the Lava Prison was notorious was the hot heat. An ordinary person couldn't stand the heat of the Lava Prison. A person would sweat even when sitting down, have symptoms of dehydration and even burn to death. Just being trapped in the Lava Prison was a terrible torture for prisoners.

It was why the Lava Prison guards weren't soldiers, but monsters. It was virtually impossible for common soldiers to work in the Lava Prison. Therefore, the jiangshis created were deployed as prison guards.

"The time has come. Let's go."

“Um...”

The sweating Han Seokbong painfully raised his body. He was able to not be dehydrated by drinking the water the Cho King provided him. However, he continued to sweat and his stamina consumption was too great.

Stagger.

Han Seokbong was about to collapse and supported his body with the bars. A cold chill filled Han Seokbong the moment he touched the bar.

‘Blood jiangshi...’

Blood jiangshi were produced using the blood of a virgin mixed with strong poison. They were much physically stronger than ordinary jiangshi and also talked like people. Of course, their ego was only at the level of the person who made them.

Trudge trudge.

Han Seokbong moved with the help of the blood jiangshi. He couldn’t remain calm in the face of his incoming death. He was afraid. He wasn’t afraid of the pain that he would suffer. He was worried about Sua being left alone.

‘No, I don’t need to worry. My daughter is strong. Even if she’s left alone, she’ll be able to live without losing courage. His Majesty also assured me that he would watch over her.’

It was a parent’s duty to believe in their child. Han Seokbong started to control his heart. He humbly accepted his upcoming death. In front of him, the nobleman Sam Dasoo appeared.

"Isn't this funny?"

“Sam Dasoo...”

Han Seokbong’s eyes became hard and furious. Sam Dasoo was a representative of the corrupt nobles and had always opposed Han Seokbong’s integrity. Han Seokbong couldn’t acknowledge Sam Dasoo as a noble.

“If I die, His Majesty will only have you... I am worried about the future of the Cho Kingdom.”

Han Seokbong mourned while Sam Dasoo laughed.

"It's worthless. Why is someone who will soon be dead worried about the future?"

"...Did you come here to mock me?"

"Kukukuk, how relieving. I'm sorry but this ill-fated relationship will end. Our relationship might be ill-fated, but I will try to speak some comforting words before you face your fate."

"I don't need any comforting from you."

"Just listen, as it is about your daughter Sua."

"...Don't say my daughter's name with your dirty mouth."

Han Seokbong released killing intent the moment Sua's name was heard. Sam Dasoo seemed to find this reaction funny as he let out a loud laugh. Then he whispered in Han Seokbong's ears.

"I will take good care of Sua for the rest of her life. I'll keep her beautiful until I get tired of her. So don't worry about your daughter and relax."

"...!"

Han Seokbong's eyes shook. The news that Sam Dasoo was aiming for Sua was like a bolt out of the blue. He tried to remain calm.

"You can't do this. I begged His Majesty to protect Sua and he promised."

"Kukuk, what if she wants me?"

"What...?"

"I have ordered some Hwanryongcho to be mixed in with her breakfast this morning."

"H-Hwanryongcho?"

Hwanryongcho was a drug that caused hallucinations. The biggest problem was that the person lost resistance to any suggestion.

"Someone will pretend to be you and whisper to Sua. 'Believe in Sam Dasoo for the rest of your life. Sam Dasoo will protect you.' This is the last will and testament of her father. Kuk! Kukukuk!"

"You! Wicked person!!"

Han Seokbong screamed. He hated this devil in front of him and cursed with all his heart. But it was useless. Han Seokbong would be executed shortly afterwards. He was bound by the blood jiangshi and couldn't do any harm to Sam Dasoo. Sam Dasoo just laughed evilly at Han Seokbong.

Lava Prison's second floor.

"Father..."

Could it be due to the hot heat? Sua's mind had been feeling fuzzy since morning. Therefore, she couldn't help welcoming her father when she saw him. She couldn't tell whether the current situation was real or a dream. Han Seokbong touched her cheek. Sua felt that her father's hand wasn't as warm as usual. It was cold for some reason but it was a minor problem.

"Do you have to leave?"

Sua begged in a trembling voice. Han Seokbong made a request.

"Sua, I am leaving first and Sam Dasoo will protect you in my stead. Always be thankful to him and serve him with all your heart and soul."

"Yes... Yes, I understand."

It was her father's last will. Sua nodded a few times. At that moment.

"Since when is that monster your father?"

It was an unforgettable voice. The deep voice dug into her ears. Sua knew the owner of this voice.

"Grid...?"

Was she still wandering in her dreams? Was this why she heard Grid's voice? Sua was confused. The face of Han Seokbong caressing her cheek changed into that of a devil.

"What bastard?"

Han Seokbong shouted. His face started to melt like liquid in Sua's eyes. After a moment, he no longer looked like Han Seokbong. It was a man with a bizarre appearance that Sua saw for the first time.

"Who are you? Father? Where is my father?"

As the medicinal effect of the Hwanryongcho fell, Sua's confusion was maximized. She felt a terrible headache. What was happening? The fear of being alone in the world. She was feeling fear in this dark prison when she heard-

"Pagma's Swordsmanship."

It was Grid's voice.

"Link."

Pit!

Pipipipit!

"Kuaaaaak!"

The man who tried to trick Sua screamed.

Kurururung!

The iron bars of the prison holding Sua were cut and destroyed.

"Let's go."

"Ah..."

Big hands approached in the darkness. Sua knew these hands anywhere.

"Grid... Is it you?"

"That's right."

Grid grabbed Sua's hands and answered. He took off his bloody mask and smiled.

"Let's go home."

It seemed difficult. He seemed to have trouble speaking. In the first place, the blood used to wet the strange mask wasn't the 'enemy's blood' but the 'wearer's blood.' As it happened, Grid was already covered with wounds.

[Chapter 638](#)

‘The jiangshi are just too strong.’

The average level of the Lava Prison Guards was 360, 29 levels higher than Grid’s current level. But level wasn’t the problem, however, as both Grid’s stats and items meant that he had already transcended the limits of his level. As he hunted and discovered more information about the blood jiangshi, he realized that apart from their physical strength and their high defense, the truly terrifying thing about them was their abnormal mental state. They showed no consciousness, felt no pain, and knew no fear.

Kieeeeeek!

Chaaeng!Chaeng!

“Kuk...!”

Grid’s maximum health had gone over 80,000 ever since he obtained the ‘Savior of the World’ title from the Belial raid. It even overwhelmed most tankers that had invested their stat points into stamina. But this great health gauge was currently in jeopardy as only 40% remained. This meant that the blood jiangshi were strong!

Chaaeng!

“...!”

Grid’s +9 Failure, his trusted weapon that exerted greater power in the darkness, swung through the air at three blood jiangshis, only to be met with a kick. The sword slipped from Grid’s hand—while Grid had overwhelmingly high strength, he couldn’t fight against three jiangshis alone.

‘Che!’

Grid clicked his tongue but didn’t despair. While Satisfy implemented high realism and freedom, it was still just a game. A simple condition went into effect when a player’s hand dropped a weapon: they were unable to pick that weapon back up for 1~3 seconds.

Kuwang!

The three jiangshis didn’t miss this fact and unleashed an onslaught towards Grid. They wielded the hands tied together by chains and swung them like a gorilla would. This was no laughing matter, however, as it seemed like Grid would be torn to pieces.

“Grid!”

Sua paled in fright. Grid had rescued her from prison, only to be isolated amongst the guards. Sua felt a strong sense of guilt.

‘I... Grid is risking his life trying to save me!’

What was this? Why did he have to sacrifice himself by running into this dangerous place?

Crunch.

Sua wasn’t a shameless person. She couldn’t tolerate that Grid was in a crisis because of her.

'I will save you!'

Sua was a warrior before she was a woman. She couldn't overlook Grid's crisis and ignored her exhausted stamina. She clenched her teeth, forgetting her heavy legs and moved. But before she could reach the blood jiangshis, Grid freed himself from his predicament. Using the four God Hands to tie up one jiangshi, Grid summoned the two Overgeared Skeletons to bind the others with silver thread before returning to the fight with a longsword in hand.

That's right. Grid swapped to a new weapon shortly after Failure fell from his hand. Grid's item swap speed utilizing the God Hands exceeded common sense. Grid wasn't able to apply the stiffness effect of Mjolnir on the jiangshis and had switched the God Hands' weapons to swords. Once he lost Failure, he immediately had a +7 Sword Ghost delivered to him. Its simple attack power was lower than the +9 Failure, but even that depended on the situation as it had the option of accumulating damage each time it attacked the same target.

Was that all?

Kkirik!

The Sword Ghost, which had cut the jiangshi's chest, separated into two swords. The weapon separated? The blood jiangshi would be terrified if they had a strong consciousness. Yes, this anomaly was the greatest strength of the Sword Ghost. It was normally used as a longsword but it had a high utilization because it could be separated into a small sword and longsword.

Chukakakakak!

The separated Sword Ghosts cut the left and right wrists at the same time.

[The +7 Sword Ghost has accumulated three attacks against the same target!]

[The +7 Sword Ghost's attack power has increased by 20%!]

The beast called Grid revealed his nature.

Seokeok!

Puok!Puok!

Grid never missed his prey. The Sword Ghost continued hitting its target. It was a wise combat method built on the basis of his various combat experiences. The result?

[The +7 Sword Ghost has accumulated 11 attacks against the same target!]

[The +7 Sword Ghost's attack power has increased by 100%!]

The potential of the Sword Ghost was lifted to the maximum. With double attack power, the Sword Ghost was stronger than Failure. Rotten blood started to seep from the steely skin of the jiangshi.

"Pagma's Swordsmanship, Kill!"

Peeeeeeong!

The necklace received as a gift from his son Lord. Thanks to the Necklace of Agility increasing skill deployment by 15%, Grid's deployment speed was much faster than before. It was the moment he overcame the inherent limits of the sword dance.

-Kuaaaaaah!

Energy blades shot like a missile and pierced the chest of the jiangshis. It eventually turned to grey.

[The Lava Prison Guard has been defeated.]

[185,001,400 points of experience have been acquired.]

[63 gold coins have been acquired.]

'The experience given is amazing.'

Grid was the first to find the Lava Prison, which was classified as a dungeon. As a benefit, the amount of experience gained for one week was greatly increased. The experience gained from one jiangshi was over 100 million.

'The disadvantage of hunting here is that the jiangshi don't drop any items. But it's not that big of a deal because they give one-third more experience than the armoured needles did.'

If he could increase the hunting speed, it would be the best hunting ground. Of course, this was limited to when the dungeon's first discoverer benefit was applied.

'If I rescue the Han Seokbong father and daughter and run away, I won't be able to come here again... I will waste the first discoverer benefits that last a week.'

However, Grid didn't feel sorry. Satisfy had plenty of hunting grounds, and the lives of Han Seokbong and Sua, as well as the quest benefits were more important.

Kiyaaaaah!

Rumble!

Immediately afterwards, he struck the two other jiangshis tied up by the God Hands.

[There are 15 minutes left until Han Seokbong's execution!]

Grid was faced with a notification window that made him nervous.

"It is already time... I looked around the 1st and 2nd floors and couldn't find Han Seokbong. Do you know what floor he is imprisoned in?"

"I'm not sure, but the Lava Prison has four floors."

'Let's go up to the 3rd and 4th floors.'

It was simple. Grid abandoned his nervousness and started to climb the spiral staircase. Sua's face was scrunched up in anxiety as she followed him.

"Are you okay?"

Sua wanted to save her father. No, it was Sua's wish that Grid would save her father. But wasn't it impossible? Grid was already quite tired from taking care of three blood jiangshis on the 2nd floor. His breathing was rough and his whole body was injured. The bizarre mask on his face was dyed red with blood. Sua was worried about how the current Grid would break through the blood jiangshis on both the 3rd and 4th floors.

There wasn't much time left until her father's execution. Grid might be the most powerful man in Sua's heart, but the possibility of breaking through the jiangshis on the 3rd and 4th floors was very slim. Grid reached the 3rd floor ahead of her and laughed as he said,

"Believe in me. Item Transformation."

[Item Transformation]

A skill that can be triggered if the legendary mineral 'pavranium' is possessed.

It transforms the pavranium into the shape and performance of a specific item.

* It can only transform into items you have learned how to make.

* The duration of the transformation is 3 minutes. After the transformation is released, the pavranium will return to its original form.

Skill Mana Cost: None.

Skill Cooldown Time: 6 hours.

It was the special move of Pagma's Descendant that had a long cooldown. However, Grid had made four God Hands with a large number of pavranium. It was possible to change all the individual hands and each God Hand didn't share the cooldown time of Item Transformation.

Pahat!

One God Hand floated in front of Grid.

"Lifael's Spear."

It was the reinforced version of Lifael's Spear that Grid reconstructed for Isabel.

Kuoooooh-

The golden spear. It emitted a sharp atmosphere around it that didn't suit its beautiful appearance.

'An artifact that can change its appearance...?'

Sua was amazed to see Grid's items. Grid gave her a reassuring smile and rushed towards four blood jiangshis, swinging the spear.

[The Light Wheel skill has been used.]

[Light Wheel has fired a massive number of Magic Missiles (Enhanced).]

[Shield of Light has been used.]

[Magic Missile (Enhanced) has been fired at the target who attacked the shield.]

Kuwang!

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

“...”

The overwhelming combat power that created awe. The myth-rated weapon produced by the blacksmith Grid reduced the powerful blood jiangshis to ashes. The blood jiangshis couldn't even so much as scream as they died.

Kurururung!

The prison couldn't withstand the firepower of Lifael's Spear and partly collapsed. The ground broke and Grid embraced the waist of Sua who was falling.

"Ah...! Hat!"

Sua couldn't help groaning and hurriedly covered her mouth and fiercely blushed. It was an unexpected reaction. While Sua usually would've thrown a joke towards Grid, she was different today as she blushed like a shy girl and avoided eye contact with her savior. Grid's heart dropped at her bashful appearance.

'Did she have such a cute face?'

So far, Grid had been able to maintain sage mode in front of Sua's beautiful face and body because her personality didn't suit Grid's taste. Sua was so perverted (?) that Grid, who was still relatively pure, couldn't handle it. But at this important moment, Grid was agitated.

"Hum hum."

“...”

Grid coughed while placing the still blushing Sua in a safe place. The two people couldn't break the silence for a while. Suddenly, four blood jiangshis approached from the other side of the hall.

'I need to hurry.'

Grid was determined to defeat the blood jiangshi before his weapon's transformation time ended, of which there was less than a left. He handed the +7 Ideal Dagger to Sua before rushing back to the blood jiangshi. Sua could use the Ideal Dagger because the usage conditions were low.

"Support me please."

"Eh...? Yes! Yes! I understand!"

Entrusting a weapon that was more precious than life to her?

'Does this mean he thinks of me as...?'

Yes, it might mean he thought of her as valuable... Sua was unsettled and barely managed to calm down her heart. Then she used the Wind Blast skill attached to the Ideal Dagger to assist Grid.

'Oh.'

Grid admired the timing and accuracy of Sua's usage. It made Grid's fight much easier. The combination of the best warrior of the Cho Kingdom and the Overgeared King Grid was fantastic. But time was heartless.

[There are 5 minutes left until Han Seokbong's execution!]

[There are 4 minutes left until Han Seokbong's execution!]

Grid destroyed the blood jiangshis and explored the 3rd floor. However, he didn't find Han Seokbong.

'The 4th floor!'

It was the only floor left of the Lava Prison. Grid and Sua rushed to the 4th floor. Then he saw it.

"S-Sua...? G-Grid...?"

Han Seokbong was being dragged like he was a criminal.

"Father!"

The excited Sua rushed forward without looking around.

[The leader of the Lava Prison has emerged.]

An overwhelming presence appeared.

'Damn. This won't be easy.'

Grid sighed.

[Chapter 639](#)

"Han Seok... What?"

The guards dragging Han Seokbong stopped in place when they saw Grid.

Puhahahak!

Then a boss monster emerged from the ground and blocked the way.

[The leader of the Lava Prison has emerged.]

'What?'

Grid was confused at the sight of the slim, pale jianghsi boss-figure. In Satisfy, the appearance of a boss was enough for the surroundings to erupt with powerful pressure. Even a low-level boss would induce a status abnormality when it appeared.

However, the leader of the Lava Prison didn't cause any abnormal conditions. It wasn't like a normal monster, which made Grid feel uneasy. Grid felt an overwhelming presence from the boss.

'The fact that it doesn't cause any abnormal conditions means that...'

Didn't it suggest that the basic specs of the lead guard were excellent? Considering that the physical abilities of the previous jiangshi were outstanding, it was highly likely that the boss jiangshi was at the peak of its physical abilities.

'I have a headache.'

Ordinary guards didn't boast tremendous physical abilities. He had lost his sword when dealing with three jiangshis at the same time. If the ability of the boss jiangshi was three times that of the ordinary jiangshi, it would be difficult for Grid to deal with it. The battle would become difficult if he couldn't defend against an attack with his sword.

'No, am I jumping too far ahead?'

Grid shook his head and smiled awkwardly. Then Sua's voice was heard.

"B-Black-horse jiangshi...!"

"...?"

Why was she so surprised by its form? Grid's anxiety grew as he watched the chief guard kick at Sua. This was no normal kick—it was reminiscent of the 1st-ranked martial artist Regas. No, it was several times faster and sharper than Regas's kick.

Kuwaaang!

It was enough to cause goosebumps. Sua barely escaped from the lead jailer's kick using Quick Movements. It was a perfect use of the Ideal Dagger borrowed from Grid.

"This kick?"

Grid was relieved to see that Sua was safe and felt doubts. The previous jiangshis had only swung their arms. They didn't use their legs to attack. Therefore, Grid had thought of the jiangshis as having a restriction in their lower body. But the boss that showed up broke that recognition.

Sua explained to Grid.

"There are five types of jiangshis."

First, the iron jiangshi. The most common type: they used powerful techniques based on their strong bodies, as if they were wearing armor. However, their movements were somewhat dull because they can't bend their knees.

Second, the poison jiangshi. Their physical abilities were similar to the iron jiangshi, but the risk in facing them was much higher because they emitted poison from their wounds. Mass-killing was easy for them.

Third, the blood jiangshi.

Not made from the same materials as the steel and poison jiangshi, they have virgin's blood mixed in with all types of drugs, making them three times faster and stronger than the iron jiangshi. They have low intelligence and could execute commands, unlike the other jiangshis.

If a kingdom could produce a large number of blood jiangshis, it was expected that their army would be invincible. However, their movements were dull like the iron jiangshi.

Next, there were the black-horse jiangshi and the flying-horse jiangshi, both encompassing a completely different realm of creation. The black-horse jiangshi was evaluated as a 'superior' type. Its physical abilities were 10 times better than that of the blood jiangshi and there were no physical inconveniences. They could even use skills.

The next type, the flying-horse jiangshi, was evaluated as a 'living superior' type made of rare elixirs and virgin blood. It was rumored that they were so strong that a single flying-horse jiangshi could even break down an army. However, their existence was almost like a rumor without any proof or confirmation.

In other words.

"The black-horse jiangshi is the peak of the guards."

"...Wow."

Grid couldn't help exclaiming at Sua's explanation. A jiangshi with 10 times the physical strength of the blood jiangshi? He expected it to be difficult if it was three times stronger. But 10 times?

'I don't have a chance with a frontal confrontation.'

"Grid! Don't care about me and look after my daughter Sua! Run away!"

Han Seokbong shouted from far away as he was dragged to the execution place by the guards. Despite knowing how great Grid was, he knew that Grid couldn't deal with the black-horse jiangshi. He gave up his life completely and only hoped for Sua and Grid to be safe.

Sua looked resigned.

"I will buy some time. Grid, run away during this gap."

A corpse itself. Sua stood in front of the black-horse jiangshi and bit her lip.

'Father, I'm sorry. I can't save you with my strength. Don't be lonely because I will follow you soon.'

Yes, Sua was determined to die. She gave up on rescuing her father. Now that the black-horse jiangshi had emerged, her only desire was that Grid would be safe. She felt an infinite gratitude that he came here to rescue her and her father.

"Run away!"

Sua was determined not to let Grid come to any harm. She returned the Ideal Dagger, her only weapon, to Grid. Then she faced the black-horse jiangshi with her bare hands.

Kiyaaaaaah!

The black-horse jiangshi laughed at Sua like she was ridiculous. She wouldn't be able to avoid it with her ability. Buying time for Grid while he ran?

'No way!'

Grid had come to the East Continent to secure people. He wanted to make friends with the Han Seokbong father and daughter who had been abandoned by the Cho Kingdom no matter what.

'I will surely protect you and make Pangea a territory of Overgeared.'

Grid pledged as he summoned the God Hands without transforming it to Lifael's Spear.

'The transformed Lifael's Spear is very weak compared to the original's power.'

It was impossible to reproduce the goddess' fluffy hair which was the main material of Lifael's Spear. It was doubtful if the spear could deal a fatal wound to the black-horse jiangshi. It would just be a waste of the Item Transformation skill.

'The God Hands just need to focus on defense in this battle!'

Pa pa pa pat!

As soon as they received Grid's will, the God Hands flew to Sua to protect her. They were kicked by the black-horse jiangshi instead of Sua.

Jjejeong!

Jjeejeeong!

The greatest strength of the pavranium was its endless durability. They weren't destroyed despite being hit by the powerful attacks of the black-horse jiangshi. However, the defense function couldn't be maintained for a long time because they stiffened for a few seconds every time they were attacked. But it was enough to buy some time.

"Noe!"

[The best demonic beast of hell has been summoned!]

The reason why Grid didn't summon Noe despite the time attack quest was to save him for an emergency. If a stalemate occurred like now, Grid needed Noe's strength and stamina to be full.

"Nyang! I'll eat well!"

Noe appeared and opened his mouth wide in order to devour the black-horse jiangshi in one bite. But the black-horse jiangshi was very agile. It avoided Noe's mouth.

"Eh?"

"Nyong?"

Noe couldn't eat it? The confused Grid and Noe were stunned for a moment.

Peeok!

"Kiyang!"

Noe's eyes became two Xs as he was hit by the jiangshi. The tongue poked out as he collapsed, making Noe look very pitiful.

"S-Sacred creature...!"

During the time of the armoured needles attack, Sua had mistaken Noe as a sacred creature. She was nervous after seeing Noe being countered so easily.

"Grid, please run away!"

She saw the black-horse jiangshi as a monster that even a sacred creature couldn't handle. Grid couldn't deal with this monster, no matter how strong he was. He had to run away and protect his own life. Sua longed for it but Grid didn't respond to her wish. He went forward and faced the guard.

"Sua, you seem to be mistaken about something. I didn't come here accidentally. I came here to save you and your father. I will protect you, even if I die."

"...Why?"

Why did he have to sacrifice himself for them? In the first place, Grid was the benefactor who did them a great favor. There was no justification for him to sacrifice so much for them.

"Ah..."

She was looking at Grid with shaking eyes when she suddenly exclaimed. She was amazed by the beauty of the new sword that Grid pulled out. Iyarugt. The 'Coolness' option made the translucent red sword look even more beautiful. A brilliant red glow started to shin in the dark dungeon.

It was the precursor. The precursor to the arrival of the strongest swordsman in hell.

"Summon Iyarugt."

[Summoning Sword Demon Iyarugt!]

Kurururung!

The moment that Grid used the skill, Iyarugt let out a roar that was like thunder. A blood red light scattered all over the place as the sword moved from Grid's hand.

"Ah...!"

A chill went down Sua's spine. Iyarugt's blood light energy. To be precise, the light emitted from Iyarugt's soul was enough to excite her soul. It was more beautiful than any gem in the world and stimulated Sua's sense of beauty.

Kuoooooh!

"...Sweet."

The raging soul gathered in one place and took the shape of an old man. An old man bent over. The blood light shone around Iyarugt's body, like a blazing fire. It was the magic power of the 'hell swordsman' who competed with great demons despite being a low-grade demonkin.

Paaaat!

Iyarugt enjoyed the fresh air entering his lungs and wielded his sword. The black-horse jiangshi couldn't escape the strike. Was Iyarugt's sword that fast? Not at all. The physical capabilities of the black-horse jiangshi were excellent enough to overwhelm Iyarugt's physical capabilities.

The reason why the black-horse jiangshi couldn't avoid Iyarugt's sword was because the demon's swordsmanship level was just too high. It couldn't avoid the strike despite seeing it with its eyes.

Chukakakakak!

The bloody light constantly moved around the black-horse jiangshi, buying time.

"Open Rune of Darkness."

Grid released the seal of power.

"Belial's Power."

The power of a great demon!

"Just who is he?"

Sam Dasoo left the prison while tying up the intruder's feet. He couldn't help feeling absurd and asked Han Seokbong again.

"There is a fool who doesn't flee the moment he sees a black-horse jiangshi. What is the identity of that freak?"

Han Seokbong glared at Sam Dasoo from where he was captured by the guards.

"Watch your words. He isn't someone that a dirty person like you can talk about."

"Kukuk! You are angry that a person who will die soon is being humiliated. How funny."

The black jiangshi was the weapon of the Cho Kingdom. There were only five black-horse jiangshis in the whole Cho Kingdom. The unidentified intruder who appeared to save Han Seokbong? He would die before he could get to Han Seokbong.

'Sua who is with him will also die.'

It was regrettable. Sam Dasoo was worried about being late and urged the guards to hurry. Han Seokbong was worried about Sua and Grid and kept looking back at the prison.

At that moment.

Kurururung!

A thunderous sound was heard from the top of the Lava Prison.

"What?"

Sam Dasoo looked back at the prison with shock. It was because part of the Lava Prison was struck by a magic bombardment.

“What is this?”

Was the intruder truly strong enough to break the prison while fighting the black-horse jiangshi?
Confused, Sam Dasoo gulped in nervousness.

Duk!

Something fell like a ball from the top of the prison. The head of the black-horse jiangshi rolled to the feet of Sam Dasoo.

"H-Hik...!"

Sam Dasoo paled.

[Chapter 640](#)

The Rune of Darkness. It was an item obtained from the event story that occurred just after Grid accepted Braham's soul. It dropped from Tallos, agent of the First Servant Amoract.

Tallos. He wasn't someone who could be made fun of. He was an agent of the great demon Amoract. He was a very strong, cruel, and well-rounded person that was chosen by a great demon. It was purely his achievement that the Yatan Church could be spread all over the West Continent.

Even the current Grid would have no chance if he was hostile to Tallos. But Braham showed his true strength in the event story and Tallos became nothing more than a worm. Tallos was killed by a handful of Magic Missiles and Fireballs by Braham who had 15,580 intelligence.

In any case, the conclusion was that the Rune of Darkness was an item that was difficult to obtain using normal paths. Who could obtain the Rune of Darkness that Tallos dropped? If Grid hadn't accepted Braham's soul... Yes, if he hadn't obtained the second class of Legendary Great Magician then he wouldn't know the existence of the rune.

'Among the two billion users, the number of users who have runes is very small. I am the only one with a rune right now in the Overgeared Guild.'

Grid guessed that later on, the gap between players would be determined by runes. The people who secured runes and accumulated more power in the runes would determine who would get ahead.

'Perhaps by now, Agnus might've accumulated more power in his rune than me.'

It wasn't just Agnus. It was likely that those LaueI classified as being sun-grade would've already secured runes. He couldn't rule out the possibility of a rune better than the Rune of Darkness. But Grid was confident. Even if there were more rune owners than he expected, his rune was ahead of everyone else.

Why?

'I have already secured the strength of a great demon.'

[Rune of Darkness]

Bound Item.

Permanently preserved in your inventory. Trading, dropping, or destroying it is impossible.

-Usage Effect: Demonic power state will rise in exchange for its use.

* Normal attacks and skill attacks will deal an addition 20% dark damage.

Unique Lasting Effect: When dealing with named demonkin and demons, you can absorb unique attributes.

* Tiramet's Power: If your health drops below 10%, health will be restored to 30% in an instant.
Cooldown Time: 12 hours.

* Latina's Power: The 'Can you Become the King of the Dead?' skill is generated.

★Special★

32nd Great Demon Belial's Power

The queen of darkness who terrorizes the world.

The queen of flame burns the world.

The queen of lies ruins the world.

The ultimate strength that was shown even on the rune. The power of a hell monarch was expressed through Grid.

"Open the Rune of Darkness, Belial's Power."

Kuwaaaaaang!

"...!"

"?!"

Noe, who was collapsed after being hit by the black-horse jiangshi. Iyarugt, who was tying up the feet of the black-horse jiangshi. The black-horse jiangshi who had adapted to Iyarugt and increased its evasion. Sua, who was watching the high-level battle between Iyarugt and the black-horse jiangshi.

All of them looked at Grid in unison. The magic emitted from Grid was absurdly powerful. Grid faced the black-horse jiangshi and smiled grimly.

Red, dark, and intense. He was surrounded by magic and looked like a comet in the night sky.

[The power of the Great Demon Belial sealed in the Rune of Darkness has been released!]

[It is impossible for humans to digest all three of Belial's powers.]

[Your body feels a great burden. You have lost 35% of your maximum health.]

[You have fallen into the 'weak' state.]

[You have resisted.]

[Your health has dropped below 10%. Tiramet's Power belonging to the Rune of Darkness if activated.]

[30% of your health has been restored.]

[You have lost more than 70% of your maximum health. The First King title effect is activated.]

[A protective shield containing the health that was lost in the last minute has been created. As the shield continues, terrain adaptability will increase by 100% while movement speed and defense will increase by 10%.]

[As a human, you can use only one of Belial's three powers: darkness, fire, or deception.]

The power obtained from Belial's raid. Grid had already tested it a few times.

If he chose the power of fire, he would activate the 'Fire Queen' passive skill. His stamina wouldn't decrease, his recovery speed would increase by 300% and his fire resistance would rise to 100%. If he received a fire attack inferior to hellfire, he might even regain health. In addition, he could use the 'Queen's Flames of Hell' and 'Flames of Hell Path.'

It featured high combat persistence and explosive attack power.

If he chose the power of darkness, a passive skill would be activated that turned demonkin non-hostile. Mana regeneration rate would increase by 300% and resistance to dark magic by 100%. In addition, he could use the 'Queen's Provocation' and 'Path of Darkness.'

It made magic and skills easier to use, as well as giving debuff skills.

Finally, when choosing the power of deception, only the Queen's Distortion was produced. But in order to utilize the distortion magic properly, it was required to have excellent power and control. It was difficult for Grid to actually use it.

"In the first place, it will be fatal for you."

Since entering the Lava Prison, Grid's health was maintained at 40%. Therefore, the First King title could be utilized at any time. The penalty of opening Belial's Power was canceled to some extent by Tiramet's Power. At the same time, the First King title effect was applied and a strong shield was obtained. In this state.

Hwaruruk!

He was surrounded by flames from head to toe. The red flickering covered Grid's eyebrows and hair.

[You have selected the power of fire!]

[The passive skill Fire Queen is applied for two minutes while Belial's Power is maintained. You can also use the Queen's Flames of Hell and Flames of Hell Path.]

[Queen's Flames of Hell]

A wild magic that symbolizes the fire queen.

The powerful flames will damage your target. The amount of damage is proportional to the user's powerful blow and the maximum health of the target.

Skill Mana Consumption: 90% of your maximum mana.

Skill Cooldown Time: 10 minutes.

[Flames of Hell Path]

An afterglow remains on the path that the queen of fire walks.

During the duration of the skill, the flames on your body will cause 'burns.' When using physical attacks and skills, fire damage is added. Fire damage is proportional to your strength and intelligence.

Resource Consumption: Lose 250 health and 60 mana per second while it is activated.

Skill Cooldown Time: 5 seconds.

The reason why Grid chose the power of fire was due to the nature of the black-horse jiangshi. The black-horse jiangshi was extremely resistant to physical attacks. It had been hit several times by Iyarugt but wasn't severely injured.

'Its physical resistance is high, but its magic resistance is weak!'

He would blow it away with powerful flames! Grid fired the Queen's Flames of Hell at the black-horse jiangshi.

Kurururung!

"Ugh...!"

Grid felt something leaving his body the moment the spell was activated. Once a large amount of mana was consumed at once, the phenomenon of 'mana rampage' was likely to happen. But Grid overcame this without much damage.

[You have resisted.]

This was due to the characteristic of Pagma's Descendant.

Kuwaaaaaang!

It poured towards the black-horse jiangshi like a waterfall. There was no scream because the black-horse jiangshi didn't feel pain.

Stagger.

It was a critical wound no matter who saw it. As a boss monster, the black-horse jiangshi boasted high stamina stat. The Queen's Flames of Hell was deadly to its health.

Kurururung!

An explosion occurred around the black-horse jiangshi and the Laval Prison disappeared without a trace.

"Kyaak!"

"Nyang!"

Once the ground of the prison collapsed, Sua and Noe lost their foothold.

'The sacred creature's soles!'

Sua touched Noe's paws and forgot the horrible reality for a moment, as she was suddenly filled with happiness. Noe's soles felt great.

Teook!

Grid crossed the collapsing prison ground and narrowed the distance to the black-horse jiangshi. The +9 Failure in his hand was burning.

"Pagma's Swordsmanship."

Hwaruruk!

The afterglow of the flames around Grid shone.

"Linked Kill!"

Kurururung!

Failure penetrated the body of the black-horse jiangshi several times.

Puk!Puk puk!

Puuok!

[Critical!]

[The effect of the title 'Death in One Shot!' has been activated, adding 30% critical damage!]

[The weak spot has been attacked! Further damage will be dealt!!]

[Critical!]

[The effect of the title 'Death in One Shot!' has been...]

[The weak spot has been...]

[Critical!]

...

...

He opened Blacksmith's Rage and the Rune of Darkness in succession, doubling the critical power that occurred in succession. The black-horse jiangshi suffered a serious injury from the Queen's Flames of Hell and now collapsed under Grid's swordsmanship.

"Ohhhhh!"

Grid needed to finish this before Belial's Power ended. He tried to end it by pouring out all of Pagma's Swordsmanship techniques, except for Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle, which was on cooldown. However, the black-horse jiangshi's resistance was very strong. The black-horse jiangshi didn't know pain or fear and attacked Grid. Grid didn't defend and counterattacked instead. It was an act to shorten the time.

The bizarre mask used by Grid, the Slaughterer's Mask, was wet with blood. The result?

Seokeok!

The black-horse jiangshi lost its health at a quick rate and Failure's Bisect option was activated. The black-horse jiangshi lost its head and fell from the broken prison ground. There was a loud roar.

[The Chief Lava Prison Guard has been defeated.]

[1,922,509,991 experience has been acquired.]

[Your level has risen.]

['Jiangshi Recipe' has been acquired!]

[Jiangshi Recipe]

A unique rated skill.

An old booklet containing the recipe for a steel jiangshi.

Conditions of Use: Daoist, necromancer.

"Ohh!"

A method to make jiangshi! This was a real jackpot that transcended imagination. If he could fill up the Overgeared Kingdom's lacking military power with jiangshis...!

'...Ah, I don't have any necromancer in the guild.'

Grid felt joy and sorrow at the same time. But there was no room for thinking. He couldn't delay because Han Seokbong's life was at risk.

"Fly."

As the duration of Belial's Power ended, he swapped to Braham's Boots and flew from the prison while holding onto Sua and Noe.

Kurururung!

Grid's party succeeded in escaping the completely collapsed Lava Prison. Lava erupted from everywhere, but the bigger threat was the ash. The city of Kars in the Cho Kingdom became ash-colored.

"This crazy guy...! What is that crazy guy doing?"

Sam Dasoo screamed and fled as the black-horse jiangshi's head fell down. He tried to drag Han Seokbong's rope, but it was impossible, as the black-haired man with a muscular body and wide shoulders blocked his way. The beauty Sua, covered in ash, laid in his arms.

"Father!"

"Sua!"

At the same time, Han Seokbong and Sua shared a reunion.

"Who the hell are you? You used some cowardly method to get rid of the black-horse jiangshi!"

"I am the king of the Overgeared Kingdom."

"?????"

Sam Dasoo had the worst first encounter with Grid.

At the same time, the VIP room of the palace.

"What is that sound?"

The luxuriously dressed yangbans sensed the situation from where they had been resting in a carefree manner.