

Overgeared 801

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'This can't continue.'

Goldhit anxiously watched Grid and made a hard decision after deliberating for quite some time.

'I have to release the lightning god.'

The lightning god, powered by the huge thunder stone discovered in the northwest forest of Titan 15 years ago, was a guardian that was the culmination of Goldhit's knowledge, magic, and a huge amount of funding and manpower. Like the other guardians in the Tower of Eternity, it had basic resistance to physical attacks and also combined a magician's magic power with the brute force of a solo number knight.

While it could only operate within the parameters of the Tower of Eternity, it was the strongest weapon that could advance the empire's 'Pioneer the East Continent' project if its mass production project succeeded. In fact, Emperor Juander had huge expectations for the lightning god.

Goldhit opened the lid of the device powered by the thunder stone, awakening the lightning god.

"Never." Goldhit gave an order, "You should never kill him."

A guardian didn't show up on the 32nd floor, just like what happened the 21st floor. Bookshelves crammed with books filled the endless space, and magicians sitting around in various places were indulging themselves in knowledge through them.

'Is there a magic that can arbitrarily adjust the size of the space?'

The Tower of Eternity had different dimensions for each floor. Some floors were hard to measure, like the 32nd floor, while some floors were less than 300 square meters. The inner structure of the Tower of Eternity couldn't be imagined just from observing its exterior. The building was so vast that Grid felt that he was exploring another world.

"Overgeared King, I will guide you."

The stairs to the next floor couldn't be seen anywhere? A magician approached Grid while he was looking for the way to go. Grid soon arrived on the 33th floor, thanks to his guide.

'From here on out, it is real.'

From the 33rd floor on, the compensation for climbing a floor increased: instead of two, Grid's intelligence rose by three each time he climbed a floor. If he could keep up this momentum and reach the 80th floor, it wouldn't be much longer before he could learn Fireball.

Grid was busy thinking.

Creak.

He opened the door and came across a guardian in a form he hadn't seen before. A humanoid guardian, with a body covered in gold. Its eyes were red, pointed chin, and three horns were all threatening. The most striking feature of the guardian before him was the electric current that danced across the humanoid body. The pale blue light of the electricity intermittently flashed in and out as the dust in the atmosphere was burned away.

Step.

The lightning god, the humanoid guardian that caused minor explosions with the lightning around it. It looked just as threatening as the name.

Step.

Taking one or two steps towards Grid, the Guardian narrowed the distance between them in an instant. The outstretched hand wrapped around Grid's head and slammed it into the ground.

Kwaaaaang!

"Kuk...!"

It was even faster than the lilith guardian! Grid couldn't respond to the unpredictable speed and groaned on the floor, suffering a total of 4,230 damage. More than half the damage was lightning damage.

"God Hands!"

Grid had been fighting with his own strength the whole time, and shouted for the first time in the fight. The four God Hands appeared in response to the call, wielding Mjolnir. It didn't reach, however, due to the lightning god's magic. When one of its horns shone blue, an electrical barrier was created that enveloped its whole body, demonstrating the power to block physical attacks. The hands that hit the electricity barrier stiffened at the same time. The electric barrier wasn't just protective, it also had the ability to reflect damage that it received.

Kwaaaaang!

Grid's face was buried in the ground. Swinging his sword behind him, flames were released, hitting the lightning god's arm. In fact, they were the black flames that were considered as a physical attack. The lightning god wasn't damaged, just like the other guardians.

Grid wielded his sword again until finally, the flames emission was activated. Grid was able to escape from the lightning god's hands and started a counterattack.

"Pagma's Swordsmanship, Link!"

Grid used the fast attack speed to release flames several times.

[You have dealt 4,100 damage to the target!]

[You have dealt 4,100...]

[You have dealt 4,100...]

....

...

It was said that there was no perfect existence. The lightning god overwhelmed the lilith guardian in all aspects: from speed, to destructive power, to magic. However, it had relatively ordinary fire resistance.

Only.

‘Its health is high.’

The lightning god’s health gauge was still high, despite being hit by 10 or more fire emissions. This wasn’t due to the lightning god’s fire resistance, but to the limit of the fire’s basic damage. The lightning god spread its legs apart and let out a roar.

Grid saw it open its firmly closed mouth and remembered the boss monster he encountered before the golems had invaded Reinhardt. He knew it. Magic power started to concentrate in the mouth of the lightning god. The mass of golden magic power would soon be shot at Grid.

This was its goal? Grid judged that the difficulty was different from the past and performed a sword dance. The lightning god released the magic power, which shot out in a straight line towards Grid. Goldhit was convinced after seeing this through the crystal ball.

‘Now Grid will use magic.’

Grid’s skills were much higher than previously rumored, but it wasn’t enough to deal with the lightning god. The destructive power of the lightning god, which combined the magic power of a magician and the strength of a solo number knight, was overwhelming.

“Don’t delay any more and show me the enhanced magic...!” Goldhit shouted excitedly.

She overlooked one fact in her zealousness, however. While it was true that the lightning god combined the magic power of a magician and the strength of a solo number knight, it didn’t have the ability to use a variety of spells like a great magician.

“Revolve.”

Not only that, the lightning god didn’t have the excellent swordsmanship of a solo number knight, meaning that it fell behind in techniques. To a veteran like Grid, who had fought against all kinds of legends, including the Undefeated King, the lightning god was just a child with great strength.

Grid counterattacked with Revolve and returned the attack back to the lightning god. The lightning god didn’t have the skill to cope with the technique that exceeded its speed.

“Noe!”

“Nyaaaaong! It is finally this body’s turn!”

As the level of Grid’s opponents increased, Noe had fewer and fewer opportunities to play an active role. The recent enemies didn’t even allow Noe to get close, meaning the power of Soul Ingestion couldn’t be used.

“Nyahahat! Look at the greatness of the best demonic beast of hell!”

The lightning god was different. According to its input data, the lightning god didn't bother to be cautious of a 'cat.' It had suffered a great deal of damage due to Grid's counterattack, and ignored the approaching cat. It concentrated only on Grid.

The result? Noe's wide mouth opened and swallowed the lightning god. Soul Ingestion was triggered.

[The memphis Noe has taken half the power of the magic weapon 'Lightning God.']

[Your intelligence will increase by 3,113 for 3 seconds!]

[You have understood the knowledge and magic of Braham.]

[The skill Fireball (Enhanced) can be used.]

[The skill Dark Cutter (Enhanced) can be used.]

[The skill Chain Lightning (Enhanced) can be used.][The skill Enchant Weapon (Enhanced) can be used.]

[The skill Decoy (Enhanced) can be used.]

[The skill Ice Spear (Enhanced) can be used.]

[The skill Mana Jamming (Enhanced) can be used.]

If the foolish Grid acquired a variety of magic, they wouldn't work properly, and would just cause confusion instead. Braham left behind magic that he judged as necessary for Grid. In fact, Grid only now realized that as his intelligence rose, Braham's knowledge flowed into his head and he could grasp it.

"Decoy."

A bird-shaped mass of mana was summoned.

Flap.

The bird flapped its wings and flew to the ceiling. The lightning god escaped from Noe's mouth and chased the bird with its eyes. The lightning god entered the mouth of a cat that it didn't take seriously. It wasn't aware of its weakened state, but it was attracted by the decoy. It was only for a moment.

"Mana Jamming."

Except for Grid's mana, all of the mana in the area became confused. The mana in the air scattered, the lightning god's mana reversed and stopped. The moment that it fell towards the ground.

"Ice Spear."

A sharp spear of ice that was two metres long was created by Grid's side. It was shockingly beautiful.

[Ice Spear (Enhanced) Lv. 1]

Deals 10,000 fixed damage and additional damage in proportion to your intelligence. Ignores the magic resistance of the target.

The target that is hit will be subjected to the 'frozen' state. The target that is frozen will receive two times the damage from an additional ice spear.

Mana Consumption: 2,500

Skill Cooldown Time: 1 minute.

The target of the ice spear was obvious.

Kuuong!

The lightning god crashed to the ground.

Puk!

[You have dealt 23,900 damage to the target!]

A giant ice spear pierced its back and it was temporarily paralyzed. The wounded area was frozen. It wriggled around. The transparent ice spears appeared and multiplied. From the moment he used Decoy, Grid also used Alarm + Ice Spear.

Puk!

The lightning god's health plummeted as it was pierced, frozen, broken, pierced, frozen, broken, etc. Goldhit's face became pale as she watched the scene before her. She couldn't help being nervous at the thought of losing the lightning god, which she had spent nine years developing and producing.

However, there was a bigger problem.

"I-I can't understand..."

Goldhit couldn't get a single hint about the enhanced magic like she wanted. Goldhit realized. The reason that she couldn't receive the enhanced magic was because Braham was transcendent, not because she was ignorant.

There was one questionable part. Grid must be a genius to have inherited Braham's magic.

"Grid...! You are a perfect existence...!!"

It was the moment when the best magician on the continent respected and envied Grid. And...

"Haaaack! Too delicious nyong!" Noe became really excited and ate the remnants of the lightning god.

At the same time, in the imperial palace.

"Kuk...! Kuaaah...!"

First Knight Mercedes was trying to appeal to lift her suspension.

"Kuaaaaack!" Gyuratan screamed.

The destruction of the lightning god damaged the thunder stone that was situated on the top floor of the Tower of Eternity.

"Your Majesty!"

Mercedes knew Gyuratan's true identity and paled. She moved earlier than anyone else. Despite the fact that she wasn't allowed to equip her swords and armour, she threw herself to the emperor's side to protect him.

"Kuhuk...! Huhuhu!"

Gyuratan no longer hid his demonic energy.

Mercedes and Gyuratan were bewildered. They never expected the situation to change so rapidly!

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"Unbelievable...!"

It wasn't Goldhit's exclamation. She had gotten a shock when she lost the lightning god and was now in a stunned state. No, it was Grid who made the surprised sound after Noe absorbed the remnants of the lightning god. Grid had no choice but to be surprised.

[The memphis Noe has taken half the power of the magic weapon 'Lightning God.']

[Your intelligence will increase by 3,113 for 3 seconds!]

[The memphis Noe has taken half the power of the magic weapon 'Lightning God.']

[Your intelligence will increase by 3,113 for 3...]

[The memphis Noe has taken half the power of the magic weapon...]

.....

.....

It was due to the notification windows that kept rising up as Noe swallowed the lightning god. That's right. Noe was a predator. As the aggro of the lightning god was drawn by Grid and his magic, Noe had been hanging onto its leg and eating. Thanks to this, the durations of Soul Ingestion and Soul Transference were constantly updated, and Grid could maintain his transcendent power.

'This is the first time.'

[Soul Ingestion Lv. 1]

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

Skill Cooldown Time: Your own decision.]

[Scratch Lv. 1]

[Your paws will attack and poison the target.]

Skill Cooldown Time: Whenever you like.]

These were the descriptions of Noe's skills. They were simple but fraudulent. Grid was the only one who knew that Noe had no cooldown for his active skills. This was why he was the best demonic beast of hell that even great demons loved. However, Grid had never been able to sense Noe's fraudulent ability.

There had been rare times when Noe continuously used Scratch. However, there was never a single instance of continuously using Soul Ingestion. Therefore...

'I forgot.'

The fact that Noe had no cooldown on his skills had been completely erased from Grid's mind.

Lick lick!

"..."

Noe was eating deliciously. His chubby butt moved from side to side as he chewed on the remnants of the lightning god with wet eyes. He was so pleased that he was even shedding tears. Grid made a hypothesis, 'The reason why Noe didn't continuously use Soul Ingestion...'

Was it because the targets Noe ate so far hadn't suited his taste?

'That's why he ate in moderation? Ah, it can't be.'

Grid was shaking when he heard Noe's voice.

"Master! Too delicious, nyong! I can keep going even if I'm full!"

"..."

The hypothesis seemed to fit. Grid sighed. He was very sad. When Grid was in danger, this selfish cat had acted less often because the food wasn't delicious?

"A beast is a beast..."

A beast was only faithful to their instincts!

Tsk tsk. Grid clicked his tongue and searched the area in case the lightning god had dropped any items. He was also faithful to the animal instinct of greed. Unfortunately, the lightning god hadn't dropped any items. The only thing left was the body. It was the same as the previous guardians.

"They should at least give me something."

Grid's gratitude for the intelligence he acquired every time he cleared a new floor was already being diluted. The greedy Grid was now hoping for more. Did he read his master's mind?

"Nyang...! Nyaaaaong!" Out of nowhere, Noe stood up on his hind feet. Then he moved his front paws from left to right like a bear, roaring in a threatening manner.

...Perhaps 100 out of 100 people would say that it was cute. However, something serious was happening to Noe.

"W-What? What happened?"

Was his stomach upset from eating like a pig? Grid rushed to Noe with worry and stroked Noe's protruding belly. "Do you think your stomach will burst? Do you want to puke?"

"Nyaaaaong!" Noe shook his head. It was a strong denial.

Grid saw the pink soles of Noe's feet and asked again, "Then what are you doing all of a sudden? Did you go crazy?"

"Kyaong! I am the best demonic beast of hell! Master is the crazy person, nyong!"

"..."

Was this a rebellion? Grid was confused by Noe's actions and retreated backward. There was a flash around Noe's body! It was a brilliant and intense light. It hurt Grid's eyes, and he was forced to turn his head away.

'What...?'

It didn't take long for the light to gradually lose its momentum. Grid confirmed it and looked at Noe. Then he got a shock. "N-Noe!!"

"Nya...! Nyaaaaong!"

Like a pooing baby, Noe's legs were up, and he was screaming. He was changing. Noe's black fur began to brighten while the small horns on his forehead split into two.

"Nyaaaaong!" Noe let out a strong roar that was different from the past. His now longer and brighter fur turned golden, and his head became slightly more rounded. Noe's white horns had been split in two and were now smaller than before. The change was easily expressed.

"...Why have you become cuter?"

That's right. Noe's transformation made him even cuter and more lovable. It wasn't an exaggeration to call him beautiful. He was a perfect pet that anyone would want to have. Noe seemed to be a species that had improved over several generations to meet humanity's sense of beauty.

It was difficult to call him a 'demonic beast' of hell. Perhaps it was a deterioration? Was Noe's body worsened after overeating?

Grid was wraped in anxiety. Then he noticed something strange. There were sparks flying around Noe's body. They were like the sparks that had wrapped around the lightning god. Then a notification window popped up.

[The memphis 'Noe' has succeeded in the evolution!]

[Name: Noe

Species: Memphis

Level: 1 (0/10,000)

Affinity: 100/100

Health: 10,000/10,000

Physical Attack Power: 160

Magic Attack Power: 160

Defense: 160

Magic Resistance: 160

Attribute: Dark, Lightning

Status: Narcissistic

(I will further develop, nyang! I will make myself stronger like the best demonic beast of hell!
Nyahahahat!!)

Skills: Fluidization (S), Scratch (S), Soul Ingestion (SSS), Lightning Discharge!! (SSS)]

[Discharge!! Lv. 1]

[The electricity will be turned on when something other than your master approaches. Attacks up to 10 enemies with 10 times the magic damage, and there is a very high chance of causing electrical shock.

Cooldown Time: None]

“...”

It was an enormous evolution. Noe's stats were now overwhelmingly high compared to when Grid first got him. They were three to six times higher. Yes, compared to when he first got Noe... Compared to level 1...

“Nyahahat! Master! Isn't this body cool, nyong? It is enough to be captivated!” Noe was filled with pride. He licked his chest fur with a short red tongue.

The temples of the silent Grid twitched. “...Is this a joke?”

“Nyang?”

“Why...? Why?! Why did you reset to level 1?”

This was an excuse, but he had gotten the Overgeared Skeletons so late that it was hard to level them up. The enemies that Grid faced were too strong for the Overgeared Skeletons. In order to train the Overgeared Skeletons, he would have to move to a novice hunting area, but Grid didn't have enough time for this.

However, Noe was different. Noe had been with Grid from early on, and they had grown together. Recently, Noe's level had reached as high as level 300. Now, it had been reset to level 1. The thousands in stat points had fallen to hundreds, making it an obvious deterioration.

Of course, Noe's potential was much higher now. However, Grid couldn't help thinking that the past few years had been in vain. Grid couldn't understand the terrible reality and mourned for the loss.

“It's okay, Master. Feed me a lot of delicious food like today, and I will quickly become stronger again. Cheer up, nyong. Treat me to delicious food!”

“...Delicious like today?”

Grid suddenly recalled the information of a mineral.

[Thunder Stone]

[A mineral that is produced only when the great demon, Astaroth, is present in the human world.

The lightning attribute can be given to an item, and it is also good for feeding to demonic beasts.

The demonic beast will be very pleased when fed.

Weight: 5]

“...”

A few years ago, Grid fought with Prince Ren of the Eternal Kingdom. Grid had defeated Eternal's first archer Ferrel and won the Thunder Bow. The Thunder Bow was a solid weapon passed down through Ferrel's family. However, it then met Grid, and Grid had disassembled it without caring. As a result, he obtained three thunder stones.

The description of the mineral said that 'demonic beasts' would like it, but Grid had never thought of feeding the thunder stones to Noe. That was natural. It wasn't a question of affection but an extremely normal attitude. Who in the world would throw away a precious mineral that was only produced when a great demon appeared in the world?

...Especially to an animal that was quick to die.

'...No, Nyangmong would do it. Ah?'

Something flashed in Grid's head. The thunder stone was a symbol of Astaroth's emergence, and it was here in the empire.

"Then Gyuratan is..."

...Astaroth. Grid had a poor mind and came to this conclusion late.

'Dispose of the thunder stone.'

Grid knew from his past experience with Hell Gao that destroying the thunder stone located at the top of the magic tower would weaken the Gyuratan's power, and weakening Gyuratan was a sure way to save Mercedes from her crisis.

"Noe! Come eat!"

"Nyang?"

There was no hesitation once his purpose was clear. Grid immediately ran to the staircase leading upstairs. There was someone waiting for him.

"I am pleased to see the Overgeared King."

It was a child, a young girl who looked four or five years old. Grid identified the name of the girl who greeted him politely and was shocked. "Goldhit...?"

Magician king... The identity of the strongest magician right now was a little girl? Grid felt something beyond confusion.

At this moment, there were people even more confused than Grid at the imperial palace...

“Demonkin...? How dare a mere demonkin break into the palace!”

‘Kuk...! Why are those greedy magicians messing around with the thunder stone?’ It was Gyuratan, the Great Demon Astaroth. As his identity was revealed, Mercedes accepted this moment as a chance, though she still didn’t know that it was caused by Grid.

However, a big chance was accompanied by great danger. Mercedes wasn’t wearing armor or holding a weapon, so she couldn’t withstand Gyuratan’s assault. Gyuratan blew away the knights and cut at Mercedes’ chest.

“Mercedes?” The emperor uttered.

He had persecuted her, yet she was defending him? The emperor’s eyes shook as blood filled his vision.

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“Kid.”

The girl on the stairs was really small and didn’t even reach Grid’s waist. Grid couldn’t accept the name that floated above the girl’s head. Goldhit? It was ridiculous that this girl could be the magician king.

“What is your name? Why are you in a place like this? Where did your parents go?”

The girl made a guileless expression. Simultaneously, laughter emerged from her that was far from innocent. It was reminiscent of an old lady’s laugh. “Yohoho... I am Goldhit. Some people call me the magician king.”

“...Is this real?” Grid could no longer deny reality and his mouth dropped open. Where was the appearance of the old woman who was over 120 years old? Even the elves, famous for their longevity, wouldn’t look like this. Grid regained his spirit and asked, “Is this due to magic?”

Goldhit nodded with her plaited red hair moving cutely. “Correct. Magic is an area that creates miracles. I have been constantly trying to obtain the ultimate miracle, and as a result, I look like this now. Yohohoho.”

He should’ve noticed from the name ‘Tower of Eternity.’ Grid immediately realized what was the ‘ultimate miracle’ that Goldhit wanted.

‘Eternal life...’

However, it went against providence. Grid bet that Goldhit had been pointed at and reprimanded by countless people for all sorts of reasons. Yet Grid didn’t reproach her. After all, didn’t Grid want Khan to have eternal life, and wasn’t he afraid of Irene’s death? Grid understood Goldhit’s wish.

“Amazing. Using magic to regain youth...”

Goldhit was indeed worthy of being called the magician king. While Grid was admiring her, Goldhit made a subtle expression. “Your Majesty, did you interpret it as regaining youth? Yohoho... You are really pure, unlike what I expected.”

“...?”

They were meaningful words. If Goldhit hadn't regained her youth, then how did she look like she did now? Anxiety settled in his heart as Grid felt a strange incongruity. He felt a sense of rejection toward Goldhit. However, Goldhit didn't give him a chance to think too deeply. “I want to thank you for answering my invitation. It is an honor to be able to host the best hero of our time.”

Her tone didn't match her appearance. She was even standing with her hands behind her back. It seemed that she couldn't abandon the habits of the old.

“Why did you invite me?” Grid asked bluntly. In fact, Grid didn't like Goldhit's emergence as the hidden quest had ended with it.

‘If I had continued with the quest, my intelligence could've reached 2,000 points.’

It was possible based on the progress of the quest and the increase in intelligence given. So, it was disappointing for Grid since he could obtain Fireball (Enhanced) the moment his intelligence exceeded 2,500. Then Goldhit made a shocking suggestion, “Can you take me as your disciple?”

“...???”

The magician king wanted to be his disciple? Grid doubted his ears. “The best magician on the continent wants to learn blacksmithing?”

“No, that is impossible.”

Indeed, he wasn't mistaken.

‘I heard wrong.’

He had been straining himself since Khan's death, so he was weary. Should he start taking energy supplements? Grid looked seriously worried about himself. Meanwhile, Goldhit added, “I want to learn magic, not blacksmithing.”

“What?” Grid's expression distorted. “Did you invite me here to joke around?”

The best magician on the continent wanted a blacksmith to teach her magic? It was a joke that even an elementary school student wouldn't make.

‘Has her brain become younger?’ Grid clicked his tongue, not hiding his displeasure. He was the Overgeared King and didn't like Goldhit joking around with him. It was like she was ignoring the Overgeared Kingdom.

Goldhit spoke to the displeased Grid with a gentle expression, “Don't be offended. I'm serious. I want to receive Braham's enhanced magic from Your Majesty.”

“...?” Grid was startled. The name ‘Braham’ had unexpectedly emerged from Goldhit's mouth.

‘How?’

Additionally, how did she know that he had learned Braham's magic? Then Grid noticed his mistake.

‘Was she watching when I fought the lightning god?’

His opponent was the magician king. The system recognized her as a 'powerhouse of the time.' She wasn't a legend but she could someday become one. If she was that type of person, it was possible for her to see the origin of the magic that Grid had used on the lightning god.

"Of course, I'm not simply asking. If Your Majesty teaches me magic, you will get something in return." A cheerful smile appeared on Goldhit's face. With ruddy skin, freckles, red hair, and round eyes, she was a really lovely girl... At least, when it came to appearance.

"What can I get? What will you do for me if I agree?"

"I have protected the empire through three generations of emperors. It means I am an important person in the empire. I have accumulated enormous wealth and power thanks to my abilities and the halo of the empire."

"..."

"It is almost almighty. If you want anything, just tell me. I will listen to any request from you. Yohohoho." It was an irresistible temptation. Goldhit was certain of this.

"The thunder stone," Grid said what he wanted. "The stone that is on the roof of your tower. Give it to me."

"...That is a bit too much to ask." Goldhit frowned for the first time. "You truly are a legendary blacksmith. You know about the thunder stone."

"It is impossible for me to not know."

"Then don't you know that it is an impossible request? The value of the thunder stone is incomparable to anything in the world. It can't be obtained unless a great demon descends..."

"You know." Grid cut Goldhit off. "You know that the thunder stone is closely related to a great demon and yet you left it like that without disposing of it? Don't you know what a great demon can do?"

"The thunder stone is the symbol of Astaroth, one of the great demons who lost his flesh due to Muller and is disqualified from being a great demon. How can he be a big threat?"

"..."

"The thunder stone has enormous magic power. It is a great help to the development of magic and weapons. How can I dispose of such a precious treasure just because of a weakened great demon?"

"Hat!" Grid burst out laughing. Weakened great demon? What would happen if it became known that Astaroth had been playing in the empire for the past decade? One thing was clear. Goldhit's reputation would nosedive, and her presence in the empire would weaken.

An alarm sounded all over the tower the moment Grid was feeling convinced of this. The magician Raji hurriedly ran over. "Master! Something is happening in the imperial palace!"

"I know." Goldhit reached out into the air. Then a space similar to the players' inventory was created, and a white robe popped out. Goldhit put on the robe and looked at Grid. "I have to delay this story for a while."

'Yes, go.' He would smash the thunder stone in the period of time when she wasn't here. Grid was convinced that the disturbance in the imperial palace was linked to Gyuratan. Goldhit read Grid's intentions but didn't feel uneasy. "Stop any silly talk. Nobody can access the thunder stone without my permission. I'll just get mad at you."

A large number of traps and five lightning gods were protecting the thunder stone. It was a thorough defense that not even Astaroth could get through.

"I will go and come back. I will solve the problem so that my precious guest won't wait long. Yohohoho..." Goldhit laughed bizarrely, and the small body in white robes disappeared. Grid waited for her to disappear from view and headed straight upstairs. His destination was naturally the top of the tower. He planned to destroy the thunder stone for Mercedes' safety and then pick up the wreckage.

However, how could it be that easy? On the next floor, Grid faced a maze. It was a huge and complicated maze, and he couldn't see a way out. A magician came up to him and said, "Goldhit has asked me to take care of Your Majesty. Now, let's go down. I will serve you respectfully."

"Can't I go up?" Grid refused the friendly magician's offer.

In turn, the magician scoffed, "The Tower of Eternity isn't a place that any dog or cattle can climb."

"I can't see anything with my eyes. Are you a dog?"

"..."

To think that the king of the Overgeared Kingdom and the peak of two billion users was being called a dog or cattle? There was no reason for Grid to endure his anger. He eagerly pulled out the Enlightenment Sword, consuming the fighting energy that had risen during his encounter with Goldhit.

"100,000 Army."

"...?"

"Massacre Sword."

"...!!"

Peng!

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The red and purple energy blades penetrated the maze in a straight line. From there, the maze started to collapse, and an explosion occurred in a corner of the Tower of Eternity which had been firmly in place for ages. There was now a small hole in the high tower.

"W-What...?"

Did Grid just blow up a magic trap with force? Furthermore, did he call out 100,000 Army Massacre Sword? It was then that the magician discovered Grid's identity. "T-The Undefeated King's descend... Keok!"

However, the current Grid wasn't lax. He didn't hesitate to kill the eyewitness and climbed to the next floor.

"Uh...!" Mercedes' scream resonated in the hall. As a matter of fact, Gyuratan had been aiming at Mercedes, not the emperor, from the beginning. It was because he knew that Bain would come out when he reached the emperor. It also meant that Bain wouldn't act unless the emperor was being aimed at.

"Sir Mercedes!" The knights heard the turmoil and were aghast. They roared angrily and came to rescue her from Astaroth.

"Don't move if you want this woman to live." Gyuratan was holding Mercedes by the neck. She was poisoned by the demonic energy that entered her body through the sword cut.

The knights were stunned while the emperor gave an imperial order, "First Knight, I will allow you to be armed."

Simultaneously...

"Sir Mercedes!" Two quick-witted knights threw their swords toward Mercedes.

Seokeok!

Two flashes of lights gleamed around Gyuratan's body. "Kuk...!"

They were truly agile movements. Gyuratan trembled as he let go of Mercedes. Mercedes stood before the emperor and tore at the bottom of her blood-stained dress to allow for easier movement. She faced Gyuratan and opened her mouth, "12 years ago, you committed the sin of killing the Red Knights and their families who devoted themselves to the empire."

"..."

"You have committed the sin of deceiving His Majesty and the empire's people."

"..."

The reception hall was tense. Gyuratan was dumbfounded while Mercedes was crying.

"...You have committed the sin of placing a stigma on Piaro. I will never forgive you," Mercedes declared with no fear in her eyes.

Justice would destroy evil.

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Gyuratan was forced to defend against a sword that struck like a lightning bolt and a sword that stung like a bee. Gyuratan's armor was pierced, and he coughed up blood. Mercedes didn't give him time to have a break. In front of her dual swords, Gyuratan's hands and feet were tied up.

'To a human...!'

“Two Storms.”

Peng!

Pepepeng!

The swords increased in speed. Mercedes' unique technique, which took advantage of sword energy, assaulted Gyuratan. She attacked and then backed away to a distance of three meters before repeating it. As she wielded her swords, her strikes were light enough to be fast and clean.

“Kuk...!” A groan emerged from Gyuratan's mouth as he defended himself against the swords. It was hard for him to cope with Mercedes' anomalous attacks where the attack distance changed in real time. The fight would be up to here.

‘Indeed!’

Things were flowing as everyone expected. The strength of the Fourth Knight was special since he protected the Red Knights. However, the First Knight was the peak of the Red Knights. The Fourth Knight couldn't be stronger than the First Knight. Mercedes' victory was already decided.

“Ahh...”

“Sir Mercedes...!”

The noble knight defended the emperor who had suppressed her in the past, and she also defended the honor of the old hero whom everyone had thought was corrupted. This image of Mercedes punishing Gyuratan with her bloody body was imprinted onto the knights. Some knights were so inspired that they started crying. They were happy that their object of admiration existed right beside them.

However, this was the reason why...

Puk!

“...!!”

Mercedes' crash caused a greater impact.

“S-Sir Mercedes!”

Gyuratan discarded swordsmanship. He was a great demon now, not the Fourth Knight. As such, he started to counterattack, and the screams of the knights filled the hall. However, Mercedes couldn't hear anything. Her world was calm as she was caught in the explosion Gyuratan had created.

‘Ah...’ Mercedes' time flowed slowly. Lightning demonic energy rose from Gyuratan's body like a haze. The hall filled with lightning that it couldn't endure, and the emperor was shouting with an expression she had never seen before. Everything was slow. One second was one minute, ten minutes, one hour...

The images of the old heroes passed through Mercedes' mind. Knights wearing red armor... The big backs, dependable smiles, and warm teachings of those who stood at the forefront of the battlefields came to her mind. Mercedes was filled with images of the past as Gyuratan's lightning fist flew toward her.

“Are your eyes bad? How can that be? If you can see through them, feel free to look. There is no darkness or lies in my heart.”

Mercedes’ innate vision... Piaro had fully accepted the cursed power which sometimes even caused fear in the parents who had given birth to her. Back then, Mercedes was still young. That’s why Mercedes had been able to keep her eyes straight, and Piaro had been able to look into them without any fear. Nevertheless...

‘I’m so...rry.’ Mercedes hadn’t trusted Piaro. She had given up on him due to the stigma of being a traitor. Everyone had shouted that Piaro was a traitor, and she hadn’t doubted it. ‘I was the traitor.’

Kwaang!

Mercedes smiled bitterly as she fell to the floor. Simultaneously, lightning demonic energy exploded around her body.

“Sir Mercedes!”

“You evil bastard! Stop right now!”

The knights ran to assist Mercedes. Their eyes blazed as they poured out all types of sword techniques. However, Gyuratan’s true power was much stronger than the Gyuratan of their memories.

“It is insulting that humans can even breathe in front of me for a moment.”

Every time this happened, the damn face of Sword Saint Muller popped up. Gyuratan started to concentrate his lightning. Then...

“W-What is this...?”

The knights’ swords and armor—their whole bodies were drawn to the lightning. Resistance was futile. Just like magnets with different electrodes, Gyuratan’s lightning emitted an attraction force that the surrounding metals couldn’t deny. This was why he had suddenly won the battle against Mercedes.

‘The situation is bad.’ Bain’s duty was to only protect the emperor. So, he protected the emperor while thinking about why the great demon had appeared in the middle of the palace. ‘It will be difficult for even me to handle him.’

Great Demon Astaroth... From the time that the thunder stone appeared 15 years ago, the empire had already predicted his emergence. However, it was strange. The longer the survival period of the great demon, the greater and more powerful the thunder stone became. This meant it was due to sheer greed that they were facing this current situation. However, it was also unexpected that Astaroth would be in the imperial palace.

Bain thought for a while before urging the emperor, “Leave this place while the knights buy time.”

The seven dukes had to govern their respective lands, and their period of stay in the palace was extremely short. They had gathered for the visit of the Overgeared King but returned to their respective estates. Currently, only the Five Pillars could be relied on. However, Bain judged that they weren’t needed.

It might be difficult for him to deal with Astaroth, but he thought that Goldhit could easily overpower the weakened Astaroth. The emperor thought the same. Great demon?The Overgeared King had managed to hunt one in a complete state. The Overgeared Kingdom was no match for the empire, so it was natural that the powerful empire should be able to easily hunt the weakened great demon.

However, this situation was a problem. The emperor hesitated to leave. It was because he saw Mercedes' collapsed form. Could she survive until Goldhit arrived? It would be tough. The emperor wanted to know the truth regarding 12 years ago and gave an order, "Bain."

"Yes."

"Save Mercedes."

Bain's eyes narrowed. He didn't know why the emperor wanted to save Mercedes when he already hated the existence of the Red Knights. However, it wasn't Bain's role to comment on the decision. He just needed to follow orders.

"I understand."

Supaak!

Bain disappeared from the emperor's right side. The point where he appeared was behind Gyuratan and next to Mercedes.

"Bain...!" Gyuratan cried out as he was handling the knights that were dragged over by the lightning. Bain's presence was so great that it made him wary. However, Bain pulled the ragged Mercedes into his arms and shook his head.

"I don't care about you," he said briefly before trying to leave.

"But I am interested!" Gyuratan obstructed Bain's way. He picked up the knights like they were a ball and threw them toward Bain. Gyuratan couldn't forgive Mercedes. His 15 years of hardships were wasted, and Mercedes was the best target to resolve his anger.

"N...no..."

"Tch."

Bain had been about to cut at the flying ball of knights only to be stopped by Mercedes. He looked at Mercedes holding onto his wrist and took evasive action. However, the moment he was going to disappear and reappear by the emperor's side, Gyuratan's sword came flying.

The sword was aiming for Mercedes in Bain's arms. Bain moved, so he was struck in the shoulder instead as he stabbed back at Gyuratan. It was a counterattack that aimed at Gyuratan's exposed abdomen. However, it didn't reach. This was due to the lightning demonic energy around Gyuratan's body. The demonic energy which had been previously pulling the metal was now pushing it away.

Thanks to this, Bain's sword lost momentum and stopped in the air. Bain clicked his tongue while Gyuratan wielded his sword again.

A fierce battle raged on. Gyuratan's swings gradually accelerated while Bain's movements were gorgeous enough to be considered acrobatics as he used the small shields attached to his shoulders and wrists to block. Both the emperor and Bain were surprised. Astaroth was too strong to be called a weakened great demon.

'Was he a high-ranking great demon before?'

It was likely. The great demon that Grid and his allies hunted had been the lowest of the great demons. If Astaroth was a high-level great demon, then he would be stronger than Belial, despite having lost his body.

'Furthermore...'

The emperor noted that as more time passed, the thunder stone became stronger. Perhaps the growth of the thunder stone meant the growth of the great demon? He thought this far.

"Isn't Goldhit here yet?"

The emperor was nervous. Then...

'Am I too late?' Bain felt Mercedes' body gradually cooling down. The shadow called death was covering her. At that moment...

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

A meteorite fell through the ceiling of the great hall. It was Meteor Strike, a spell from the current strongest magician among humans—Goldhit. The spell was lacking compared to Meteor which summoned 'multiple' meteorites. Due to the level of the magic, Meteor Strike only summoned a small meteorite.

However, the only magician who was able to use the full Meteor in human history had been Braham. Meteor was the symbol representing the great demons. It was already great for a human to be able to use Meteor Strike, and the spell was powerful enough to break through the impregnable wall.

"Sorry, I'm late. Yohoho..." Beyond the collapsed ceiling, a girl descended from the stormy sky. Her hair fluttered as she attracted everyone's attention. "Tsk tsk, foolish great demon. I wish you had continued living like you were."

It was a pity for the thunder stone. Goldhit reached toward Gyuratan who had been hit by the meteorite. Magic power that exceeded the category of a human gathered at her fingertips. However, it was useless unless the magic manifested. A black lightning strike fell from the sky and struck Goldhit. She collapsed without even being able to scream.

Goldhit exited the moment she arrived. A lightning storm was raging, and Astaroth was gradually getting stronger. The pouring rain brought with it despair.

Simultaneously, in the Tower of Eternity...

"What is this...?"

The breakthrough was ridiculously quick compared to the Behen Archipelago. Grid soon arrived at the 79th floor and faced a huge kennel. There were young girls and boys waiting for food like they were livestock, and dirty straw was scattered all over the ground.

“Crazy jerk...!” Grid realized why he felt strangely discomfited during his conversation with Goldhit. Yes, Goldhit hadn’t become younger. She had snatched it away.

“Uwek!”

How long had this taboo been happening? The horrible scene made Grid feel disgusted and nauseous. He pitied the girls and boys who looked at him with expressions that knew nothing, and he developed a hatred for Goldhit.

There was no reason for him to hesitate now. Grid immediately moved to the next floor—the 80th floor. The glass ceiling where the thunder stone was located on the Tower of Eternity attracted Grid’s gaze.

“Discovery.”

“Intruder.”

“Discovery.”

“Repel. Repel. Repel.”

The five lightning gods started operating. Goldhit believed the five lightning gods were the strongest weapons that could defend the thunder stone. However...

“Divinity.”

[Show off the virtues of a blacksmith who deserves to be praised as a god. The casting time and cooldown time of all blacksmithing skills will be removed. It is applicable up to two times.]

“Item Combination.”

It wasn’t enough to prevent Grid from opening the power he obtained from producing three myth rated items.

[Chapter 805](#)

[The heavenly gods can’t take their eyes off you. Your dignity can be compared to a god after making three sets of battle gear that even the gods will covet.]

This was the notification window that rose when Grid made the myth rated White Tiger Sword. It was the first of the ‘special event’ that would happen every time he made three myth rated items. The reward was a skill, Divinity.

[Divinity - Blacksmithing Version]

[-Raises your existence to a level close to a god.

The casting time and cooldown time of all blacksmithing skills will be removed. It can be used up to two times whenever the skill is activated.]

Resource Consumption: None.

Cooldown Time: 23 hours.]

Grid thought of a number after he got this skill—18. The ‘F’ word came out. (The pronunciation of 18 in Korea sounds a lot like the F word in Korea.)

Think about it. A blacksmith’s skills were almost always related to production. So, if Grid’s blacksmithing skill was considered an active skill like ordinary blacksmiths, then it would be possible to show the merit of Divinity by completing one item the moment the ‘production’ button was pressed.

However, Grid’s blacksmithing skill was passive. He didn’t have a production button. Furthermore, Pagma’s Swordsmanship was classified as a sword skill and it wasn’t affected by Divinity. This meant that the benefits Grid gained from Divinity weren’t very large.

Grid’s anger had skyrocketed for the first few hours.

“Item Combination.”

On the day that he got Divinity, Grid had controlled his mind and recalled all the skills related to blacksmithing which he had obtained from hidden pieces.

They were Item Combination and Transformation. The skills exerted a transcendent power depending on the use. However, the cooldown time was too long for Item Transformation, and the casting and cooldown times of Item Combination were long as well. It was difficult to use them in practice.

However, Divinity could now get rid of these shortcomings. It was a skill that removed casting and cooldown time. Grid was confident that his upgraded power was at a level close to ‘invincible.’

[Belial’s Staff and the Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires will be combined!]

Grid usually merged items of the same type. Typically, it was a sword and a sword. Why? That was because he found it difficult to manually devise what types of items should be combined. However, it was now possible for him to depend on the Divinity system. If he used Item Combination after Divinity, the system would assemble the items with care.

That’s why he was able to challenge it. He combined a sword and a staff, which were completely different types of items.

Flash!

Belial’s Staff and the Enlightenment Sword flew into the sky by themselves and merged together, accompanied by a bright and splendid light which captured everyone’s eyes. However, the lightning gods rushing toward Grid showed no response to that. After all, they were weapons with no emotions. They only wanted to get rid of Grid. Then...

[Item Combination has been completed!]

The staff and the sword joined together within the light and returned back to Grid’s hand. Appearance-wise, there was no major issue. The staff had become a handle with a length of two meters. The total length of the combined weapon was three meters.

[Belial's Staff + Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires]

[Rating: Myth (Transcendent)]

Durability: Infinite

Physical Attack Power: 3,490 Magic Attack Power: 2,253

- * 30% increase in intelligence.
- * 20% increase in physical attack power.
- * 40% increase in magic attack power.
- * 30% bonus fire attribute damage.
- * 30% bonus dark attribute damage.
- * 15% bonus lightning attribute damage.
- * Deals an additional 50% damage to sacred beings.
- * There is a certain probability of flames (large) being released when attacking.
- * There is a low probability of illusions being released when attacking.
- * There is a low probability of summoning a red lightning bolt when attacking.
- ★ There is a certain probability of a black flames explosion when attacking.
- * 30% increase in magic casting speed.
- * You can cast three types of magic at the same time. However, proficiency is required.

When fire and dark magic are cast simultaneously, the magic power of each one was increased by 200%.

* Every time a spell is cast, a shield that absorbs 5,000 damage is automatically created. Targets that strike the shield are subjected to the fear and slowed stats.

★ When triggered, the options such as fire emission, hallucinations, red lightning summoning, black flames explosion, and so on are considered as casting a spell.

- * 20% increase in magic critical chance.
- * 150% increase in magic critical damage.
- * The skill 'Enlightenment' is generated.
- * The skill 'Ecstasy of Desire' is generated.
- * The skill 'Belial's Power' is created.

"...??"

The attack power and magic damage were slightly lower than those of the individual weapons. It seemed there was a negative aspect because the sword and staff had lost the ideal balance. There was also no significant change in the option values.

There was only one change.

[* Every time a spell is cast, a shield that absorbs 5,000 damage is automatically created. Targets that strike the shield are subjected to the fear and slowed stats.

★ When triggered, the options such as fire emission, hallucinations, red lightning summoning, black flames explosion, and so on are considered as casting a spell.]

The newly added option made the Belial's Staff + Enlightenment Sword reach a new level of fraudulence. It was more than Grid had expected. The power of myth + myth combined...

[The blacksmith god is very surprised. He feels jealous of a human's skills.]

[The other gods are laughing at the blacksmith god.]

[Affinity with the blacksmith god has decreased by 1.]

[If affinity with the blacksmith god reaches -10, any items made (above legendary rating) will be cursed.]

"Ah, ****..." Grid cursed after a long time. Every time he got something new, he always felt both joy and loss. There were big profits but also a big worry. One example was when he was nerfed every time he created five legendary items.

'Jealousy? Curse? What type of god is this?'

It was a really serious situation that when he combined two myth rated items, his affinity with the blacksmith god would reduce. If Grid didn't know how to increase the affinity, he would only get a penalty and wouldn't be able to avoid the curse.

"Wow, this sucks! Really annoying."

'Damn bastard!'

The lightning gods came closer as Grid was cursing the unknown blacksmith god. However, Grid's response was simple. He drew a full moon with the weapon he held, hitting the five lightning gods simultaneously. One was struck by flames while another was struck by a red lightning bolt. Then Grid's body was surrounded by a translucent dark shield.

[A shield with 5,000 health has been created due to the effect of Belial's Shield.]

[A shield with 5,000 health has been created due to the effect of Belial's Shield.]

They were overlapping shields! In the blink of an eye, Grid obtained an extra 10,000 health. The other three lightning gods, that were not exposed to the flames and electricity, counterattacked.

[You have suffered 3,900 damage.]

[The target you have attacked has resisted the 'fear' state and failed to resist the 'slowed' state.]

[You have suffered 3,710 damage.]

[The target you have attacked has resisted the 'fear' state and failed to resist the 'slowed' ...]

[You have suffered 4,050 damage.]

[The target you have attacked has resisted the 'fear' state...]

Grid looked at the lightning gods losing their unique speed and was thrilled.

'A scam!'

The opponent being unaffected by the status conditions was a secondary problem. Grid just enjoyed the overlapping shield effect which didn't consume any mana.

'More in the future...!'

Grid's motivation boiled up. He attacked the lightning gods with the 'spear' which combined physical attack power and magic attack power.

'I want to make more items in the future!'

This desire lay in Grid's heart. Grid thought about the combination of items he could actively utilize due to Divinity, and his anticipation for the infinite overgeared state he could show pierced the sky. The five lightning gods exchanged blows with Grid and gradually turned to rags, suffering damage from the magic attack power that Grid displayed.

On the other hand, Grid was fine. The fire emission, red lightning, and black flames—the options attached to the item frequently appeared, and the shields accumulated in number. As the battle progressed, he didn't lose any health and increased his protection instead. It went up to at least 50,000.

"Hat..! Kuhahahahaha!" A feeling of pleasure exploded within Grid.

It felt like he was cheating while playing the game. This was the joy of being overgeared. He was so excited that he felt like he would burst into pieces. If the lightning gods were creatures with emotions, they would complain about Grid's absurdity.

"Nyahahat!" Noe also had a smile on his face while he was binge eating. Every time he swallowed a piece of the thunder stone which was the core of the lightning god, Noe's level rose quickly, and it was now close to 100. This wasn't strange since Noe was eating five lightning gods.

Grid shattered the head of the last lightning god. The duration of Item Combination finished, and he recovered the two separate weapons. Then he looked up at the glass ceiling.

"The thunder stone..."

It was emitting massive thunderbolts. Grid stabbed it with his sword. Then...

Kuwuung.

The clouds covering the sky disappeared like they had been a lie, and the thunder and lightning stopped. The heavy rain subsided as well. Light returned to the world that had faded to grey.

“...!!” Goldhit opened her eyes.

She hurriedly raised her body and looked around, wondering if she had dreamed everything. Then Goldhit saw the scene of Gyuratan and Bain competing against each other. It wasn't a dream.

'Dammit!'

To think she had shown such an ugly appearance to the emperor...? It was a disgrace. Goldhit was stunned because she had been so confident at first. Now, her face was flushed red. She was confused. Why hadn't she used Teleport to get to the palace? It had been to analyze the power and techniques of the great demon.

Goldhit had inferred that Astaroth was familiar with darkness and lightning magic. There was also the high possibility that swordsmanship was involved. Therefore, Goldhit had used magic to significantly increase her body's defense and physical strength.

Had that been all? After her splendid appearance, she had immediately deployed a barrier in case the great demon counterattacked. As a person who explored eternal life, Goldhit's desire for survival was really great. Yet she had allowed an attack to hit her almost as soon as she arrived.

Goldhit clutched her head and recalled her last memory. 'I didn't get hit by him.'

Yes, the great magic that hit her body hadn't been from Gyuratan. She winced as she remembered his appearance.

'There is another enemy somewhere here.'

Goldhit was finally convinced that she had been hit in the back.

'The enemy's level is significant.'

They had the ability to use magic capable of penetrating a shield made of all attributes and the ability to hide so that she couldn't detect it. Maybe it was another great demon... Could another great demon be hiding somewhere here? Goldhit gulped nervously.

A lightning bolt fell from the sky.

“Uh...?” A chill ran down Goldhit's spine. She realized once again how clever the enemy was. The lightning storm itself was magic... The source couldn't be found because this was magic without attributes.

“Is this Astaroth's field...?!”

It was an enormous monster. Maybe Astaroth was a single digit great demon when he was complete?

It was at this time that Bain's sword was unable to pierce through the demonic energy and floated in the sky. Bain missed the sword flying away from his head and was unable to block Gyuratan's next attack.

“...”

At the collapsed great hall, the First Knight was in rags, and the Five Pillars present had been defeated. The corpses of the soldiers and knights that formed a mountain in the background were meaningless. This was the overwhelming power of the great demon.

Astaroth was about to speak. There was no hope for humanity. At that moment...

Swaaaah!

The rain pouring from the ceiling suddenly stopped. The lightning storm subsided, and the demonic energy around Gyuratan's body became a haze.

'Don't tell me...?'

The frustrated Goldhit remembered a certain man—Overgeared King Grid. Then...

Clink.

Mercedes used a broken sword as a cane and raised her body. It was a dangerous situation. Mercedes was severely wounded and seemed like she would die at any moment. It seemed like it was hard for her just to breathe. So, why? Why did the emperor feel infinite trust in her? This was the value of a knight's existence.

[Chapter 806](#)

A great demon was an existence beyond eternity. From their point of view, 15 years was extremely short. It was a long time for Astaroth, however, despite him being a great demon. The newly acquired body that he obtained 15 years ago from his contract was extremely fragile. It was like walking a thorny road as he mixed among humans. He felt relief whenever he passed the day safely.

"So...I persisted for 15 years."

The shackle that was called a contract would last until his summoner's wish was fulfilled. He overcame Piaro and Asmophel, the ones who decorated the golden age of the empire, before securing his own power. He devoted himself to making sure the days passed without blood or vomiting. However.

"This woman...!"

Kwaduduk!

Astaroth's eyes were consumed with hatred as he gazed at Mercedes.

"You ruined everything!"

In fact, the direct cause was the Overgeared King. If that crazy human hadn't showed up, Astaroth would have succeeded in getting rid of Mercedes and establishing a more solid position. With the way things were going, the contractor's wish to become the emperor would've been quickly realized. As such, the completion of the contract would then secure him enough magic power to look for a chance of resurrection.

Yes, Astaroth hated and resented the Overgeared King for ruining his years of waiting. He wanted to tear out Grid's soul and chew on the body. But the Overgeared King wasn't here at the moment, making it natural for Astaroth's resentment to spill over Mercedes.

“Why...?! Why did you bring him in?”

Astaroth’s weak body couldn’t bear his wrath as the swollen blood vessels on his forehead were ripped apart, spewing blood everywhere. Astaroth didn’t care, however, as he barely managed to gather his weakened demonic energy and fire it at Mercedes.

Astaroth knew one fact from mixing in with humans for the past 15 years: they were really weak. They were creatures that were little different from the livestock that they raised. It wouldn’t be strange for the injured Mercedes in front of him to die immediately. She would disappear from even a small wave of mana. There was a limit that humans couldn’t overcome.

The lightning demonic energy reached Mercedes; resistance was not allowed. The metal attraction attribute of the lightning pulled Mercedes’s broken sword towards her, preventing any resistance. She was destined to be helplessly killed by her own weapon, Astaroth was sure of it.

On the other hand, the emperor believed in Mercedes. The emperor shouted, “Mercedes! Survive!”

In the 12 years that she had been serving her master, this would be the first time that Mercedes had received her master’s sincere command.

“...”

Her faint consciousness. Her numb flesh. Mercedes’s vision was blurry, as if she was trapped in a cloudy fog. The only thing keeping her standing was her instinct and to protect the emperor. However, things changed the moment she received the emperor’s command.

Mercedes’s vision brightened, her sharp eyes processing the world more completely than before. Mercedes threw her sword, stopping the demonic energy that was flowing towards her.

“It’s useless!”

Astaroth had come flying after the demonic energy. Astaroth ridiculed Mercedes for using the lightning rod principle to neutralize his demonic energy. It was a just a desperate, last-ditch effort after all. His devastating sword flew towards Mercedes’ face.

Mercedes used a sword technique, shouting, “Supreme Swordsmanship 4th Style!”

Her body responded with the technique that had been ingrained in her body since childhood. The skill of an old hero, the technique that exuded the essence of a person labeled a traitor. While it had to be sealed, Mercedes used it at this moment.

"What?"

Astaroth’s eyes narrowed in surprise. He was baffled that the sword about to pierce Mercedes’s face suddenly lost momentum before being pulled towards Mercedes’ fingertips. Mercedes created a sword by substituting her hands and arms in its place. Her body shone radiantly as her palms held Astaroth’s sword.

World messages emerged.

[A legendary knight has been born!]

[Every knight in the world will look up to her and praise her!]

“What...?” What...! What?!!!’

The fear sealed deep inside Astaroth’s heart instantly surged up. He got a glimpse of Muller’s shadow, a legend that broke beyond human limits and could threaten a superior species, from Mercedes. Mercedes had evolved. Astaroth wanted to deny the terrible reality before him.

“Knight’s Resolution.”

Silver sword energy burst out from Mercedes. Her sword energy didn’t target Astaroth, as they headed towards her fellow knights instead.

“Oh...! Ohhh...!”

“S-Sir Mercedes!”

The knights who received Mercedes’ sword energy rose up. They were so energetic it was hard to imagine that they had been on the verge of dying not too long ago. A silver sword imprint on their chests burned like fire. There was also a silver sword imprint on Mercedes’ own chest.

“What are you trying to do?!!” shouted Astaroth, feeling threatened. He let out a deep, guttural growl, as if he were a wild beast. However, Mercedes and the knights felt no fear, with infinite courage protecting them.

“For our homeland.”

“For our homeland!!”

Mercedes and the knights yelled! Then they rushed to Astaroth all at once. Astaroth was forced to give up the sword caught by Mercedes in order to get away from his spot, which was a big deal considering his strength. Thanks to Astaroth, Mercedes got a new weapon and became a complete knight.

Despite her various injuries, she leapt towards Astaroth at a transcendent pace, her sword dancing through the air like it was nothing. Her beautiful swordsmanship captivated everyone’s attention.

“Pledge Sword.”

The knights couldn’t count how many times Mercedes stabbed Astaroth with her silver sword energy; it was just too fast to be seen by the naked eye. She stabbed so much and so fast that it made the illusion that the universe was pouring out into the air.

“Kuak!”

Astaroth crashed to the ground and coughed up blood.

Kuwaaaang!

The floor collapsed. The ground vibrated but the knights stood firmly in place. Due to Mercedes’ buff effect, their courage and physical abilities had increased significantly.

"You...!" Astaroth's pale face became paler as he barely raised his body. Dozens of swords could be seen in his vision. It was in the sky above him. Mercedes watched Astaroth being damaged by the buffed knights and held her sword in front of her chest. The straight line seemed to represent her heart.

"Didn't I tell you? I will punish you."

Mercedes's sword energy fully unfurled, revealing wings of silver light fluttering behind her. Her glowing sword gave Astaroth a sense of despair.

"Why?!"

Why were the legends always disturbing him?! This call rang out as Mercedes's sword came down like an angel descending to earth. Astaroth lost his power in the aftermath of the thunder stone's destruction, and was unable to cope with her attack. Thus, he was split in half, turning to grey.

"Waaaaaaaah!"

The knights' shouts filled the great hall. Their momentum seemed to cover all of Titan. On the other hand, everyone, including the emperor, Bain, and Goldhit were silent. The second legend in the empire's history. Bain and Goldhit couldn't help feeling jealous.

In addition, there was the emperor.

"..."

He was ashamed. From the moment he was born, he had reigned over the world. This was the first time he was unable to raise his head. Mercedes approached him. Her life was saved after becoming a legend, but her body was covered in bloody wounds. Even so, just the fact that she was still beautiful was amazing.

"Your Majesty, please forgive my disloyalty in not trusting you."

"..."

The emperor was silent as Mercedes kneeled down before him. She was dominated by guilt, making the emperor feel even more pained.

"That...you are putting the burden of blame on yourself?"

"Knights can't blame their masters."

"Piaro and the former Red Knights didn't betray me?"

"Yes. Everything was the work of the evil great demon."

"Did you know it from the beginning?"

"I only found out recently. Piaro and Asmphel are serving the Overgeared King."

Mercedes' explanation followed, explaining the truth that she had heard and seen to the emperor. The emperor listened quietly while the knights were in tears.

"I see... It was like that..." The emperor nodded after he found out the truth. He lamented while feeling regret and guilt over the past. He was grateful that Piaro met a new master and overcame the past feelings.

"Mercedes."

"Yes, Your Majesty."

What decision would the empire make? Would he forgive Piaro's sins, and redeem him as a hero? Or would he cover up the past mistakes? No matter what choice the emperor made, Mercedes had to accept it. Honestly, though, she hoped that the emperor would tell the truth to the empire. She dreamed that Piaro would be stripped of the 'traitor' label.

The emperor's voice entered her ears, "I will strip you of your knight qualifications."

"...!"

"Y-Your Majesty!"

Mercedes was at a loss for words while the knights were agitated. Bain and Goldhit were also greatly confused. The emperor was getting rid of a knight who had become a legend? It didn't matter what the reason was; it was an incredibly stupid choice.

Bain was absolutely obedient to the emperor's commands, and had never dared give his opinion before, making what he was doing now all the more incredulous. He stood in front of the emperor, admonishing. "Your Majesty, you should reconsider..."

It was useless, as the emperor didn't give in. He shook his head and approached Mercedes, who was shocked to the core. He touched Mercedes' delicate, wounded hands.

"This isn't a command, but a request. Mercedes, give me a chance for atonement. Please serve my old friend and help him spend his last years in peace."

Piaro, who was regarded as the best genius of the empire since childhood, also came from an excellent lineage. It was natural for him to be approached by the emperor when he was still a prince. The two of them were friends for a long time and accumulated a friendship beyond status. This was why the emperor's sense of betrayal towards Piaro was so large, and also why he hated the existence of the Red Knights. Piaro's betrayal was a great ordeal and pain for the emperor.

"Please, I'm asking you."

"..."

The emperor shed tears. It was the first time Mercedes and the knights had seen it. They realized that the emperor was also human. Mercedes was unable to refuse his request. In the end, "...I will leave. I will protect the old hero and pass on his happiness to Your Majesty in the future."

"Thank you... I really thank you." Then. "I'm sorry."

Did the emperor ever meet anyone with a pure heart since the time he lost Empress Aria, and the time he was betrayed by a friend? Sadly, he hadn't. But things would change in the future. The weeping emperor smiled as the great burden in his heart was relieved.

The Saharan Empire was destined to become stronger in the future.

At the same time...

[A legendary knight has been born!]

[You have succeeded in sealing the weakened great demon Astaroth!]

[The 1st place raid compensation is acquired!]

"...No, what is this?"

Grid's mind became blank.

[Chapter 807](#)

[Name: Kazak

Age: 6 years old Gender: Male

Race: Human

Level: 1

Strength: 1/40 Stamina: 2/50

Agility: 1/30 Intelligence: 1/???

-A child with innately high magic power. Four years ago, he was kidnapped by the magic tower and raised by magicians.

He lacks language and intellectual abilities because he didn't receive any education.]

[Name: Cha Cha

Age: 5 years old Gender: Female

Race: Human

Level: 1

Strength: 1/20 Stamina: 1/40

Agility: 1/40 Intelligence: 1/???

-A child with innately high magic power. Four years ago, she was kidnapped by the magic tower and raised by magicians.

She lacks language and intellectual abilities because she didn't receive any education.]

Shortly after destroying the thunder stone, Grid immediately descended to the 79th floor. In fact, he wanted to rush to the imperial palace right now. However, he couldn't pass by the children who were being treated as livestock.

"Abu? Ah!" Dozens of boys and girls extended their hands as they found Grid. The sounds from the children's stomachs indicated they were hungry.

'Dammit.' Grid found it hard to understand. Goldhit had selected children to be the 'vessel' of her soul. If she was going to use their bodies, then it was normal to take care of them. Yet why were the children treated as cattle?

'It's also annoying to look after too many of them.'

He could imagine all types of things. It was horrible and disgusting. Tsk, Grid narrowed his eyes only to suddenly control his expression. It was because the children became scared when they saw his tough face.

"It's okay. I'm not a bad person."

Since when had he been so kind? It was strange for him to save people who weren't related to himself. Grid smiled bitterly and smashed the lock containing the children. The small padlock was too thin to cope with Grid's strength that was over 3,000.

"Come out." Grid opened the door as gently as possible. However, none of the children attempted to come out. For the children, this was the only world they knew.

'...Shit.' Grid's emotions intensified. His blood boiled just thinking about Goldhit's face, or rather, the face of the child that she took over.

"Sigh." Grid reigned in his heart and entered the 79th floor. He fell to his knees without worrying about the dirt between the haystacks. "Come outside with me. If you go outside, there will be many delicious and pretty things. You can feel the clean air when you breathe."

"..."

The intentions in his heart were delivered. Grid's smile combined with his high charm and dignity stat gave the children confidence.

"Abu..." The first one to bravely move was a small boy. He took a cautious step outside. It was a signal.

"Ahh! Ah!" All the other boys and girls started running out.

"Please stay quiet."

Then it happened when Grid was handing out the underwear he'd made to the children.

"What are you doing?!" Magicians emerged. They had come rushing when they heard the sound of the thunder stone exploding. The frightened children hid behind Grid's back. Grid asked, "What are these children?"

"Haven't you met Goldhit already? Can't you guess the identity of the children based on her appearance? Then..."

“Just answer. Why did you abuse the children like this?”

“Neglect isn’t abuse. Of course, we looked after them well at first. Now they are just waste children who lost the qualification to be a ‘vessel.’”

“...Waste? Wouldn’t it be better to let them go instead of treating them like this?”

Grid had experienced countless incidents while playing Satisfy. He had suffered a lot in the past and learned not to lose his cool. However, this time was an exception. The victims were so young. Grid’s voice was shaking, but the magicians didn’t care much. They were also angry. Grid had become an enemy the moment he destroyed the thunder stone.

“It’s a waste to release them, don’t you know? They can be used as experiments someday. They’re guinea pigs.”

The words were a taunt filled with ridicule. In the end...

“You trash!” Grid couldn’t endure his anger. He threw his body toward the magicians, who acted like they had been waiting.

“Water Wave!”

“Chain Lightning!”

Overgeared King Grid—he was the Hero King born hundreds of years after Muller. Yes, hundreds of years... The years were too long for people to accurately gauge the value of the Hero King. The magicians acknowledged Grid but mistook him for someone they could go against. This was a misjudgment that would lead to a terrible tragedy.

“What...?” The magicians were shocked as Grid was unharmed despite their collaboration magic. Grid also ignored the binding magic and grease magic on the floor.

“Tch! Explosion!” One of the magicians used a powerful explosive spell. He was the first to realize he could be killed if he fought while worrying about the tower collapsing. However, this enlightenment was too late. Grid used Valhalla’s magic resistance to minimize the magic damage and Doran’s Ring to regain health. Then he also succeeded in completing his sword technique.

“Revolve.”

“...!!”

Peeeeeeong!

The explosion, which should’ve hit Grid, swallowed up the magician instead. Someone was seriously injured, while someone else’s casting was canceled. However, the group of magicians could draw out an ultimate efficiency by casting different spells sequentially.

Grid had various combat experiences and couldn’t be unaware of this fact. The reason he had chosen a counterattack as his first skill was to cut off the magicians’ flow, and it had a big effect. The magicians’ formation broke down, but Grid didn’t use any skills on them.

He judged he would get more out of the basic attacks instead of just one skill. It was a judgment based on the inherent limitations of a magician with low defense and health. The magicians weren't able to endure the basic attacks Grid dealt them with the assistance of Alex's Quick Gloves. It was safe to say that the battle ended at this point. Of course...

"Crossfire!"

"Thunder Hammer!"

There still existed excellent people in a group. Some of the magicians, who were Goldhit's disciples, showed excellent combat power in a melee. They used relatively weak spells with a quick casting time in order to accumulate damage on Grid. The problem was that a single hit from Grid dealt more damage than three of the magicians' spells. Resistance was futile.

"Kuk...! Cough!"

"You...! You are really crazy!"

The fallen magicians threw threats at Grid.

"Do you think you will be safe if you harm us?"

"How dare you insult subjects of the empire?! Can you afford the empire's wrath? You and your country will soon disappear into history!"

The tower magicians were estimated to have a minimum level of 360 or higher. Despite the limitations of humanoid NPCs and magicians, it wasn't easy for them to die from Grid's attacks. That's why they could talk like this. Grid looked at them and didn't let go of his sword. 'It's a good idea to take care of all of them.'

It wasn't just because of his anger but also for the future of the Overgeared Kingdom. The empire was eventually destined to become the main enemy of the Overgeared Kingdom, which meant the magicians were expected to be a major threat. Now that Grid had destroyed the thunder stone to get rid of the great demon, it was an opportunity for him to get rid of the magicians. That's right. Grid was someone who usually didn't fall for provocations easily. So, the reason why he responded to the magicians' provocations was actually due to his calculations.

"It's a mountain I have to cross. I'm afraid it can't be avoided."

"You...!"

Grid's reply sank the magicians into despair. Then Grid glanced at Noe, who yawned and approached the boys and girls. "You human kids! You can appreciate the noble appearance of hell's best demonic beast! Nyang!"

"Abu! Abuoo!" The children had never seen something cuter and more beautiful. After confirming that the children were looking at Noe, Grid cleaned up the magicians.

"Let's go."

'I have to help Mercedes,' Grid judged as he left the tower with the magicians in it. 'The fact that I visited the empire today will be known by Goldhit.'

It was inevitable that he would be identified as one of the suspects behind the chandelier falling and walls collapsing. However, Grid wasn't greatly concerned. Wouldn't it be considered the work of the great demon?

'Astaroth was revealed at a good time, so things are going well.'

Grid decided to rescue Mercedes from danger without realizing that he was the reason for Astaroth's emergence.

"All of you wait here." Grid moved the children to a place that looked safe and handed out food to be shared. Noe's mouth was in a '人' shape as he flew around Grid. It was difficult to see Noe as a 'demonic beast.'

'If these children were raised in a good environment, they would be happy right now...'

Greater compassion and gentleness filled Grid's eyes as he looked at the children.

[A legendary knight has been born!]

[Every knight in the world will look up to her and praise her!]

"What?"

The world message about the birth of a new legend appeared before Grid. Grid noted that the legendary knight was a 'her.'

'Don't tell me it is Mercedes?' Grid was naturally reminded of Mercedes.

[You have succeeded in sealing the weakened great demon, Astaroth!]

[1st place raid compensation is acquired!]

He was stunned. "...No, what is this?"

It wasn't unusual for the empire to be able to raid the great demon. That was natural when considering the power of the empire. However...

'Why do I have the first place contribution?'

He got the first place contribution despite not participating in the raid?

'Something like this... Ah!' The confused Grid realized it. 'Is it because raiding Astaroth was impossible until I destroyed the thunder stone? Is that why I have first place in the contribution?'

He was only half right. Revealing Astaroth's identity was considered by the system to be part of Grid's contribution. However, it was impossible for Grid to notice this fact.

'In any case, this is serious.'

It was a surprise! Grid didn't have much of an expectation, but he was worried. His developing thinking ability sent him a warning.

'Mercedes is a legendary knight.'

A legend...

She had made a great contribution in raiding Astaroth and was now the empire's hero. Could she still join the Overgeared Kingdom? It was impossible. The empire wouldn't let her go, and her nature meant it was impossible for her to leave the empire.

"Dammit..."

Grid depended on items more than anyone, considered items as more important than anyone, and thus became the Overgeared King. However, he knew the importance of personnel. He had a large number of named NPCs such as Piaro, Asmophel, Sticks, and Rabbit. Grid felt more regretful about losing Mercedes than joyous over the various raid rewards now entering his inventory.

"Return to the kingdom first... Eh?"

Grid was moving the children when he stopped. The last raid reward captured his gaze.

['Weakened Great Demon Astaroth's Power' has been attached to the Rune of Darkness!]

"..."

It was an incoming reward. However, he didn't know what Astaroth's power was. Grid hadn't fought with Astaroth personally, so he didn't know Astaroth's skills and abilities. It was hard to predict what power would be attached to the rune without information about Astaroth.

The excited Grid immediately confirmed Astaroth's power.

[Weakened Great Demon Astaroth's Power]

[If you are a demonkin or have demonic energy, you can create the 'Storm Demonic Energy Field.']

"...Field?" Grid's mouth dropped open. Create a field...? This was completely...

"Am I a boss mob?"

Grid was becoming more omnipotent rather than versatile.

[Chapter 808](#)

Mercedes left the great hall after receiving the emperor's command.

"Your Majesty! Are you okay?" The other Five Pillars, apart from Bain and Goldhit who were guarding the emperor and the indisposed Kyle, came running belatedly.

They were Grandmaster Zikfrector and Armored Cavalryman Chensler. Zikfrector looked at the traces of the battle, while Chensler examined the emperor's body. "Are you hurt?"

"I'm fine," the emperor gave a brief answer, but he didn't rebuke Zikfrector and Chensler for not coming sooner. In the first place, they had been outside the imperial palace. This was actually a fast arrival time.

“You must’ve destroyed the thunder stone,” Zikfrector opened his mouth as he realized Astaroth’s death. “It looks like an overwhelming battle... The fact that you can overcome the situation meant there was an extra variable?”

Goldhit nodded. “That’s right. I was able to overcome the crisis by ordering my disciples to destroy the thunder stone.”

Clearly, Goldhit didn’t intend to announce that it was Grid who destroyed the thunder stone. She had already lost the thunder stone, so she planned to gain benefits from it. After all, she hadn’t done anything during the Astaroth raid. However, Zikfrector was cynical. “You gave up the thunder stone? That’s a funny joke.”

Zikfrector knew Goldhit’s desires, so he was convinced that Goldhit would never destroy the thunder stone herself. Goldhit’s face reddened. “Do you doubt my words?”

“Don’t get too agitated.” Zikfrector didn’t pay anymore attention to Goldhit. After all, he was the pinnacle of the Five Pillars. From his point of view, the magician king was trivial compared to the new legend.

“Your Majesty.” Zikfrector stood before the emperor and saw through everything, making it hard to believe that he had just arrived at the scene. “Was Mercedes the one who dealt the final blow to Astaroth?”

“Correct.”

“If she isn’t here, does this mean that Your Majesty sent her away for some reason?”

“...Grandmaster has seen it correctly.”

“I won’t ask anymore. There’s just one thing,” Zikfrector even dared to speak in such a casual manner to the emperor. It was estimated that he had lived longer than Goldhit despite having the appearance of a young man. Zikfrector told the emperor, “You might respect her work, but don’t give her any spoils of the battle. You need it.”

“...”

“If you’re embarrassed, I will go and get it from her.”

“No, I will give the order.” The emperor listened to Zikfrector, wrote a short order, and delivered it to a soldier.

“I will forever keep the loyalty I have learned from you.”

There were dozens of knights gathered at Mercedes’ mansion. They were in the garden saying farewell to Mercedes. On the other hand, Mercedes was indifferent. “Why are you gathering to send me off when the palace is in disarray from all types of disasters? Even now, people are in misery.”

“...It’s the last time. Please let us say a final farewell.”

“We will return to the front lines as soon as we confirm your departure.”

“You aren’t kids,” Mercedes scolded them even at the end. However, a smile was spreading across her face. She was secretly happy about being able to share a final farewell with the colleagues she had been with for 12 years.

Step.

“Attention!”

“I respect and love you.”

Step.

“Blessings for you and the heroes of the past.”

One step, another step...

As Mercedes moved through the garden toward the gate, the speed of her footsteps was slower than usual. There were tears in the eyes of the knights as they saw her off with their swords.

‘Sir Dia, Sir Lorex, and the other knights who passed on... Are you watching us from heaven?’

The Red Knights had the highest regards for Mercedes, the noble knight. There were many people who wanted to leave with her. However, their master was the emperor. They had learned from Mercedes that knights must be loyal to their master until the end.

It was a solemn atmosphere. In the garden, Mercedes faced a young soldier.

“This is an imperial command,” the soldier said. Then he read out the imperial letter, “Mercedes, I wish you luck.”

“Is that the end?”

“Yes, that’s right. Dear Captain Mercedes, I also wish you good luck.” The eyes of the young soldier were shining like a star as they stared at Mercedes.

“Thank you, Mr. Soldier. I wish you luck,” Mercedes responded with a smile that was more beautiful than the stars.

[Storm Demonic Energy Field- Weakened State (3)]

[-Summons a lightning storm with a radius of 200 meters.

-Field Effect 1-

A maximum of 11 lightning strikes will occur at least four times per second. The struck target will suffer 10,000 fixed damage, resulting in paralysis, stuns, burns, and other status conditions.

* Lightning bolts will fall randomly. In addition, the lightning bolt won’t distinguish between enemies and friends. It will be a threat to all except for the caster.

-Field Effect 2-

Strong winds will lighten the user's body. Under the effect of the strong winds, the user's movement speed will increase by 20%. On the other hand, everyone apart from the user will be unable to cope with the pressure of the strong wind and movement speed will drop by 20%.

-Field Effect 3-

The heavy winds will interrupt the visibility of all targets except the user, reducing the accuracy rate by 10%.

-Field Effect 4-

The sound of thunder in the ears will cause confusion. The skill and casting speed of everyone except the user is reduced by 10%.

-Field Effect 5-

Sealed due to the weakening. Will be opened in Weakened State (2).

-Field Effect 6-

Sealed due to the weakening. Will be opened in Weakened State (1).

-Field Effect 7-

Sealed due to the weakening. Will be opened when released from a weakened state.

Resources consumed when field is activated: 1,000 mana per second.

The time it takes to summon the field: 30 seconds.

* Activated immediately in places where the weather is already cloudy.

Skill Cooldown Time: 20 minutes.]

“...”

Field magic was one of the symbols of a boss monster. The field that the boss summoned created enormous pressure by strengthening the boss, weakening the players, or exerting aggression. This powerful force was now obtained by one player—Grid. It was more appropriate to say it was crazy than to say it was great. This was almost a collapse of the balance!

‘However, the mana consumption is very large.’

It was a magic that exerted all types of influence over a 200-meter radius. He couldn't think of it as a waste of mana. Grid thought that if he used this field magic in conjunction with Blackening, it would be like giving himself wings. This was despite its weakened state.

‘What are the other sealed effects?’

It almost made up for missing the rare talent called Mercedes. This was the excitement of a game. Unlike reality where trying hard gave a reasonable reward, the world of games gave huge rewards as a player moved through new quests, raised their level, and overcame trials. Who wouldn't love games?

Grid smiled as he comforted his past self, ‘Shin Youngwoo, the game isn't a refuge for you. It's hope.’

Thanks to the power he gained today, many things could be achieved in the future. Grid formed a fist and called out to Noe, "Let's really go back now."

It was good. He had accomplished his purpose and got more than he had expected. This was enough to appease the regret of having to give up Mercedes. Grid led the children along with Noe. If Grid were alone, he would be able to fly to Reinhardt in one month. However, it was impossible with dozens of young children. Their movement speed was as slow as a turtle's.

'What should I do with these children?'

Should he leave them at a village? But would these children be welcomed? Wouldn't these innocent children, who were victims without knowing the reason, suffer new pains? Grid was more concerned for the children than for how long it would take to return to the Overgeared Kingdom.

'It might be better to summon a knight.'

Euphemina could use Mass Teleport and take all the children with her at once. Grid was about to make a decision when he heard Noe's excited voice in his ears.

"That is a flower, nyong."

"Abu!"

"That is a mountain, nyong."

"Ada!"

"That is the sky, nyong."

"Bubu! Ba!"

"Nyahahat! The best demonic beast of hell Noe is your teacher, nyang!"

"No...e!! No..uh!"

"Nyang!"

The children had been trapped in the magic tower for as long as they could remember, while Noe had spent a lot of time in the pet inventory. Now the children's faces were full of happiness as they received freedom and saw the picturesque scenery. In the end...

'Let's walk a bit more.'

Grid didn't want to ruin the atmosphere and summoned Randy and the Overgeared Skeletons instead.

"Abu!"

Clack!Clack clack!

"Adad!"

"Hello. I am Randy."

Claack!Clack!

Hell's best demonic beast, the strongest doppelganger, two skeletons, little children who didn't know anything, and the 'strongest player'—this unusual party crossed the river and passed through the forest. Anyone who saw them would feel it was absurd. Additionally, the party...

"You! Give me your money! Keok!"

It was incredibly powerful. In the process of walking, Grid destroyed more than 10 groups of bandits and at least 1,000 monsters, giving a good amount of experience to the Overgeared Skeletons. However, a crisis soon arrived for everybody. People who always won were rare in this world.

Kiyaaaaaaah!

"Dammit! Why is the medusa here?"

They encountered a field boss monster as soon as they entered the Lamia Forest. It was a boss with a level in the low 300's—a weak field boss that Grid could hunt alone. The problem was the children. They could die just by having their gazes meet the medusa's eyes. Grid encouraged the medusa to focus on him, but the children didn't cooperate.

"Ahh! Kyo!"

"Kyaak~~!"

The bizarre appearance of the medusa's snake hair was horrifying to the children who didn't know the world. The children screamed, and the medusa's eyes turned straight toward them.

"No...!"

Were these children's lives were going to end after only a short life of suffering? Grid felt desperate.

Puk!

A number of arrows flew from the side and successively pierced the medusa's head. It was done with an archery skill reminiscent of Jishuka. Grid's and the medusa's gazes headed in the direction of the arrows. They saw a knight. Armed with old leather armor instead of red armor, she put away the bow and pulled out an axe.

The medusa was hit in the neck with the thrown axe and the knight rushed toward it. Two swords flashed in a fast and powerful manner. The medusa's heart was pierced, and its head was separated from its body. Then the medusa turned to grey.

"You..."

"Wandering knight Mercedes greets the Overgeared King."

The two people were reunited.

[Chapter 809](#)

"What?"

Why was Mercedes here when she should be the hero of the empire? Grid suspected his eyes and doubted his ears. "Wandering knight? You left the empire?"

It was impossible. Even if Mercedes wanted it, the empire wouldn't have let her go. Wouldn't the emperor be a fool not to keep a legendary hero? Grid knew this, but he couldn't help having expectations. In the first place, Mercedes had a serious nature and didn't know how to joke.

"...Is this real?"

"Yes."

"Really?"

"Yes, I really left. To be precise, I got kicked out. Can Your Majesty take me?"

"Ha..!" A smile crossed Grid's face. He didn't even have time to feel suspicious about Mercedes being 'kicked out.' Grid felt so happy that his head was refreshed. Then he acted rashly.

"I'm happy! I'm really happy, Mercedes! Of course, you're welcome!" Grid hugged Mercedes' slender body as hard as possible. Mercedes was embarrassed, but Grid didn't care. He felt like he would miss her and hugged her desperately. "Haha! I'm so happy! I never thought this day would come!"

If there was a game that classified cards from the F class to the SSS class, Mercedes was undoubtedly an SSS card, and this was before she became a legend. At present, Grid didn't even dare deduce her value. Now that she had come to serve him, he was happy enough to tear up. He imagined Khan smiling at him in the sky.

"..." Mercedes' face turned extremely red. Grid's smile was as bright as the sun, his chest was hard, and she felt his hot breath against her ear. Mercedes was grateful to Grid for saving her from a crisis as well as healing the wounds of the old heroes... Yes, Grid stirred Mercedes' heart. Mercedes clearly realized that she had been longing for Grid.

"I..." Abandoning resistance, she spoke in a trembling voice as she rested her face against Grid's chest, "Can I stay with you?"

This was Grid's answer, "Always, always stay with me."

It was like this. Mercedes' confession entered his ears, "I have lived for 27 years as a swordsman and a knight."

"I know."

"So, I don't know the role of a woman."

"Huh? Really? I see."

"But I will do my best."

"Yes. Thank you."

"As Your Majesty's knight and mis..."

"Mis?"

"Mis...!"

Mistress! Mercedes hadn't experienced a first love and couldn't say the unfamiliar word. She couldn't say 'as Your Majesty's knight and mistress.' The words turned around and around in her head. Grid cocked his head in confusion. "Mis-mis-mis?"

Was it something like true true true? (similar in Korean)

"Well, it's okay. In any case, I welcome you once again." Grid was so intoxicated with joy at obtaining Mercedes that he ignored his trivial curiosity. Anyone watching them now would become so frustrated that they would collapse.

[The level of the Overgeared Skeleton (1) has risen!]

[The level of the Overgeared Skeleton (2) has risen!]

Grid had an unexpected harvest as he walked with the children. It was the growth of the Overgeared Skeletons. In the process of moving from Titan to the border, Grid faced all sorts of monsters. There were many low-level monsters suitable for the Overgeared Skeletons.

"Really cute." With her eyes shining like lanterns, Mercedes looked like a naive girl. She couldn't keep her eyes off the Overgeared Skeletons. That's right. She wasn't calling Noe or the children rescued from the magic tower cute. Instead, Mercedes had a great fascination with the Overgeared Skeletons.

'Her taste is truly...' Grid clicked his tongue, but the Overgeared Skeletons had a different look from ordinary skeletons. Their faces and eyes were bigger. So, it was true that they looked cute at first glance. In that case, Mercedes' taste couldn't be called strange.

Clack!Clack clack!

Mercedes patted their heads, and the eyes of the Overgeared Skeletons curved like crescent moons. They liked Mercedes too. Mercedes admired them. "This is the first time I've seen undead expressing emotions."

"There aren't skeletons like these kids in the empire?"

"They can't be found anywhere on the continent. These children have a sense of empathy that's almost life-like. They're very special children."

"Hrmm."

It's true that they were special kids. They could raise their levels, equip items, and even learn skills. It was difficult to see them as simply summoned undead. They were more like pets. However...

'They are weak.'

Grid looked at the status windows of the level 70 Overgeared Skeletons.

[Overgeared Skeleton (1)]

[Lv. 70

Health: 1,045/1,045 Mana: 3/3

Strength: 127

Stamina: 100

Agility: 127

Intelligence: 1

Remaining Stat Points: 0

Items Worn:

Weapon: Sturdy Long Sword

Secondary Weapon: Silver Thread.

Armor: Dependable Armor

Exclusive Skills: Silver Thread Shooting, Silver Thread Avoidance, Beginner Mining Technique Lv. 6, Beginner Sword Mastery Lv. 2, Beginner Petrification Resistance, Beginner Physical Resistance, Beginner Magic Resistance, Strike, Bite, Skull Headbutt]

[Overgeared Skeleton (2)]

[Lv. 70

Health: 1,045/1,045

Mana: 525/525

Strength: 25

Stamina: 100

Agility: 55

Intelligence: 175

Remaining Stat Points: 0

Items Worn:

Weapon: Sharp Dagger

Secondary Weapon: Good Shield

Armor: Dependable Armor

Exclusive Skills: Silver Thread Avoidance, Beginner Mining Technique Lv. 6, Beginner Mental Focus Lv. 1, Beginner Petrification Resistance, Beginner Magic Resistance, Beginner Instantaneous Acceleration, Strike, Bite, Skull Headbutt.]

The Overgeared Skeletons gained five stat points every time they leveled up. Unlike ordinary undead, they could grow, wear equipment items, and had high learning abilities. However, they had the

limitations of a skeleton. The Overgeared Skeletons were so fragile that they would blow away with the wind or when striking the White Phosphorus Tree with an axe.

Grid had invested points into their stamina, but their survival ability was still weak. In particular, they were vulnerable to explosions and didn't demonstrate a visible defense capability. It had gotten to the point where Grid built armor for them to increase their defense.

'However, they show a high resistance to slashes and stabs...'

To be precise, their evasion rate was high. Stabs or slashes couldn't strike the bones of the Overgeared Skeletons directly, entering crevices or gaps instead. Therefore, attacks would be judged as having missed their targets. Still, this only happened when they were lucky.

While Grid was regretting the weakness of the Overgeared Skeletons, Mercedes said, "The fundamental problem is that these children don't know how to fight."

She first pointed to Overgeared Skeleton One. "This kid has a very good strength to agility ratio. Therefore, his movements are agile and his attacks are sharp, but his intelligence is too low. He doesn't know how to correctly take advantage of his physical ability."

"Hasn't he gained Sword Mastery?"

"His intelligence is so low that it is hard to apply the techniques."

"Ah..."

The problem was the one point in intelligence.

'I also need to invest points in intelligence,' Grid realized and was reminded of Jude. 'Is he doing well?'

There were many people with talent in the Overgeared Kingdom. Now that Jude didn't have to defend Winston, Grid could send someone else. He thought that he should bring Jude to his side sooner or later. Then Mercedes' voice entered his ears, "This kid is clever, but his physical abilities are very low. He uses his skills properly, but there isn't a big effect."

This was the evaluation for the Overgeared Skeleton Two. Grid spoke the truth, "In the first place, he's a candidate to become a magician."

However, he hadn't learned any magic. Additionally, Grid wasn't good at making magic battle gear. As such, Overgeared Skeleton Two couldn't exert his true strength at the present time. The moment Grid thought this...

Awooooo! The sound of wolves rang out from the sky. Grid moved his gaze to the sky and saw direwolves flapping large bat wings. They were level 200 monsters. The Overgeared Skeletons wouldn't be able to deal with them. Mercedes moved forward with a sword in both hands, piercing through the gaps in the sharp teeth of the descending direwolves.

This was a fast and clean swordsmanship that Grid wanted to learn. It seemed that the Overgeared Skeletons were the same. Overgeared Skeleton One watched Mercedes with wide eyes and suddenly tried to hit Overgeared Skeleton Two. Overgeared Skeleton Two was turned upside down and Overgeared Skeleton One stole his dagger. He wanted to use two swords like Mercedes.

“Interesting.” Mercedes’ clear eyes shone like a lake. She held her double swords and nodded at Overgeared Skeleton One. “Okay. I will teach you simple swordsmanship.”

This was the moment that the Overgeared Skeletons gained a great mentor. Mercedes started to teach the Overgeared Skeletons basic movements that could be followed, and the Overgeared Skeletons used this whenever they encountered low-level monsters.

[The level of the Overgeared Skeleton (1) has risen!]

[The level of the Overgeared Skeleton (2) has risen!]

[The Overgeared Skeletons (1) and Overgeared Skeletons (2) have acquired the skill ‘Vaintz Swordsmanship.’]

“Wow...”

The growth rate of the Overgeared Skeletons had become noticeably faster. In particular, the jump in Overgeared Skeleton One development was huge. Every time his intelligence increased with a level-up, his attack rate and evasion rate increased significantly. The weakness of his low durability wasn’t overcome, but the number of times his arms and legs broke had decreased.

“It’s rewarding to teach these children.” Mercedes gently patted the skulls of the Overgeared Skeletons. For some reason, Grid felt a desire to have his head patted by her.

However, he regained his spirit and wondered, ‘Wasn’t Braham favorable to the Overgeared Skeletons?’

The prideful Braham had advised Grid to raise the Overgeared Skeletons well. That’s right. The Overgeared Skeletons were recognized by the legendary knight Mercedes and the legendary magician Braham. Maybe these guys were more than Grid had expected? Grid’s expectations of them now soared into the sky.

Then a few days passed by...

“Have you been raising two families?” Lauel greeted Grid when he finally returned to Reinhardt. The other Overgeared members were also shocked. Grid arrived late with a group of children and a woman, causing them to misunderstand.

Someone muttered, “Energetic King...”

‘Secretly having two families and so many children!’ The forever single Vantner shed tears of blood.

“There are many people to meet,” Mercedes spoke while taking off her helmet. The Overgeared members could now see her name and face.

“The First Knight...!” Someone cried out.

It seemed that Mercedes’ presence was really big. Grid formally introduced her, “Everyone, say hello. This is the legendary knight that will be with us in the future.”

“What...?” The eyes of Lauel and the Overgeared members widened.

[Chapter 810](#)

The birth of a legendary knight became a global issue. Who was the main character of the new legend and how strong was her power? How would she change the landscape of Satisfy in the future? Various media companies around the world provided in-depth analytical broadcasts, all of which had high ratings. It was proof that there was hot interest in the new legend.

On the other hand, the mood among the Overgeared members was the worst. The Overgeared members internally discussed the matter and found it was highly likely the legendary knight had been born in the empire. The Red Knights were the best on the continent. Among them, the First Knight Mercedes was a female and likely to have become the legend. The Overgeared members were able to easily guess this and felt upset.

Who was Mercedes? She was the person who made Grid kneel to her the first time she met him. It was terrible to think about how the Overgeared members would be suppressed by her now that she was stronger. However, at this moment...

"Everyone, say hello. This is the legendary knight that will be with us in the future." Grid brought Mercedes as his companion.

"...???"

"...Is this real?"

The Overgeared members shut their mouths. They knew that Grid could easily build up affinity with NPCs, but they didn't realize it would be enough to catch a legend. In particular, wasn't Mercedes a knight of the empire? She was famous for her unwavering loyalty, so how did she end up with Grid? It didn't make sense no matter how they thought about it.

Clap. Clap clap, a sound broke the silence. It was the sound of Vantner hitting his bald head in order to determine if this was a dream or not. After a moment, Vantner scratched his bald head that was as red as a boiled octopus and muttered, "This isn't a dream?"

That's right. It was reality. Everyone couldn't deny it any longer and gulped. They alternated looking between Grid and Mercedes as they asked for an explanation.

"This is it."

Where should he start? There were too many parts to explain. The moment that Grid was sorting out his thoughts...

"Your Majesty, the introduction is wrong," Mercedes opened her mouth and kneeled in front of Grid. "I am your knight before I am a legendary knight."

She would serve him forever along with the old heroes. Mercedes' noble appearance under the radiant sun gave everyone a chill. A notification window appeared in front of Grid.

[You have recruited the legendary knight Mercedes. The city she stays in will have the strength of its city walls increased by 50% and the power of its siege weapons increased by 20%. Once there is a siege, her knights and soldiers will have their attack, defense, and health increased by 10%.]

Mercedes' and Piaro's past, the emergence of the great demon Astaroth and Mercedes' crisis, and then Grid's rescue of Mercedes and the Astaroth raid—all the Overgeared members were briefed on the series of incidents and felt doubts.

"It doesn't make sense to me?"

"That's right. Why did the emperor release Mercedes? Why did the emperor release Mercedes, who got a great achievement and was promoted to a legend?"

"It is fishy, fishy."

"Maybe the emperor sent her as a spy?"

"Ah."

The atmosphere was boisterous. Grid belatedly realized that he had missed the most important part of the story and opened his mouth again, "Mercedes explained it to me on the way."

Then Grid once again started a long story. It was about the relationship between the emperor and Piaro. In the end, the atmosphere in the group calmed down.

"The hidden story..."

"The emperor sent Mercedes as atonement for what happened to Piaro."

"Yes. I guess he wants to get rid of his guilt. He also hopes that Piaro's last years will be happy."

"...Even the best power on the continent is a human like us in the end. It is a needless bother."

After all, the Saharan Empire was bound to be the Overgeared Kingdom's main enemy. This move dampened the hostility that the Overgeared members felt toward the empire and the emperor. They felt strange emotions once they realized the emperor wasn't that different from them. There were many people who were impressed by the sentiment of sending Mercedes to the Overgeared Kingdom for atonement.

Grid warned them, "Straighten your spirits. The emperor has finished his atonement by sending Mercedes here. He will become bigger than before after getting rid of the shadows in his heart."

Grid knew because he had seen the emperor face to face, and the emperor was never satisfied. As an individual, Juander was completely different from how he was as an emperor.

Laue speculated, "For the time being, the emperor will concentrate on strengthening the inner stability."

The empire needed control after the chandelier and the great demon incidents had occurred one after another. In the course of the reorganization, there would be a bloody fight between factions. Laue suggested, "We have to regain power during this gap."

Grid's revenge was over for the moment. Now that Immortal had left the imperial palace, Grid had other things to do until their whereabouts were found. A new group of knights had to be created with Mercedes as the captain, and new items produced for the Overgeared members. A few Overgeared

members had won medals in the National Competition, allowing them to pursue a rapid power development.

Grid rose from his seat. "Okay. I will start."

It was time for more labor...

Darkness was in front of Grid, but he didn't show it. He wanted his colleagues to depend on him.

In front of the great hall, Mercedes greeted Grid after the meeting finished, "Aren't you tired?"

Grid once again realized the power of appearance. It was because his tired mind and body became lighter upon seeing Mercedes' beautiful face. He was excited when he thought he could continue being with her. "Aren't I able to work a bit harder thanks to you?"

"...?" It was adorable seeing her try to figure out the meaning of his words. Grid couldn't help laughing and looked at Mercedes' detailed information.

[Name: Mercedes

Age: 27 Gender: Female

Occupation: Legendary Knight

* All types of weapons and armor can be worn without restrictions. However, magic weapons are excluded.

* Can bring out hidden functions when wearing a shield and heavy armor.

* Can create your own knights. The number of times a knight can be created will increase every time the skill level of Complete Weapons Mastery is increased.

Title: Owner of Keen Insight

* Can penetrate the essence of things.

* Disables mental magic and all sorts of traps. Can see through the target's skills and abilities, which will reduce the target's defense and attack power by up to 30%.

Title: One who Became a Legend

.....

Title: Becoming a Role Model

* Increases the growth rate of the knights and soldiers you command by 30% while keeping their loyalty at the maximum.

* When appointed as a commander in a war, the morale of allies won't deteriorate easily. The delivery speed of commands will increase by 50%.

Level: 457

Strength: 3,231 Stamina: 2,588

Agility: 2,910 Intelligence: 1,530

Leadership: 2,512

Exclusive Skills: Empire's Military Tactics (A+), Vaintz' Swordsmanship (S), Eyes that can Read Combat (SS), Noble Bravery (SS), Knight's Resolution (SS), Shield Block (SS), Complete Weapons Mastery (???), Incomplete Predictions (???), Noble Chivalry (???), Silver Wings (???).

-A person with a prestigious lineage of the Saharan Empire and who has a unique insight. As she develops, his insight will grow to a level that can predict the future.

* Currently, she is loyal to Player Grid. Players aside from Grid can't build up an affinity with her.]

The strongest—was there any other word to describe her? In particular, Grid liked that he was the only player who could build up an affinity with Mercedes in this world. The sense of superiority at being her favorite was beyond imagination.

"Have you looked around the capital?"

"Yes. I think it is a place like heaven."

"Heaven?"

"It is a city where people who don't know misfortunes are gathered. Even the lowest residents are laughing. Since it is a city where Piaro and Asmophel are located, the walls and military facilities are perfect."

A rich and secure city—this was what Mercedes felt when she saw Reinhardt. It was the same as when she looked for Grid two months ago in order to convey the imperial order. Mercedes had traveled all over the continent and visited countless cities, but Reinhardt was counted within the top five of good cities.

"I am thankful for the words. Have you met Piaro?"

"No. I searched all the military facilities in the city but couldn't see him anywhere. He seemed to be away."

"Military facilities? Why are you looking for Piaro there?"

"...?"

"Ah..." Grid was about to say Piaro could be found in the fields, only to stop and sigh deeply. He was saddened by the fact that he now recognized Piaro as a farmer.

'Originally, he should be in the military facilities...' This was during Piaro's days as a great swordsman. 'Of course, he is still strong enough now.'

Piaro's Pounding Mortar and Fated to Perish were winning cards that could even damage a great demon. In particular, his destructive power was transcendent when he used Natural State. Piaro was still

strong and was in a position to be the best. Unfortunately, most of Piaro's skills were agriculture-related. If all of his skills were combat-related, Piaro would be much more powerful than he was now.

"Your Majesty?"

Grid looked up and realized that Mercedes was making an anxious expression at him. Her transparent eyes, which were filled with a clear light, healed Grid's heavy heart. He smiled and grabbed Mercedes' small hands. "Let's go to Piaro."

Mercedes' face flushed red, but Grid didn't notice.

"Why is Piaro here?" Mercedes was confused when Grid led her to some agriculture fields. Piaro was someone who had accomplished the title of a great swordsman. Why would he be in fields instead of working to obtain the status of a Sword Saint? Shouldn't he be spending 24 hours a day polishing his swordsmanship?

'...Piaro probably needs time to rest.'

The full moon that filled the night sky was huge today, and the rice fields were calm and beautiful. Mercedes walked beside Grid while listening to the night sounds. Her heart was beating wildly. She imagined Piaro looking up at the night sky with his hands clasped behind his back and pictured the noble and dignified appearance of the old hero resting.

Puk!Puk puk!

"...?" Mercedes moved across the fields with a throbbing heart only to stop in place when she heard the sound of something digging at the ground. On the other hand, Grid didn't stop. He hadn't heard the digging sound yet. It was a major reminder of the gap between Mercedes and Grid.

"Your Majesty." Mercedes silently pulled out her sword and stopped Grid. "I can hear a suspicious sound. I think people are digging a tunnel to infiltrate the capital."

"Tunnel?"

The thought of North Korean operatives breaking into South Korea came to Grid's mind. He tried to focus, then he started to hear the sound of digging in his ears. Grid was very familiar with this sound. It was the sound of a hand plow. However, it was unfamiliar to Mercedes who was ignorant about farming.

"Leave it to me. I will overcome the enemies and find out who sent them."

"No, wait...!"

There wasn't time to shout. Silver sword energy wrapped around Mercedes' body, and she was already flying forward.

Kuwaaaaang!

It was a charge. The distance between Grid and Mercedes widened to dozens of meters in a flash. Then distant clashing sounds rang out.

“...Isn’t her personality bold?” Grid felt sorry for the man who she liked or who married her. He didn’t know this person would be himself.

Kwa kwang!Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Thunder-like roars were heard, and the wind pressure crushed the wheat in the field. Grid was nervous. “Who is she fighting?”

It couldn’t be...

“This is Piaro again!”

It was clear that Piaro wouldn’t be able to suppress his enthusiasm once he saw Mercedes’ growth. The confused Grid ran to the scene of the battle. He didn’t want this fight to happen because he didn’t want to see Piaro defeated. Grid still didn’t know... Piaro’s true value!