

Overgeared 831

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These elves had survived Mercedes' and Grids' attacks, and Beniyaru had even endured Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle. The elves had a high defense vitality, unlike their slender bodies which were covered with just a few leaves. They were an upper-level species different from vampires.

However, could they withstand the 100,000 Army Massacre Sword?

[100,000 Army Massacre Sword (Degraded) Lv. 1]

[-Deals 60% of your attack power 30 times to everyone (can't distinguish between friend or foe) in a 10-meter radius.]

It was impossible to confirm. Despite being degraded, the swordsmanship of the Undefeated King that 'slaughtered' 100,000 enemies had a power beyond Pagma's Swordsmanship. There was even the possibility of the black flames exploding when 100,000 Army Massacre Sword was used with the +1 Enlightenment Sword.

So why? Why did Grid use the 100,000 Army Massacre Sword when he wanted to save the elves? It was because he had faith. There was a thimble on Grid's long and thick thumb.

[Elf's Bow Thimble (Made by Pagma)]

[Rating: Legendary]

Durability: 111/111

* Bow attack speed +20% when worn (elves receive double the effect).

* Allows normal attacks or skill attacks to switch to 'target mode' (Three-minute cooldown. The cooldown is halved when used by an elf).

-A legendary item received from Death Knight Povia on the Behen Archipelago!]

It was a fraudulent item that transformed non-targeted skills into targeted skills. However, Grid's brain hadn't been in an active state when he received the thimble. He hadn't recognized the fraudulent nature of the thimble and had only been fascinated with the 100,000 Army Swordsmanship. As such, he had naturally forgotten about the bow thimble.

Consequently, the biggest harvest Grid got from discovering the forest of the world tree was actually realizing the use of the bow thimble. Grid put on the World Tree's Necklace and the bow thimble, then he used the skill.

"100,000 Army Massacre Sword."

He used a wide-range skill, but only the bodies of the Kir members were blown away from where they were hiding amidst the thousands of elves. Black flames occasionally swept over the elves.

"Kyaak!"

"Uhh...!"

The basic vitality of the elves' was high enough for them to not die. However, the two or three successive explosions caused the elves to be seriously injured.

"Look. The elves wouldn't die from this much."

In the end, they would just have to endure it even if it hurt. Grid confirmed the countless gray pillars that rose into the air and used Revolve immediately after 100,000 Army Massacre Sword. Then Arisa's scimitar which aimed at Grid ended up reversing and striking herself in the chest instead. She fell into a stunned state from receiving the great damage and cried out in a trembling voice, "What the hell is this...?"

The black flames were the instant skill which had killed Tarma instantly during the National Competition. Yet how many times did the black flames just explode in a row? Every skill had a cooldown, and the more powerful the skill, the longer the cooldown would be. Logically, this situation was completely incomprehensible.

Grid asked the confused Arisa, "What do you mean?"

That's right. Grid didn't understand Arisa's question. He didn't know that Arisa and others had misunderstood the black flames as a skill! Grid's basic attack struck once at Arisa's unprotected side. Then he stabbed a second time and a third time.

However, the third strike wasn't required. Arisa was already seriously damaged from the time she was hit with Revolve, and she turned to gray after Grid's second blow. A high-level player who couldn't be harmed by hundreds of 200+ level players had been helpless before Grid's nonsensical attacks.

Grid wanted to shout, 'All existences apart from me are equal!'

Knight, who had been hired for millions of gold, and the top members that Kir had fostered were brutally killed, leaving Kir speechless. "Crazy..."

The disaster called 'Grid' was something that the 1st ranked merchant and so-called Merchant King was unfamiliar with. Only 34 people survived the bombardment of 100,000 Army Massacre Sword. Having lost their killing intent, they simply stood silently. No one interfered with Grid as he approached Kir.

Everything Kir had done was in vain. The army that he'd built with his hard-earned strength was made to kneel before a one-man army. Grid was an unjust existence for Kir, who lived with the power of money.

'...Power is imperative.' Kir realized that he shouldn't be elated about purchasing one city. The thing he needed was the power to break through the limits of money. 'The money I invested in a small city could've been spent on the emperor.'

Grid wouldn't have dared be so hostile to him if Kir were under the aegis of the empire. While Kir was feeling regretful and remorseful, Grid arrived right in front of him and asked, "Is there a demand for elf slaves?"

"Don't you think it is a merchant's role to create demand? Why? Do you intend to find the slave buyers and punish them? Is that your justice?"

"I'm not that diligent. I was just wondering how many people take for granted the buying and selling of people?"

“People?” Kir doubted his ears and burst out laughing. “Are you crazy? Are you going to say that the masses of AI are actually people?”

Anger filled Kir’s eyes. “NPCs exist for the convenience and progress of us players. Only players can be called people. Have you forgotten the reality of games after marrying an NPC and giving birth to one? Or is it your wish? Are you one of those madmen who wish to become an NPC so that your wife and child are real?”

In reality, many people fell in love with anime characters television. So, it wasn’t strange that people would fall in love with NPCs who could actually converse, touch, and share emotions.

“Kukuk!” Kir could only laugh. He had been fiercely playing the game in order to fulfill his grand dream of completing his revenge against his father. Meanwhile, a famous ranker had been playing house with NPCs.

“...I can’t acknowledge it.” Kir’s anger exploded. He stared at Grid with murderous eyes and pulled out a heavy bag. Based on the sounds the bag was making, it was clearly full of money. Were there gold coins that weighed around hundreds of kilograms?

“You carry that much money with you? You are the 1st ranked merchant for a reason.” The surprised Grid scoffed. “So what? Will you give me money in order to spare you? Okay. Give it a try. I might spare you depending on the amount.”

He had succeeded in rescuing the elves, and Mercedes was wiping out the remaining members of Kir’s Company. Kir was the only one left, so Grid could afford to spare him. He didn’t have any personal grudges that made him want to kill Kir, and there was no reason to reject the offer.

However, Kir ridiculed Grid, “You talked about different things, but you are the same as the rest.”

In the end, humans wanted money. It was rare for a human to not be greedy. Kir once again remembered this fact.

“Money? If you want it then I’ll give it to you!” He shouted and swung the bag full of money toward Grid.

‘Is he crazy?’

Was this called an attack? Grid was unfamiliar with the merchant class and saw them as having no combat power. Therefore, this attack seemed meaningless. It was so lame that he couldn’t even mock it.

“...!” Grid shook his head and was too surprised when he was about to be hit by Kir’s attack. It was because he couldn’t avoid Kir’s slow move.

[The huge power of gold stimulates your greed.]

[You can’t resist. You have been attracted by the gold force.]

‘What?’ Grid felt a moment of anxiety. Then the heavy money bag struck Grid’s face.

[You have suffered 1 damage.]

[The weight of riches is a great law. You can’t bear the weight!]

[You have exited from the battlefield!]

Grid's body flew high into the sky and disappeared.

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“Y-Your Majesty!”

What was this? It was an unbelievable sight! Mercedes looked at the sky with a devastated expression. Then Kir urged her, “Your Majesty? Are you referring to Grid? Then you should hurry. Isn't it dangerous to be alone this deep in the forest?”

“Kuk!” There was nothing more important than her master's safety. Mercedes looked at the elves and then at the ugly Kir before leaving without hesitation. She ran in the direction that Grid had flown to. It was only after she had left completely that Kir revealed his desperate situation. “Another unexpected expenditure...”

[Flying Money]

[-Hits the target and blow them away. It applies to everyone that can't resist the smell of money, except a certain species.

It inflicts 1 damage to the target and blows the target 3 kilometers away.

Skill Resource Consumption: Gold in proportion to the target's level and attack power will be consumed. The skill won't activate if there isn't enough gold.

Skill Cooldown Time: None.]

Flying Money was a survival skill that only a third advancement merchant could acquire. Since there were only two merchants who had acquired their third advancement class, there were only a few people who knew the identity of this skill. This meant people didn't know much about the skill, and even Kir couldn't grasp it accurately.

Why? That was because he'd never used it before! As a result, he confirmed that it was a very powerful skill that guaranteed a high survival rate.

“...430,000 gold was blown away.”

An absurd amount of money was consumed. Kir expected the spending to be great considering the effect of the skill, but he hadn't expected it to be so big. When he saw that his number of gold had sharply decreased, Kir trembled. The operation to capture the elves had failed because of Grid, and Kir was forced to give up ownership of the world tree. This resulted in a total loss of 40.43 million gold, which was worth more than 48.5 billion won. The loss was so large that it was hard for Kir to bear.

“Dammit...! Dammit!!”

The merchant's ranking wasn't simply calculated based on level. It was also based on completed transactions and the total number of assets. Due to this incident, Kir would lose the title of 1st in the merchant rankings as well as many things he had enjoyed in the meantime. The expression in his eyes turned dark, and he felt suffocated as his body trembled.

“Hrmm, this is great.” Beniyaru laughed at the angry Kir.

It was natural for Kir’s anger to turn to her. “You! It is because you cried out for help!” Kir kicked Beniyaru’s face many times. He spat on her and then forced her onto his horse. “I will sell you for an expensive price.”

“Beniyaru!”

The elves tried to stop Kir, but it was impossible. Having been poisoned by the Yatan Essence, they couldn’t even move their fingertips. Kir was about to leave with Beniyaru when he shouted, “Knight Summoning!”

Three knights were summoned. They were named NPCs that Kir was proud of. Kir gave an order to the best knights that ordinary players couldn’t go against. “One minute. Kill as many elves as you can in one minute. Then take a few back to the city.”

“Yes!”

A deep grudge settled in Kir’s heart as he sat behind Beniyaru and rode in the opposite direction of Grid’s flight.

‘Grid! I will make you regret your actions today for the rest of your life!’

The screams of the elves rang through the forest behind him.

“...” Darkness filled Beniyaru’s empty eyes.

“...” Grid didn’t know where this place was. After being hit by a bag of money and flying a few kilometers away, he laid on the ground for a while. However, he recovered within a short span of time and got up.

“Wow, isn’t this absurd?”

The power of gold that couldn’t be resisted...? He never imagined that there would be this type of skill. If he had known that a merchant had such a dangerous skill, Grid wouldn’t have spared Kir.

‘I didn’t think it would be so annoying.’

Grid was aware that Kir had left the battlefield at the beginning of the battle, but Grid hadn’t gone after him. It had been a conscious decision to not place Kir into the range of 100,000 Army Massacre Sword. Why? It was because Grid had been confident that he could easily deal with a merchant who didn’t have a separate escape route. However...

‘Dammit.’

Having too much confidence was terrible. Grid felt the need to study.

‘I should collect as much information as possible about relatively unfamiliar classes and be aware of their characteristics.’

Would there ever be an end to this studying? Grid's pledge might be useless considering the countless classes available in Satisfy. However, Grid was confident that he wouldn't regret it. He believed that he could do it without giving up. At the same time, he reflected on himself.

'I should've used Mercedes more aggressively.'

He should've ordered Mercedes to watch Kir in order to grasp some of his skills and abilities. There was a low probability that she could've detected the Flying Money skill and then allowed him to avoid it.

'I've obtained a legendary knight, but I haven't been using her properly. Tsk.'

The problem wasn't a dumb brain. This incident was caused by excessive confidence. Grid had believed himself to be a top player while Kir was an insignificant enemy. Therefore, he had been careless. Grid had failed to maintain his concentration and ended up missing things.

'Well, everything is an experience.'

He put on Braham's Boots and started flying. There was no nervousness about the fact that Mercedes and the elves were left alone as he believed in Mercedes. Grid flew back to his original location. He smiled as he overcame all the obstacles in the forest using the advantage of flying.

'Kir, you stupid bastard.'

What did he intend by blowing Grid away? Mercedes still remained behind. She would take care of the remaining members of Kir's Company and rescue the elves.

'I hope that Kir is still alive.'

Then Grid could take his money. It hadn't been out of 'general consideration' that Grid had listened to Kir's uncomfortable nonsense from beginning to end. He'd done so out of patience to gain the maximum advantages. Grid intended to gain money by bargaining with a 'merchant' who was afraid for his life, giving Kir hope for his future. What if Grid didn't get as much wealth as he wanted? Then he would just go ahead and kill Kir. From Kir's point of view, he would be forced to feel desperate.

'There is still hope. Mercedes might've saved his life. Um...?' Grid became confused and stood in place.

It was because he saw Mercedes running toward him from a distance. "Your Majesty! Are you okay?"

"What?"

This was an unexpected encounter! Grid was confused for a bit and then smacked his lips together with regret. "Did you already kill Kir?"

"Huh...? No, I was worried about your safety and immediately followed."

"What?" Grid narrowed the distance towards her. Mercedes was surprised since Grid had only shown her a gentle appearance after acquiring her. Grid asked, "Are you that bad? You let go of the enemies that needed to be kept and the targets to be protected?"

"...I'm sorry." Mercedes wanted to refute it. However, a knight couldn't give excuses to their master.

Grid flew up again while speaking to the silently bowing Mercedes, “Well? Return to the front line immediately!”

“Yes!”

Grid no longer rebuked Mercedes. If he looked at it from the perspective of a knight that should consider the safety of their master as the top priority, he understood why she had run while leaving Kir and the elves alone. Mercedes’ master had been attacked by the enemy and had disappeared before her eyes. Had there been room to think about anything else? It was natural that she would chase after Grid, disregarding Kir and the elves. After all, her duty was to protect Grid, not the elves.

However, it was regrettable. What if Mercedes were a player? They would be able to respond flexibly to the situation by sending a whisper to Grid or by checking the health gauge in the party window.

‘It is a limitation of an NPC.’ Grid felt strange whenever he remembered that players and NPCs were different from each other. In particular, his heart throbbed when he thought about Irene. Trying to shake off his thoughts, Grid’s shout was louder than usual, “Knight Summoning!”

‘I don’t need to summon Piaro or Asmophel.’

It was a burden to summon Asmophel, who was traveling all over the continent to find the Red Knights. Meanwhile, Piaro would have to return to the vampire city all over again. In the first place, Grid wanted the knights with high mobility since it was to track down Kir who had already run away!

“Huroi! Faker!”

[The summoning command has been sent. The response is pending.]

[The targets have accepted the summons.]

[The knights Huroi and Faker have been summoned.]

“This Huroi! I have come in response to Your Majesty’s call!”

“What’s going on?”

Huroi and Faker immediately appeared in response to Grid’s call.

“Merchant King Kir is somewhere in this forest. He couldn’t have gone too far. Find him now and bring him before me.”

Orator Huroi had a wyvern, so he was able to see the entire forest from the sky and demonstrate an excellent maneuverability. Meanwhile, Faker was an assassin who had excellent tracking abilities.

“Yes!”

“I understand.”

Both of them replied confidently. They had no idea what was going on, but they noticed the urgency of the situation and immediately took action.

A few minutes after they left.

“...Ah.”

“...”

Grid and Mercedes arrived at the place where the elves had been. The number of elves making frightened expressions had obviously been reduced. More than 100 elves had disappeared in the short time they had been gone. Beniyaru couldn't be seen either. Grid had an ominous feeling. He took several deep breaths to empty his mind of the terrible sight and approached a young elf.

Then he released her bound wrists and ankles and asked, “What happened?”

“Sob.” The elf couldn't speak and just shook her head with a frightened expression. She was obviously afraid of Grid and humans.

“I'm sorry... I'm sorry, Your Majesty.” Mercedes bowed deeply, believing the terrible events of this day had been caused by her. She felt sad because the trust Grid had built up with the elves collapsed due to her not being able to cope flexibly.

Grid's voice entered her ears, “No. It isn't your fault. Kir is the one in the wrong. In the end, I crossed a river that can't be reversed.”

Grid felt a strong hostility and disgust toward Kir who had tried to enslave the elves using the excuse that they were just NPCs with an artificial intelligence. However, he knew that most people, not just Kir, perceived NPCs as bits of artificial intelligences or chunks of graphics. Just looking at the Overgeared members, weren't there also players who didn't recognize NPCs as people?

There was no reason to waste energy by imposing notions of respect and affection on Kir. He was just a bastard that money could be obtained from. Of course, that was until a few minutes ago. Now, the situation had changed. Grid took several deep breaths in an effort to calm his mind.

No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't calm down. He had witnessed countless terrible and miserable things in the past, but why was it that he couldn't adapt every time? Grid's eyes were cold, and his hands trembled as he released some of the frightened elves while sending a whisper to Lael.

-Grid: The city of Merchant King Kir. What kingdom is it in?

-Lael: The Gauss Kingdom

-Grid: If we invade the city, does it count as invading the Gauss Kingdom?

-Lael: Of course. There is a high probability that a diplomatic problem could lead to war.

Lael didn't ask what happened. He had sent a whisper to Huroi after the summoning and gotten a glimpse of Grid's current situation.

-Lael: My role in this life is to realize Your Majesty's will. Don't worry about anything.

-Grid: ...

-Lael: Since Mercedes' arrival, the power of the Overgeared Kingdom has clearly exceeded the Gauss Kingdom. They can't defeat us even if a war takes place. Of course, there is room for other countries to intervene.

There were no small countries that wanted the Overgeared Kingdom to expand its power. It was likely that an alliance of small countries would form, and the Overgeared Kingdom would suffer a great crisis. However, Lael didn't say this. After all, Grid was the strongest player. Lael couldn't control him under the reigns of 'responsibility' while Grid was spreading his wings.

Lael was thinking from Grid's position. How frustrated would he feel if he were suppressed by the guild and kingdom that he had built up with his own efforts? He wouldn't feel strong but doubtful of himself instead. This was the time to release Grid's desires.

-Lael: Please give the command. I will summon an army to trample on Kir's city and burn it.

-Grid: Is there a need to move the army?

-Lael: Huh?

Lael didn't know about the Divinity and Astaroth's Power which Grid had acquired recently. A wicked smile appeared on Grid's face.

-Grid: Leave the army. I will go alone.

However, he had work to do before that. He had to chase Kir down and save the kidnapped elves.

"Mercedes."

"Yes!"

"Release the elves here and protect them."

"I understand." Mercedes was given an order, so she couldn't tell him that she didn't want him to go alone. She wasn't stupid enough to make the same mistakes. Instead, Mercedes believed in the power of her master because this was what he wanted.

Grid received a new whisper.

-Faker: I've found a party moving with dozens of kidnapped elves. However, Kir isn't here.

-Grid: There was another party left? Yes, it would be impossible for Kir to kidnap or harm over a hundred elves in such a short time alone.

Grid realized that Kir had likely summoned his knights. This was natural since Kir was a baron.

-Grid: Okay.

This was fine. He would handle all of Kir's knights. A dark smile appeared on Grid's face. It was evil enough to surprise Mercedes.

-Grid: Let me know their locations. Additionally, keep track of Kir.

Faker's biggest advantage was that he didn't talk a lot. He accepted his role without expressing any opinions. However, it wasn't the case this time.

Faker: I am two kilometers northwest of the point where I was summoned. Be careful. There are three people, and they are all named-grade NPCs. Depending on the situation, I will stop tracking Kir and join you.

-Grid: Needing to join me... That won't happen.

'Won't he be blind with anger right now?' Kir laughed. He felt great pleasure at the fury Grid would feel when he witnessed the deaths of the elves. Of course, this was only for a moment. Kir remembered that he had lost close to 50 billion won in one day and soon forgot about this slight joy.

"You dog bastard!" Kir let out a curse.

From his perspective, Grid was the scum of the earth. This was natural as Grid was the person who had ruined Kir's business company just for the sake of helping NPCs. Grid was a disruptive character that was difficult to understand.

'He is almost at the level of a psychopath.'

Kir thought about it and recalled his past. How many weak people had he trampled on? He had directly and indirectly taken advantage of many people as he climbed to 1st on the merchant rankings. However, he had justified his evil deeds under the guise of getting revenge on his father.

'...In the end, I am the same.' He regained his sense of reason. Looking over at the wounded Beniyaru, Kir belatedly realized something. As he saw the poison in her heart again, Kir warned Beniyaru, "There is no hope. You can't go back anymore. Just accept reality."

It was also a warning to himself. Kir controlled the poison in his heart. Then he heard a great noise from above. It was a loud roar.

'A wyvern?' Was there a wyvern habitat here?

Kir looked up and saw a red wyvern in the sky above the forest. The wyvern descended with a terrifying momentum and landed on the ground. It blocked Kir's way and he was forced to stop his horse.

"This is...!"

Why had a wyvern suddenly appeared and blocked his path? Kir was as stiff as a stone statue when he finally noticed that a person was riding on the back of the wyvern. The person's identity was Huroi. Huroi came down from the wyvern and asked Kir a question, "Did your parents recently die?"

"How did you know?"

"..."

Kir and Huroi were both upset by this, but the one who first recovered his spirit was Huroi. Huroi coughed and made a serious expression, as if his previous words had never been said. "Hoh! You are very bad! You are a terrible person who has gone astray and caused your wonderful and precious parents to feel shocked and sorrowful!"

"What?"

Why was this person suddenly talking about a stranger's dead parents? From Kir's perspective, Grid, Huroi, and the Overgeared members were all terrible villains.

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-Huroi:Your Majesty!!'ve found that damn bastard!

-Grid:That damn bastard?Do you mean Kir?

-Huroi:Yes!

-Grid:Good.Faker, join Huroi right now.I will follow after rescuing the elves.

-Faker:I understand.But as I said, be careful.

Players like Grid who didn't have a lot of dependence on pets were rare. Pets boasted different characteristics depending on their species, attribute, sex, level, and so on. Most ordinary players felt the limits of their individual strength and were forced to rely on pets.

As a result, the levels of their pets were naturally high. The flames emitted from the level 300 Lord of the Skies above the Grasslands, which had been active since Huroi's early days, was enough to threaten Kir.

[You have suffered 9,700 damage!]

[You have been burned! You will receive 1,330 burn damage per second.]

"Kuuack!" Kir was swept up by the flames and struggled with the pain.

His legendary armor, jewelry, and items received terrible damage. Additionally, his defense and resistance were lower after being affected by Huroi's Spiteful Tongue. Kir couldn't escape receiving serious injuries despite having proudly declared that he was the most overgeared person after Grid.

'I have no chance!' Kir's judgment was quick. Who was Huroi? He wasn't a simple orator. As the first player to obtain a second class, Huroi was also a swordsman. When combined with the strength of a wyvern, he was as strong as a high ranker. It was natural for Kir to consider retreating when he was a merchant with no combat power apart from Flying Money. However, it was difficult for him to escape.

"You are a bastard that your parents would be ashamed of!"

"You jerk!"

[You have been provoked!]

Kir was thinking about running away only to stop in place. Huroi's taunt skill was stronger than his sense of reason and instincts. It was impossible for an NPC or player to stand up to the system. Grid's Longsword, which was completely different from the mass-produced longsword, stabbed deeply into Kir's side.

However, Kir had a legendary-rated armor and wasn't damaged by Huroi's attack. As soon as the duration of the taunt was over, Kir drank a potion and cried out bluntly, "I am Merchant King Kir! I can't be easily hurt by rabble like you!"

Huroi might be a high ranker, but he wasn't tough in comparison to Overgeared King Grid! Kir had used a large number of gold coins to blow Grid away, but he didn't feel the necessity of using Flying Money on Huroi. In fact, he thought it would be a waste to use money on Huroi.

The wyvern's strong flames were his only source of worry. The wyvern seemed to cry out, 'If you want to live, give me money!'

'No! I can't afford any more spending!'

Shit, how good would it be if he could summon his knights at this time? Kir only owned three knights, but he had already summoned all of them a few minutes ago. The cooldown time meant it was impossible to summon them again right away. Feelings of regret surged inside him about how he had summoned the knights to slaughter the elves just to get petty revenge on Grid!

The wyvern's breath turned the forest into a sea of fire, and Kir barely evaded it on his horse. The bushes and thorns obstructed Kir's vision as his white horse broke through trees and rocks. Huroi's eyes widened, finally noticing a small white horn on the horse's forehead. "A unicorn?"

The size of the horn was small enough for the unicorn to be mistaken as a horse. Based on the size of the horn, it wasn't an adult yet. However, even a baby unicorn had astronomical value. As far as Huroi knew, only a few NPCs who were royalty possessed unicorns.

"The rich are truly different!" Huroi got back on his wyvern and hurriedly chased after Kir, with Faker joining him after a moment.

Kir felt a great threat as there were people chasing him on the ground and in the sky.

'Why... Why do I have to suffer like this?' Revealed between the gaps in his matted hair, Kir's eyes were filled with anger and fear. It was a shabby appearance. The majesty of the Merchant King—who boasted the highest reputation after Grid, Kraugel, Agnus, Ares, and so on—was long gone.

"This is a really unpleasant mission." Banus, one of Kir's knights, was complaining.

Beside him were 20 elves tied together. His mission was to massacre and kidnap women who couldn't resist. Even if they were a different species, the mission from Master Kir upset Banus. To be honest, Banus' pride was pricked. It felt disgusting that a big person like him would have to perform the same duty as a third-rate bandit.

'I picked the wrong master.'

His master, Kir, had promised him enormous wealth and honor. What was the biggest honor for a warrior? It was to win a fight against famous and strong people. Yes, this was what Kir had promised. According to Kir, Banus would get to fight countless giants. Every day would be fun. However, this was the reality.

"Tch." Banus walked while swinging the whip that he held. It was to rush the elves who were walking slowly because they didn't want to leave the forest.

“Ouch!” The elves moaned as their health decreased noticeably. It was completely different from when the members of Kir’s Company had hit the elves. This was an indirect glimpse of Banus’ strength. Banus warned the elves, “Don’t act silly and I won’t touch you. This is good for both of us.”

“Where are the other knights and elves?” At this time, a black-haired man fell from the sky and blocked Banus’ path.

Banus saw the man’s eyes that were as sharp as a bird and asked, “Overgeared King?”

As a mercenary, Banus longed for money and sought battlefields throughout the continent. He had been employed by the former Eternal Kingdom before serving Kir. The opponent in that war had been the Overgeared Guild. Banus couldn’t forget the exhilarating experience from that time. Was Toban the name of the dark-skinned paladin? Banus was still thrilled when he recalled the battle with whom he believed was the strongest warrior in the Overgeared Guild. He didn’t forget falling down after a one-hour-long battle, but Banus was confident. If he hadn’t caught the ankle of the Overgeared warrior, the former Eternal Kingdom would’ve been occupied by the Overgeared Guild much faster.

“Kuk! Kukukuk! That’s right! So, my master was running away from you?” Banus’ huge muscles started to swell. The force that could crush a man’s head burned heartily.

“I took a peek at your performance in the war from the distance. You swept through thousands of soldiers. Huhut, okay... This is very exciting! Thank you! Thank you for showing up in front of me!” Banus roared and rushed toward Grid without hesitation.

His muscles, which were trained to not be cut by a spear and had blocked a sword from the strongest warrior Toban, were combined with the defense of the legendary armor Kir had given him. With these, Banus dealt a vigorous blow to Grid.

“Ugh?” However, Banus suffered pain for the first time in decades. He was bewildered, but he endured with his physical strength, pushing his fist deeper into Grid’s chest. His swollen fist contained an ogre’s strength and had even dealt significant damage to Toban, the strongest of Overgeared warriors. Combined with his legendary-rated knuckles, Banus delivered an impact to Grid’s armor.

“W-What?” Banus felt like he was dreaming. His fist couldn’t even scratch the armor? No, the armor wasn’t the problem. In the first place, armor was designed to defend against attacks. Banus found it hard to believe that Grid could maintain his posture and not fly away from the weight behind the first.

“Is this the strength of a legend? I knew you would be stronger than Toban but I didn’t realize it was by this much...” Banus was amazed and excited at the same time. “This is the first time since a solo number knight that I am actually forced to use this power!” Banus screamed, and the mana around him stirred.

As the injury on Grid healed, Banus’ already swollen muscles swelled up even further. In particular, his right forearm was now thicker than an ogre’s forearm.

“From now on, it is the real battle!” Banus roared with extreme excitement. Confidence overflowed on his face as he used his ultimate technique which had inflicted serious damage onto the Ninth Red Knight. That’s right. The people who believed themselves to be the strongest were always filled with confidence... until they were hit by Grid!

“Revolve.”

“Keok!”

He was hit by his own fist...? This was an unfamiliar experience for Banus, who fell down while coughing up blood. Then Grid’s sword arrived at Banus’ neck.

“Where did the other two knights and the elves go?” Grid asked without expecting an answer. He honestly admired Banus’ high defense and high attack power, which had penetrated Grid’s defense. However, a named NPC with such high loyalty would rather choose to die than to answer. In fact, didn’t all the NPCs that served Grid boast high loyalty? Well, apart from Minor.

Unexpectedly, Banus answered in a hearty manner, “You will be able to meet them if you just go straight ahead. I just slowed down the march because I dislike being with them.”

“...” Grid was confused as he hadn’t expected Banus would answer so earnestly.

He was hesitating when Banus revealed his throat. “Well? Kill me.”

“...”

“Um? What are you waiting for? Didn’t you kill tens of thousands of people during the Eternal War? Go on and kill me. For a warrior, being defeated is no different than death. There is no point in living anymore.”

“...Yes.” Grid originally intended to get rid of all of Kir’s knights. He planned to take everything away from Kir. It was funny that he was hesitating now because he felt a slight affinity after seeing Banus’ skills and attitude. In the end, Banus advised Grid who was raising his sword, “The strongest warrior who defeated me. The other two knights you are chasing are completely different types of monsters. You should be vigilant. Kukuk.”

Banus turned to gray, leaving behind his knuckles. They were legendary-rated knuckles. Their performance was greatly inferior compared to the items Grid made, but they could be melted down and used as a material. Grid grabbed the knuckles and released the elves. “Go back to the previous place. Your family and friends will be waiting.”

“That...” One scared elf opened her mouth. Her name was Deruyaru. She was a beautiful girl reminiscent of a rabbit due to her round cheeks and big eyes. “I am one of the 12 Te. The Deru family... I want to thank you on behalf of my people.”

“You can say it later.”

He hadn’t saved everyone yet. Grid left Deruyaru and the elves behind him as he ran in the direction that Banus had indicated.

“Noe, Randy. Can you Become the King of the Dead?”

Respecting the various warnings, Grid fully prepared for the worst.

[Chapter 834](#)

“Pant! Pant! Pant! Cough...!”

No matter how much Kir ran, he couldn't see the end. The forest, which he had believed to be a treasure warehouse, was now more terrible than hell. The beautiful flowers and trees, the fresh air, and the sweet fragrance of fruit all seemed like a deceitful curse. There were constant questions in Kir's head as he swallowed a potion and checked his stamina gauge.

How had this happened? Why had he met Grid? Why had Grid become hostile to him? Was it that big a deal that he had enslaved the elves? Why did he have to experience this pain? Maybe Grid had planned this entire situation?

'Was I dancing on Grid's palm?'

When on earth had he started planning this? Had it been since Kir started investigating the forest of the world tree?

"Ugh..!" The huge shadow on the ground made Kir's heart throb. He felt an infinite pressure as Huroi's wyvern flew above his head.

"Pero! Avoid it!"

The white horse—no, the unicorn jumped sideways like a crab at Kir's command. These movements weren't possible for a normal horse. The flames emitted by the wyvern moved straight ahead and would've completely burned the spot where they had been traveling.

Kir followed the path of fire to the left and gulped. 'A wyvern doesn't have infinite mana.'

The wyvern had a limit of one or two more flame breaths left. Meanwhile, the unicorn, which was classified as one of the highest-rated rides, could use its evasion skill dozens more times. The unicorn's basic mana far exceeded that of the drake!

'I will live!'

Kir didn't have time to resent the past or worry about the future. The present was more important. He didn't want to face the worst experience of losing a large amount of experience and items by dying.

'Somehow! I have to somehow make it back to my city!'

He would pay back the loss and shame of today by several times! Kir made this promise because he had something to believe in—the presence of his three knights.

Form King Banus, Dark King Dias, and Eating God Phou were the strongest people Kir recruited as he wandered around the continent as a merchant. Named NPCs were stronger than the Overgeared members at the moment, especially Grid and Kraugel. Kir knew this right after seeing Piaro play an overwhelming role during the Belial raid.

As such, Kir was certain that if he invested another year and concentrated on raising these three knights, they would be born again as stronger than Piaro!

'The possibilities are endless! They haven't developed yet but they're the ones with the nicknames of 'king' and 'god'.

Just as Kir was praised as the Merchant King, Banus, Dias, and Phou were already called kings or gods by the local NPCs when Kir first met them. They were so powerful that they exceeded the category of a player and had the unlimited potential of named NPCs. It was no wonder that Kir had high expectations for them.

'If I escape safely, it is very likely that the Overgeared Guild will invade the city. I will ask for support from the Gauss Kingdom, defend with my three knights, and then move to the empire...'

Kir started smiling as he planned it out. The Overgeared Guild's invasion was likely to be very beneficial for him.

Firstly, it was possible to make the Gauss Kingdom and Overgeared Kingdom completely hostile to each other. Then he would be able to shift public opinion of the Overgeared Kingdom to a negative one for invading another country, and he would also be able to create an alliance with the other countries that were anxious. It was a bonus that he would be able to move into the empire without fearing the Overgeared Kingdom.

'I don't like that the First Knight is with Grid.'

However, it shouldn't be a big factor considering the emperor's ambition of unifying the continent. Kir made this judgment as his body moved upward. It was because the unicorn carrying him jumped randomly. Kir soon figured out the reason why. There was a sword energy at the unicorn's feet. If the unicorn had jumped a bit later, its legs would have been cut off.

'This is ridiculous!'

To think that Huroi had swooped down fast enough to catch up with the unicorn's speed and wield his sword...! Even if he was a ranker, wasn't he an orator? Kir wasn't convinced of this, and he looked back. Then his trembling eyes saw the source of the attack.

"Faker!!"

That Grid had pulled out his strongest card! A chill went down Kir's spine. While growing to become the Merchant King, Kir's greatest strength had been his information network. In the 'player rating' table that he'd made using his extensive intelligence, Faker's power was S-class. It was just behind players like Grid, Kraugel, Agnus, and Haster. He was comparable to the top players when it came to killing power alone. They were both high rankers but Faker had a completely different force in comparison to the B-class Huroi.

'This can't be!'

Kir knew he wouldn't be able to hold out after becoming Faker's target and urgently shouted, "Pero! Use Brilliant Sprint!"

The body of the unicorn was then covered with a pure white light, and it disappeared from its location. To be precise, the unicorn made an extremely quick movement. It was a major skill that consumed most of the unicorn's mana.

Faker looked beyond the forest as he was left alone. "Do you think you can get away?" Then Faker also disappeared from his position.

Huroi watched the two people from above and stroked his jaw. The wyvern flew in the sky as Huroi gave a soliloquy, "A unicorn... It would suit Master."

Black smoke rose up from the forest.

In the forest of the world tree, Dias frowned when Phou said like a fool, "Hungry..."

The elves being dragged behind them had terrified expressions. They trembled because they had already witnessed the terrible scene that occurred every time Phou said he was hungry, and fear poured in like the tide. Dias scolded Phou, "Didn't you just eat? They aren't your food. They are Master's goods."

"Hungry..." Phou lost his intelligence when he became hungry and only cared about his stomach. It would be pointless to say anything to Phou.

"Sigh, do whatever you want." Dias raised his hands. He didn't have any authority or power over Phou and was quick to give up.

"N-No...!" The elves turned deathly pale as Dias retreated. Tears filled their eyes, but Phou just stared at them with saliva dripping.

"Haaap!"

The fate of the elf Phou snatched up was terrible. She was swallowed by Phou and turned to grey.

Gulp! A man had just devoured a female elf that was 170 centimeters tall, yet there was no glimpse of satisfaction on his face as he burped. His meal wasn't over yet.

It was a horrible disaster for the elves, of whom there were only 30 left. However, the elves no longer cried or begged. They had gone insane from witnessing the gruesome sight of their family and friends being eaten several times. Now, they couldn't even feel fear.

"Hungry..."

One of the elves didn't resist as Phou's large hand caressed her body. Then it happened when Phou opened his mouth and tried to swallow her. Four golden hands flew forth and swung their hammers. The hammers struck Phou's large neck and thick biceps in rapid succession.

Additionally, a furry cat moved his short and chubby legs and then shot out like a lightning bolt toward Phou. "Lightning Discharge~! Discharge, nyong!"

"What are you doing?" Grid showed up next. His cloak flapped as he danced. There was a killing intent in his eyes as he stared at Phou.

"Kill!" Grid screamed as he swung the Enlightenment Sword. He was convinced that his enemy would become stiff from being hit by Mjolnir four times in succession, as well as Noe's lightning. Additionally, Grid thought Phou would stop eating the elf and that his unprotected flesh would be hit by Kill.

Gulp!

However, unlike what Grid had expected, Phou resisted the stiffness and electric shock. Instead, he swallowed the elf, who was making a hopeful expression, and then hit Grid's Kill with his palm.

[The skill has been neutralized.]

"What?"

Phou had a defense that neutralized a legendary skill? Moreover, it was just by using his bare hands? No, how did he resist the stiffness and electric shock in the first place? Grid was making a shocked expression when Phou headbutted him.

"I don't know who you are, but I'm sorry." Dias shook his head. He didn't doubt that the black-haired man would be beaten by the three-meter-tall Phou. However, Dias was mistaken.

"..."

The black-haired man was fine. One of the golden hands flew up and blocked Phou's strike. The golden hand shook and stiffened, while Grid's burning eyes peered over the golden hand at Phou.

"You pig-like dog!"

A dog and a pig, what was this? Dias scratched his head with confusion.

"Pagma's Swordsmanship!"

'Pagma?'

"Wave!" Grid drew a dark red half-moon with his sword. Simultaneously, a wave of energy emerged and hit Phou.

[You have dealt 28,310 damage to the target!]

[Decreases all speeds of the target.]

[The target has resisted.]

'Slow resistance?'

Phou's health was also high. There was no change in his health gauge despite receiving almost 30,000 damage.

'His defense is relatively normal and his basic speed is slow...'

Grid wore the Slaughterer's Eye Patch and was surprised when he looked at Phou. It was because Phou's palm, which was three times bigger than Grid, was flying toward him. It would've been a disaster if the God Hands hadn't responded right then as Phou was faster than suggested by his size. Additionally, after eating the two elves, Phou's mild-looking eyes were now wild. He was baffled and angry by Grid's iron-like defense.

"These hands... Phou's attack... stop..." Phou firmly grasped a God Hand, placed it in his mouth, and tried to swallow it. However, he felt an instinctive rejection.

Dias led the elves away. "Since you used Pagma's Swordsmanship, are you the famous Overgeared King? But are you Phou's opponent? That guy is a monster born between a giant and a troll king. Even a transcendent human can't hurt him."

Phou's abdominal wound, which had been caused by Wave, was already recovering. His recovery power was similar to that of a troll. Phou's face reddened, and he roared angrily, "Phou! Monster! Noooooooooo!"

The dozens of elves, Randy, the Overgeared Skeletons who arrived late on the scene, and even Dias stumbled at the roar. The power of Giant's Roar took away the strength in their legs.

"Divinity. Item Combination." On the other hand, Grid was fine.

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

Flash! The Enlightenment Sword and Belial's Staff were engulfed in light and combined into one.

Grid soon swung a spear-like weapon. Thanks to the options produced by combining the items, the black flames and red lightning bolt were classified as magic. The magic damage was increased by 20% and the critical damage was increased by 150%. This was enough to threaten Phou's high health.

Phou's health gauge decreased noticeably as he struggled with the pain. Then what about Grid?

[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.]

[A shield with 5,000 health has been created due to the effect...]

.....

.....

Many overlapping black shields started rotating around him. It was a contrast to the growing number of wounds on Phou.

"Hurts! It huuuuurts!" The expression in Phou's eyes turned crazy, and his fists struck the shields surrounding Grid in succession. However, this was poison to Phou.

[You have suffered 9,700 damage!]

[The shield will absorb damage.]

[You have suffered 10,300 damage!]

[The shield will absorb damage.]

[The target who attacked you is in the 'fear' state. The 'slowness' has been resisted.]

Grid avoided a loss of health thanks to the shield while Phou lost his momentum.

"H-Hik! Phou... Phou is afraid...!"

That's right. Phou was a strong person, who was comparable to Piaro during the time of the Belial raid. He could resist many types of status conditions, but he wasn't a legend nor was he immune to all status conditions. Phou was vulnerable to feeling frightened. On the other hand, Grid was several times stronger than he had been during the Belial raid. Yes, he was currently much stronger than Piaro had been at that time!

"Blacksmith's Rage, Blackening." Grid turned in a semicircle and pulled out his maximum force. He pierced Phou's bloated stomach with an invincible spear. "Knight Summoning! Jishuka, Regas, Chris, Pon, and Jude!"

Why did he bother calling them in a situation where he was winning? It was to make sure the job was finished cleanly. He had no more room to feel relaxed. Grid cut Phou once again and commanded the five knights who appeared, "Kill that bastard! Save the elves!"

The 'bastard' he was referring to was Dias. All five knights seemed tough, so Dias was forced to shrink back in fear. Grid showed that he was far superior to Kir in every way!

[Chapter 835](#)

"Lael put us on hold, and you really summoned us. We roughly know the situation," a tanned beauty holding a bow spoke up. She drew three arrows which flickered with flames that were as gorgeous as her big lips and wavy hair.

"Leave the small fries to us." Jishuka smiled confidently and unleashed archery close to a godly archer. The three flaming arrows were shot without a time difference and arrived precisely at the middle of Dias' eyes, brows, and heart.

Dias and the dozens of elves he'd captured were surprised.

'To think that a person who isn't an elf is capable of this sort of archery?'

The arrows shot like beams of light and exploded the moment they hit, dealing Dias with deep wounds. Dias flew back, but Chris rushed to the wide open Dias and swung his greatsword.

"Daring to hit Grid without permission!!" Chris thought that everything should have a process. If someone was going to challenge King Grid, they had to demonstrate their qualification by going through Chris first! Chris' greatsword struck Dias! Following this, Dias continued to suffer great damage as he was hit by Regas and Pon. The intense skills made Dias feel dizzy.

"Jude. Hit." Then the finishing blow came from Jude, whose attack aimed at the ragged Dias. However, it only cut the air.

"...???" What was this sudden trolling? The group was stunned because they had expected Jude to finish off Dias.

Chris acted on behalf of Jude. "1,000 ton Sword!"

It was a heavy blow! Then Dias started turning gray.

"What is this?" The party paused as they were heading to support Grid. It was because they didn't receive messages about Dias' death, as well as the experience and dropped items.

'What?' The party was confused. Jude was the only one who was untroubled and didn't look surprised. Then a voice rang out from behind Jishuka. It was the voice of the supposedly dead Dias, who had reappeared without a single wound and shook his head. "I guess Master caused a terrible incident. I told him to stop but he touched a lion's nose. Tsk!"

Chris hurriedly exclaimed, "Jishuka! Avoid it!"

However, it was too late. Dias' black hand penetrated Jishuka's armor, tearing at her skin and muscles.

[You have suffered 12,390 damage!]

[You are affected by black magic. Your pain is maximized.]

[You have suffered a further 5,700 damage!]

[The recovery of all resources has slowed. Defense and resistance have dropped. Skills and magic can't be used for 3 seconds!]

The attack was strong.

"Cough!" Jishuka became alarmed as she was stabbed and severely injured.

'Grid dealt with these monsters alone?'

This was a natural misunderstanding! Dias opened the distance again as Regas' late kick and Pon's stab burst into the air instead of hitting him. He narrowly avoided their attacks in a breathtaking manner! Letting out an exaggerated sigh of relief, Dias looked at Phou and Grid. "It's ruined. No matter how I looked at it, there is no chance of turning this around."

The Overgeared King and his knights were better than rumored. This situation was dangerous for him to face just by himself. So, Dias made a judgment. It might be possible in a one-on-one fight against Grid or his knights, but it was impossible to go against them all. In particular, the stupid-looking knight with a silly expression was a problem. "Jude. Kill."

'My illusion magic doesn't work on him. Is his stupid expression mocking me?' Dias blocked the greatsword that aimed at him. He couldn't cope with the weight of the sword and hurriedly withdrew his arm, while Jude kept turning left and right.

"Kuock!"

Jude's power was incredible! Dias' illusion was shaken from side to side and removed.

"He's there!"

The gazes of the other members, which were in a completely different direction from Jude, shifted to Dias' body at once. Dias was frustrated. "I didn't think my illusion would be broken so soon."

It was the first time he had ever experienced this. Dias had played an active role in the Violet Kingdom and faced countless powerful players, but he had never experienced such a grave crisis. He saw Jude as a transcendent person. "You are the Overgeared King's first knight for a reason."

“Jude. His Majesty’s first knight!” Jude’s greatsword didn’t stop for even a moment as he continued to corner Dias. Jude had been growing ever since he became Grid’s knight. He had been breaking his limits over and over, having fought Maxong and then becoming stronger during the Belial raid. Now, he was in the spotlight for the third time.

Dias tried to fight back and resist. His magic blocked Jude’s greatsword and aimed at Jude’s abdomen a few times. However, Jishuka’s rain of arrows flew over Jude, making his counterattack pointless. As more arrows were shot, Dias’ wounds increased while Jude healed.

Meanwhile, Chris, Pon, and Regas worked with Jude to add more pressure onto Dias. Dias was knocked to his knees and cried out with pain. He coughed up blood and asked, “The battle gear you use... Were they produced by the Overgeared King? Precious memories—stories that will become history and legends—are contained in these solid objects, right?”

Yes, there was nothing insignificant in the world. Dias wanted to convey it, “We all have our unique circumstances. I have somehow become a villain, but there are many stories where I’m not a monster. I had a special power and had a terrible life because I was born as a hybrid. Then I met my master...”

“...?”

What did Dias want to say? The named NPCs’ long tirade entered the ears of Chris’ group. Thinking it was the precursor of a quest, everyone focused on Dias. This was apart from Jude, who struggled in Regas’ and Pon’s constraints while everyone listened to Dias.

However, Dias didn’t give them a quest. He just asked for a favor, “I hope you don’t hate my master too much. He wasn’t a wicked person in the beginning.”

It was the same for players, NPCs, and monsters. Everyone had a story. As such, the last wish that Dias wanted to convey was for his master’s safety. When Dias finished speaking, he moved his fingers.

“Uh...?”

Some of the surrounding trees turned into elves. No, to be precise, they were changed back into elves. This was the reason why Phou was still hungry despite frequently eating elves.

“That Phou, he is currently on an empty stomach. The satiety he feels is due to my illusions. But this will soon be released, and he won’t be able to fight for long.” Dias looked sympathetically at Phou whom Grid was hitting one-sidedly.

Jishuka asked, “What is your reason for saving the elves?”

“I am also an apostle of justice.”

“...”

“Kukuk, I’m joking. I will say it bluntly. I helped my master, not the elves.”

Yes, he had protected the elves because he hadn’t wanted to see his master’s ‘goods’ damaged. Everything was for the sake of his master. His master had never given all his heart to Dias, but the grace Kir had offered to his knights on the first day had been real.

"I do feel a bit of anger toward my master but..." Dias extended his neck to the struggling Jude, who was still being held back by Regas and Pon. He wanted his end to come from the strongest knight who defeated him.

"W-Wait a minute." Jishuka tried to stop Jude because she felt reluctant to kill Dias. Chris, Pon, and Regas also looked troubled. However, Jude was adamant. He barely shrugged off Regas and Pon and then swung his greatsword at Dias' neck without hesitation. "Waste of time. No. His Majesty. Help. I will."

A gray pillar shot up, then Jude immediately headed to Grid. Once Dias died and his illusions were completely removed, Phou fell into a terrible state of hunger and went berserk. He swung his big hands at Grid continuously.

"Jude! Help!" Only looking at Grid and only thinking about Grid... No, he was a thoughtless knight. Jude broke through his third limit after killing Dias and acted, but it was too late.

"Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle!"

"Kuwaah!" Phou had become berserk and only focused on attacking. This was a mistake. He wasn't aware of the damage he received from the shield and the poisonous fog of Valhalla of Infinite Affection, and he didn't bother to block or avoid Grid's attack either.

The fight was over. Unable to endure Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle which had activated twice due to God's Command, Phou turned to gray.

Jude's eyes lit up when he arrived at Grid's side belatedly. "Your Majesty. Cool!"

"..." Kir's stamina was depleted because he hadn't been able to rest for a while after entering the forest.

Pero, the unicorn, licked Kir who looked haggard and drained. The unicorn's clear eyes contained feelings of deep affection and anxiety, but these emotions weren't delivered to Kir. From Kir's point of view, pets were just chunks of graphics and artificial intelligence.

"Tch." Kir wiped away the saliva on his cheek like it was dirt and shifted his gaze to see Faker standing silently nearby. This made Kir sincerely curious.

"Why are you so relentless? Is there any meaning in killing me? What does the Overgeared Kingdom gain if I lose items and experience?" Kir grumbled despite already knowing the reason why. Satisfy was a competitive society like in reality. It was natural for players to keep other players in check. Let's suppose that they let Kir go. One day, he might have an impact comparable to Grid, and when that happened, he was likely to threaten Grid.

"Shit... Dammit." Kir understood why Grid was obsessed with killing him. Now that he was a target, Kir's fate was inevitable. He would suffer enormous damages from the moment he started dancing on Grid's palm. However, even so...

"It will be a mistake if you think this will end so easily."

His stamina was slowly recovering thanks to the unicorn's blessing. Kir overcame his exhaustion and held a glass bottle to Beniyaru's mouth, who was still trapped in his arms. The bottle was filled with a black liquid.

"The Yatan Essence. If she swallows this much, even a named NPC will die instantly. Understand? I absolutely won't die alone." Beniyaru was the one Grid had called out to, and she had asked Grid for help. As such, Kir speculated that there was a special link between Kir and Beniyaru and that Beniyaru's death would be a significant blow to Grid. "I won't lose everything alone. Isn't that right?"

"It isn't right."

While he was chuckling wickedly, Kir stopped with surprise. "...!"

He got goosebumps as a God Hand flew toward him and swung a hammer.

"Urgh!" Kir became stiff due to the hammer! Grid used that moment to take Beniyaru away. Kir gritted his teeth. Feeling that he was obviously the victim, the hatred and anger in his voice were genuine as he said, "You! How much do you want to take from me?"

Grid asked in return, "How much do you have to take away from the elves?"

"What?" Kir was speechless. He was taken aback by the question since he now completely understood the feelings of a victim. Grid ignored the silent Kir and looked at Beniyaru. Did she want to get away from reality? Having blocked off her emotions and thoughts, Beniyaru looked like an empty doll.

"She... What have the elves done that they have to suffer like this?"

"..." The present Kir couldn't answer that. Grid aimed at Kir and was about to hit his neck. However, at this moment, Huroi ran over urgently and whispered in Grid's ears, "Master, the horse he is riding is a unicorn."

"Unicorn? Really?"

"Take it."

"What?"

Take away a pet? What was this? Pets were different from items. Players didn't have to worry about losing pets when dying because the ownership of a pet was fully guaranteed.

"There is a way. Ownership can be transferred over."

"No, what are you saying?" Grid frowned. He couldn't understand Huroi at all. "Why would that bastard transfer his pet to me?"

"In exchange for sparing him..."

Everyone's eyes were focused on the scene of Huroi whispering in Grid's ears. The people didn't know what they were talking about, so they soon got a shock.

"Kir, do you want to live?" It was due to Grid's sudden offer.

"What? You will spare me?" Kir was also confused.

Grid nodded at the suspicious Kir. "Yes. I'll spare you. Didn't you spend a lot of money on the elves this time? If you die here, won't you lose your ranking and have trouble with future transactions?"

It made a lot of sense, so Kir didn't deny it. He thought about it and immediately noticed the catch because he was a merchant. "What do you want in return for sparing me?"

Grid pointed to the unicorn in response. "That."

"Crazy jerk!" Kir's angry reaction was natural. The value of a unicorn was so great that it couldn't be converted into money! Kir calculated that no one had a unicorn as a pet. He would rather die than give up something so precious. Just when Kir was about to refuse the proposal without hesitation, Grid said, "Think carefully before answering. If you make a mistake, I will be an enemy you can never get rid of."

Gulp! Chills went down Kir's spine. He was well aware of what Immortal had suffered recently. Could one merchant cope with the Overgeared Kingdom that not even Immortal could handle? Realistically, it was hard. The protection of the empire might've prevented Immortal from being raided by those who are tempted by the items, but it was impossible for other ordinary players to deal with. He could become the target of two billion people! Kir imagined something terrible and shook his head.

Grid didn't give Kir a chance to think too deeply. "Give me the unicorn. Then I will spare your life without giving you a death bounty."

"You will really spare me? You won't set a kill order on me?"

"Yes. Instead, I will kill you the next time we meet. I really dislike you. Be careful not to encounter me again for the rest of your life."

"Ugh..!"

Grid had the trinity of money, strength, and authority. The force he could gather using his items as raw material was infinite. All these made Kir afraid of Grid, and he was convinced that it was best to accept Grid's offer. In the end...

[Ownership of the unicorn 'Pero' has been transferred to 'Grid.']

Kir agreed to Grid's request. This was a decision for his future.

"...Can I go now?" Kir asked in a powerless voice.

Grid nodded. "Yes. Go."

Kir had lost time, money, pride, and his unicorn. However, his eyes were overflowing with motivation.

'Definitely... I will someday repay today's disgrace.'

It might not be possible in one or two years. However, the story would change in four or five years. Kir would successfully recover under the aegis of the empire as planned. He would build up an alliance around the Gauss Kingdom and get revenge on Grid one thousand—no, tens of thousands of times. Kir believed that if he had more strength and authority, he would be able to do something about Grid.

However, this faith was soon broken.

“Did you forget my warning? Didn’t I tell you not to meet me?”

“What?” Kir had walked for around 20 minutes and was shocked when he suddenly heard a voice. He raised his head to see Grid blocking the way on a white unicorn.

“W-What is this? It can’t be!”

Was the top-ranked player such a gangster? No, it was impossible. Grid pointed a knife at Kir who was denying his imagination.

“I told you I would kill you again. Didn’t I tell you to be careful?”

“Y-You son of a bitch!”

Grid was a villain—no, a scoundrel... No, a gangster. Kir paled as he belatedly realized Grid’s essence and shouted, “Knights Summoning!”

It wasn’t the time to cling to the elves. He had to take down Grid today! Kir summoned his three knights...

“What?” Kir lost his soul.

It was due to an unexpected notification window.

[No knights are available to be summoned.]

“D-Don’t tell me...?”

“The unicorn is good.”

Kir, who had transformed the forest of the world tree into hell, turned to gray. This was the precursor to the fall of the Merchant King. That’s right. Kir thought he had lost everything to Grid today, but it was only an illusion. He still had things left to lose—the trading connections he had all over the continent.

[The unicorn is sad.]

[Affinity with the unicorn is very low.]

[It is recommended to give the unicorn a new name.]

[Affinity with the elves has increased by 50.]

[The world tree is interested in you.]

[The world tree has sent you an invitation.]

[Chapter 836](#)

“I won’t forget...! Never! Never!!” Anger and hatred filled Kir’s eyes as he screamed and turned to gray, showing his willingness to get revenge no matter what.

However, Grid’s expression was calm. Naturally, Grid knew that being the subject of a deep grudge could be deadly. A disaster might end up returning to him. After all, Grid had many grudges in the past

and had experienced returning anger and hatred to his opponent. Therefore, he couldn't be unaware of this fact.

'...Now, I have become the target of revenge.'

The more power he gained, the more he had at stake.

"Is it okay to push him this far?"

"Why wouldn't it be okay?" Grid didn't regret his choice. His eyes weren't shaken as he stared at Jishuka, who looked extremely worried. "Was there something wrong with my actions today?"

Merchant King Kir was a potential competitor, but Grid had fought for a just reason. Since it had already happened, it was better to crush Kir thoroughly. Showing mercy was just likely to lead to deadlier disaster being returned to Grid. At this moment, weren't there countless players forming alliances and then betraying and going to war against each other?

"It is a matter of survival. I don't want to give leeway to the other person."

Yes, Grid couldn't show any weaknesses. A second or third Immortal would be born to threaten Grid's precious people.

'I will trample them so thoroughly that they can't even try getting revenge.' Grid pledged with cold eyes.

Gulps could be heard from the Overgeared members watching Grid. However, Chris had a bright expression on his face. Chris had once been head of the Seven Guilds and knew the virtues of a leader.

'A leader needs to be ruthless towards the enemies.'

Satisfy was a world where survival of the fittest ruled. A person who was gentle to everyone would just be eaten. Therefore, Chris judged that Grid's qualities were ideal. Meanwhile, Grid checked the information of the unicorn.

[Unicorn]

[-A legendary divine creature on the East Continent. It is very aggressive and not easily tamed. They have a temperament that loves women and hates men.]

Name: Not Set

Level: 189

Affinity: -110/100

Health: 40,000/40,000

Mana: 80,000/80,000

Defense: 1,980

-Barding can be equipped (Barding= body armor for war horses)

Status: Sad and petulant.

(Master, who gave me many girlfriends, has abandoned me. If he was going to abandon me, then abandon me. Why did he give me away? To add to my grief, my pride is hurt. It is more annoying because my new master is a man.)

-Skills Possessed-

[Unicorn's Blessing (Passive)]

Increases the resource recovery of all riders by 20%. If the rider is a woman, there will be a further 30% increase.

[Sprint]

Moves a distance of 60 meters per second for up to 3 seconds. At this time, the unicorn and riders will enter a super armored state and will resist all conditions. However, physical status conditions can't be resisted. If the rider is a woman, the unicorn can move for up to 5 seconds.

Skill Cooldown Time: 2 minutes.

Mana Consumption: 4,900

[Jump]

The unicorn can jump up to 10 meters. Avoid all types of attacks and obstacles at the moment of the jump.

Cooldown Time: 5 minutes.

Mana Consumption: 7,800

[Repel]

The unicorn will attack a target with the large and beautiful horns. Knocks back the target and deals 10,000 fixed damage.

Skill Cooldown Time: 30 seconds.

Mana Consumption: 1,500

[Male Hatred]

The unicorn will hate all males, regardless of the species. Humans are no exception. If the owner of the unicorn is a male, affinity will reduce by one point per day. In order to raise affinity, the owner must keep the unicorn in constant touch with women.]

"..."

Gender discrimination? The confused Grid stared at the unicorn.

The combination of the unicorn's elegant and smooth white fur, long neck, and beautiful horn looked good. Moreover, the unicorn's big black eyes were completely pure. The unicorn's appearance didn't match the description in the status window at all.

'A bug?'

Were the details of the status window wrong? Grid reached out to stroke the unicorn's face. Suddenly, the unicorn huffed and struck Grid's chest with the horn.

[You have suffered 10,000 damage!]

"Ugh...!" This damage was unfamiliar for Grid who had an extremely high defense. He frowned at the pain, taking a few steps back as he stared at the unicorn. The unicorn's eyes suddenly curved into the shape of crescent moons as he approached Jishuka. He licked Jishuka's big chest and pretty face with his tongue.

Jishuka didn't know the reality of this unicorn and smiled brightly. "He is a child who follows people well. It is fortunate. You got a good pet."

"...Didn't you see that he just hit me?"

"It is probably an expression of affection. What pet would attack their master?"

The unicorn's status changed as he buried his face in Jishuka's chest and listened to their conversation.

[Status: Joyful

(I didn't think my ugly new master would have such a pretty girlfriend. This is a complete gain.)]

[Affinity with the unicorn has risen by 10.]

"..."

It was disgusting. No, seriously, what was with this different tone when it came to women?

'Was the developer sick when they made the unicorns?'

Grid frowned and gave a name to the unicorn. He didn't intend to give the unicorn a rough name just because he didn't like his personality.

"Overgeared Corn."

[A name has been given to the unicorn.]

[A bond has formed with the unicorn.]

[Affinity with the unicorn is restored to a normal value.]

[Affinity: 0/100]

Was he that glad about receiving a name? Grid watched the unicorn and thought he was a surprisingly pure creature. However, in the eyes of the Overgeared members, the unicorn seemed sadder than when he lost his master.

"Thank you for saving us."

The 12 Te, elves from the 12 clans, bowed toward Grid. This was the first time that the highly prideful elves had bowed to a human. Grid felt more embarrassed than proud. "This isn't something to thank me for. Didn't I tell you? I just wanted to repay the favor I received from Sticks."

"That..." Deruyaru, who had an exceptionally young appearance among the elves, grabbed Grid's hands and raised herself up. Then she asked carefully, "What exactly is your relationship with Sage Sticks? Do you know Sticks' current status?"

100 years ago, the honorable high elf Sticks left the forest before the tragedy that split the World Tree's Forest in half. Male elves and female elves had separate villages around the world tree for several decades now. They pretended not to know each other even when they passed each other in the forest.

The 12 Te took this situation seriously. The birth rate of the elves had fallen even further, and they worried about the survival of the species. However, the king who had left to be with the male elves ignored the worries of the 12 Te. He was firm about not reconciling with the female elves, who also loathed the male elves.

If only Sage Sticks appeared at this time... He could awaken the king's spirit and lay the foundations for uniting the species again...

The 12 Te missed Sticks. In particular, they felt a greater need for Sticks after this incident. If Sticks had been here, they wouldn't have fallen for the human's lowly trap. The problem was that they didn't know where Sticks' location was.

Grid explained, "Sticks is my special friend. Right now, he is staying in the Overgeared Kingdom to help me."

"Sticks is in a human kingdom..." The 12 Te twitched.

This reaction puzzled Grid. "By the way, why don't you know Sticks' status? Didn't he recently come here?"

Sticks had gone to the World Tree's Forest to make an antidote for Khan. However, the elves didn't know this fact and were confused along with Grid. The 12 Te were perplexed. "Sticks recently visited the forest?"

"Yes."

"This..." The 12 Te whispered among themselves after hearing Grid's answer.

"Did Sticks appear in the king's village?"

"That's right. It seems to be the case."

"I'm sure the terrible king told him all sorts of lies. Sticks won't know about the situation in the forest."

There was only one conclusion. The 12 Te turned to Grid with serious expressions.

"Could you please ask Sticks to visit the forest? Tell him not to see the king but to meet the 12 Te."

"Eh? Y-Yes. Okay."

What other episodes were hidden among the elves? There must be a serious situation for them to call their king 'terrible.' Grid didn't want to know because it seemed to be an annoying situation. However, it wasn't possible for him to leave the forest immediately. He couldn't ignore the call of the world tree!

'Is it going to thank me for saving the elves?'

Wouldn't he receive a great gift then? Grid was filled with high expectations as he moved to the village under the elves' guidance. Along the way, he didn't notice that there were feelings of emptiness and anger in the silent Beniyaru's eyes, which were different from the other 12 Te.

However, Grid did see the notification window that appeared in front of him.

[The one who leads the dead has been born again as a legend!]

[The world will fall into a panic!]

It was a world message announcing the birth of a new legend. The style of the message was somewhat different from normal. With the mention of 'reborn' and 'one who leads the dead', only one person came to mind. The aghast Grid and Overgeared members stopped in their tracks.

"Agnus..."

『 The sculptor Polish, who became famous at the time of his debut, has found out that he learned sculpting through Satisfy. Experts in each field claim that it is possible to learn skills in Satisfy. In fact, many organizations and countries are trying to nurture talent through Satisfy. The S.A Group... 』

The huge castle was locked in silence. Only the voices from the TV echoed meaninglessly in the darkness. Then the capsule opened. A thin and pale man rose from it and wore a robe over his naked body. He was Agnus. His tired eyes looked at a large portrait in the middle of the room. The woman in the portrait was smiling happily. There were no traces of the unhappiness and unfortunate things that had happened before she took her own life.

"It won't be long until we meet again."

He had finally upgraded the growth type hidden class Baal's Contractor to the legendary rating. This was the result of repeated efforts over three years. Agnus had gotten the 'creation' skill he had been hoping for.

"Caroline, I will make you."

It didn't matter what sacrifices he had to make, or if it was a lie and not reality. He wanted to recreate his lover who had been driven to death because of him. Then this impoverished reality would become the lie. Agnus leaned his cheek on the portrait and fell asleep.

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It was like watching wild dogs with rabies. The terrible kapen skunks that foamed at the mouth were threatening monsters which stimulated a human's primordial fear.

As she faced the skunks rushing through the foothills, Royman, an Overgeared knight, yelled, "Archers! Run and seize the highlands! The spearmen and shield soldiers will buy time here with me!"

"Waaaaahhhh!"

The kapen skunks appeared at the outskirts of Reinhardt every spring and were level 277. Their strength and awful stench gave hell to the knights and soldiers of the Eternal Kingdom. Due to the large casualties that occurred without exception, many tombstones were erected every spring, which produced the saying 'there is no stone in the spring of Eternal.'

However, Reinhardt was now part of the Overgeared Kingdom. The knights and soldiers of Overgeared confronted the kapen skunks boldly. Their flesh had been trained while farming with Piaro!

"Haaap!" Royman moved faster than the skunks jumping on rocks, trees, and other objects as she placed her shield on the ground, embedding the sharp end of the triangular shield in it.

As soon as the skunks approached, the ground collapsed like it had been dug with hoes.

"...!"

Beasts were said to be sensitive to impending disasters. In line with this, the skunks that were flying through the steep foothills suddenly stopped with surprise. Then while they were startled by the sudden landslide, arrows rained down on them. Royman and the soldiers bought time while the archers occupied the highlands.

"Good!"

The jaffa arrows pierced the skunks and turned them to gray one by one. Pillars of light fell onto Royman and her people several times. It was the symbol of a level up.

"There is a signal from Sua's group! The skunks in the Buren Valley have been completely eradicated!"

"There is a signal from Bland's group! The skunks in the Fortina Field have been completely eradicated!"

"Royman's group has sent a signal!"

"Okay. Then the southern section has also been cleaned."

In the outer barracks, Lauel couldn't hide his satisfied smile as he conducted the army with a map in front of him. He remembered the painful first spring they experienced after establishing the Overgeared Kingdom.

Many villages on the outskirts of Reinhardt had been destroyed by the group of skunks, and countless people lost their lives or become refugees. It had been almost impossible to eradicate the skunks, considering their high breeding rate and the lacking power of the Overgeared members at the time. There would've been irreversible damage without Overgeared members like Pon and Regas.

However, as the years passed, the Overgeared Kingdom became stronger. The talent Grid brought over from the East Continent, the people Piaro trained, and the army Asmophel raised meant that this year's

military power was the strongest ever. After they repelled the scary skunks in just two days, Lael felt that their military power was hundreds of times stronger than before.

'It is a reward that burns the soul.'

Lael thought that the efforts and hardships of the past were worth it. He felt proud of his contribution to the development of the kingdom, despite suffering from hair loss.

'But...'

He couldn't be satisfied with just this. The Overgeared Kingdom wasn't the best yet. The Saharan Empire wasn't the only threat to the kingdom. There was also the relatively recent threat of the Valhalla Kingdom. Furthermore, there was one more person.

'Agnus...'

A few minutes ago, there was a world message about the birth of a new legend. One of the strongest enemies had been reborn as a legend, and this made Lael nervous. The responsibility of raising the Overgeared Kingdom's strength even further weighed down on his shoulders.

'Things have become twisted in many ways.'

It wasn't hard to speculate that Agnus' class, Baal's Contractor, had grown to the legendary level. Additionally, a growth type class probably didn't have the level reset when it reached legend.

Lael hadn't expected Agnus to become a legend so fast. This had been due to Agnus' method of gameplay. Someone had said, 'There is no one who dies as often as Agnus among the high rankers.' Agnus was a rare type of ranker who wasn't afraid of death. Death in Satisfy meant a decline in growth, which had made Lael predict that the timing of Agnus' upgrade wouldn't take place for a long time.

'But it was the opposite...' Lael felt a chill as he thought about Agnus and realized what Agnus' frequent deaths meant. 'It means he has been continuously challenging content with little or no information.'

Agnus pursued a high risk, high-return gameplay method that was more like thorough calculations than madness. It was the reason why Agnus had stayed at 7th in the rankings for so many years despite dying so often.

'He has his own standards. He can bear this level of damage until he reaches a shortcut... He has his own criteria...'

There was only one conclusion that could be made. Unlike what was known, Agnus wasn't as mad as he seemed on the surface. Was Agnus a much stronger enemy than Lael assumed? Lael shivered and gulped as he realized this.

-Grid: Lael. Send people to become a bus for Ruby and Sexy Schoolgirl.

A whisper came to Lael from Grid.

-Grid: We have to raise them in order to be able to fight against Agnus. Additionally, raise the offerings to the Rebecca Church by three times. It doesn't matter if there is a deficit. I will fill up the lacking money

with my own money. We need more priests in order to fight an undead army. And in my personal opinion, there are NPCs who have completed training in the academy. Can't we use them now?

-Lauel: Yes. I understand.

Lauel's anxiety disappeared as he responded to Grid's orders and opinions. So what if Agnus was stronger than he expected? It didn't matter. After all, his master was also growing more than expected!

A towering tree soared into the sky. A few hundred meters away from the gigantic world tree, there was an elf village with houses made of dense branches.

"What?"

"Is this okay?"

Jishuka, Faker, Huroi, Pon, Regas, and Chris. The elite members of Overgeared were surprised and confused as they visited the elf village with Grid. It was due to Grid's order to move away from national affairs and concentrate on their personal growth.

"Realistically, it is impossible. Look at Jishuka and Chris. Since the founding of the kingdom, they have been in charge of Bairan and Reidan. The two cities will become inoperable if they don't do their jobs."

"That's right. The kingdom will fall into confusion."

Becoming a lord was a dream for all players. They could build up their own territory, accumulating great wealth and power based on the taxes that came from there. However, a high status meant great responsibility.

Jishuka's and Chris' workloads were considerable. Assuming that they played Satisfy for 14 hours a day, at least a quarter of that time was spent on territory management. It was the same for the other lords. The lords of the country had their respective roles and were obliged to carry out these duties. The entire Overgeared Kingdom would become a mess if key members like Jishuka, Chris, and Pon didn't do their jobs.

However, Grid didn't withdraw his command.

"It's okay. In the past few years, the Overgeared Kingdom has been able to develop thanks to you sacrificing your personal time. Now it is time to prove this development."

"What?"

"I have secured NPCs to do your jobs."

"What?"

Lauel had been struggling since the founding of the Overgeared Kingdom. Administrator Rabbit was the only NPC who could help Lauel with his work. Finding an NPC with administrative talent was like picking a star from the sky.

"Rabbit has selected talents and Sticks trained them at the academy."

They trained people in administrative work, just like Piaro and Asmophel trained people in military work.

“Now, we aren’t lacking talents. Most of the work you are doing right now will be replaced by the new talents in the future. You have suffered a lot in the meantime. I am grateful for the work and congratulate you for being able to escape it.”

Agnus was a very aggressive person. He had dealt with both the Overgeared members and Valhalla before becoming a legend, and it was unknown how strong that monster would be now. It was likely that he would continue jumping without limit. Grid needed to be prepared for this.

“Go with the flow. As I said earlier, all of you should focus on your personal growth. Shouldn’t you change to your fourth advancement class?”

Lim Cheolho had stated it clearly a few years ago at a press conference. A normal class would eventually become as powerful as a hidden class due to the class advancements. Grid had felt somewhat deprived as a legendary class, but now he realized he had been wrong.

‘It doesn’t mean I will have a disadvantage if everyone is strong.’

Why?

‘Now I have the best colleagues by my side.’

No matter how strong he was, there were many talented people in the Overgeared Guild who excelled at certain areas more than others. Grid believed in them and wanted to rely on their strength.

‘I also have to become stronger.’

By the time the normal classes became as strong as legendary classes...

‘I will be a myth-rated class.’

It wasn’t a joke or arrogance. Grid had absorbed the power of great demons and produced several myth-rated items. So, he was sincerely looking at all the possibilities. Grid asked the cute elf called Deruyaru, “Speaking of my colleagues, can they hunt the ancient species while staying in the forest for a while?”

Aside from Deruyaru, the eyes of the 12 Te widened.

“Do you know how strong the ancient species are?”

“It is too dangerous if your colleagues aren’t as strong as you. They will lose their limbs.”

“That’s right. It is good for us if you hunt the ancient species, but... you are placing too big a burden on your colleagues. Please forget it.”The 12 Te refused Grid’s request due to how much they liked him.

However, in the midst of this turmoil, Deruyaru opened her mouth, “We don’t need to worry about Grid’s colleagues. They are all strong. I saw it myself.”

“...”

Weren't humans originally weak creatures? Were they mistaken? Grid shrugged at the confused 12 Te. "There are dozens of kids who are as strong as they are. I will call them all to the forest in order to hunt. We will get rid of the ancient species."

"Y-Yes..." It was too absurd to be a bluff. The 12 Te shook before nodding. Then a warm voice rang out in the air, -Children of the forest. The human loved by the goddess of light. Give him and his colleagues the blessing of the elementals.

It was the world tree. Grid and the Overgeared members were now experiencing a fraudulent event.

[The world tree has given you a huge blessing!]

[Player Grid and all the players in the Grid-led forces will be able to contract with elementals. However, it is limited to lower elementals. The attribute can't be selected. The attribute will be given at random.]

[The benefit will only apply to existing members. Any new members won't receive this benefit.]

Grid's soul was leaving him when he heard the trembling voices of Jishuka and the Overgeared members.

"...I love Grid."

"Me too..."

"Me too."

"..."

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[Thanks to the player 'Grid', you have received the blessing of the world tree. You can now make contracts with lower elementals.]

[You must meet the world tree in order to make a contract with the elementals.]

It felt like they had just received a bunch of money while sitting down doing nothing. The Overgeared members cheered at the notification window that suddenly popped up.

"God Grid, what did he do again?"

"It is great! He hits a jackpot every time he goes somewhere!"

"Grid is the best!"

Making a contract with elementals...! This was uncharted territory for most players, which gave them even greater expectations. The excited Overgeared members started preparing to travel in the order that Lael decided. The destination was naturally the World Tree's Forest.

-Lael: Yes. Only the players belonging to the Overgeared Guild, not the Overgeared Kingdom, are eligible to contract with the elementals.

-Grid: I'm glad.

-Lauel: Yes. Unconditional rewards shouldn't be given to people who can move to other kingdoms at any time. By the way, have you signed with an elemental?

-Grid: I'm going to try it now.

Grid stood in front of the world tree as he grasped the situation through Lauel's whisper. It was a huge tree that he couldn't see the end of. His neck hurt as he turned his head to measure the tree's size. The Overgeared members, Mercedes, and even the unthinking Jude gulped. The humans, who were proud about dominating the world, became infinitely smaller in front of the infinite mysteries of nature.

"I greet the mother of the forest," Grid respectfully greeted the world tree. It wasn't an attitude based on any calculations, he truly was honored. Just like the others, Grid was overwhelmed by the world tree.

The voice of the world tree was warm and sweet. [You who have received the love of the goddess of light after exercising a strong will... I am grateful to you for helping my children. The protection of the elementals will forever be with you...]

'Elementals!' Grid's heart thumped.

Beniyaru's elementals had neutralized Mercedes' and Grid's attacks. The mighty image of a burning giant and a beautiful woman came to mind, amplifying his expectations.

'It doesn't matter if they are lower elementals.'

It would be great!

Duguen duguen! Grid was unable to calm his beating heart and knelt before the world tree. This was according to the procedure that the elves described. There was a flash of light that was brighter than the sun, but it didn't blind him. Additionally, it was warm. The green light wrapped around Grid's body gently.

"Ah..." Grid couldn't help letting out a groan. His mind and body relaxed the moment he was wrapped in the light, and a feeling of infinite happiness rose within him. It was like laying in a futon on the night before a holiday. He wanted time to stop right here. However, he couldn't relax. The brightly lit up Grid opened his eyes.

"I, Grid, want to contract with an elemental!"

The light surrounding Grid grew stronger as if responding to his call. Simultaneously...

[The lower elementals are looking at you.]

[The lower fire elementals are scared after feeling a fire hotter than them and have run away!]

[The lower water elementals trying to reach you have evaporated and disappeared!]

[The lower earth elementals smelled the metals on you and have hidden in the ground!]

[The lower wind elementals realize they can't wrap around you and have passed by!]

"...??" Grid panicked when notification windows which were completely different to his expectations popped up. In particular, he was greatly disappointed that the fire elementals had escaped.

'I thought the fire elementals would be a hint to achieve the Duke of Fire.'

The great magician Braham had said that it had been due to the Duke of Fire that Pagma had been surrounded by flames while hammering. It had been from this point that Pagma's status went up. This supported the fact that blacksmiths and fire were highly compatible with each other. So, Grid naturally wanted the fire elemental. Yet they had run away! Additionally, all the other elementals didn't want him!

"What is this?"

The tranquility that came from the light around him was lost. Just when Grid was nervous that a contract with an elemental might not be possible, another notification window appeared.

[The world tree admires your big vessel that can't be filled with lower elementals. The world tree has called for the hidden elementals!]

[The lower elementals of light and darkness have appeared!]

"Ah...!"

Round masses of darkness and light descended from the sun and the covered moon, surprising the many elves watching the ceremony. It was because the light and dark elementals were the symbol of the 'royal family' that not even the 12 Te could have.

He might be their savior but he was still a human. Yet Grid was going to be chosen by a light or dark elemental? It was something that the elves couldn't understand. On the other hand, the Overgeared members, Mercedes, and Jude were calm because they had no information about elementals. They didn't know anything and kept watching the elemental contract ceremony silently.

Meanwhile, Grid was suffering once again.

[The lower light elemental is consumed by the darkness hidden inside you!]

[The lower dark elemental is lost in the light of Goddess Rebecca, who has blessed you!]

[The world tree is embarrassed!]

"What?"

Wasn't this too much? Grid's anxiety was amplified as the elementals of light and darkness disappeared. He was forced to feel like this since he had been rejected by all the elementals. The voice of the world tree entered the ears of the trembling Grid, [The goddess of light's love toward you is greater than you thought. Yet you also have a great darkness in your heart.]

"Is this the end?" Grid asked bluntly.

The world tree took special measures. [I watched from beginning to end as you struggled to protect my children in the forest. I can't ignore your grace, so I will give you a greater blessing.]

[The intermediate elementals are looking at you.]

[The intermediate fire elementals are scared after feeling a fire hotter than them and have run away!]

[The intermediate water elementals trying to reach you have evaporated and disappeared!]

[The intermediate earth elementals smelled the metals on you and have hidden in the ground!]

[The intermediate wind elementals realize they can't wrap around you and have passed by!]

[The intermediate light elemental...]

[The intermediate dark elemental...]

....

...

"..."

The same thing happened again. Like the lower elementals, the intermediate elementals couldn't endure Grid's presence.

'Isn't this too much?'

Was he not going to get a reward? Then it happened when Grid was cursing in his mind...

[The advanced elementals are looking at you.]

The world tree called for the advanced elementals. Elementals resembling Beniyaru's elementals appeared around Grid.

"Wow."

The world tree hadn't given up? Grid was stunned. However, the 12 Te protested violently.

"Mother! I understand Mother's heart but you have to be careful!"

"We don't doubt Grid but we are concerned about the weakness of the human mind. Humans can become corrupted by excessive power. Mother, think about the seven malignant people who gained the power of a god and became corrupted. Grid might become a new malignant person."

"That's right! The emergence of a malignant evil in this era with no Hero King will signal the destruction of this world! Calm down, Mother!"

The seven malignant people—Grid's strongest passive skill, God's Command had originated from them. Who would've expected the name to pop out of the elves' mouths? Grid's eyes widened with surprise as he muttered, "I am the Hero King..."

"What?"

"What?!!"

The 12 Te were astonished.

[That's right. You are a human beloved by the goddess of light and the Hero King. I can trust you.]

The world tree was determined. The advanced elementals tried to reach Grid only to stop repeatedly. Unlike the lower and intermediate elementals, the advanced elementals spoke in the human language.

“This is a human already good at dealing with fire. My flames won’t be a great help to this human.”

“It is too hot and bad for me. When water disappears when I near him.”

“Um... Ummm... The power of the earth... Not required... Umm... I don’t think... Um..”

“He is called Grid? He already has the power of a storm. My wind won’t help. Hmm, the elemental kings might be needed.”

The advanced elementals also rejected Grid. Then the advanced light and dark elementals appeared belatedly. There was a white sphere with the size of a soccer ball. The cute ball of light with yellow half-moon eyes spoke first, “I like it. This person’s light is like Mother’s light. The hidden darkness is scary but I can overcome it. I like it.”

There was a black sphere that resembled the light elemental. The red-eyed black sphere adamantly rejected Grid, “I don’t like it. This child has more light than darkness. I don’t like it.”

So, it was decided. The important thing in contracting with an elemental was the will of the elemental. Grid didn’t worry about this part.

[Light elemental, be with him forever.]

“Okay!” The light elemental consented to the world tree’s request.

[You have succeeded in contracting with the light elemental!]

[The title ‘Light Elemental (Advanced) Contractor’ has been acquired.]

[Light Elemental (Advanced) Contractor]

[You can use the advanced light elemental.]

Current level of the light elemental: 1

-Available Elemental Techniques-

* The energy of the advanced elemental is infinite. An advanced elemental doesn’t consume the resources of the contractor.

[Sword of Light]

Makes the elemental into a sword of light.

It will follow the contract and help the contractor secure visibility in the dark. When an enemy with the attribute of darkness is found, it will move by itself and attack the enemy.

The attack power of the Sword of Light is affected by the contractor’s physical attack power and magic attack power.

* This skill can be maintained at all times. However, separate techniques can’t be used in the Sword of Light state.

[Flash]

The light elemental will 'instantaneously' move to the target pointed out by the contractor.

If the target is an enemy, it will shine intensely and blind the target for 0.3 seconds. The target can't resist the blindness effect.

If the target is the contractor's ally, it will shine brightly and give the target a one-time 'dark attack resistance' effect.

Cooldown Time: 5 minutes.]

"...Amazing."

There was a CC that couldn't be resisted as well as an autonomous attack power. Although it was limited to a dark target, it could surpass a Sword Saint's cognition. This was just the performance of a level 1 elemental. Grid didn't know how great the elemental would be when the level rose.

The 12 Te weren't exaggerating when they were worried about the seven malignant people. Jishuka's eyes turned to heart shapes as the Sword of Light started to hover beside Grid. "A visual explosion..."

It was like the lights that were set up for shooting commercials with celebrities. The power of the light was almost fraudulent. Grid was becoming equipped with more systems.

[Chapter 839](#)

[The lower wind elemental whispers that it will make your arrows faster.]

[The lower wind elemental whispers that it will your spear lighter.]

[The lower wind elemental whispers that it will your mouth lighter.]

"Why is it my mouth?"

"...???"

Jishuka, Pon, and Huroi contracted with wind elementals.

[The lower earth elemental promises to make your body more solid.]

Regas succeeded in contracting with an earth elemental.

It was a bit disappointing after seeing Grid contract with an advanced spirit, but they didn't express it. After all, if it wasn't for Grid, they wouldn't even have the opportunity to contract with an elemental. It was an undeserved honor for them to even contract with a lower elemental.

'Good.'

Jishuka and Pon had their attack speed and attack accuracy increased slightly due to the lower wind elemental, while Huroi had his talking speed increased thanks to the wind elemental. Regas gained more resistance and defense due to the earth elemental, making him fully satisfied. He was particularly joyful because his low defense had grabbed his ankle several times.

Meanwhile, Faker and Chris received great fortune.

[The lower wind elemental notices that you are faster than it and has retreated with frustration.]

[The intermediate wind elemental whispers that it is going to have fun with you.]

[All lower elementals have felt the qualities of a tyrant and have run away.]

[The intermediate earth elemental promises to govern your rough nature.]

After seeing the people who successfully contracted with the intermediate elementals, Chris established a hypothesis that the most important factor when contracting with a higher elemental was a 'higher rated class'. The basis for this hypothesis was the two men who managed to make contracts with intermediate elementals. Faker had received the second class 'Shadow Master's Student' after Khan's death while Chris had the second class 'Tyrant.'

"It is highly likely. Isn't this why Grid contracted with an advanced spirit?"

"Hrmm... We will know for sure when we see the result of Yura's contract."

Would Demon Slayer Yura succeed in contracting with an advanced elemental like Grid? Grid and all the members of Overgeared were filled with expectations.

There was a thick fog around the poisonous river. It was a terrible fog that caused the 'poisoned' state when it was breathed in. The volcanoes in the area were active and the earth was shaking with agitation. The sense of balance was lost. The boiling lava melted skin with heat alone and didn't allow any living thing to enter.

This was the 32nd Hell. It was full of chaos after losing its ruler, Belial. Creatures were no longer controlled, and its residents had long since left their homes. Only hungry demonic creatures were left wandering aimlessly. In this place, gunshots rang out, announcing the deaths of the demonic beasts.

Tatang! Tang tang!

A demonic beast turned to gray whenever the gun fired. Dozens of pillars of gray ash kept rising through the fog. The demonic beasts witnessed their kin being killed and lost momentum. Their tails dropped, making them seem like puppies as they ran away.

However, the beauty didn't miss any of them. She jumped through the space itself and shoved her sword into the mouths of the retreating demonic beasts. The Demon Slayer's beautiful white skin looked red as blood splashed on her.

"Sigh... Sigh..."

Any communication with the human world was blocked in hell. It was impossible to live alone in this barren landscape with a normal mentality.

Yura had never lost her composure apart from when she dealt with Grid. However, life in hell was hard. Her body and mind had long been exhausted. Now, she couldn't tell if the screams that constantly rang in her ears were real or false, and her thoughts were a mess.

Nonetheless, Yura kept moving forward. She walked without resting in the unchanging scenery that she had seen for several months already and pointed her gun at a demonic beast.

Tatang!

She longed to be qualified to stand at the same level as Grid, who had collapsed the sky to become the new sky. Yura wanted to feel proud again. Desperately wanting to be the best again, she wanted to prove that the Demon Slayer class she had selected wasn't lacking compared to Sword Saint and Pagma's Descendant. She didn't want to be ashamed with facing Grid. Furthermore, she didn't want to be a burden to Grid after abandoning the Yatan Church for the Overgeared Kingdom.

"...?" Yura stopped in place as she was moving forward. Then her eyes shook. It was because she felt a change in the landscape of hell that had been the same for two months. In the distance, she saw a black castle covered in fog.

'Belial's Castle?' Yura gulped as the light of the castle reflected in her eyes.

She was filled with hope that perhaps something left in the ownerless castle would help her. There might be a fierce monster, but she was convinced there would be a treasure to help her grow further. This wasn't without basis. Considering the symbolism of a great demon's castle, Yura's expectations were reasonable.

A huge dusty gate opened instantly under Yura's hands.

"..." Yura's eyes narrowed as she observed the scenery outside the castle. Had the demonic beasts eaten themselves after becoming hungry? The outside of the castle was filled with the stench of rotting corpses. Yura's footsteps were careful while she moved forward. As the distance to the front doors narrowed, she started to detect 'something.' She wasn't mistaken.

[The Demon Slayer's intuition has felt a strong demonic energy.]

[You will enter the Prepared to Die Posture. The extremely concentrated magic bullets will have a 10% increase in the creation speed and physical defense will increase by 15%. Magic resistance has increased by 20%.]

The passive skill that hadn't activated when she faced the 32nd Great Demon Belial told Yura something. The gift beyond the door would be much larger than her expectations. Yura gulped and controlled her thoughts. 'I am over level 300 now.'

This place was also hell. It was a stage that maximized a Demon Slayer's abilities. The present Yura was incomparable to during the time of the Belial raid. Yura recognized this fact and overcame her fear, pushing open the door with her small, fine hands. The rusty iron made an unpleasant sound as it was opened, but it was the 'man' on the throne in the dark great hall that caused chills to run over Yura's skin.

"Why are you here?" Yura's voice trembled as she asked the man sitting on the throne. The last time she was so blatantly shaken had been when she faced Grid.

Why? Grid was the one who always transcended her expectations. Yes, like right now.

"Pagma's Swordsmanship."

The man raised his body from the throne. He took one and then two steps forward before dancing. His sharp eyes, reminiscent of a bird of prey, stared at her.

“Transcended Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle.”

The atrocious surge of energy moved with a fierce momentum and hit Yura.

“...!!!”

The giant castle that was the symbol of the 32nd Great Demon’s supremacy collapsed like a sand castle.

In the past few years, the Overgeared members had actively utilized Grid’s reputation and abilities. They had called in people by using Grid’s name, and Lael had selected talents to join the Overgeared Guild.

Now, the Overgeared Guild had reached 620 people. It was unbalanced since more than half of them were production-oriented classes. However, it was natural since the ‘army’ of the kingdom meant production classes were more valuable than combat classes.

“All the blacksmiths have contracted with the fire elementals?”

“Yes. Panmir as well.”

“Shit... Why am I the only one with a light elemental? Isn’t Pagma’s Descendant a blacksmith?” Grid’s obsession with the Duke of Fire was greater than imagined. It couldn’t be helped since he was pursuing Pagma’s shadow.

Lael soothed the grumbling Grid, “Isn’t the light elemental a higher class spirit? I heard that they are elementals of the royal family. Isn’t it better than the fire elemental? Be calm and satisfied.”

“I know that. However, it isn’t very good if the target isn’t of the dark attribute.”

“Isn’t the water elemental a counter for the fire elemental? What result would ever give 100% satisfaction?”

“No, think about it. How convenient would it be if I had a fire elemental? It would be comfortable when I’m making an item and it’d be easy to cook rice while traveling.”

“...You only eat beef jerky anyway.”

Grid’s words were just petty grumbles, so Lael gave up trying to calm Grid and looked outside. Hundreds of Overgeared members were standing before the world tree. Their contracts with the elementals were successful, and they were full of happiness as they cheered for Grid.

“In any case, it is really great. I always admire your performance.”

“Did you sign with an elemental?”

“Of course. I followed the attraction of my soul and communicated with an elemental as soon as I entered the forest.”

As he stared at the laughing Lael, Grid asked carefully, “Did you contract with a dark spirit?”

“That’s right. I hesitated for a moment between the fire and dark spirit due to the black flame dragon sealed in my arm, but I eventually decided on the dark elemental.”

“Crazy!”

At this point, the game system was creepy. It seemed to penetrate the personality of the target person perfectly. Lael asked for a final confirmation from Grid, “If the Overgeared members team up in groups of eight, they can raid the ancient species called the bear-wolf... Are you sure there is nothing wrong with this command?”

“Yes.”

“Don’t you know that the current full power of the Overgeared members can attempt the Belial raid again?”

“Yes.”

“The bear-wolves are that strong?”

“They are strong. That’s why I’m leaving Mercedes and Jude behind. They will take responsibility for the safety of the guild members when they’re hunting and growing together in the forest.”

“Really... Will you really go alone?”

Grid had declared that he would invade and destroy the city of Merchant King Kir alone. As such, Lael couldn’t help feeling worried. Although Grid had taken care of Kir’s elite knights, there were still thousands of troops left in the city. There would even be hundreds of players. There were also dozens of high rankers who had ties to Kir due to the items he had given them. Did it make sense to be able to defeat them with one person? Despite having a grasp of Grid’s strength, Lael thought it was impossible. The recent growth of the rankers was scary, and the trend was gradually rising.

Grid shrugged. “Don’t worry. I have become much stronger.”

Kir’s chance of escaping had disappeared the moment Agnus became a legend. He had to shatter Kir to a level that made it impossible for him to recover. This was a natural need when considering Kir’s personality.

“I have to hurry. Kir might’ve already made contact with Agnus.”

The Saharan Empire, Immortal, the Yatan Church, and the great demons...

Grid had no intention of neglecting a variable in the upcoming wars which couldn’t be avoided. The determined Grid left the World Tree’s Forest and headed for the city of Merchant King Kir.

[Chapter 840](#)

[You have suffered catastrophic damage!]

[A legend doesn’t die easily. You can resist all attacks for 5 seconds with a minimum of health.]

“U-Ugh!”

In the collapsed wreckage of the castle, Yura’s head was dizzy as she barely escaped from the pile of rocks. Why was Grid in a place like this? Why did he attack her? Furthermore, she was driven to death with ‘one blow’? She had never imagined this situation. It was difficult to make a reasonable judgment

due to the confusion that surged in like a tsunami. Her willpower was scattered. She didn't know what she was doing, what situation she was in, and what she had to do.

'No.' Yura gritted her teeth and regained her composure. Grid didn't have a reason to visit hell at the present time. The opponent who attacked her couldn't be Grid.

That's right.

'This person isn't Grid.'

Her confusion was settled. Yura moved through the remnants of the castle. Then she confronted the mysterious person who had driven her to death in a single blow.

"Grid..." Yura's eyes widened as she confirmed the name of the mysterious person. The name 'Grid' was present on top of the person who looked like Grid. However, the golden shining name made him clearly different from Grid. He had the symbol of a named NPC.

"What is this?"

Why did a named NPC version of Grid exist, and why was he located in hell? In the midst of her growing confusion, Yura made several hypotheses.

'Is it Yatan black magic?' Were they trying to assassinate her for betraying the church? 'Perhaps there is a demonkin that can copy people's appearances...'

In any case, he was an enemy. Yura drank a potion and aimed her gun at Grid's head.

"Question," the demonkin who borrowed Grid's appearance spoke in a voice that also resembled Grid's, "Are you human? Are you the same creature as Grid?"

"...!" The demonkin's question was enough to increase Yura's confusion. 'Do you know Grid?'

Then demonkin's questions continued. "Surprise. It is the first time I've seen a human here."

"..."

"Question. Can Grid come here?"

He knew about Grid and was obsessed with Grid? Yura heard the question and asked, "Are you looking for someone called Grid?"

"Answer. That's right."

"What is your relationship with him?"

"Answer. There is no relationship."

"Then why are you looking for him?"

"Answer. I have to kill him."

"Why?"

"Answer. I was born for the sake of killing Grid."

“You... Who are you?”

“Subtle. Grid?”

“...”Yura’s hair started rising. She felt an extreme fear despite the man in front of her having the same appearance, voice, and name as Grid. However, she wasn’t afraid of him because he was strong. This was a more primitive type of fear. The man cocked his head. “Question. Does our conversation mean anything?”

“...” Yura stepped back. This wasn’t an unidentified monster whose ego was incomplete but a bomb that she couldn’t deal with. So, she turned around and ran away.

“Pagma’s Swordsmanship, Flower.” Dozens of energy blades reminiscent of a flower blooming appeared.

“...!!” Yura’s vision flashed red. Once again, the blow dealt her a serious injury. Fortunately, her health was still in the unit of 10s. She escaped from the ruins without looking back. However, the man in the hall didn’t chase after her. Instead, he returned his rusted sword to its sheath and muttered, “Difficult. Need to find a new home...”

Who was he? He had never thought about it. He only knew that he had to kill Grid.

“I will make it so that the gangster can’t piss anymore! Funny, how funny! How are the other rankers so incompetent that they are pushed by that fool?”

There was a small city with a population of 30,000 at the eastern end of the Gauss Kingdom—Penan. It was a city that Merchant King Kir had bought for a large sum of 20 million gold. He had paid 10 billion won in cash, but he hadn’t thought it was a waste of money.

If he developed the city as planned, he would be able to withdraw his investment in seven years of game time and turn it into a surplus. Yet it was all wasted now because of Grid. The first large-scale project that would’ve been a stepping stone for profit had failed due to Grid’s interference. This morning, he lost more money than what his city was worth.

Kir resented Grid’s ‘ignorance’ more than his ‘evil.’

“Stupid bastard! Doesn’t he know that joining hands with me will result in a huge profit for him? Why did he have to make me so tired by becoming my enemy?”

It was always like this. Low intelligence caused disgust to form inside him. In short, Grid was a lump of cancer. Reminded of Grid, Kir was feeling resentful and irritated when he received good news.

“Earl Taru has promised to support with his troops.”

“Okay. It is natural.” Originally, Penan had been one of Earl Taru’s countless cities. The amount of money Kir had given Earl Taru in the process of purchasing Penan was significant. “How much money did I give him? He can’t refuse my request if he has a conscience.”

Kir was in a dangerous condition because he had lost many troops and three knights to Grid. His top priority was securing as many troops as possible. He had to expand his business quickly to recover the lost money, but this required force. As soon as he resurrected, he had contacted Immortal in order to secure some military strength.

"I didn't think we would meet this way." The door opened and a white-haired man appeared. The man who shook hands with Kir was Veradin.

Merchant King Kir smiled brightly and grabbed Veradin's hand with both hands. "Thank you for accepting the invitation."

"I am the one who should be thankful."

Immortal had lost their place due to the Overgeared Kingdom's killing order. It was hard to find a safe place to go since they were always chased by players. Then they received an invitation from Merchant King Kir. It was a proposal to stay in Kir's city.

Veradin faced Kir and smiled. "Were you hit by Grid?"

"...What?" Kir hadn't said anything about what he'd gone through and why he had called Immortal. So why did Grid's name pop up randomly?

Veradin shrugged at the confused Kir. "Aren't you famous for always putting your best interests first? If you were in a normal situation, you wouldn't go against Grid by inviting us."

Yes, Kir wouldn't do anything against Grid unless he was an idiot. That's why Veradin guessed that Kir had already been hit by Grid. Kir sighed deeply. "Well... I didn't intend to hide it. Your guess is right. I was hit by that damn Grid and have a debt to repay."

Veradin's eyes shone. "Interesting. Why don't you tell me more?"

"The beginning started with..."

Kir needed Immortal's cooperation and was obliged to make them a perfect ally. So, he explained in detail about what happened to him. However, he reduced the amount of damage he'd suffered and hid his relationship with the Yatan Church. Then the lengthy explanation ended.

"Yes. You went through a lot of trouble. You also suffered damage from the villain called Grid. Okay. Immortal will stay here and help you. Victims should help each other. Otherwise, who will help us?" Veradin gave Kir a satisfactory answer. "We will make this place our base and reserve our strength. Immortal will do our best to carry out your instructions."

"Good. I will also support Immortal by providing items. By the way... what about Agnus?"

In fact, it was because of Agnus that Kir first thought about Immortal. The world message which spoke about Agnus becoming a legend gave Kir hope. He assumed that it would be easier to get revenge on Grid if he had Agnus. However, he couldn't see Agnus here at all. He was feeling troubled by how Veradin responded like it was nothing, "Isn't Agnus famous? At this moment, he is freely wandering the continent and enjoying the moment."

"What about the kill order?"

“What is the use of a kill order against him? Who would dare to hurt Agnus apart from Grid directly?”

“Haha! I see.”

“Yes, don’t worry. Agnus will arrive after we deal with the miscellaneous matters.”

That was a lie. Veradin had lost Agnus’ trust due to the Reinhardt invasion, so Agnus’ attitude was now very different from the past. He didn’t leave any tasks to Veradin and completely neglected Immortal. However, Veradin couldn’t reveal this fact. It was obvious that Immortal would be nothing without Agnus. Additionally, he believed that Agnus would find him again someday.

“Shall we talk about future plans?”

“First of all, I will raise money. I will gather money from all types of commercial areas, regardless of means and methods. I will then develop talent and weapons.”

“Is this to defend yourself against Grid?”

“That isn’t enough. I must take everything away from Grid.”

“Haha! It is a great mindset. Okay. Let’s join forces to flatten Grid.”

“Is it enough to flatten Grid? We will destroy everything. Hahaha!”

The sound of the two men’s laughter filled the colorfully decorated office.

The two men planned to get revenge on Grid and believed it was fully feasible. After all, the stronger the Overgeared Kingdom became, the more people became jealous of them. Thus, Kir and Veradin were confident that they could trample on the Overgeared Kingdom.

This was something Grid and Lauel were concerned about. They couldn’t give any room to people who had already become enemies.

“K-Kir!”

“Veradin! He came!”

“...?”

The cheerfully laughing Veradin and Kir closed their mouths and stiffened at the same time. Their faces turned pale as their rushing colleagues explained the situation.

“What?”

“At that time, I was careless.”

“That’s right.”

Boutian and Arisa—the two high rankers belonging to Merchant King Kir’s forces—replayed the fight in the forest.

“It was a shame when I tried to use magic to blow him away. It would’ve been enough to tie up his feet.”

If he had blocked the movements that were required for Pagma's Swordsmanship, Grid's power would've been weakened by several times. They had analyzed Grid's weak points in the National Competition videos but hadn't been able to utilize them due to their greed.

Boutian was filled with frustration while Arisa confessed honestly, "We made a lot of mistakes. I was too conscious of Blackening and got caught off guard. It would've been easier if I did my best from the beginning..."

Then Tarot, who was sitting quietly between the two people, laughed. "You should've taken me along. I would've been able to hunt Grid easily. Isn't that right?"

Tarot was someone with Blackening, like Grid. He had gained a mighty power during a great demon quest and evolved into a half-demonkin. Even Boutian and Arisa were deeply regretful that he hadn't encountered Grid at this time.

"Ah, it was a chance to hunt him and get bonuses."

"It couldn't be helped. You had a separate mission."

"That was a mistake in the first place. If you waited until my mission ended, you wouldn't have gone through such humiliation... Huh?" Tarot was blaming Kir's stupidity when he let out a sound of confusion. He rubbed his eyes a few times before pointing at the gate.

"Isn't that Grid?"

"What?"

Boutian and Arisa frowned at the same time. They thought that Tarot was joking in this serious atmosphere. Tarot licked his lips like he had a delicious meal in front of him. "Ah, how bad is a human's vision? It has been a few months since I've been a human, so I have forgotten."

"What are you doing?"

It was too much to fool around. Boutian and Arisa became confused as Tarot suddenly used Blackening. Unfortunately, Tarot wasn't joking right now. He pulled out a red sword and jumped toward the gate. Then a white sword of light flew and pierced his brow.

"...Eh?" Tarot was stunned as he lost half his health from the one blow. He lost his momentum and fell helplessly. Then a man passed by him, and Tarot was hit with hundreds of energy blades and turned to gray.

Boutian and Arise hurriedly shouted, "E-Emergency!"

"Gather the entire army right now!"

"100,000 Army Massacre Sword."

"...!!"

Alarm bells rang as a wild beast appeared in the city.