

심판의 1 군주

오늘도요 현대 판타지 장편소설
DONG-A MODERN FANTASY

Sovereign of Judgment

- 심판의 군주 -

**- Episode 1 -
New World**

**-Author-
TodayAgain
오늘도요**

[Myoniyoni Translations]

- STORY -

Author Synopsis:

[Survival] [Sovereign]

One day, a survival game started.

I decided to call it the end of the world.

To survive until the end for revenge, what would I need?

Myoniyoni Synopsis:

A fighting genius.

In grade 6, Choi Hyuk killed someone. He then promised his mother that he would never fight again. He spent his school days being bullied and blankly staring out the window.

One day, a ring appeared in the middle of his classroom.

Choi Hyuk, now a high schooler, who had spent his whole life atoning for his sins was now faced with a decision, to kill or to die.

PROLOGUE

You have no other choice.

Repeat. You have no other choice.

Instead of complaining, I advise you to throw another punch.

Yes, get angry.

And angrier.

Kill.

Only then can you kill.



Was it an alien invasion?

Or God's judgment?

The end of the world (yes, I have decided to call it the end) came too suddenly.

Afterwards, everyone lived in Hell. No, our lives became Hell.

On an ordinary afternoon,

I was in school.

CHAPTER 1

RING OF REBIRTH (1)

This child was a fighting genius.

He instinctively knew where to hit, how to hit, to hit or to shove, to take down, to break or to grab their hair without any training. Even with his young age, his small height and physical strength didn't affect his ability. He was simply a genius.

At age 5, he fought and won against an 8-year-old kid in a playground.

In grade 2, he fought and won against three 4th graders.

At first, the child's mother was worried. She feared that her child would get seriously injured constantly fighting against people older than him.

This was a misjudgment.

In grade 6, he fought with five 16-year-olds who tried to rob him at a PC bang{1}. The child's eyelid ripped and spilled a lot of blood. However, the ones who really got hurt were the middle schoolers. Among them, one became blind and another died on the spot.

Since he was a minor, he didn't receive a criminal penalty even though he had committed murder.

However, his mother was stricken with fear.

A 13-year-old... a child who had just turned 12 in Western years{2} beat and killed a middle schooler that was much bigger than him. And he didn't kill him with brute strength. After investigating, it was discovered that the victim died of a concussion when the child threw him cleanly over his shoulder. However, the assailant had never learned judo before. It was then that the child's mother realized that his fighting ability wasn't simply extraordinary. If this child grew up, how dangerous would he be? Would he kill someone again? Would he live his life as a criminal?

The mother pleaded to her child as she cried.

Never.

Never again. Do not hit anyone.

If anyone hit him, to just get hit.

If he experienced something unfair, to just experience it. To think about the sin of killing someone.

To never hit anyone again.

That he was a deadly weapon.

Then the mother distanced her child away from any physical activity and the child was unable to watch any sports at home.

The child whose mother was everything to him as he did not have a father faithfully accepted his mother's demand.

Afterwards, the child who was prideful and loved sports never asserted himself. During physical education, he would lie by saying he felt ill and quietly sat down.

Nonetheless, the child still grew tall and became muscular.



Choi Hyuk was in his second year of high school. He wasn't good at studying nor did he have a lot of friends.

181cm tall. His body was quite muscular, yet he did not exercise.

He never asserted his pride either. He would usually sit alone and blankly stare out the window. Then he would suddenly shake his head as if he had a tic disorder. He looked like an idiot. If someone picked a fight with him, he would put on a sloppy smile and say, "Sorry."

So he became the target of the school bullies.

Choi Hyuk transferred to this school during the first semester of his second year. Looking at his healthy figure, the bullies were nervous that he would pick a fight but

when they realized he didn't fight back, they started to harass him as if he owed them money.

There were three bullies in Choi Hyuk's class.

"Hey- Hyukie!"

The know-it-all bastard, Lee Mingi. Kang Minho nicknamed him 'know-it-all bastard' because he was a know-it-all even though he wasn't good at fighting. 170cm tall. Thin. This fellow would always greet Choi Hyuk with a fist whenever he met him. He claimed that because Choi Hyuk was big, he liked the feeling of hitting him.

Punch!

"Urgh!"

When Choi Hyuk lowered his head after getting hit in the guts, Lee Mingi put him in a headlock.

"Hyukie. What did you have for breakfast?"

He said affectionately while hitting Choi Hyuk's head with his fist.

"I couldn't eat today. Haha."

Choi Hyuk would go through this every day and every day he would put on a sloppy smile like today.

"Anyways, I saw that our Hyukie glanced at Minji when you came in today, do you want to fuck her? Should I let you fuck her~?"

Jung Minji. 170cm tall. She was popular because of her slim figure and innocent face. She was the only female student that would talk to Choi Hyuk. She was first in school as well as the class president. She was also the only student to bring up the topic of the harassment Choi Hyuk endured. Of course, she eventually abandoned him as well.

"Haha. No. It's not like that."

"What isn't it? Hmm? What isn't it? Huh? Aren't you hard right now?"

Lee Mingi punched Choi Hyuk's lower belly with his fist.

Since he didn't have any friends, his classmates would act like they didn't see anything. Until first period started, Choi Hyuk stayed in a slightly bent position and was dragged around in a headlock by the much smaller Lee Mingi.

After the first period ended, the boss, Kang Minho, called Choi Hyuk over.

"Hey. That."

Kang Minho. 190cm tall. Thick bones and developed muscles. He was the best fighter in school after the Choi Junsung. He demanded today's math homework from Choi Hyuk.

"Yeah. Here. Haha."

Choi Hyuk awkwardly laughed as he handed him his homework.

"Did you show your work properly this time?"

Last time Minho copied his answers, he was punished by the teacher. That day, Choi Hyuk was called over by Kang Minho and was punched 3 times in the chest.

"Yeah. I personally answered them. Haha."

"Good job."

Kang Minho said before turning away. There weren't many cases where he would personally hit Choi Hyuk.

When second period ended, the students became hungry.

"Gilsoo! Gilsoo! Where are you? Gilsoo. Here you are, you fucking bastard!"

Slam!

As soon as the teacher left, the fellow who made his way from his seat in the back calling out 'Gilsoo' and the one that hit the back of Gilsoo's head was Bae Hyunsung. 175cm tall. Liked soccer and was agile. Was good at swearing and lost his temper easily.

The kid who got hit in the head, Yang Gilsoo, was ranked even lower than Choi Hyuk. 162cm tall. Dark skinned and thin. Would often tremble his hands.

“Fucker, buy me pizza bread.”

When Hyunsung said that, Mingi stuck next to him and added in.

“Me too.”

There would occasionally be days when they would give him money but seeing how they said, “Buy me,” it looked like he would be buying today as usual.

During the break after second period, no one would touch Choi Hyuk. So Choi Hyuk would blankly stare out the window. He was picturing Lee Mingi in his head. He recalled Mingi swinging his fist at him.

Unexpectedly, he wasn't angry.

‘Why is his punch always like that?’

It was a simple question.

There wasn't enough power behind Lee Mingi's fist. It was because his footing was sloppy. When he swung his fist, his shoulder didn't turn enough. There was nothing to say about his waist and his uselessly large swings couldn't hit his target properly and would waste his energy. His wrist would shake as well.

Honestly, even though he was hit in the guts, it didn't hurt a lot.

Like always, he would only act like it did.

‘At least Kang Minho's fists are quite good... well... ’

Kang Minho's fists didn't meet his expectations either. Choi Hyuk's mind drew up the most effective punching method. His muscles that weren't noticeable even when he took off his clothes wriggled. Even if he didn't exercise, his muscles would develop when he imagines it for short periods of time

‘No... No, I can't.’

Choi Hyuk slowly shook his head.

‘Not these thoughts again...’

To clear his mind, Choi Hyuk blankly stared out the window. Desperately. He looked at the blue sky.

However, he would eventually think of those thoughts again.

‘Would it really turn out to be a proper punch like I imagined?’

‘If I fought, would I really win?’

He would then become startled and shake his head again. With a guilty conscience, he desperately attempted to clear his mind.

‘Crazy bastard. Are you crazy? You’re a murderer. What do you mean fight? You have to atone your whole life.’

Choi Hyuk appeared to be foolishly looking out the window, however, there was an intense conflict raging inside him.

‘... Still... I’m curious...’

Choi Hyuk sat supporting his chin. His shoulder muscles wriggled and moved.

‘... Everyone looks so weak.’

Looking out the window, Choi Hyuk compulsively shook his head again.

The class president, Jung Minji, looked at Choi Hyuk with a pitiable look.

‘If he didn’t shake his head so much, he might not have become a target...’

Then she looked back at her notes.

‘So irritating...’

{1} PC Bang – A place where you can pay an hourly fee to use a computer (usually for games)

{2} Koreans are 1 when they are born, so people are 1-2 years older than their ‘true’ (Western) age.

CHAPTER 2

RING OF REBIRTH (2)

The third period was the same as any other day.

Suddenly, everything changed.

At first, Choi Hyuk thought that the student next to him was pushing him. That wasn't the case. The student was being pushed as well. The middle of the classroom distorted and the students were roughly pushed towards the walls along with their desks.

Shrieks, screams and smashing sounds were mixed together until it suddenly became quiet.

In the middle of the classroom, a ring that took up half the classroom started to appear. It was similar to a boxing ring, however, there was a semi-transparent wall that wrapped around it and it was floating at waist height.

As soon as the ring had completely materialized, the sounds erupted again.

"It hurts..."

Female students who had severely collided into something groaned.

There were many students that were easily injured as they didn't exercise regularly.

Even in this situation, everyone looked for their phones.

"Ah... the frame cracked!"

Someone threw a fit. Behind him, others sympathized with him.

"Huh? Mine too."

"Mine as well!"

There were only noises of people supporting their phones.

The classroom door wouldn't open.

"It really won't open!"

Although the know-it-all bastard, Lee Mingi, tried his best, the sliding door wouldn't budge. It didn't even wobble.

"Move."

Lee Mingi was surprised at Kang Minhó's shout and moved aside.

At the same time Mingi moved aside, Kang Minhó ran and kicked the door. If Mingi didn't avoid it at the right time, he would have been hit instead of the door. Kang Minhó raised his knee up to his chest before striking out in front of him. It contained the full force of 190cm tall man. However...

Crash!

The sound wasn't refreshing.

The sliding door didn't even move a bit.

'How could it be like that?'

Choi Hyuk was completely surprised. It did not follow the laws of physics. He felt an enormous sense of inconsistency.

It looked like Kang Minhó's leg hurt as he walked with a slight limp. Although he quickly stood like nothing was wrong, his expression darkened.

"Quiet! Quiet! Stay calm. Kang Minhó, go sit in your seat."

The stocky authoritative teacher who appeared to be in his forties tried to control the students. However, it wasn't an easy task to complete amidst the confusion.

"Teacher! Something's written in front of the ring!"

Once a student near the blackboard shouted, the students all gathered towards the front of the classroom. The ring was in the middle of the classroom and it was too cramped and chaotic for 30 students to gather around it.

Only after everyone had pushed him away with no concern did Choi Hyuk slowly make his way to the front. There were words written on the semi-transparent wall. Fortunately, there were no students taller than him besides Kang Minho, so he had no trouble reading from the back.

{The Ring of Rebirth}

1. Karma will be distributed when you climb into the ring.
2. The first person to climb up can choose their opponent. Unless someone substitutes for the chosen person, that person will stand in the ring.
3. Only when you kill more than one person on the ring are you permitted to leave.
4. You can kill up to five people.
5. You have no choice. Kill. Only then will you kill.

“Murder? Kill someone?”

A female student was astonished.

“Fuck, is this real? Goddamn, fucking damn. What a fucking scoop.”

Bae Hyunsung shouted with a loud voice.

“Quiet, quiet! Stay still until we fully understand the situation!”

Although the math teacher wanted to keep the situation under control, the female students protested.

“How are we supposed to understand the situation when our phones are dead?!”

The math teacher who wasn't good at handling female students couldn't find a solution. It was only chaotic, there was no one that was properly analyzing the situation.

Choi Hyuk quietly sat in a corner. At a glance, he looked like he was scared. However, his thoughts were complicated.

‘If what is written is true, what should I do?’

The students had already checked the windows. They wouldn't open. Nor would they break. They didn't even budge.

'If I can't leave here, will I starve to death? No, before I die how would I get rid of my piss and shit?'

It was a critical problem.

"Quiet! Bae Hyunsung, you bastard! Aren't you going to sit?"

The math teacher seemed to have made up his mind as he personally grabbed the students' arms and forcefully sat them down in their seats. He didn't even let the female students off. Although Bae Hyunsung and a few others had a dissatisfied look, they still had the common sense to not pick a fight with their teacher. And the math teacher had a strong build.

A scene unfolded where students listened to their teacher, sat down in their chairs and conversed with each other. While constantly checking their phones.

'I don't think that it'll be solved like that.'

Choi Hyuk's heart slowly started to beat harder.

'Would it really be solved by waiting? What if, like the words written on the ring, we could only leave by killing someone?'

Choi Hyuk forcefully tried to control his thumping heart.

'Would I have to live by killing someone?'

Choi Hyuk couldn't forget that day his mother cried endlessly. He never fought after that day. It came to a point where he would shake his head at the thought of hitting someone. It had already become not a belief or a decision but a hardened habit.

Choi Hyuk made up his mind.

'If... everyone plans to starve to death, I will too.'

But, what if they didn't? What would he do? Choi Hyuk hadn't thought that far. Perhaps he had unconsciously avoided that thought.

However, his heart was constantly beating dangerously. His hands were trembling. Rather than fear or anxiety...

‘No...’

Choi Hyuk shook his head uncontrollably.

And the humans who could never stay put started to become interested in the ring.

“Can we really get in?”

Lee Mingi said while pushing down on the semi-transparent wall with both hands. When he pushed with his hands, the semi-transparent wall pressed down like a rubber ball.

“Fuck, I’m telling you that it’s as those words say! That we can only leave after we kill someone!”

Bae Hyunsung sought approval from Kang Minho.

Kang Minho didn’t say a word.

“Lee Mingi! Don’t touch that!”

The math teacher yelled at Lee Mingi. After glancing at the math teacher, Lee Mingi pushed the wall harder and said.

“We have to see what this is. And I have to go to the washroom.”

Swoosh.

After pushing the wall past a certain point, it suddenly let Lee Mingi in. As soon as Lee Mingi entered, the semi-transparent wall became clear.

“Lee Mingi!”

The math teacher sprang up but Lee Mingi was already in the ring. It was like he was standing on a stage. He calmly looked at his classmates before dancing frivolously.

Although the math teacher’s face became red with anger, he could not step into the precarious ring.

“You come out here right now!”

He could only shout. Lee Mingi acted as if he couldn't hear him and continued to dance.

“Keke, this stupid bastard.”

Bae Hyunsung chuckled.

After dancing for a while, Lee Mingi tilted his head as he stopped. He blankly stood there staring into space.

“What is this? Power, Speed, Control...”

Lee Mingi who was mumbling to himself suddenly jumped in place.

Crash!

The students' eyes looked up at the ceiling.

Lee Mingi just did an 80cm Sargent jump. It was on the level of top class basketball players.

Lee Mingi was surprised.

“Wow... I am exploding with power! Is this what they call karma?”

Everyone became surprised. It was because, even though he was somewhat of a bully and a know-it-all, they knew he didn't have that sort of physical ability.

The blank Lee Mingi suddenly smiled playfully.

“Ah, but. Since I'm in the ring, I will need an opponent. It's weird just standing here. I'm going to test it out.”

With a slightly excited voice, Mingi indicated.

“Gilsoo, get up here.”

Everyone instinctively looked at Yang Gilsoo. The one who was ranked the lowest in the class.

At first, Gilsoo was still. However, suddenly, as if something was pushing him from the

back, his feet headed towards the ring.

“Wow... Fuck... I’m getting goose bumps.”

Bae Hyunsung exclaimed.

“Huh? Huh?”

As if something was pushing him, Gilsoo was constantly being pushed towards the ring.

“No! No! Don’t!”

Yang Gilsoo’s face filled with fear. Everyone, even the math teacher, was stricken with fear as they blankly watched the scene in front of them.

At that moment.

Grab.

Someone grabbed Gilsoo’s waist.

“Everyone grab him!”

It was the class president, Jung Minji. She was trying her best to prevent Gilsoo from being dragged towards the ring.

Choi Hyuk followed behind her and pulled on Gilsoo. Only then did everyone wake up from their stupor and tried to help Gilsoo. However...

Crash!

Gilsoo was eventually sucked into the ring while everyone else bounced off the transparent wall and rolled onto the floor.

“Eyaa... Gilsoo must be happy. Minji hugged your waist.”

Inside the ring, Mingi chuckled while spectating.

“Hyukie grabbed you after Minji. You have no real friends besides your fellow gopher,

Hyukie, right? Or maybe not? Maybe Hyukie was coming onto her?"

Lee Mingi shameless put his arm around the trembling Yang Gilsoo who was stricken with fear. Very relaxed and natural.

However, the one who was the most frightened was, in fact, Lee Mingi.

'It's real. It really happened like it said it would... '

Lee Mingi tensed his trembling knees.

'I don't want to die.'

That was why the first person to enter the ring was the frivolously acting Lee Mingi. It was a simple calculation. Although he would act rashly as a bully, he knew better than anyone else that his fighting skills were nothing to look at.

If it was like the written rules, then no one would be able to leave unless they killed a person. It would be the end of him if he dawdled and was chosen by someone who was stronger than him.

So he was the first to enter and had chosen Yang Gilsoo.

'It worked out well. It really did.'

On top of that, Lee Mingi currently had his arm around Gilsoo. The best position. He had already personally experienced his strength rise when he entered the ring.

'Yang Gilsoo probably got stronger as well. Even if it is Yang Gilsoo, there's no need for me to look down on him and suffer. Let's do it in one shot. One shot.'

Lee Mingi slipped his arm that was around Gilsoo's shoulders and wrapped it around his neck.

Crash!

"Gasp!"

He took him down onto the floor and fiercely started to strangle his neck.

CHAPTER 3

RING OF REBIRTH (3)

Someone screamed.

“Kyahhh!”

Lee Mingi was attempting to kill Yang Gilsoo in front of everyone. The malice he revealed made everyone astonished.

Gilsoo’s dark face was dyed red.

“What do we do... He might die...”

A female student was on the verge of tears. That was human nature. If Gilsoo was beaten and killed on some hill, they might have only clicked their tongue and felt sad for him. When they saw him dying in front of their eyes and since they didn’t know if the next person would be them, it felt more shocking and horrifying.

The small 162cm tall Yang Gilsoo was pitifully dying underneath Lee Mingi. Although the math teacher shouted, condemning him, Lee Mingi who was engulfed in excitement couldn’t hear a thing.

“Awk. Awk.”

Yang Gilsoo who looked like he was about to die grabbed Lee Mingi’s arms with his trembling hands. Then there was an unexpected change.

“Uh? Uh?”

Yang Gilsoo who was laying on the floor being strangled was getting up. He was pulling away Lee Mingi’s arms as he stood up.

Lee Mingi gave up strangling him and brushed away Yang Gilsoo’s arms.

Riip.

When his clothes ripped, it revealed a distinct mark on Lee Mingi's arms.

An unexpected situation, everyone focused on the ring. Even Choi Hyuk.

“Euahh! You fucking asshole!”

Yang Gilsoo let out a horrible shriek as he rushed towards Lee Mingi. He was in a state in heightened adrenaline.

‘I beat Lee Mingi in strength. Look at that asshole cowering and running away. I can win. I can kill him. Asshole!’

The sorrow and anger that had built up for a long time exploded. He swung his fists as he ran towards Lee Mingi.

Crash!

Yang Gilsoo's fist was extremely sloppy. However, the fist had somehow managed to hit Lee Mingi's shoulder and he flew about 3 steps back. A ridiculous punching power.

Yang Gilsoo grew more confident as he rushed forward.

Choi Hyuk who saw this couldn't help but frown.

‘No... you have to take a defensive stance.’

He could tell just by looking. That the sudden burst of confidence would lead to his defeat.

Yang Gilsoo may be stronger than him but Lee Mingi was faster. Lee Mingi's arms and legs were longer as well. He twirled around while avoiding Yang Gilsoo's brute force punches.

Punch!

He would land a hit whenever there was an opening. In Choi Hyuk's eyes, Lee Mingi's fists were pathetic but perhaps it was due to 'karma' that his fists were unimaginably strong.

Punch, punch!

However, it looked like Yang Gilsoo had great endurance as well since he was able to endure taking a lot of hits. Unfortunately, the problem arose from somewhere else.

“Pant! Pant! Haa... Mingi... asshole... just one hit... one fucking hit...”

Unlike Lee Mingi who avoided until there was an opening, Yang Gilsoo’s brute force punches quickly drained his stamina.

His fists hopelessly slowed down. On the other hand, Mingi’s movements became more relaxed.

Choi Hyuk couldn’t take his eyes off the fight. If it was like any other day, he would have already shaken his head to clear his thoughts but today was different. He was completely immersed in the raw desperate struggle unfolding in front of him. His long-suppressed talent and spirit longed to see more of the fight.

Lee Mingi who was carefully circling around a panting Yang Gilsoo suddenly burst forward and struck Yang Gilsoo’s face.

Crack!

Yang Gilsoo was too exhausted to dodge. He was hit straight on. Gilsoo’s teeth flew out and blood spurted from his mouth. A distinct stream of blood.

“Kyahh!”

Another scream erupted.

Afterwards, it was one-sided.

Punch! Punch! Punch!

Lee Mingi laid Yang Gilsoo down and crazily beat him with his fists. He was covered in blood.

“Sav...”

Yang Gilsoo’s faint pleading voice painfully pierced the spectators’ ears.

However, Lee Mingi constantly hit him again and again as he endlessly despised him.

“This crazy loser bastard. Embarrassing. Crazy Bastard. Overrating himself.”

At some point, Yang Gilsoo stopped moving.

Someone mumbled.

“He’s dead...”

Yang Gilsoo’s corpse turned into grey ashes and was disappearing. Those ashes circled around Lee Mingi before being absorbed through Lee Mingi’s nose.

A murder had occurred right in front of their eyes. A fearful silence came down.

Every scene of the fight imprinted into Choi Hyuk’s memory in slow-motion.

Fresh blood. The last breath of a dying man. The chest that wouldn’t rise again.

Choi Hyuk’s memory was returning to his time in grade 6. Death. The middle schooler who had died too easily. The one who easily died was the middle schooler but his mother was the one who was actually torn up.

This was the first murder he had witnessed since then.

This time, it wasn’t by his hands but someone else’s.

However, the attitude of the murderer was too different from himself.

“Hooooo...”

In the ring, Lee Mingi stretched his waist as he let out a sigh. Lee Mingi felt a strong sense of excitement. He exuded a more composed demeanor.

‘I got stronger. Power is overflowing. Was it that the more people I kill the stronger I become?’

Lee Mingi thought.

‘I killed one... does that mean I can leave? No... no... was there any guarantee that this wouldn’t happen again? What happens if I leave and I have to fight someone stronger than me?’

Lee Mingi decided.

'I have to get stronger now.'

His survival instincts pushed him into a corner. He had a hunch. A hunch that this murder game wouldn't end here.

'Since it said that I could kill up to 5 people... if I could get stronger.'

He had already killed someone in front of everyone. Nothing would change now. Lee Mingi decided.

'Let's fight once more. I need to pick a weak one, so I don't get tired.'

Someone weaker than Yang Gilsoo... at the very least, there was no 'man' like that. Lee Mingi chose his target.

"Yoon Girim. Come."

A crying female student raised her head up in surprise. Her face was completely pale.

At that moment, the students who were watching Lee Mingi realized. The meaning behind the {Ring of Rebirth}. Lee Mingi, he had definitely been reborn as a 'murderer'.

CHAPTER 4

RING OF REBIRTH (4)

Thud.

The chosen Yoon Girim moved forward as if she was being pushed by something.

“No. No. Mingi. Mingi! Don’t do this! Please?”

However, he showed no mercy. The girl was slowly dragged towards the ring by an invisible force.

Everyone was silent.

‘What to do? What could I do?’ Those thoughts never entered their minds.

As if it was a nightmare, they blankly watched Yoon Girim getting dragged across the floor.

Like before, there was only one person who moved. The class president, Jung Minji.

Jung Minji grabbed Yoon Girim’s shoulder.

Everyone wondered.

‘You’re trying to pull her back? You failed last time with Gilsoo.’

However, she wasn’t trying to pull her back.

Jung Minji pushed against Yoon Girim’s shoulder and used that momentum to leap forward.

“I will fight instead.”

She declared just before making contact with the transparent wall.

Swish!

The transparent wall let her through instead of Yoon Girim.

Now then did everyone recall one of the rules of this game.

{The first person to climb up can choose their opponent. Unless someone substitutes for the chosen person, that person will stand in the ring.}

Jung Minji came forward as the 'substitute'.

"Euaah."

Yoon Girim who was being dragged forward flopped on the floor.

Jung Minji lightly jumped up onto the ring. As soon as she went on, she lightly checked her body condition by clenching her fists, swinging her arms and even running in place.

"Eiyahh~ Minji. You wanna fight me?"

Jung Minji didn't reply to Lee Mingi. Lee Mingi smiled suspiciously. She was always like that. She would consistently ignore Lee Mingi. Whenever Lee Mingi saw Jung Mingi, he couldn't stand the feeling that she was looking at him like she would a cockroach.

Lee Mingi slowly scanned her slim thighs and waist. He didn't pay attention to outsiders anymore. The true nature of a person would be fully displayed once they had power. Lee Mingi said with a crooked smile.

"It's good that you came. I've always wanted to fuck you... Let's do a live show."

Jung Mingi who was checking the changes in her body due to karma suddenly stiffened.

She smiled.

With an innocent and charming smile, she said with a slight lisp.

"Fuck off."



Jung Minji and Lee Mingi's fight was normal.

After getting stronger from killing Yang Gilsoo, every aspect of Lee Mingi, including speed and power, surpassed Jung Minji. Jung Minji kept a defensive stance until her collar was grabbed by Lee Mingi.

Lee Mingi became relaxed when he became certain Jung Minji was not his match. He grabbed her collar and attempted to rip her top.

"Minji~ Let's take off your clothes."

However, those were his dying words.

Crack!

Jung Minji's hand stabbed into Lee Mingi's temple. In her right hand was an awl she had taken from the tool box.

Skreek.

Jung Minji pressed her left hand on Lee Mingi's shoulder and pulled out the awl from his temple. It was stabbed in so deeply that they could hear the friction between the metal and his bones as she pulled it out.

"Huh?"

Lee Mingi tilted over after letting out his last breath. Wet blood oozed out of his temple before he turned into ash. With that, it ended.

"Hoo..."

Jung Minji let out a short sigh. Her shoulders shivered as if she was appalled by Lee Mingi's ashes permeating her body.

As if nothing had happened, the ring was clean.

The students fell into a state of shock once again. The awl they would always see in the tool box, if they stabbed that into someone's head, they would die. There was no

one that didn't know this but the shock was completely different when they had personally witnessed it.

Jung Minji expressionlessly walked out of the ring.

“Th... Thanks, Minji!”

Yoon Girim who was still on the floor expressed her thanks to Jung Minji.

However, Jung Minji coldly laughed.

“For what? What are you thankful for? You're going to die anyways if you act like that.”

Yoon Girim's shoulders stiffened. Jung Minji simply passed her.

Slide.

The classroom door opened. She said without looking back.

“Do you think I stepped in to save you? Do you still not understand the situation? Kill while you can. The ones who die are in the wrong.”

Then she exited into the hallway.

Rumble!

Following behind her, students rushed to the door.

“What! It's blocked! Open it!”

“Move!”

It became noisy but there was a transparent wall blocking the opened classroom entrance. They were still unable to leave.

“Assholes... you're fucking loud.”

It was Kang Minho who had used the chance to enter the ring. 190cm tall. The student who was the best at fighting after Choi Junsung.

“Isn’t that right, Choi Hyuk?”

He picked Choi Hyuk who was known as the tall loser.

“Get up here.”

Choi Hyuk’s head creaked as it turned.

He had a strange smile on his face.

A single thought repeated in his mind.

‘Lee Mingi and Jung Minji killed as if it was nothing.’

If that was the case,

He who had killed a middle schooler 5 years ago,

Lee Mingi who had killed Yang Gilsoo and

Jung Minji who had killed Lee Mingi

were all murderers.

“Kek...”

A laugh sounded out.

‘... What the hell?’

A beast was born among chicks.

Whenever the beast touched a chick, the chick would easily crumble.

The ones who would easily crumble were them... was what his mother said.

That it wasn’t the weak who were bad but himself.

That was why the beast pulled out his teeth and lived among chicks with his arms tied behind his back.

While enduring as the chicks who didn't know their place pecked at him and walked all over him...

But a chick had just called him out. He said that he looked weak and that he would kill him.

'You? Kill me?'

"Hahahahaha."

Choi Hyuk laughed. He felt refreshed. It felt like the chains that were tightly wrapped around him were breaking off. He was trying to kill him. He thought that since he was weak, he could kill him.

'But are you really stronger than me?'

No matter what, he didn't feel that he would lose.

It couldn't be confirmed rationally. He last fought when he was in grade 6, it was too far in the past. All this could be an illusion. However...

'I just need to confirm it myself.'

And.

'The weak will die.'

He probably wouldn't have any regrets.

Choi Hyuk walked onto the ring with his own two feet.

On the ring, Choi Hyuk's arms and legs were slightly trembling. Kang Minho laughed when he saw this.

"This bastard cowering... fight with confidence. You're the only one in the class in the same weight division as me."

"Haha. Okay."

Choi Hyuk continued to laugh awkwardly. His arms and legs were trembling from

extreme excitement.

It was neither fear or anxiety.

Choi Hyuk was trembling in happiness.

CHAPTER 5

RING OF REBIRTH (5)

Kang Minho. He had the most outstanding physical traits in school. His 181cm height that made Choi Hyuk look small, thick bones and muscles developed through regular exercise.

However, Kang Minho was also no match against the 175cm tall Choi Junsung who didn't work out. From the start, Kang Minho didn't have the courage to fight with Choi Junsung.

That's right. Kang Minho with his incredible physical traits just didn't have the balls in critical moments.

Kang Minho wanted to appear more manly and intimidating but that was only his wish. He was the type who, in the face of real danger, would stay back and read the situation.

He called out Choi Hyuk because he wanted both safety and reputation.

'It'll be embarrassing if I beat a small fry to death. So Choi Hyuk who's big but weak is best.'

No matter how much of a loser Choi Hyuk was, it looked better killing him because he was tall.

At the same time, he thought.

'But I don't know how much stronger Choi Hyuk will get once he gets karma.'

Not long after he stood in the ring, he received something similar to a system message and karma was distributed to him. Because of this, he personally experienced how strong a body with karma truly was.

Kang Minho's eyes became colder. He made up his mind.

'I'm going to tackle him as soon as he gets in the ring and beat him to death.'

Kang Minho was planning on beating Choi Hyuk to death before he received karma and before he could adjust to his new strength. Since that was safer.

That was why, as soon as Choi Hyuk entered the ring with trembling hands.

The moment Choi Hyuk laughed, “Haha, okay.”

Crash!

Kang Minho charged. His strengthened body flew out like a cannon ball.

The students spectating the match responded late. A tackle as fast as an Olympic gold medalist’s. Before Choi Hyuk could finish speaking, Kang Minho’s hands were already wrapping around his waist.

Kang Minho was assured of his victory.

Crush.

‘What is this sound?’

However, at the critical moment, Kang Minho felt something was weird. A disturbing crush had sounded out too close to him.

‘Where did this sound come from?’

With his face smashed in, Kang Minho, along with that thought, turned to ash.

Choi Hyuk’s body reacted the moment Kang Minho lowered his stance and lunged. First, he firmly planted his left foot on the ground. Then used that momentum to twist his waist and his upper body was pulled forward. His right foot arched as he thrust his knee upwards and his right thigh exploded with power the moment it made contact with Kang Minho’s face.

Bang!

He used his whole body to propel his knee up. No, it shot up. Choi Hyuk’s knee instantly smashed Kang Minho’s face. Even Kang Minho’s charge reinforced with karma was used against him as his face crumbled like tofu.

An explosive counter knee kick from Choi Hyuk who had never learned martial arts.

With that, it ended.

While absorbing Kang Minho's ashes, Choi Hyuk let out a small sigh.

"I won..."

It suddenly started and ended before he could do anything.

The adrenaline pumping through his veins had nowhere to vent.

He was dumbfounded at the quick conclusion.

His guilty conscience of killing a man collided with his cynical ego that believed that those who intended to kill had nothing to say when killed. However, he didn't feel it. It didn't feel real. Instead, a sense of disappointment swept over him.

Choi Hyuk read the message that appeared in front of him. It was like a system message from a game.

{Great Accomplishment! You have killed someone with karma before it was distributed to you. As a reward, you get 10 points to allocate however you want. Your karmic stat has increased by 3.}

{You have entered the Ring of Rebirth. Karma has been distributed.}

{ You have killed someone! You have absorbed a portion of your opponent's karma. Karmic point has increased by 1.}

{Choi Hyuk}

*Human

*Karma Points

Power: 5 +1 Up!

Speed: 7 +1

Control: 22 +1

Endurance: 7 +1

Stamina: 9 +2

Recovery: 10 +1

*Free Karma Points: 10

*Retribution: 4

On average, he had 10 for each stat. However, his control was extremely high to the point of being strange.

And the absorbed stats from killing Kang Minho were indicated on the side. Seeing how stamina was +2 while everything else was +1, it seemed like Kang Minho had high stamina.

The points would be distributed differently for each person.

And Choi Hyuk could feel the 'thing' had squeezed into his body. Something sticky like honey filled up his insides. It was an unfamiliar feeling but it wasn't uncomfortable. It was probably 'karma' that was circulating his body as it bonded with his body more securely than his muscles and tendons and allowed him to move explosively.

His altered body. The adrenaline in his body. Choi Hyuk instinctively wanted to test his body, however...

'That's enough. Are you going just kill people now?'

His perseverance that he increased his whole life was barely able to suppress his instincts.

Choi Hyuk carefully examined the people surrounding the ring. Since he had killed someone, he could simply leave the room like Jung Minji. He just needed to step down...

'But...'

His thumping heart grabbed at his feet. He wanted to fight more. He wanted to prove himself. On the {Ring of Rebirth}, Choi Hyuk was unable to decide whether he would step off or not.

Just then, he saw Bae Hyunsung looking away. The last remaining bully.

How unlucky. His instincts started to justify cunningly.

'He would probably kill someone and live... does that make sense?'

He felt offended. For the man who tormented Yang Gilsoo and him to live? By killing another student?

Grit.

“That makes no sense.”

Choi Hyuk knew. That he wasn't an apostle of justice. That this was his self-justification to fight longer... he was aware of it. But before he knew it, he had already called him out.

“Bae Hyunsung! Come up here.”



“Sa... save me. Mm? Hyuk. I mean we were quite cool right?”

Bae Hyunsung went down to his knees and pleaded as soon as he got in the ring. But Choi Hyuk frowned.

‘What’s that?’

He caught sight of black and red flashes reflected in Bae Hyunsung’s eyes. It felt sinister.

“I’m really sorry. It’s really all my fault.”

He was already in a bad mood because of the strange flashes of light but seeing Bae Hyunsung stoop so low, pissed him off even more. He didn’t call him up here for this.

“Come at me. You’re going to kill someone anyways.”

“I won’t! I won’t kill anyone. I will just stay here quietly!”

Even though it was obviously a lie, since Bae Hyunsung was acting like this, Choi Hyuk was at a loss for words. Killing was Choi Hyuk’s lifelong trauma. Ever since that incident, he avoided resorting to violence. His devious instincts enjoyed fighting not killing so when Bae Hyunsung begged for his life, even if he knew it was a lie, he didn’t have the heart to kill.

“Ha...”

Choi Hyuk who felt stumped at what to do looked at the ceiling and sighed.

‘Should I just leave it and get off. But... why is he like that? Isn’t he planning on killing someone and leaving?’

He didn’t like this. He wished it would be Bae Hyunsung more than anyone else. If it was possible, he wanted to fight Bae Hyunsung who had suppressed him until now. However, looking at his state, he couldn’t act. While Choi Hyuk was troubling over this, a red light flashed in front of him.

A red light exploded from Bae Hyunsung’s body. Immediately after, Bae Hyunsung took out a carpenter’s knife he had hidden in his pocket and slashed at Choi Hyuk’s neck.

Bae Hyunsung prostrated and begged for this moment. He never expected Choi Hyuk to spare his life from the beginning. Since, if he was in Choi Hyuk’s position, he wouldn’t. He only waited for the moment his opponent let down his guard.

“Fuck! This fucking bastard!”

Bae Hyunsung swiftly slashed with his knife. However...

Crack!

The knife missed its target and instead, Choi Hyuk’s fist slammed right in between Bae Hyunsung’s chin and throat.

He had stepped back to avoid the knife and pushed forward before throwing a counterpunch.

Stretched out legs, his rotated waist and shoulder and his wrist that had endured the impact.

Perhaps it was due to his control stat of 23 but he was able to slam his fist straight into his target without wasting even the slightest energy.

Thud.

The stiffened Bae Hyunsung slumped down onto the floor.

“...What the fuck.”

The sudden flash of red light. He might have reacted slower because he was surprised by this light.

‘Just what was that?’

But the only person to see the light was Choi Hyuk.

Choi Hyuk gazed at the collapsed Bae Hyunsung. He hadn’t died yet. He hesitated again. It wasn’t a situation where he died from fighting but where he would have to purposely kill him. Choi Hyuk looked at his surroundings. Students were shaking in fear. The math teacher’s eyes were trembling.

Because his opponent crumbled so easily, Choi Hyuk’s actions looked irrational. Nothing had changed in 5 years.

He was a monster, a killer.

‘... Too late... ’

Choi Hyuk smiled bitterly. He strangled Bae Hyunsung’s neck.

A game where everyone had to become a killer to survive. Someone was going to kill Bae Hyunsung anyways. Or, Bae Hyunsung would regain his senses and kill. Perhaps it would be different if he didn’t call him out in the first place but he felt that leaving at this time would be more cowardly. Choi Hyuk strangled the unresisting Bae Hyunsung to death. It put him in a bad mood. He wanted to fight to his heart’s content but instead, he became more uncomfortable.

‘This is what you guys started... ’

To brush off the uncomfortable feeling, Choi Hyuk made an excuse. Finally, Bae Hyunsung turned into ash as he was absorbed into Choi Hyuk.

{You have killed someone! You have absorbed a portion of your opponent’s karma. Karmic point has increased by 1.}

{Innate Skill 'Eyes of Distinction'.}

Messages that made it seem like he did a good job. They made him more depressed.

'I guess this isn't the end?'

After looking at the messages, he didn't think that this survival game would end in a day or two.

'If it's going to be this uncomfortable, I won't feel happy about fighting...'

Then, his body stiffened as a sudden thought struck him.

'Were we the only ones going through this damn game?'

Something felt wrong. Just how far would this supernatural phenomenon extend to? The school? Seoul? No...

'... What about mom?'

Why didn't he think of this sooner? Choi Hyuk's mind was in a rush. She was probably at work right now. What if a ring like this one appeared there?

The hairs on his body stood on end. Choi Hyuk hurriedly got off the ring and ran out the classroom. The unpleasant feelings that wrapped around him evaporated as adrenaline poured into his body.

CHAPTER 6

BONUS GAME (1)

After Jung Minji and Choi Hyuk had left the classroom, it became a desperate struggle with no regard for man or woman. As there already were fights with deadly weapons, the bloody battle continued with people wielding hammers and stabbing others with broken broom shafts.

In the end, the only ones left in the classroom were the math teacher, a male student who was shy but had a lot of friends named Min Byungsae and Yoon Girim who had previously been picked by Lee Mingi. A total of three people.

“Byungsae...”

The math teacher called Byungsae out.

“Since you’re a guy...”

“...Te, teacher?”

The math teacher with a good figure got up on the ring and called Byungsae.

“I’m sorry...”

The fight ended easily. Byungsae turned into ash after the math teacher pressed him down on the floor and strangled him.

Yoon Girim who had seen everything was in a corner covering her ears trembling. The math teacher coldly gazed at her before exiting the classroom.

‘Save me... save me... this is a dream, right? Yeah, a dream. Please...’

Alone in a classroom where desks and chairs were scattered all around and tools and broken broom shafts were tossed here and there, Yoon Girim trembled as she cried.



Choi Hyuk's mother was a person who couldn't even kill a cockroach. When he was young, whenever a bug appeared in his home, Choi Hyuk would have to kill it instead of his mother. To the young Choi Hyuk, it was something he took pride in.

Because of that, Choi Hyuk had a hunch.

"Damn it... Fuck..."

The only place he could go after leaving the classroom was the gym. Everywhere else was blocked by an opaque wall. No matter how hard he pushed the opaque wall or how many times he kicked the windows of the gym, it was useless. There wasn't even a single person walking outside the window.

The whole school was trapped in this damn game. There was a likely chance that it was the same outside.

Choi Hyuk assumed the worst case scenario.

'If a ring appeared in the company mom works in... mom's probably dead... no, she was murdered.'

In a situation where one could kill another, humans would always kill their opponent. Choi Hyuk knew this all too well as he had been bullied for a long time. Ethics and morals weren't things all humans instinctively possessed. There would always be someone who would become endlessly cruel in a situation where there were no consequences.

There were probably guys like that in his mother's company. However, his mother wasn't like that. It would have been better if she was... but Choi Hyuk knew all too well that his mother wasn't that kind of person. If a situation like that arose... his mother would have been murdered.

Choi Hyuk's heart burned black with anger and concern.

As he grew up without a father, the meaning of a mother was different from his peers. He grew up seeing his mother cry every night. His mother was someone who had brought him pain and sympathy but was also a comrade who he endured the harsh realities of life with. He had vowed countless times that he would never let his mother

cry again and grew up reflecting his actions.

“Euaaahh!”

Choi Hyuk who was about to go crazy in frustration kicked the window rapidly. The window still wouldn't budge. Words appeared on the window.

Yes, get angry.

And angrier.

Kill.

Only then can you kill.

“Ha...”

Choi Hyuk blankly stared at the words written on the window. It felt like freezing water was poured all over his head.

The message. The moment he read that message, he thought that his mother really had died.

He realized that this game wouldn't end easily.

And that no one could be free in this game.

Just who was it? The one who created this damn game.

...Whoever it was. Choi Hyuk tightly clenched his eyes as he resolved himself.

“Okay. I get it.”

If what you want is for me to become a killing machine, I'll become one.

If you want me to lie on my face and lick your feet, I'll do it.

I will kill and kill and bow my head again and again and survive until end.

Then.

Then if I can meet you just once...

That time, I want to meet your faces and beat each and every one of you to death.

Choi Hyuk vowed.

When he opened his eyes, his face turned cold.



In the gym, the ones who had killed someone were guarded against each other as they kept their distance. Jung Minji glanced at Hyuk and was surprised but didn't say anything.

In the center of the gym, words appeared like a hologram.

{Bonus Game – Preparing}

1. Waiting for the previous game to end...
2. Break time. Prepare for the future.

At first glance it looked like it was telling them to rest but Choi Hyuk didn't think of it like that. Choi Hyuk clearly remembered. The message they sent him, 'get angry,' the ones who created this game wanted the competitors to become more intense and desperate.

'Prepare.'

Choi Hyuk kept thinking of that word. It was the only valid information in the message.

Choi Hyuk examined the gym. There were about 30 students and among those, he found that 4, including Jung Minji, were slowly searching the gym. They must have come to the same conclusion as Choi Hyuk. However, they were moving slowly.

'More and more students will come. Instead of trying to not alert others, it is better to move a step faster than the rest.'

Choi Hyuk didn't delay any longer. Instead of caring about what others' thought, he ran to the middle of the stage.

Thud!

The karma circulating in his body allowed him to jump up onto the stage in one shot. Choi Hyuk searched everywhere including the waiting room and behind the curtains. He searched as if he was smashing through a heap of items. It paid off.

“Ha... are they telling me to kill more people more easily?”

He found a Japanese sword behind the curtain. There was a long strap that could be tied on his belt.

“It’s a sword!”

As soon as Choi Hyuk who was making a fuss on top of the stage picked up a sword, the other students were horrified. They finally understood what kind of situation they were in. A great commotion rose. Everyone hurriedly started searching the first floor.

Choi Hyuk didn’t even look at the 1st floor. He jumped to the 2nd.

Swish!

Swiish!

Choi Hyuk ran across the 2nd floor rails and he swung each curtain in front of the long window aside.

Swish!

When he pushed aside one of the curtains, there were words written on the window.

{Throne Game, Hidden Rule #9}

If a person kills more than 5 people and awakens to an innate skill but is not affiliated with a king, the person receives the rights of the ‘King without Subjects’ and 30 free karma points that can be allocated however they want.

As soon as Choi Hyuk looked at the words, the words written on the window started to sway, then flew to his forehead and was absorbed. The window became clean once again.

Just to be sure, Choi Hyuk kicked the windows but like expected, it didn’t budge. When he looked out and saw that there was no one walking down the street, it gave him a very strange and quiet feeling.

Time passed quickly. As more and more students arrived at the gym, the fiercer the search became.

During that time, Choi Hyuk finished searching the 2nd floor. Additionally, he found a bastard sword, an estoc{1} and 3 more hidden rules. Now the whole gym was chaotic. Students ran everywhere to look for weapons, defensive equipment and hidden rules. It wasn't just the students, even the teachers from the staff room were mixed together and a fight had broken out. There were even students who had just arrived at the gym and were running around without knowing why.

Choi Hyuk didn't show any interest to the chaos. Instead, he turned his attention to the ceiling.

There were steel structures on the ceiling that were like a jungle gym and he felt he could swing there to explore even further.

'If there are items hidden there, they must be extraordinary.'

The early bird gets the worm. Choi Hyuk grabbed a column near him.

He used his changed physique for 10 minutes. His karma reinforced hands held the columns like a clamp and endured his weight. Choi Hyuk crawled up the column and hung on the ceiling structure.

"Wow... shit. That bastard's crazy."

The school leader, Choi Junsung, looked up at Choi Hyuk in admiration. No matter how much stronger your body became due to karma, it wasn't easy to think of those ideas.

"I can't lose to him."

He followed Choi Hyuk and climbed up to the ceiling.

CHAPTER 7

BONUS GAME (2)

“Heee~~~haaaaww!”

Choi Hyuk heard Choi Junsung’s cheer. It seemed like after following him, he was the first to come across something. The best fighter in school, Choi Junsung, didn’t lose his bright attitude when facing the chaos. As if there was no need to fuss about killing and getting killed. As if he wasn’t going to die.

Creak! Creak! The steel structure Choi Hyuk was hanging on creaked. Choi Hyuk turned his attention away from Choi Junsung and carefully searched the ceiling. And just then, he found a hidden rule.

{Throne Game, Hidden Rule #15.}

When a ‘King without Subjects’ sits on the throne, the person will be randomly given a D rank or greater weapon.

‘King without Subjects’, this one was related to the first rule he had found.

And the treasure hunt was slowly coming to an end.



{Bonus Game – Preparing}

The previous game has ended. Break time has ended. Preparing the Bonus Game...

When the ethics teacher entered the gym, the words in the center changed. The students who were wandering around the gym with no more items to find finally stopped.

Choi Hyuk stopped searching any further and checked his fruits of labor.

He didn’t find any defensive items, only weapons. On the left side of his belt hung three swords that would rattle every time he moved.

{Japanese Sword F rank} – Cutting, two-handed

{Bastard Sword F rank} – Stabbing and cutting, two-handed or one-handed

{Estoc F rank} – Stabbing, one-handed

And he had found 5 hidden rules. When he searched, he did come across quite a few of the same ones so, excluding those, he found 5.

{Throne Game, Hidden Rule #5}

The first to declare oneself as king will receive 5 karma points that can be allocated however they want.

{Throne Game, Hidden Rule #6}

The first to serve a king will receive 3 karma points that can be allocated however they want.

{Throne Game, Hidden Rule #7}

A king who has more than 100 subordinates will receive 10 karma points that can be allocated however they want.

{Throne Game, Hidden Rule #9}

If a person kills more than 5 people and awakens to an innate skill but is not affiliated with a king, the person receives the rights of the ‘King without Subjects’ and 30 free karma points that can be allocated however they want.

{Throne Game, Hidden Rule #15}

When a ‘King without Subjects’ sits on the throne, the person will be randomly given a D rank or greater weapon.

Throne Game that was written next to the hidden rules caught Choi Hyuk’s attention.

‘The current game is the Bonus Game. Then, is the Throne Game something else?’

If he used the hidden rules to guess, he thought that the ‘Throne Game’ was a game where people would declare themselves as kings and collect subordinates to take the throne.

‘The Bonus Game must really be a bonus game. It’s certain that the Throne Game will

be the main one. I have to prepare ahead of time.'

What should he do when the Throne Game starts? Choi Hyuk analyzed the hidden rules.

Rules #9 and 15 were rules connected by the term, 'King without Subjects'. And Rule #15 was a rule that Choi Hyuk had climbed to the ceiling to find. A rule that needed another rule to understand and was hidden in a hard to reach place... The reward would be a D rank or greater weapon.

'Is a D rank or greater weapon really worth that much? Then I have to get it.'

Of course, he would lose something if he chose to do that.

The moment he decided to aim for Rule #9, 'King without Subjects', he had no choice but to give up the rewards from Rule #5, 6 and 7, 'first to declare as a king', 'first to serve a king' and 'a king with more than 100 subordinates'.

However, Choi Hyuk decided resolutely. He had already resolved himself to show his worth to the creators of the game and both the reward and the title 'King without Subjects' appeared to be decent. If he could obtain a D rank weapon from the interlinked Rule #15, then it would be more than enough to make up for giving up on the other rules.

'3 people... I need to kill 3 more.'

The conditions to become a 'King without Subjects' were to kill 5 people and awaken an innate skill. And he had already awakened an innate skill.

Choi Hyuk looked at his status. He could bring it up with a thought.

{Choi Hyuk}
*Human
*Karma Points
Power: 7
Speed: 10
Control: 24
Endurance: 9
Stamina: 12
Recovery: 12

*Free Karma Points: 10

*Retribution: 5

{Innate Skill}

-Eyes of Distinction

After killing Bae Hyunsung, all his stats increased by 1 except his Speed which increased by 2.

Although he did have 10 free karma points, he didn't distribute them yet.

And there was the skill, 'Eyes of Distinction'.

{Eyes of Distinction}

You are able to see what intentions a person has.

– Black: Hostile Intent

– Red: Killing Intent

– White: Goodwill

– Yellow: Sacrificial will

The red and black flashes of light emitted from Bae Hyunsung which made him feel uneasy was the effect of the 'Eyes of Distinction'. Back then, Choi Hyuk was seeing the hostile (black) and killing (red) intent of Bae Hyunsung.

'It's a good skill...'

At a time where no one knew what the other was thinking, this was an unrivaled skill.

Just when Choi Hyuk finished checking everything, the Bonus Game started.



The words written in the center of the gym became larger and slowly changed. Semi-transparent rectangular booths appeared in different locations throughout the gym. The students near them were pushed aside.

{Bonus Game – Item Hunt!}

1. A golden opportunity to obtain an E rank item. Dropouts will be indicated with an ITEM mark.

2. If a dropout dies, the person will turn into an E rank item.
3. If a dropout kills someone, the mark will disappear and the dropout will be given karma points.

‘Dropout? Who?’

It was currently puzzling. However, soon, its meaning became clear.

Around 30 people were summoned, each into a semi-transparent rectangular box. And a clear ITEM mark was above each of their heads.

“Huh? Jinsu?”

“Girim!”

The students and teachers in the gym recognized the people who had appeared with an ITEM mark above their heads. They were those who didn’t fight until the end and were left in the classrooms.

Among them, was Yoon Girim who was in Choi Hyuk’s class.

There were the only non-murderers here... It meant that they had to kill the most innocent people here to obtain items.



People divided into two sides.

On one side were those who gave up. They were those who didn’t know what to do and had decided not to act. Although there were many of them, they didn’t have any influence on the situation.

And the others were split into two groups again.

A side that decided that they had to kill to obtain an item... and a side that resolved to not let their friends die.

The only ones who had a great influence over the situation were those on either side.

While those that had decided not to act spectated, the rest slowly surrounded the item boxes. There were even a few who impatiently attacked the boxes. But the boxes were extremely sturdy and the attacks didn't leave a mark.

"Has it not started yet?"

One's indifferent voice terrified another.

The dropouts inside the box were screaming something but their voices couldn't pass through the box.

"Guys! This isn't right! Teacher Kim! This isn't right, right?"

A teacher blocked their path and shouted but it had no effect.

"Fuck! Who here isn't a murderer?"

The words spoken by someone stabbed into everyone's chests.

"Fuckers... get away from Hyejin. Fuck! You! If you come a step closer, I am going to break your head in!"

A male student threatened the approaching students with a firefighter's axe. He was enduring the attacks for his girlfriend who was trapped in the box but there were four or five students who were like distant vultures waiting for him to get tired and the box to disappear.

'Minji! Minji!'

The class president Jung Minji looked at Yoon Girim who was mouthing her name. She suddenly became irritated.

'Try to get out with your own strength!'

Jung Minji hated the weak. She loathed those who didn't resist.

Because... she was in pain.

It was different from being kind. It was closer to an illness. Perhaps it was due to her natural-born empathy or through experiences. Whenever Jung Minji saw someone

who was getting bullied or beaten, or crying in front of her... her chest ached as if she was the one being beaten. It wasn't a figure of speech; she really was in pain.

Jung Minji hated that pain. And she hated the weak who caused her to suffer.

No matter how many times she stretched her hand to help, they didn't stand up for themselves... so she despised those that caused her endless pain.

'I wish that these weaklings would all die!'

This was her honest feeling. However, she could never turn her back on someone who was suffering. She hated that part of her... but there really was nothing she could do.

Jung Minji counted the people who surrounded Yoon Girim. 6 people. These people either had a sword or wore a chainmail. Jung Minji was better equipped. As a result of diligently moving from the start, she had obtained a shield, longsword and armor. However, she was outnumbered.

Jung Minji quickly scanned her surroundings to increase her numbers.

In the middle of all this confusion.

Swoosh.

Just then, the semi-transparent walls that were wrapped around the ITEMS disappeared.

And Choi Hyuk had to kill 3 people before the next game started.

CHAPTER 8

BONUS GAME (3)

Who would they kill?

Of course, it would be the dropouts. They weren't distributed karma since they had not gone up onto the {Ring of Rebirth}. On top of that, if he killed them, they would turn into items.

The problem was who to target. Normally, they would choose people that they had never met before.

However, Choi Hyuk didn't target the dropouts.

'I'll kill the first one that receives an item and take it.'

It was a riskier strategy than facing the weak dropouts. But Choi Hyuk didn't want to personally kill the dropouts. It was because he believed that his mother would have faced the same fate. However, he needed items. And, for the hidden rule, he need to kill three more.

That was why he decided. That if someone killed another, Choi Hyuk would kill that person. He couldn't kill the innocent. He was confident he could handle that much risk.

If others saw him, they may denounce him as a hypocrite.

'So? What's wrong with that?'

Choi Hyuk just needed to set his own rules.

'Aahhh!'

A teacher's scream filled the gym. The people who watched from afar thought, 'Ah, so that's killing violently.' A sound they thought they would never become familiar with rang in their ears.

Choi Hyuk looked towards that direction. The social studies teacher was stabbing a

young unknown teacher with a spear. Still, since he was a grown-up, he didn't wait in front of a box with a student inside. The teachers targeted and gathered around boxes with teachers inside and the moment the box disappeared, they would attack in an organized manner. In that sense, they were grown-ups.

“Cough...”

The spear pierced right below the neck. A fatal blow. Although he didn't die instantly, the young teacher flailed around on the floor in his own blood.

At that moment.

“Huh?”

A golden hammer the size of a human appeared above the dying teacher's head.

Swish.

The hammer let out a mysterious sound,

Slam!!

And mercilessly smashed the teacher with a fatal wound.

Drip, drip.

Scraps of meat and blood splattered onto the clothes and the cheeks of the surrounding spectators.

The hammer, still in its smashing position, disappeared with another swish. In its place, a necklace appeared, floating in the air. The necklace automatically fell down towards the social studies teacher who had dealt the final blow.

The social studies teacher quickly grabbed the necklace and hung it around his neck.

He wanted to show a serious expression but the tips of his lips were slowly making their way up. The teachers who couldn't obtain the necklace sent envious glares or went to hunt other dropouts. There were even some who glanced at the students.

Just then, Choi Hyuk charged.

Dadada, bam!

His footsteps rhythmically sounded out throughout the gym. He charged as fast as he could then with a bang, jumped up into the air.

Because the last footstep the social studies teacher heard was far away from him, he never thought that the footsteps were heading for him.

Choi Hyuk's karma enhanced body shot out like an arrow. The condensed power in his body exploded. Choi Hyuk's body jumped more than 8m forward. A world record class long jump. And it wasn't a simple jump, he also quickly drew his sword.

Choi Hyuk's ability allowed him to move in the best way possible. Even if he had never learned it before, he could control all his joints and muscles to move like an expert that had practiced for his whole life.

The critical moment Choi Hyuk drew his sword, the sword caught on its sheath and whipped forward in an instant. The quickest blow, quick draw. Until the moment Choi Hyuk's sword broke, the social studies teacher had no idea that Choi Hyuk had approached him. However...

Ting!

The Japanese Sword broke in half in midair. One of the pieces brushed past Choi Hyuk's palm and drew blood.

It was then when the social studies teacher finally turned and faced Choi Hyuk. The necklace on his neck flashed multiple times.

'Was it because of that item?'

Even with his incredible vision, Choi Hyuk wasn't able to see it properly. The moment it was about to hit, it looked like something flew out of the necklace and destroyed the Japanese Sword.

"This!!!"

The social studies teacher became enraged. He stabbed his long spear at Choi Hyuk.

Choi Hyuk stepped to one side and avoided the spear. The difference between life and

death could be a single step. Choi Hyuk stepped another step closer to the social studies teacher and threw a punch at his throat. That moment.

Punch!

His arm throbbed. The necklace around the social studies teacher emitted a dimmer light.

‘Luckily, it seems to be dependent on the attack.’

If it used the same strength it did when breaking the Japanese Sword, his fist would have been shattered. When he thought that, his whole body began to pump with adrenaline. ‘Danger’ was a feeling that Choi Hyuk hadn’t felt for a long time.

It was different from the boring fights against Kang Minho and Bae Hyunsung.

‘How long will that necklace last?’

Choi Hyuk grinned as he avoided another stab and punched out again. This time, he used less power.

Slam!

His left arm bounced off. However, he didn’t lose his balance.

The expression of the teacher had when facing the pressure emitted by Choi Hyuk’s penetrating style of fighting.

And Choi Hyuk’s eyes saw the light from the necklace around the teacher’s neck go out. Choi Hyuk instinctively knew. That he had used all his chances!

‘Checkmate.’

The social studies teacher tried to sweep the spear in front of him to gain some distance but Choi Hyuk took a hit to the shoulder and stepped closer. Facing the unexpected actions of Choi Hyuk, the teacher’s response became a mess.

While Choi Hyuk used his left shoulder to continuously push the spear aside and limited the teacher’s actions, he took out a long, thin estoc that was meant for stabbing. Then, he stretched his left hand to grab the teacher’s collar and, at the same time, he

raised his estoc behind his back and stabbed the teacher with a downwards stab. The sword had pierced above the teacher's collarbone.

"Urk, cough!"

All of this was smooth and natural like flowing water and he had suppressed the teacher with only the right amount of physical strength. The teacher had no choice but to gaze at the sword that was stabbed into his throat.

He turned into ash and was absorbed into Choi Hyuk.

"First one..."

{Necklace of Protection}

Rank: E

Intercepts an opponent's attack within a certain range.

Remaining interceptions: 0/3

*You will gain an interception every 20 minutes.

When Choi Hyuk hung the necklace around his neck, the hammer appeared again in another area of the gym.

Swish.

Slam!!

This was the moment Choi Hyuk's next target was decided.



The total student population was 1,938 people. With teachers, that number exceeded 2,000 and among those, 812 had survived past the {Ring of Rebirth}. And 150 of them participated in the Bonus Game. The rest moved aside as they watched the desperate hunt. Unlike in the {Ring of Rebirth} where people had no choice to kill, many took a passive stance.

On the other hand, the ones who participated to obtain items or to save their friends became more immersed in the situation.

CHAPTER 9

BONUS GAME (4)

7 minutes after the boxes disappeared, the majority of the dropouts had been killed.

It was a gruesome scene.

First, the dropouts were separated into two groups, one with friends that tried to protect them and others without. The dropouts with friends protecting them numbered 7 to 8. It was more than everyone thought.

The rest had to survive on their own.

The moment the boxes disappeared.

“Euahh!”

With a hurried scream, the friendless dropouts ran. The hunters tried to stop their paths but they rolled and pushed their way out.

The dropouts weren't captured as easily as everyone expected. The hunters were people who had karma and were stronger than the dropouts but they were still students and teachers. They were people who would have a hard time catching a rabbit even while running after it with a sword. It was hard to kill those who struggled to live.

This was why a more gruesome scene unfolded. A round of mixed martial arts was 5 minutes. For the dropouts who didn't have karma to try their best to run and resist for that time, of course, they were at their limit. The dropouts' movements became sluggish while the hunters who were pissed became more heartless. A running dropout was hit by a swing of a spear and rolled onto the ground. Someone came running behind him, kicked his face, then grabbed his hair and sliced off his neck. Then the hammer would appear, smash its victim, splattering blood everywhere. Afterwards, an item would appear.

Madness.

The people who didn't participate but were spectating felt their knees tremble.

And this scene occurred throughout the gym. Many would chase after one and the lucky winner would obtain the item. However, not everyone was like that.

Although everyone had similar stats and karma, the difference between each other started to show and it was greater than the difference among level 1's in an AOS game^{1}.

There were 'players' who particularly shined.

First, the class president Jung Minji. She fought like she was the incarnation of Joan of Arc. Not only did she show that she was physically skilled but she even was outstanding at reading the situation and devising plans. There was no hesitation in her actions.

The moment the box protecting Yoon Girim disappeared, she grabbed her, put her over her shoulders and charged. The 6 people who surrounded Yoon Girim all had dumb expressions like a dog chasing a chicken and couldn't react in time.

The place she was heading towards was next to Chu Youngjin who was protecting his girlfriend.

Punch!

The moment she slammed her fist into a student's throat who was approaching Lee Hyejin, his girlfriend, an alliance was formed. Jung Minji didn't stop there.

"Hey! Baek Saelom! Aren't you friends with Hyejin?"

Like that, she continued to call out specific people's names. Although there were some who looked away, there were also some who slowly entered the fray.

As she started to aggressively form a group, the hunters felt uncomfortable facing Jung Minji's group.

This game was a bonus game. Although an E rank item was enticing, there weren't many who were willing to risk their lives for it.

Of course, they were some who were still willing to kill even though they didn't have

to put their lives on the line.

The third year, student representative Kim Piljoong was like that. He coordinated with his friend, Son Dukpil, and he differentiated people he knew and didn't know with a sword. He would save those who he was familiar with but kill those he had only met once. No one was able to block his arrows as he was skilled in archery. He killed 3 dropouts and their friends who tried to protect them. Son Dukpil would take care of those that approached and Kim Piljoong would shoot arrows from behind or stab with his gladius^{2}. Kim Piljoong had obtained a new bow, shoes and a shield. And among those, he gave the shield to his friend, Son Dukpil.

There was even a player who would run around swiftly cutting dropouts' necks. She was the one known as the Queen Bee among third years, Lee Hyunah. When she ran, her victims wouldn't be able to react as their heads dropped onto the floor. Even their blood took a while to flow. As if she was kind, she would save those with pretty faces and mercilessly kill those she deemed ugly. She gave swords to those she saved and ordered them to kill others. She had obtained a ring and a throwing knife.

5 teachers died after getting hit by the gym teacher's iron mace. Among them, three weren't dropouts but those that hunted dropouts. The gym teacher Hwang Mangi didn't hesitate to kill his competitors. He had obtained a pill and armor.

Then there was Choi Junsung. As expected, he easily obtained items. While dragging a long two-handed sword behind him.

“Wanna move?”

With those words, even competitors who had caught a dropout would move aside without a word. He was the rumored fighter of the third years so they didn't have the courage to stand up to him. The first third year who lost his temper was cut in half by Choi Junsung's lightning fast two-handed sword. Choi Junsung obtained a necklace, helmet and gauntlets.

Who to kill?

Your competitors or to quickly kill the dropouts?

And.

Will you kill only the dropouts or their friends as well?

Or, contrarily, will you kill the hunters and save the dropouts?

Who will you kill and who will you save?

Even in this simple game, there were a few options and the players who shined each had their own style.

Instead of a fight between justice and injustice, it was more a fight between rules. And rules were something only the strong could create.

And among them, Choi Hyuk's rule was eye-catching.

'Kill the one who obtains an item.'

There was no one who specifically targeted those who obtained items. Because an E rank was powerful, no one wanted to fight against people with items with unknown effects.

While everyone else was fairly(?) killing dropouts and obtaining items, Choi Hyuk was the only one who solely focused on snatching the items after killing their owners. Because of this, Choi Hyuk's fights were especially fierce.

Since the necklace he had snatched first was useless as it was already spent, his second fight was fierce as well. His opponent wielded an E rank saber. Every time he clashed with the E rank saber, his F rank Bastard Sword would chip. If he was to receive a hit straight on, it was certain his sword would split in two. Also, the E rank saber increased its owner's power and speed, so it was difficult for Choi Hyuk to break through. Choi Hyuk sneakily moved back avoiding the slashes as he waited for his opponent to tire out and stabbed right when his opponent showed an opening. His Bastard Sword ripped through his opponent's armor and Choi Hyuk was able to seize a slightly curved E rank saber from his corpse.

Every fight would be the same, so it took quite a lot of time.

When he seized the Necklace of Protection and the saber, 6 minutes of the Bonus Game had already passed. And by that time, most the dropouts were chased down and killed.

While one side was hunting normally, Choi Hyuk was fighting fiercely by himself.

Smash!

At the same time Choi Hyuk seized the saber, another golden hammer fell to the floor. Shoes that would increase your recovery stat and jumping ability. The student who had obtained them was clearly aware of Choi Hyuk. It was because he had seen Choi Hyuk target other people's items. As soon as he received the shoes, he ran to the sides and hid among the spectators. However, Choi Hyuk chased after him. The item owner used his increased jumping ability to avoid Choi Hyuk but, eventually, Choi Hyuk's estoc pierced through his stomach. There were no exceptions to Choi Hyuk's 'Kill those that killed first. In the order, I see them' rule.

Everyone was filled with shock at the scene.

Especially the spectating students who thought they were a safe distance away, they couldn't help but be terrified of Choi Hyuk's determination as he moved in between them to kill his target.

"Haa... Ha..."

When he had finally killed his last target, Choi Hyuk's stamina was at its limit. The karma that was fiercely circulating his body stiffened or relaxed. It seemed he was feeling the effects of his stamina stat.

But still, perhaps it was due to struggling through fights or because of his rule, he wasn't as uncomfortable as he was when he killed Bae Hyunsung. It was better if his body was uncomfortable than his mind.

He calmed his breath and looked at his surroundings.

'What a mess.'

Everyone was flashing out a red (hostile) light. Some were even emitting a black (killing) light. Choi Hyuk could see it with his 'Eyes of Distinction'. Red and black lights flashed on his skin. It was an unpleasant and disgusting feeling.

Many were cautious or envious or hated Choi Hyuk. Although the student body president Kim Piljoong and the gym teacher Hwang Mangi had killed more people than Choi Hyuk, the one who was under the most hostility was him.

It was because, among the players who stood out, Choi Hyuk was a guy that they had never heard of or seen before and he was the only one who targeted those who obtained items. There was no one who doubted that the best fighter in school, Choi

Junsung, would kill people. But when a person no one had seen before was doing things even the best fighter Choi Junsung wasn't doing, he really popped. A lot of hate fell onto Choi Hyuk.

Except for Choi Junsung.

'Why is he white?'

Only Choi Junsung was emitting a white (goodwill) light to Choi Hyuk. When their eyes met, he would wave. For him to show goodwill when he killed people. For some reason, he felt worse. Choi Hyuk ignored him.

The only surviving dropouts were the four Jung Minji's group was protecting. Besides them, all the other dropouts either died or, with the help of their friends, killed someone and got rid of the ITEM mark.

As it was tough to face the 15 people in Jung Minji's group, the hunt for dropouts ended there.

Then, when no dropouts were killed for 2 minutes, the announcement for the next game appeared. There wasn't even a break.

'Damn... damn it all...'

'These fucking dropouts...'

Jung Minji who was unable to obtain any E rank items because she was protecting the dropouts was inwardly grinding her teeth.

However, she was the player who had formed a group faster than anyone else.

And that was how the {Throne Game} began.

{1} Aeon of Strife, probably better to think of it as a MOBA

{2} Gladius – <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gladius>

CHAPTER 10

THRONE GAME (1)

The rules of the Throne Game were partially revealed.

{Throne Game}

1. Think of five people. If you gain their support, you can become a king.
2. Those that become kings will receive 10 free karma points
3. Time limit: 1 minute
4. <Hidden>

In under a minute, how many people could gain the support of five people in a single school?

A typical group of friends was made up of 3-5 people and there was bound to be central person in that group. There were more people who attempted to gain five people's support than they thought.

On top of that, the reward was 10 free karma points. Normally if someone killed a person, a total of 7 karma points would be distributed to each stat, so it was better than killing someone. Since the karma points were able to be allocated however they wanted, it might even be better than killing 4 or 5.

Also, because of the short time limit, there was a rushed side to it like a sale that was about to end.

The students and teachers who were confident in their popularity competitively thought of five people.

{Kim Piljoong wants your support. Do you agree?}

The friends who were asked received a short message.

These people exchanged glances with each other.

It was the same with the class president Jung Minji. However, the ones she thought of weren't those who trusted and followed her or those who were easy to deal with like Yoon Girim. She thought of nearby leaders who she was friendly with. She picked the third year who fought hard with a firefighter's axe, Chu Youngjin, the student who was known as the most handsome boy in her class, Kwon Saehyuk and the ethics teacher who helped protect the dropouts with Jung Minji, Park Solam.

Jung Minji said at the same time.

"Carefully think about what that the hidden rule is! 'Throne Game', do you think there will be endless thrones? We have to join our strength together."

The ones who heard her shout were speechless. She was saying that the number of thrones was limited and that the ones who declared themselves as kings would have to fight each other in a battle royale.

'She thought that far as soon as the message appeared?'

They couldn't help but be surprised by her intelligence.

"Are you sure?"

The ethics teacher Park Solam asked.

"Rationally, half-half. Emotionally, 100%."

Jung Minji gave a short answer. Everyone took her words seriously.

Everyone had either fought together with Jung Minji or had seen her actions in the Bonus Game. If they couldn't trust her judgment, who could they trust?

If what she said was true, it was better to join up as one strong power than be separated into 6 different groups.

Eventually, Jung Minji gained the support of five leaders.

Pahhh!

Light shined from Jung Minji's body. It wasn't just her. Shining lights appeared throughout the gym. Among the 797 survivors of the Bonus Game, 42 had become kings.

They stared into space as if there was a message only for the kings. Kim Piljoong looked as if it was only natural, Choi Junsung looked like he was having fun and Jung Minji had a nervous expression, however, the majority had proud expressions as if they had become a special existence.

Then the announcement changed.

{Throne Game}

4. Choose your king. Those who aren't kings must be affiliated with a king.
5. Time limit: 5 minutes. Those who haven't chosen a king will cease to exist.
6. <Hidden>

At this moment, Choi Hyuk recalled the hidden rules he found during the break.

{Throne Game, Hidden Rule #9}

If a person kills more than 5 people and awakens to an innate skill but is not affiliated with a king, the person receives the rights of the 'King without Subjects' and 30 free karma points that can be allocated however they want.

{Throne Game, Hidden Rule #15}

When a 'King without Subjects' sits on the throne, the person will be randomly given

a D rank or greater weapon.

‘Good...’

If he hadn't found these rules, Choi Hyuk would have had to choose a king as well. However, he had found rules related to 'King without Subjects'. And to achieve it, he had already killed 5 people.

Choi Hyuk crossed his arms and waited. Since the rule about 'those who haven't chosen a king will cease to exist' didn't apply to him who had found the hidden rules.

But, there was no way the other kings knew that. Choi Hyuk was the most outstanding player in the Bonus Game and it was obvious that no matter what kind of game the Throne Game was; it was necessary to have strong followers.

The first to approach was Jung Minji. Her group was made up of the friends and colleagues of the five who joined her at the start and it could be considered large enough to face off against the school president Kim Piljoong's group.

“Hyuk. Join me.”

Choi Hyuk turned to look at Jung Minji. A smart and daring girl. The girl who had stood up for him by herself. The girl who had saved Yoon Girim who was abandoned by everyone else. But, she was definitely not a pushover. She was just strangely sensitive to the weak as she unhesitantly stabbed guys like Lee Mingi with an awl.

She was charming. If he hadn't found the hidden rules, he might have gone under Jung Minji's command.

Choi Hyuk shook his head.

“I have some circumstances.”

Jung Minji's expression didn't change when she heard his refusal and she asked calmly.

“In the very least, I don't want to become enemies with you. Who are you planning to join?”

Choi Hyuk replied.

“Don’t worry. As long as the situation allows it, I won’t be your enemy.”

Then Jung Minji silently looked at Choi Hyuk before extending her hand. Choi Hyuk examined her hand. The Jung Minji reflected on his ‘Eyes of Distinction’ didn’t reveal any colors. Her suggestion wasn’t made with good or bad intentions. Like she said, she simply didn’t want to fight him. An objective judgment.

In this chaos influenced by madness and confusion, she kept her calm. For some reason, Choi Hyuk liked that calmness. Choi Hyuk grinned as he grabbed her hand.

Besides, there were many guys to fight besides her.

As soon as she left, Choi Junsung approached him. He smiled brightly and abruptly tried to put his arms around Choi Hyuk’s shoulders. Choi Hyuk pushed him away before his arms could wrap around him.

He was the Choi Hyuk who had seen Lee Mingi put his arms around Yang Gilsoo and strangle him.

The fellow known as Choi Junsung looked like he had nothing to be scared of as he acted thoughtlessly.

“What.”

“Hey... Don’t be so cranky. You fight pretty good? Let’s fight together. You have to choose someone anyways.”

The best fighter in school Choi Junsung really liked Choi Hyuk. He who had no friends, only lackeys, felt that he had finally found an ‘equal’. That was why, even though Choi Hyuk pushed him away, he didn’t feel bad.

And he never thought that Choi Hyuk would actually refuse him. It didn’t matter if he liked him or not. If a tiger was to choose a king, it would be another tiger. Choi Junsung was confident that the only tigers in this school were Choi Hyuk and himself.

“Screw off.”

So the next words were particularly unpleasant.

“What?”

“I told you to screw off.”

The only person who thought they were equals was Choi Junsung. Choi Hyuk thought he was nothing more than a ‘shitty bastard’ who only acted tough when he was actually weak.

Choi Junsung’s face distorted.

“Huh. What? So did you really side with that bitch? Fine. I get it. Ptu.”

Choi Junsung spread out his hands before turning around and leaving.

In between the white (goodwill) light his body was emitting, traces of red (killing) light squeezed through. The warm light had traces of clamminess to it.

‘What? How can there be goodwill and killing intent? Is it saying that since he can’t get me, he’ll destroy me?’

Anyways, he was a funny guy.

That was how people with killing intent increased but Choi Hyuk didn’t care. Didn’t he resolve himself? That he would stand at the top. That he would show the most memorable performance.

5 minutes had passed.

When everyone else stood around the 42 kings, Choi Hyuk stood by himself.

Those who approached him with slight expectations all had cold water poured over them. They all thought one thing.

‘Just who is he backed by to act like that?’

Choi Hyuk was a dangerous existence. They never thought of the possibility that Choi Hyuk wouldn’t choose anyone and were curious who Choi Hyuk joined in secret.

Then there was a change.

Paah!

It was the same as when the kings were chosen. Choi Hyuk body emitted a light. But, the color of the light was different. Instead of a white light, a black light was emitted. And above Choi Hyuk's head, a hidden rule was revealed.

{Throne Game, Hidden Rule #9}

If a person kills more than 5 people and awakens to an innate skill but is not affiliated with a king, the person receives the rights of the 'King without Subjects' and 30 free karma points that can be allocated however they want.

"Huuh."

Shouts erupted all around him. No way. For there to be a rule about a 1-person king? Although Choi Hyuk didn't know this, unlike the other rules which had multiple copies, there was only a single copy of the 'King without Subjects' rule. To everyone else, Choi Hyuk's ascension to 'King without Subjects' was something they had never expected.

'On top of that, 30 free karma points?'

In fact, if they ranked the people who had killed the most, the school president Kim Piljoong, gym teacher Hwang Mangi and Choi Hyuk placed in the top three. For someone like him to receive 30 free karma points to use however he wished meant that he could act with an unequalled strength. And this place was a place where you would get stronger the more you kill. If there was this much difference from the beginning, it might be hard for them to catch up.

Their already heightened alertness against Choi Hyuk further hit their peak when the other rules of the Throne Game were revealed.

{Throne Game}

6. There are 5 thrones. You cannot leave unless 5 kings remain.
7. The only way to end the qualification of a king is to kill them.
8. From here on out, followers are unable to defy their king and no king is able to kill their followers. If a follower's king is killed, the follower will join the enemy king's group.

Those who had hastily become kings regretted it. It was as if they had voluntarily jumped into a game of death. There were about 30 kings like that while the other 13 had a burning desire to take one of the five seats.

At the same time...

Killing intent poured onto Choi Hyuk who was the strongest by himself but had no strengths in numbers. Choi Hyuk could see the killing intent with his 'Eyes of Distinction'.

His vision was filled with red lights. A disgusting sticky feeling. Choi Hyuk smiled like a beast.

While smiling, he specifically pointed out kings who were emitting red lights.

"You."

The first person he pointed to was the student president Kim Piljoong. He had a 'Who are you?' expression.

"You."

The second was Choi Junsung. He just shrugged his shoulders.

"You."

The third was the gym teacher Hwang Mangi. His facial muscles rippled when he heard a student talking to him impolitely.

“You. You. You.”

The 6 kings Choi Hyuk pointed out were quite high ranked. At the same time, they were those who had the most killing intent towards him. After specifically pointing them all out, Choi Hyuk declared while revealing his teeth.

“I’m going to kill you.”

The other kings were speechless. Even Jung Minji’s expression distorted.

Choi Hyuk unconcernedly started to distribute his free karma points. If he was to include the previous reward for {Danger}, he had 40 free karma points. Choi Hyuk divided it up into 30 and 10 points and put them in Stamina and Recovery.

{Choi Hyuk}

*Human

*Karma Points

Power: 15 (+5) Speed: 19 (+5) Control: 27

Endurance: 13 Stamina: 45 Recovery: 35 (+10)

*Free Karma Points: 10 *Retribution: 5

{Comparison to his beginning stats}

Power: 5 Speed: 7 Control: 22

Endurance: 7 Stamina: 9 Recovery: 10

His other stats were higher than others anyways. Even if they were lower, Choi Hyuk was confident he would win. So he believed that the most important stats were Stamina and Recovery.

‘Since I don’t know how many I’ll kill... ’

He planned on fully revealing his violent side in this fight.

‘Watch carefully.’

He was planning on appealing to the fucking bastards who created this game.

To what lengths this human known as Choi Hyuk could fight to.



{Settings (T/N: Information about how the system works)}

Power: 16 (+5) Stats raised with items will be indicated with a (+5). If you were to take away the increased stat, power would decrease to 11.

Below are the items Choi Hyuk earned in the Bonus Game

{Necklace of Protection}

Rank: E

Intercepts an opponent's attack within a certain range.

Remaining interceptions: 0/3

*You will gain an interception every 20 minutes.

{Tireless Boots}

Rank: E

Recovery +10

Durability: 10/10

Allows you to run faster and jump higher.

{Fang Saber}

Rank: E

Power +5 Speed +5

Durability: 300/300

CHAPTER 11

THRONE GAME (2)

Flash!

Lights flashed out everywhere as a king symbol appeared above everyone's forehead. And they were granted the names of the kings.

Jung Minji's symbol was a bloody knight, her king name was the Crazy Knight King.

Choi Junsung had an executioner as his symbol, his king name was the Slaughter King.

Kim Piljoong had a hunter as his symbol, his king name was the Hunter King.

And above Choi Hyuk's head was a black flag made from something that looked like the clothes of a death god. His king name was the King without Subjects.

As their symbols were larger and brighter than everyone else's, it was easy to find a king wherever he was. And you could tell who was under who's rule in an instant.

Those who declared themselves as kings numbered 43 and there were 5 thrones.

Each group started to distance themselves from each other. There were too many competitors to start fighting right away. A fierce psychological battle erupted between close groups. And that boring engagement... would have continued.

If it wasn't for Choi Hyuk.

While groups were wary of each other as they distanced themselves away, Choi Jung dashed. Towards the school president, the Hunter King Kim Piljoong.

Kim Piljoong's reaction was fast.

"Those with shields come forth, spearmen behind them. The rest get behind them and all of you get your backs against the wall."

Among the groups in the gym, Kim Piljoong's group was the truest to their name as

well as the strongest. He wasn't afraid of Choi Hyuk. However, he was pissed.

"There nothing good being under attention from the start... tsk."

In a situation where everyone was trying to read what was on each other's mind, they would only become targets if they put under attention. If his battle line became disorganized when fighting Choi Hyuk, there was a possibility that another group would launch a surprise attack.

Kim Piljoong drew an arrow. The bow he obtained when he killed a dropout, the 'Returning Bow', not only increased the speed of his arrows but his arrows would return to him after being shot.

'I will shoot when he comes within 5 meters.'

No matter how good Choi Hyuk's skills were, he believed that there was no way that he would be able to block an arrow shot from the 'Returning Bow'.

But, Choi Hyuk switched directions before he came within 5 meters. He even sped up. With his 19 karma points in Speed and the speed effect of the 'Tireless Boots', Choi Hyuk sped forward.

Choi Hyuk's target was never the Hunter King Kim Piljoong. Running towards Kim Piljoong was just a disguise.

His real target was the weakest of the six kings he pointed to. His symbol was a dhole {1}.

Choi Hyuk didn't know his name. Only that he was friendly with Lee Mangi, Bae Hyunsung and others who bullied him. His killing intent towards Choi Hyuk was his mistake.

He stared blankly as Choi Hyuk approached him. His eyes widened later as if he was surprised but it was already too late.

Tada, Slam!

Choi Hyuk's body flew 10 meters into the air. The moment his subordinates flinched, Choi Hyuk was already passing above their heads. When his target was fumbling with his sword, Choi Hyuk pulled his Fang Saber from its sheath.

Slash!

{First Kill! You were the first to kill a king. You have been given an additional 3 free karma points. Retribution has increased by 3.}

{You have killed a king. You have been given 2 free karma points.}

If he found a hidden rule about the first kill, he might have gotten a bigger reward but it wasn't a bad start.

Thud.

When Choi Hyuk landed, the group without a king stared at him with blank expressions. The king's symbol above their heads disappeared.

Choi Hyuk lifted his head and counted the numbers.

"One down. Five left."

Choi Hyuk's next target was the next weakest one. It was normal in a fight against many to target the weakest ones first.

The fight began.



Originally, those followers who had lost their king would become affiliated with the enemy king.

However, it was different when their king was killed by the 'King without Subjects' Choi Hyuk. The followers who lost their king lost their affiliation as well and would join the first king who made contact with them. So, whenever Choi Hyuk killed a king, the place would overflow with new followers. The first to take them got them. When such a chance appeared in a game where you would die out if you couldn't increase your power, the real competition between the kings began. The psychological battle quickly switched to battles and all-out wars.

A blood wind blew with Choi Hyuk at its center.

Choi Hyuk was intoxicated with the karma circulating his body. Karma was stronger

than bones, tougher than muscles and more flexible than joints. The more karma he received, the more superior the karma that circulated his body was.

The karma from his 21 Speed stat immediately contracted to moved Choi Hyuk's body. When others took one step, Choi Hyuk took two. In a fight, that one step difference could mean life or death.

Slash!

His opponent unconsciously took a step back as he saw Choi Hyuk approach but, with another step, Choi Hyuk slashed off his neck with his Fang Saber. Choi Hyuk quickly turned around and charged to his next opponent.

Slash!

It was a guy wearing an E rank armor. Choi Hyuk didn't aim for his armor but for his wrist.

"Gahhh!"

When his target screamed as he grabbed his bleeding wrist, Choi Hyuk used that chance to take out a thin estoc with his left hand and stabbed his opponent's neck between the folds of his armor. 30 Control. He didn't waste a single drop of strength with his Control stat that surpassed his Power and Speed. The karma stretched out and precisely stabbed with the sword.

"Grkk..."

Enemies were everywhere, he took one out but another enemy arrived raising his sword immediately after. Choi Hyuk grabbed and pulled the wrist that was holding onto the sword. As the man lost his balance, the Fang Saber sliced his throat.

The dead turned into ashes as they were absorbed into Choi Hyuk. Then, Choi Hyuk's stats would increase once again. He was getting stronger in real time.

"Block it! Block it!"

Choi Hyuk's second target. The symbol of a wild dog, the Wild Dog King Song Minsik urged his followers crazily. Due to the rule that followers could not disobey their king, his followers blocked Choi Hyuk's path knowing all too well that they would die.

Taking advantage of the confusion, the Weed King Kim Taesik brought his followers to launch a surprise attack on the Wild Dog King. “Euah! What the!” shouted the freaked out Song Minsik who ran away. “Goodbye,” said the tailing Kim Taesik. And behind Kim Taesik was the Crazy Knight King Jung Minji who attacked, “I’ll use your items well.” Jung Minji who wasn’t able to obtain any items during the Bonus Game was first targeting easy kings with items.

Although they chased one another and tossed and turned, eventually only the strong would survive.

The Crazy Knight King Jung Minji (Class President, First in School) and the Hunter King Kim Piljoong (School President) were well versed in tactics. Their followers didn’t lose formation in this confusing brawl.

“Go back a step!”

They would move back.

“Two steps forward!”

They would push away their enemies and stay in line. If they were to obtain shields, spears and swords and planned out new tactics, everyone and their dog wouldn’t be able to stop them.

That was the reason. Why Kim Piljoong was so overly confident.

It had been 20 minutes since the Throne Game had started. 20 kings had already been eliminated. Kim Piljoong’s group was still the strongest as well as the largest. Choi Hyuk killed 3 kings by himself but to Kim Piljoong, it was like he only killed pathetic ones who didn’t even know the basics. It was because of that. During the brawl, Kim Piljoong’s group came close to Choi Hyuk but Kim Piljoong wasn’t nervous in the slightest. He thought that he could just lazily clean up his surroundings and devour Choi Hyuk when he had the chance.

‘Killing a regular king gives you 2 free karma points... I wonder how much the King without Subjects will give?’

Instead, he was actually becoming more excited.



That moment, Jung Minji was in the middle of urging Yoon Girim.

“I did what I can. I’m pissed so don’t push it.”

“Bu... but...”

“Stop. Just shut up and kill. You trash.”

Jung Minji threw a student who was subdued by her group in front of Yoon Girim. Yoon Girim still hadn’t gotten rid of the ITEM mark. She wasn’t distributed any karma, wasn’t affiliated with anyone, couldn’t fight and was instead becoming a target for enemies. Jung Minji had a mind to kill Yoon Girim and obtain an item. However, whenever she saw her weak face, she couldn’t leave her alone. That was why she became angrier.

‘If I could have my way, I would like to do this to Lee Hyejin as well...’

Jung Minji glanced at Chu Youngjin’s girlfriend, Lee Hyejin. Currently, among the four dropouts, two had killed someone and had gotten rid of their ITEM marks. The only ones left were Yoon Girim and Lee Hyejin. However, Jung Minji found it uncomfortable telling Lee Hyejin what to do.

Unlike Kim Piljoong who was always famous as well as a leader and the school president, she was only a class president, even though she was a king of the alliance, she couldn’t help be careful around Chu Youngjin.

‘I can’t make enemies when I don’t know what kind of games there will be in the future.’

Chu Youngjin who was currently the attack leader of the group was crazy for Lee Hyejin. There was no reason to create grudges.

“Sob... sob...”

While Jung Minji was pondering over things, Yoon Girim had stabbed the subdued student in the neck while crying. The ITEM mark above her head disappeared. In its place was Jung Minji’s Crazy Knight King symbol.

Jung Minji didn't want to see Yoon Girim's crying face.

'Fucking sensitivity...'

When Yoon Girim cried in this bloody battle reeking with blood, Jung Minji's heart hurt. Jung Minji patted Yoon Girim's head as if she was hitting her before turning towards the battlefield.

"Now, go fight."

It was about time the fight would come to a lull anyways.

Even if she roughly counted, there weren't even 20 kings remaining. As there was more space than before, it was much easier to keep each other in check. And due to the brawl started because of Choi Hyuk, everyone's stamina was at rock bottom. After using Power surpassing their Stamina stat, karma would completely relax and they weren't able to move their bodies like they wanted to. It was similar to a muscle pain. Some would call it the 'cooldown'.

Already, she could tell that the front lines weren't as fierce as before. Instead of fighting, it was more like they were acting like they were.

'If you die in this situation, Yoon Girim, you're a dumb bitch.'

When Jung Minji was finishing her calculations.

Murmur.

The front lines noisily murmured.

'What happened?'

In the middle of the commotion stood Choi Hyuk.

And a countless number of Hunter symbols were surrounding Choi Hyuk. Currently the strongest, Kim Piljoong's group... Their symbol was disappearing. Jung Minji's mouth opened wide dumbly.

"The school president is dead!"

Someone who was overcome with fear and terror screamed.

But that wasn't the end of the screams.

While Choi Hyuk was stirring up Kim Piljoong's group, Choi Junsung thought this was a chance and set up a small party and was devouring Kim Piljoong's outer lines.

So,

Choi Hyuk's eyes landed on Choi Junsung who was with a small group.

"Waaahhh!"

Another commotion arose.

Just how many did he kill to get so strong? Choi Hyuk's movements had already far surpassed that of a human. His body immediately accelerated that it was like watching a motorcycle hit zero-hundred in 2 seconds. Choi Hyuk's Fang Saber shot towards Choi Junsung.

Clash!

Sparks flew out like lightning. Choi Junsung's two-handed sword blocked Choi Hyuk's Fang Saber with lightning speed. However, Choi Junsung's face became completely pale.

'Fuck... don't tell me that was just his strength without a skill?'

Choi Junsung was the man who followed Choi Hyuk up to the ceiling. There, he found an E rank skill called {Lightning Strike}. {Lightning Strike} could use any weapon to strike with incredible speed and it matched well with Choi Junsung's two-handed weapon. However, Choi Hyuk's running slash was equal to his {Lightning Strike}.

Clang!

The swords clashed again. Choi Junsung's {Lightning Strike} was able to deflect Choi Hyuk's Fang Saber. On the outside, they looked equal. But, Choi Junsung's insides were burning. The skill consumed a lot of stamina. His tense karma already started to stretch out like rubber on a hot day. If he used {Lightning Strike} again in this state, he wouldn't even have the strength to run.

“Fuck! Block him!”

Choi Junsung used the subordinates who followed him here as a shield as he escaped.

Slash!

Crash!

“Gahhh!”

His subordinates died a gruesome death but because of them, Choi Junsung was able to escape to his headquarters. Even when Choi Junsung arrived at his headquarters, he didn't have the courage to go save his dying subordinates.

The surroundings were still.

At some point, there was an empty space with Choi Hyuk in the middle.

He suddenly cut off the school president Kim Piljoong's neck then Choi Junsung who dominated fights ran away with his tail between his legs.

“Haa... haa...”

In the center, Choi Hyuk was catching his breath.

After 30 minutes of fighting desperately, everyone's karma had become stretched out and their legs were trembling. Steam even came up from Choi Hyuk's body.

Choi Hyuk was recalling the fight.

‘So close.’

It was going great when he killed Kim Piljoong while his guard was down. The interception from the {Necklace of Protection} really showed its worth. Kim Piljoong couldn't block his attack when he ignored defense and rushed in.

‘It would have been the best if I took down Choi Junsung as well.’

However, Choi Junsung was already locked up in his headquarters, completely alert. He had already used up the one interception he had and it was too much to fight him

now.

Choi Hyuk wiped his head. Sweat dripped off.

Huh...

It was refreshing.

He wasn't fighting with the intentions to kill.

How far his body could move. Where he should stretch his arms or legs to. He moved that way up until now as if he was training and experimenting. Everything went the way he thought it would. Choi Hyuk's ability was finally able to stretch out its arms and let out a cheer.

Choi Hyuk looked at his surroundings. He had killed 4 out of his 6 targets. There were only about 17 kings left alive. They all looked like their stamina had reached their limit as they took this chance to curl up and rest.

However, Choi Hyuk never thought about resting.

"Don't we have to continue? I still have 2 left."

Choi Hyuk stared at the gym teacher Hwang Mangi. He took a deep breath before dashing towards him.

"Crazy!"

"Just what is this bastard's Stamina?"

Cries erupted everywhere. To those exhausted people, Choi Hyuk looked like he had become even faster.

Since the beginning of the Throne Game, when everyone else's stats were around 10 each, Choi Hyuk's Stamina was at 45 and his Recovery stat was at 35 after using the free karma points he received as a reward.

And currently, his Stamina was at 83 while his Recovery was at 73.

Choi Hyuk put more strength into his sword.

CHAPTER 12

THRONE GAME (3)

{Choi Hyuk}

*Human

*Karma Points

Power: 54 (+5) Speed: 58 (+5) Control: 69

Endurance: 52 Stamina: 83 Recovery: 73 (+10)

*Free Karma Points: 8 *Retribution: 44

{Hwang Mangi}

*Human

*Karma Points

Power: 73 (+10) Speed: 43 (+8) Control: 33

Endurance: 42 (+10) Stamina: 33 Recovery: 39 (+5)

*Free Karma Points: 0 *Retribution: 28

Hwang Mangi was strong. He had a Power stat of 73. Choi Hyuk's Power stat was 54, so if you only looked at their Power, he was stronger than Choi Hyuk. The 10 free karma points he received once he became a king and the 14 points he earned through hidden rules and killing kings were all put into his Power stat and even his E rank iron mace increased his Power by 10. As he was in the top 3 along with Choi Hyuk and Choi Junsung, his other stats were outstanding as well.

So it was fine as long as Choi Hyuk didn't meet Hwang Mangi's iron mace head on.

Whoosh!

Bang!!

Hwang Mangi's iron mace mercilessly smashed the gym floor. The cement exploded as he smashed it with his 73 Power.

However, Choi Hyuk looked at him with a pathetic expression.

Hwang Mangi's movements wasted too much energy because his Control was less than half of his Power. The karma that was contracting and increasing in his body was too rough. To the point where he couldn't control it.

An obvious blind spot after his full swing. Choi Hyuk pierced that opening.

“Uhuhuk!”

Still, it seemed that the gym teacher had good reflexes as he quickly reacted.

Cling!

The sword that had just slightly pierced Hwang Mangi’s armor slipped off. Hwang Mangi backed away with a pale face. His overflowing confidence went into hiding after a single exchange. Choi Hyuk’s high-speed footsteps were like that of a ghost’s. Most of the strong weren’t strong because they played fair but strong because they were still alive. Hwang Mangi who believed himself to be strong realized too late that he shouldn’t have had a direct fight with Choi Hyuk.

“Everyone block that bastard!”

Most of Hwang Mangi’s followers were teachers. Teachers Choi Hyuk was familiar with blocked his path and wielded their weapons.

Choi Hyuk showed no mercy to those who tried to kill him. A bloodbath occurred.

Hwang Mangi brought his royal bodyguards to target another king in the meantime.

“I have to quickly end this game.”

This was Hwang Mangi’s conclusion. That he had to get rid off all the easy kings instead of Choi Hyuk. So that he could be in the last 5.

Bang!

Whenever he swung his iron mace, three or four exhausted students would be smashed apart. However, there was no way he would be able to endlessly swing his iron mace with a Stamina stat that was a bit more half his Power. At some point, Hwang Mangi became completely exhausted as he was busy running away with his royal bodyguards. One minute felt like an hour.



The moment Choi Hyuk charged at Hwang Mangi, the other king's fates were sealed.

Jung Minji ordered.

“Get up. Get them.”

Currently, Kim Piljoong's group wasn't absorbed. If others didn't follow Choi Hyuk and increase their strength by absorbing other groups, they would be left behind.

Even the third year Queen Bee Lee Hyunah urged her group.

“If you rest cuz you're tired, you're dead.”

Choi Junsung was a bit more desperate. He was already heading towards the group next to him.

“Kill!”

The reason was the same as Hwang Mangi's.

‘Fuck... I'm next if the gym teach dies. I have to quickly kill the rest and end the game.’

With different reasons, they started the final struggle. As an intense battle began while everyone's stamina was at their bottom, the number of deaths began to pile up one after the other.

Everyone aimed to devour each other.

Slice!

The Assassin King Lee Hyunah was definitely fast and it seemed like she was getting used to a skill as her attacks were even becoming more stealthy. And that shined in this intense battle. While Choi Hyuk was chasing after Hwang Mangi, she had cut off two king's heads. However, her stamina was also the problem.

“Pant. Pant.”

The moment she had grabbed her knees as sweat dripped down her body.

Whoosh. Whoosh.

A hatchet flew towards her. She tried to move once she heard the sound but her legs wouldn't react.

Thud!

“Ackk!”

The girl's followers surrounded her as she collapsed after getting hit in the shoulder.

“Lightning Strike!”

Flash!

A white lightning seemed to have passed as three people were sliced through their waists.

“Hooo... hooo... I feel like I'm gonna die. Sorry, nuna^{1}.”

The one who appeared was Choi Junsung. Though he was friendly with Lee Hyunah, he unhesitatingly stabbed the back of her neck.

“I have enough problems of my own.”

Even Lee Hyunah who distinguished herself in the Bonus Game died in vain.

No one knew where Choi Junsung picked up an E rank hatchet from but his aim was incredible. After the encounter with Choi Hyuk, Choi Junsung hurriedly cleaned out the kings near him and picked up quite a few E rank items. He decided that if he survived this game he would need an item that would help keep Choi Hyuk at bay.

And Chu Youngjin's girlfriend, Lee Hyejin, was unluckily tangled in. She was the only dropout who didn't get rid of her ITEM mark.

“Are you okay?”

Chu Youngjin was protecting Lee Hyejin from the intensified confusion. The Crazy Knight King Jung Minji didn't like his actions but overlooked it for now.

Lee Hyejin and Chu Youngjin were childhood friends. They grew up together like siblings under their parents who were friends with each other. The girl didn't think of the boy beyond a friend and the boy had a one-sided love for that girl for a long time until they were finally together. A familiar tale that wasn't very common in real life.

So to Chu Youngjin, it could be said that Lee Hyejin was his other half. In reality, if he were to remove all the memories including her, there wouldn't be many left. In every moment of happiness and sadness, in glory and despair, she was with him.

Chu Youngjin gazed at the trembling Lee Hyejin and Lee Hyejin met Chu Youngjin's gaze and nodded. In her eyes, Chu Youngjin could see a mixture of nervousness and warm trust.

She was always easily scared since she was young. It was the same when Chu Youngjin fell down a flight of stairs when he was seven. The one who was bleeding was Chu Youngjin but the one who fainted from the shock was Lee Hyejin. How shocked Chu Youngjin was when she suddenly fainted, how many times he teased her about it later, how she would sulk saying that she was scared of remembering the blood afterwards and how much effort he put in to calm her down...

To that girl, this situation was too brutal. Chu Youngjin found it too sad.

Just then.

Whoosh.

A hatchet flew and split Lee Hyejin's head.

"Huh?"

Drip drip.

Red blood splattered onto Chu Youngjin's uniform. Soon after, the blood flowing from Lee Hyejin's head covered Chu Youngjin's hands and soon soaked her shoulders.

"Huh?"

The moment when the light in her warm eyes that had met Chu Youngjin's gaze moments before disappeared... became an everlasting nightmare for Chu Youngjin.

Swish.

A golden hammer appeared. As if something shoved him, he was pushed a few steps away and his hand was no longer on her shoulders.

Slam!

Blood splattered everywhere.

When the hammer disappeared, Lee Hyejin was no longer there but a red longsword was floating in her place.

“Ah... Ahhh...”

Chu Youngjin became absentminded.

“Last item!”

Shouted Choi Junsung. He was rushing as fast as he could to grab the longsword.

Chu Youngjin unconsciously chased the sword that was his girlfriend. The hairs on his body stood on end and his eyes became bloodshot.

{Innate Skill ‘Berserker’ awakened!}

A system message popped up but he didn’t care.

“Euahhhhhhhhh!”

Chu Youngjin shot towards Choi Junsung at the speed of light. However, Choi Junsung smiled as he held the longsword. Choi Junsung cruelly received the weapon.

“Lightning Stike!”

Chu Youngjin who had awakened the Raging Warrior was fast but he was overwhelmed with agitation and Choi Junsung’s {Lightning Strike} was fast enough to pierce that opening.

That was the moment Jung Minji appeared.

“Protect!”

The Protect skill built in her E rank shield, the ‘Shield of Protection’, activated. A grey barrier surrounded Chu Youngjin’s body.

Clang!

Choi Junsung’s {Lightning Strike} shattered the barrier but due to the barrier’s curvature, his sword slipped and wobbled. The red blade cut into Chu Youngjin’s shoulder but it wasn’t a fatal blow. However, it was Chu Youngjin who was the most surprising. Even as his shoulder was sliced into, he didn’t slow his speed. He ignored the sword stuck in his shoulder and shot forwards with even more strength. His sword embedded itself into Choi Junsung’s neck.

“Co... cough.”

Choi Junsung turned into ash. He died meaninglessly.

During that time, Choi Hyuk chased the escaping Hwang Mangi and eventually killed him. He killed him even quicker because he looked like he would beg for his life. And when he turned his head, he saw Choi Junsung die.

Chu Youngjin ripped out the girl, the red sword that embedded herself into his shoulder. He hugged the sword tightly and broke down sobbing.

Choi Hyuk silently watched the scene.

“...Is this the end?”

The Throne Game was coming to an end.

It took around 30 minutes to eliminate 26 out of the 43 kings but it only took 5 minutes to eliminate 13 out of the remaining 17. There were only 4 kings remaining. The Crazy Knight King Jung Minji, the Heckler King Kim Hyunbaek, the Slave King Song Simin and the King without Subjects, Choi Hyuk.

In reality, before Choi Junsung’s death, with the death of Hwang Mangi, there were 5 kings remaining. Choi Junsung was stabbed to death because of his pointless greed.

The distinguished kings struggled against each other and in fact, the more normal

ones survived.

The announcement in the middle of the gym changed.

{Break Time}

1. From now on, the kings and their followers can move according to their free will.
2. You cannot leave the school until nightfall.

The long brutal fight had finally ended. Out of the 797 survivors of the Bonus Game, 483 remained.

^{1} nuna – what a younger male calls an older female

CHAPTER 13

EVENING AND DINNER

Since the corpses turned into ash, the gym was cleaner than he thought. Not only did the Recovery stat decreased the time it took to use Karma again but it was excellent for wounds as well. Most wounds would slowly close up. The seriously wounded would die of shock and turn into ash. As expected, didn't leave a single trace.

If not for the blood stained clothes, he would have thought that everything was a dream.

The sudden peace actually made people nervous.

The one who took the lead was Jung Minji. Although the rule about absolutely following a king's orders disappeared, no one could question Jung Minji's leadership skills. Out of the 483 people, Jung Minji had gathered 258. Due to the actions of the ethics teacher Park Solam, who was her follower, there were an especially large number of teachers in her group.

Jung Minji stood in front of the teachers and brought order.

{You cannot leave the school until nightfall.}

First, she checked that this included the surrounding school field as well. Then she divided everyone into teams and let everyone use the washrooms to wash themselves off. Afterwards, she raided the cafeteria and the snack store and ordered the distribution of food. The Slave King Song Simin followed Jung Minji's commands as well. Choi Hyuk didn't line up for food but took it directly, however, he didn't take more than the distributed amount.

But the Heckler King Kim Hyunbaek was worried his leadership would be stolen.

"You don't know when things will happen and you want to mix together like this?"

"Then?"

"There's no need to do everything yourself. Just fairly divide the goods and let each

group decide how to distribute it.”

Jung Minji glared at Kim Hyunbaek before giving him provisions and supplies. Kim Hyunbaek smiled. He thought that Jung Minji was definitely a pushover. Even if she was like a ghost in the battlefield, she couldn't be heartless in situations like these.

‘If it was me, I would have never divided it. Tsk, tsk. What’s the point in having power? When you don’t even know how to use it.’

Kim Hyunbaek secretly looked down on Jung Minji. Because of her, he was able to obtain several things. First, he understood Jung Minji’s personality and he could show off his ability to his group. Since his orders weren’t absolute, creating a public image was important. Unlike Jung Minji who distributed supplies sparingly, Kim Hyunbaek let his followers eat as much as they wanted that day.

After washing, changing clothes in the locker and eating, it was break time. As there was nothing to do, people suddenly felt everything was new. Everything happened in only a day.

“I can’t believe it... We killed people?”

They were all normal teachers and students this morning but now there wasn’t anyone here who hadn’t murdered before. It was scary. The shock came after everything had happened. They didn’t know during that time but the mushy feeling when a sword sliced into someone, the warmth they felt when blood splattered on their sleeves and the last breath of their victims were now coming back to them.

The thing they couldn’t handle.

“Don’t tell me, it’ll be like this tomorrow?”

“...Fuck. It might even be tonight.”

If they had something to do, it might not have been so overwhelming. But since they weren’t allowed to leave the school until night, their anxiety couldn’t help but rise.

When they were endlessly beaten, it was natural they would become desperate. The real moment their hearts felt like they were being scraped was when it was peaceful. Sobs sounded out around them. There were some looking for their dead friends and some who entered an empty classroom and wept.

It was night.

The student who waited at the school entrance let out a shout.

“The wall is gone! We can go out!”

People swarmed towards the entrance once they heard the shout. However, at that moment, a separate message was given to the kings.

{All troops are to standby until tomorrow morning.}

Choi Hyuk mumbled.

“Fuck... just what are they planning now?”

The message to standby wasn't given to everyone but only to the kings.

“Everyone stop!!!”

A female voice resonated out from the school. It was Jung Minji. She ran as fast as she could and blocked the entrance with Chu Youngjin. Luckily, no one had left yet. It could be because the streetlights were all off. It would be scary to walk by yourself in a dark night. Too many people had already died.

“A message was sent only to the kings. ‘Standby until morning, those that leave will perish.

Jung Minji lied outright. There was nothing about ‘perishing’. It only said to standby. However, Choi Hyuk couldn't help but be amazed at her quick thinking. They wouldn't be well off if they refused the message anyways.

People were agitated.

“Why did only the kings receive it?”

They were suspicious. No, they didn't want to believe it. The person who came out afterwards was the Slave King Song Simin.

“I got it too. It's true.”

A heavy silence came over the noisy people. If another king came out and confirmed it, it would be almost certain. The person who messed it up was the Heckler King Kim Hyunbaek.

“I got it as well. But perishing is a lie. It just said to ‘standby’”

Everyone became noisy once again. Jung Minji gave a death stare to Kim Hyunbaek. He only shrugged his shoulders.

“There really wasn’t anything about perishing?”

Those with foolish expectations asked. Jung Minji said strictly.

“No. It definitely said perish. Kim Hyunbaek, why are you lying?”

Kim Hyunbaek showed a speechless expression at Jung Minji’s question before raising his voice.

“What? Why would I lie?”

Kim Hyunbaek felt dejected. Because it wasn’t a lie. Because his reaction really showed that, some even thought, ‘It looks like he’s right?’

“I got it too. It said perish.”

As soon as three of the four kings said they would perish, the mood that felt like they would jump out at any moment died down. When Jung Minji said, “Let’s go in,” everyone started to make their way back. However, it wasn’t like there weren’t any more doubts.

“Ha! It’s easy to make someone a fool! I get it! I do! I’m sorry!”

It might have been partly because of the loudly shouting Kim Hyunbaek who made his way back to the classroom.

As the night deepened, Jung Minji came to Choi Hyuk,

“Can we gather for a second?”

The Jung Minji reflected in his eyes still continued to be colorless. No good or bad

intentions.

“What is it?”

“I want to discuss just what kind of fucked up situation we’re in.”

For Choi Hyuk who wanted to know the mastermind behind this, it wasn’t a bad offer. He went to a classroom. The core members of Jung Minji’s group were already gathered. Even Song Simin and Kim Hyunbaek brought the core members of their groups.

Jung Minji spoke first.

“Two things caught my attention. First, the words written in the Ring of Rebirth. Kill. Only then will you kill.”

Some people nodded at Jung Minji’s words while others showed expressions that they didn’t understand.

“Why is it not ‘will you live’ but ‘will you kill’?”

Jung Minji didn’t stop there.

“One more thing. Today’s message. All ‘troops’ are to standby. They called us troops.”

Choi Hyuk nodded his head. He had even seen the message on the window. The words that passed by like an illusion were ‘get angry’.

“They... I don’t know if they are gods or devils. Anyways, I think they are trying to make us into an army.”

She had already come to a conclusion.

“The Ring of Rebirth was for individuals. And they tested one’s talent for killing. They made us fight in groups and pick leaders in the Throne Game. Then what would be next? Just what would we fight against as an army?”

It was silent. Tomorrow... yes, just what would happen tomorrow?

Just then, Kim Hyunbaek’s voice sounded out. It seemed like he was drunk as he had

a slight slur when he talked. The ones who searched the night duty room and found alcohol after hearing they had to wait until morning were Kim Hyunbaek's group.

"Ah~ you really are a headache. I was wondering why you gathered us here at night. We will find out tomorrow morning so why are you in a panic already?"

Kim Hyunbaek swayed as he got up from his seat. Jung Minji asked.

"Kim Hyunbaek. You're drunk?"

"Fuck. Kim Hyunbaek... Am I your friend? Even if I don't expect to hear 'senior', this is a bit too much."

He was already drunk. And the events today were so alien they already felt remote. Kim Hyunbaek started to show his real personality.

But Jung Minji didn't blink an eye and demanded.

"Everyone's sensitive. If you piss people off in your drunken stupor, they might really pull out their swords. Go out right now and stop the drinking party and sleep."

Kim Hyunbaek who heard her words only lifted his middle finger before leaving.

"I'm leaving~ You guys can chat til morning!"

Jung Minji's face became cold.



The gathering didn't produce any real results. There was Jung Minji's plausible conclusion but that was it. They lacked information. The meeting ended with an agreement they would gather again once they had more information.

Choi Hyuk returned to the classroom. Students had grouped up with their friends and spread out into different classrooms. Choi Hyuk was alone. He sat by himself as he recalled the events that occurred today. First, his status.

{Choi Hyuk}

*Human

*Karma Points

Power: 71 (+5) Speed: 75 (+5) Control: 86

Endurance: 70 Stamina: 0 (★) Recovery: 90 (+10)

*Free Karma Points: 10 *Retribution: 59

{Innate Skill}

- Eyes of Distinction

{Accomplishments}

- You have killed someone with karma before it was distributed to you
- Qualifications of a Sovereign 1/3

A long time had passed since his body filled with karma exceeded the human limit. He was curious what would happen if a stat hit 100 but it just returned to being a single digit and a star appeared next to it. It wasn't simply an increase in stats. It felt like a qualitative change in karma. Afterwards, even if he killed someone, the stat wouldn't rise. Was it because they weren't his match anymore?

And in the accomplishments section, a part about qualifications of a sovereign appeared. It was the reward for taking a throne.

{You have received a part of the Qualifications of a Sovereign.}

Like always, he couldn't figure out anything else about it. Just he felt a stronger belief in Jung Minji's words about an army.

He also received a weapon. His F rank estoc eventually broke during the fight and now he only had the Fang Saber and the new sword, Predator's Blade, left.

Choi Hyuk raised the pitch black blade. The dirty blade looked crude but it was very sharp. It was the reward he received from one of the hidden rules.

{Predator's Blade}

Rank: D (Unique, Growth-type)

Sharp and sturdy. The more blood it spills of strong foes, the stronger it will get.

Durability: 1,000/1,000

Just looking at the rank, it was iffy. The reward was a weapon that was D rank or above but he received the lowest rank weapon he could get. On top of that, he didn't receive any boosts in stats either. It was a blade that looked to be worse than the E rank Fang Saber. However, Choi Hyuk was completely happy with the weapon.

'A sword just needs to be sharp and sturdy.'

And as it could get stronger by cutting down foes, it was first-rate.

Choi Hyuk recalled the feeling of killing a countless number of people. It was unpleasant. It was a conflicting feeling. It was great that he could fight to his heart's content but, at the same time, there was a psychological resistance. He felt guilty when he remembered his mother's crying face pleading him to not hit people.

No... because of that, he became even angrier. Like the creator of this game wanted.

'I can't change the past.'

Choi Hyuk ground his teeth. His mother could already be dead. Although she could be alive... it didn't matter as he needed to become powerful enough to resist. Only then could he save or take revenge for her. He couldn't just become a pawn on a chessboard and suffer without knowing. If that was the case...

'Does that mean I need to become a killer? Do I just need to become an indiscriminate killing machine after discarding my previous self?'

Choi Hyuk shook his head. He would definitely get his revenge. However, a minimum rule, he needed one. It was hypocritical. But that was the mark his mother left on him. He couldn't give it up.

Choi Hyuk then made a few simple rules. The minimum to remember his past self.

Who to kill?

'Those who try to kill me. And those who brag about their strength in front of me.'

Luckily there was an overflowing amount of these people. To distinguish himself from others, he had no choice but to kill many... Even today, there was a countless number of candidates.

Now, who to save?

'This... I don't know. Those who are useful to me? First... Jung Minji?'

It was hard to set a clear standard.

Choi Hyuk closed his eyes.

'Let's do this slowly. Slowly.'

Since it seemed like his rule about who to kill would be enough for a while anyways.

The night was peaceful and sounds of chatter and laughter could be heard from various places. A person couldn't cry for 24 hours just because something shocking happened to him. The functions of laughter were various and sadness would come and go like a wave. Even in the saddest funeral, the chief mourner would occasionally laugh before crying suddenly.

Perhaps it was because of that, the night after a day of slaughtering was surprising filled with laughter. And there was a commotion that exceeded those noises. Choi Hyuk frowned.

The loud singing of Kim Hyunbaek's drunk group.

'There's no need to kill those trash.'

Although he was pissed, the uncomfortable feeling that would come after killing them would be greater. Choi Hyuk stopped paying attention and turned his body away. At that moment, someone knocked on the classroom door. When he opened it, he found Jung Minji had come with Chu Youngjin. They were completely armed.

Jung Minji suddenly asked.

“We are on our way to Kim Hyunbaek.”

Then she read Choi Hyuk’s mood. To see if he was displeased or not. Choi Hyuk shrugged his shoulders.

“That has nothing to do with me.”

Jung Minji nodded her head and left. Chu Youngjin followed behind her. Chu Youngjin emitted out a savage aura after Lee Hyejin died and showed absolute loyalty to Jung Minji who helped him get his revenge.

“Let’s go.”

Jung Minji ran in the hallway with that. Behind her, followed the elite unit in Jung Minji’s troops.

“Huh? What’s this!”

The members of Kim Hyunbaek’s group who were drinking and singing suddenly became noisy. Crash! The sound of someone jumping over something. The groan of someone who was stabbed. A scream. And...

“Save me! I’m sorry! Minji! Okay!! Ah!! Ahhhhhh!!!”

Kim Hyunbaek’s desperate scream.

It became silent soon after. The sounds of the occasional chatter or laughter disappeared. A night filled with terror.

Choi Hyuk looked out his window. He saw students who couldn’t face reality and decided to defy the order to {standby} and run towards their homes. Choi Hyuk only guessed it then but he really never saw them again.

Choi Hyuk looked up at the moon.

A moon no different from yesterday's. A classroom no different from yesterday's.

However, what was in front of them was completely different from yesterday.

A new world.

Episode 1: New World (End)



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