

# 심판의 관주



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# **Sovereign of Judgment**

- 심판의 군주 -

- Episode 6 -  
**Mafia Game**

-Author-  
**TodayAgain**  
오늘도요

[ **Myoniyoni Translations** ]

# CHAPTER 90

## INDEPENDENT TROOPS (1)

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The sudden group fight ended with the appearance of Commander Mack of the Virgo Cluster. She looked like a human and was beautiful. She had sapphire blue hair and a pair of golden horns that grew in a diagonal line near the back of her head. At a glance, however, they didn't seem like horns but rather an elegant hairstyle.

“Haa...”

When she held her forehead and sighed, the aliens dropped to their knees with a thud.

“Cough... What's this? Cough.”

Camilla, who had been hit by the aliens and knocked out, slowly got up and looked around.

She caught sight of the blue-haired Commander Mack. Commander Mack, who floated slightly in the air, was slowly sliding down towards the middle of the group fight.

“Pathetic fools.”

Her voice was chillingly cold. As if the four aliens in the group were pressed down by something, they couldn't get up easily.

Commander Mack, who was a high ranked warrior (6-star), possessed an excellent ability that allowed her to invade and change other people's karma. Alliance members called it 'Laying down fate' when she used her power. The fate the aliens were currently receiving was the fate of Atlas, who held up the sky. Commander Mack changed their karma and made their arms and legs rigid and heavy. To those experiencing it, it felt as though an enormous weight was weighing down on them.

“As those who are attending the welcoming event, you pick a fight with the main stars of the event? You who call yourselves warrior leaders of the Virgo Cluster?”

The four aliens, who fought against the overseers of Earth, were the warrior leaders of the Virgo Cluster division troops.

“Erk. For life and freedom.”

Tangka of the Armoured Soul Tribe, who was the leader of the four, stood on its trembling legs and saluted. It looked as though the 3-meter-tall, steel ‘robot’ was lifting the Earth as steam was emitted from its entire body. All it was doing, however, was barely straightening its legs and standing up. It displayed a karma light when it saluted, but it seemed even that was difficult as its shiny, metallic karma light swayed in different directions.

“Kik.” The Queen of England Diana, who had been hit by Tangka, laughed cutely, seemingly pleased at its current figure.

Commander Mack didn’t accept its salute.

“That’s enough. You guys are going to ‘lift the sky’ for the whole day. If any one of you frowns or if your legs tremble during the welcoming event because it’s too difficult... prepare yourselves.”

Mack said in a chilling voice.

“Bu-but commander. The new recruits committed mutiny!”

Tangka showed a dejected face as it protested.

Thud!

Its knees touched the ground once again. The burden pressing down on its body had increased.

“Looks like you have the strength to talk? You get double.”

“Keuk...”

Tangka couldn’t speak anymore and kept its mouth shut.

Mack clicked her tongue while looking at it.

“Pathetic, who’s a new recruit? They haven’t even been commissioned yet. Strictly

speaking, what you committed was an abuse of authority and an assault on citizens. You're lucky that you aren't going on military trial."

At the mention of a military trial, the four, including Tangka, became pale.

Only then did Mack turn her gaze towards the overseers of Earth.

'How gruesome.'

That was the first thing Mack thought. The arms and legs of Earth's overseers were broken, and their insides were injured, resulting in blood dripping from their mouths.

This was because of the big difference in levels even though they had the numerical advantage of 7 against 4. Tangka and the rest were above-average middle ranked warriors (5-star), while, on the other hand, Earth's overseers were all hovering at the level of low ranked warriors (4-star) excluding Choi Hyuk, who had just become a middle ranked warrior. Even Richard was only at a level between middle and low ranked warriors.

'But they fought well considering the difference in level.'

Mack glanced at the four warrior leaders standing as they endured the weight. They weren't fine either. A bruised face wasn't unusual, but there was even a fellow whose arm was broken due to burns.

Sighing, Commander Mack looked at the overseers and said,

"Nice to meet you. I am Commander Mack of the Virgo Cluster. Since Earth is part of the Virgo Cluster, if you get commissioned, you will be under my command. And you will occasionally see dimwits like them."

Mack glanced at the warrior leaders again and then said to the overseers,

"You came here for the welcoming event, but you had a hard time from the start. Still... It was impressive."

Grinning, she turned around and headed towards the event hall.

"Now, let's head to the event hall. Everyone's waiting for you."

“Huh? Do we just go like this? What about our wounds?”

When the Queen of England Diana asked, Mack didn't even turn around as she replied,

“Wounds at that level will heal by themselves. Don't worry about it. Everyone attending the welcoming event is a warrior. If you have a few wounds, there will be something to talk about so it'll be fine.”



Even though a civilization was newly joining the alliance, there wasn't a particular ceremony or order to the welcoming event.

When they arrived at the event hall, it was bustling with aliens from various places throughout the Laniakea Supercluster. These aliens identified the 'earthlings', whom they were seeing for the first time, and greeted them.

Going around, greeting others and eating was all there was to the welcoming event... and it wasn't all too bad.

Like Commander Mack said, the attendees showed interest in Earth's overseers' injuries. Each and every one of them wanted to gather around and listen to the story of the group fight between Earth's overseers and the Virgo Cluster's warrior leaders.

They crowded around and greeted them to the point Choi Hyuk's eyes felt dizzy. And Choi Hyuk was surprised at the fact he memorized all their names. As his karma grew, the limit of living beings gradually became non-existent.

There weren't only warriors who attended the event. They were surrounded by the Seo tribe, who weren't skilled in combat but could make incredible weapons, the Thumb tribe, who were responsible for gathering and analyzing information, as well as other various tribes.

“Cough.”

Choi Hyuk, who was surrounded by all types of aliens, was conversing with them with a mixture of bewilderment and joy, occasionally coughing up a bit of blood. He had been hit in the chest by Tangka of the Armoured Soul Tribe, and it seemed as though it was taking a while to heal since it was an internal injury. Looking at this, the alien warriors made a fuss.

“Oh, earthling’s blood is red too?”

“Of course, blood has to be red to be genuine.”

“What are you saying. Warriors without blood are true warriors. Like me.”

Unsure whether they were always like this or because they could finally let loose after a long time, but the aliens joked non-stop amongst themselves and laughed as they floated around.

The event hall was a zero-gravity area made with a specially produced dark matter. It was dark and transparent all around them, but they could occasionally see a bright comet rotating around the event hall. The comet had a set rotation and, like a replaying video, continuously circled around, and when one saw it, they would become hazy as if hypnotized.

“Of course, blood has to be red to be genuine... Huh? Didn’t I say this already?”

“You did. You did. Puhahaha. You were caught by the time gap!”

Deja vus didn’t cease throughout the event.

“Aah, is this the first time in a <Time Repeating Zone> for earthlings? Since we are in the middle of a war, we don’t have enough time. That’s why they set up this <Time Repeating Zone> when we need to gather like this. Inside, time continuously repeats, so if we play all the time, time doesn’t pass. Only, the side effect is that you constantly say the same thing. Meaning there are a lot of deja vus.”

It was good anyways. Choi Hyuk swallowed the ‘Karma Pop’ drink floating next to him. The moment he swallowed the drink, the karma within his body bubbled like soda and gave him an exhilarating feeling.

“Keu...”

When Choi Hyuk’s body shivered, an alien warrior laughed,

“This guy here knows how to drink some Karma Pop, doesn’t he?”

“However, nuclear bomb candies are the best at giving an exhilarating feeling.”

“Let your Dark Tribe eat those.”

Drinks and food floated around, and time continuously repeated itself, giving off a pleasant mood that seemed like peace would continue forever.

Thud.

Someone hit Choi Hyuk, who was enjoying himself. When he turned around, it was Tangka of the Armoured Soul Tribe. Since it was still pressed down with weight, its actions were somewhat unnatural, but it seemed like it was enjoying itself as well.

“Hey, you were quite good at fighting. I was honestly surprised.”

It put out its hand as if trying to reconcile with him.

“Although I don’t know which troop you will be assigned to, please take care of me. To be honest, it’ll be good if you came under my command.”

Choi Hyuk grabbed its hand and said,

“...Can we assign ranks through battle?”

“What? Puahahaha!”

At his words, Tangka burst into laughter and introduced the other warrior leaders.

1023-quasarling Whalubo, Bilu of the Dark Tribe, and Lamiain Dalaenala. They too held Choi Hyuk’s hand and said, “You were pretty good.”

As they talked, other overseers of Earth began to gather one after the other. The mood was pleasant. The four warrior leaders told them the general information about the Virgo Cluster.

“To be honest, the Laniakea Supercluster is at the border among the other superclusters in the universe, and among them, the Virgo Cluster we’re in is at the utmost border. As the exploration isn’t complete, we don’t know exactly how many

civilizations are inside, but currently, there are over 1,000 civilizations that have been discovered. Among them, only three have obtained citizenship. Now that you guys joined, there are four. Among them, there are some who haven't yet been granted independent operational authority and have been organized as the division troops of the cluster army, and those who have been granted operational authority and have independent troops... I don't know how it'll be for you."

Lamiain Dalaenalae, who came from a galaxy known as the Large Magellan Cloud on Earth, gave the overseers a meaningful look.

"What is the difference between independent troops and division troops...? Do the division troops receive more dangerous missions?"

The one who asked was the Sovereign of Opportunity Nasir. As he was one of the seven overseers, he had also attended the welcoming event.

Choi Hyuk's mood spoiled when he saw Nasir, so he swallowed a Karma Pop floating next to him. Karma bubbled inside him. Since he had already made a promise with the Sovereign of Balance, he had no intention of acting against him.

Dalaenalae replied to Nasir's question,

"That depends on the mission. Since independent troops can choose their own missions, it could be safer... but division troops are made up of a mix of different species, so they will be able to deal with a variety of situations more safely. I can't straight out say which is more dangerous... Why? Do you want safe fights?"

Dalaenalae gave a provocative look.

However, Nasir didn't pay any heed as he asked again,

"Then does that mean there are only two cases? One where all seven of us become part of the division troops or one where we are combined together to form an independent troop?"

At Nasir's composed reaction, Dalaenalae replied with an unsure gesture.

"I don't know. Depending on the civilization, there are cases where they are all moved together and cases where only a portion become part of the division troops and the rest become independent troops. It all depends on you. You could be organized as a

group, or each of you may lead your own independent troop.

Listening to their conversation, it was an interesting and important topic. This time, the Sovereign of Balance Richard joined the conversation and asked,

“How do we decide?”

“It’s obviously based on your test results. Once the welcoming event ends soon, you will be commissioned under the supervision of the Exalted Wing Dark-Sound. Then you will be appointed once you complete your training and assessment test.”

‘Exalted Wing.’

Choi Hyuk brooded over that name.

The moment he heard it, he felt as though his surroundings had become quieter and darker.

His heart pounded.

A survival game that started one day. And Choi Hyuk who had lost everything dear to him because of it.

Unsure of the reason or when it would end, he had overcome countless drastic changes and catastrophes to finally get here.

Existences he would come across if he went up the stream of events which caused all the disasters that occurred on Earth. He would soon be able to meet one of the Exalted Wings.

Although he was only meeting one,

‘It all begins now.’

This place was the starting line. A signpost clearly lit by his rage and pain, which had been previously faint and vague.

# CHAPTER 91

## INDEPENDENT TROOPS (2)

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Dark-Sound appeared suddenly.

The noisy event hall abruptly became quiet. There were still people talking, but as if they were muted, only their mouths opened and closed, no sound was heard.

Then, it became dark.

Like a TV suddenly shutting off, a pitch-black darkness suddenly entered and covered their eyes. There was no difference between closing your eyes and opening them. It was simply dark. Choi Hyuk couldn't even see his own hand.

'What's this?'

A frightening feeling sent shivers down his body. He became dizzy as if he was falling endlessly. He had never felt this facing any opponent before. Even Commander Mack, who was a high ranked warrior and was so strong Choi Hyuk had no chance at winning against her... he still felt a desire to defeat her. However, this was different.

Choi Hyuk had never experienced this feeling from anyone until now. This emotion he was feeling for the first time in his life tickled his heart. It was the emotion known as 'fear'.

His heart trembled nervously. His vision narrowed, and it felt as though his already dark surroundings became darker. Trembling impalpably, Choi Hyuk's hand moved up, as if he was floundering, and abruptly stopped, seemingly stuck in the air.

Grit.

He ground his teeth.

'... Fuck.'

His chest trembled nervously, and then, the emotion known as fear turned into ash and faded away. A rage, more deeply rooted than fear, began to burn. His body began

producing adrenaline, and his karma began to boil. Each of Choi Hyuk's hairs stood on end one after the other.

Although his surroundings were still dark and he couldn't see anything, for some reason his eyes felt a bit brighter and refreshed.

Then, he suddenly realized the man standing there. In the corner of his eye. A man whose tall, thin figure looked sharp. He was motionlessly staring at Choi Hyuk with his pale face. Choi Hyuk couldn't place the man at the center of his vision no matter how much he turned his head. Like a picture stuck to his cornea, only the man's pale shadow followed behind. In the darkness when he closed his eyes and in the darkness with his eyes open, the man was there.

"You got out of it yourself. Is your source rage? Amazing."

He said. His gaze turned towards 'Choi Hyuk's Imprint' hanging on the left side of his waist.

"On top of that, a Sword of Vow... Someone already made you a karma-sword? Ah, is it her?"

"...Are you Dark-Sound?"

"Yes."

At the same time as his answer, the world brightened.

In front of him was Tangka with its mouth agape. The Queen of England Diana looked around as if she had just woken from a nightmare. However, there continued to be no sound. Suddenly, he heard a faint, echo-like voice in his ears.

{Welcome, earthlings on joining the alliance. I look forward to you becoming warriors powerful enough to end the long war between karmalings and monsters. In the name of Dark-Sound, an Exalted Wing, I grant Overseer Choi Hyuk with the title of middle ranked warrior and Overseers Camilla, Richard, Diana, Yohan, Nasir, and Jessie with the title of low ranked warriors. As overseers representing Earth, they will carry out the mission of a commander. I hope they will be able to obtain peace and freedom with their swords.}

Everyone heard that voice at the same time.

That was the end. Their surroundings became disorderly. A few of the aliens who had been noisily enjoying the welcoming event said their farewells to the overseers of Earth and left the event hall.

It felt like it had ended abruptly.

“...Is this the end of the commission?”

The Ethiopian Sovereign Yohan rippled his black muscles as he felt this was strange. Dalaenalae replied,

“Since there was a speech by Dark-Sound, it’s the end. Anyways, haa... I thought I’d be scared to death.”

She rubbed her skin, which had become bumpy and was reflecting light like a mirror, as she calmed herself.

“Why did he appear so terrifyingly?”

The moment Sovereign Jessie grumbled, a message appeared.

{You have faced the source of your heart. Your free karma increased by 10 points.}

“Ah?”

Looking at Jessie who let out a foolish sound, Dalaenalae showed a ‘Now you know’ expression.

That was how the welcoming event ended and the recruit training began.



Because they were in the <Time Repeating Zone>, they didn’t have to worry about Earth during their training. They turned the event hall into a new recruit training area

and used it. They said they specially made it familiar to earthlings, but it felt weird since they set it up to look like a school. It looked like a combination of different schools on Earth, and the chairs and desks seemed familiar. When they sat there and looked at the blackboard, an alien instructor would go on with the class, and holograms would appear on blackboards and around the classroom, clearly displaying images. It was strange as if it were a dream.

The training started by explaining the system which began the awakenings on Earth. An instructor from the Thumb tribe, who was as small as a thumb, stood on the podium and began her lecture.

“Your karma development is on the quicker side. You should have especially experienced rapid growth up until the 3-star level.”

According to her, it was all achieved through the artificial intervention of the alliance.

“Although earthlings have been assessed as having high combat skills, in reality, the karma earthlings are innately born with isn’t anything special. This is because your species hasn’t accumulated a lot of retribution. It is said that it would take 1,000 more years until there would be a naturally self-awakened person. But, how were they able to dispatch a middle ranked warrior, so a 5-star warrior, within 3 years? Simply put, it is because of the alliance’s new recruit fostering system.”

And, as everyone already knew, it wasn’t all good.

“The karma you awakened for the first time, the karma you obtained by killing your species, the karma received when you unlocked an achievement, and the karma given after you completed a mission... Where did it all come from? It is all karma obtained by burning your homeland, Earth. We unsparingly released the karma that had accumulated in the last 6 billion years, a period where the Earth was formed, and on it, life was born and continuous reproduction occurred, leaving behind descendants. Although, as a result, Earth will cease to exist... But you should all know this.”

She said these horrible words in an unconcerned tone. As if this sort of tragedy was common throughout the universe.

Earth’s overseers weren’t shaken up when they heard this. They already knew all this. There was no one who would express themselves about something like this as their

rage had already cooled and solidified, taking root deep within their hearts.

After the explanation of the system concluded, an introduction on the composition of forces in the alliance began.

4 species existed within the alliance who were strong enough to be called the top 4.

Among them, the Flame Wing Tribe was first.

They were a species born alongside the beginning of the universe. They were born right after the Big Bang, when the universe was filled with extreme heat and energy. When hearing this, they could naturally understand why they were a species stronger than any other in the universe. Unlike other species born in the cold universe, their world was filled with extreme heat and energy. They lived in a world which living beings on Earth couldn't endure for even a second before turning into ash. This was why species of the cold universe would turn into ash at the flick of their hands.

On top of that, the Flame Wing Tribe was born with strong karma. It was because they, being a species that was present since the formation of the universe, had accumulated a massive amount of karma. They awakened karma before they were born, and their karma would reach 3-star level without any effort or training.

As a species with such an outstanding talent, they established karma skills more excellent than any other species. It was part of their struggle to survive as well. Since the universe was quickly cooling after the Big Bang, they had to research karma to adapt to the cooling universe. The Flame Wing Tribe, which was born in a fiery world, could live in the cold universe without any discomfort because karma, the energy of the fate of the universe, allowed living beings to overcome their limits and allowed one to communicate with the universe itself. The Karma Heart Discipline, which Choi Hyuk was familiar with, was developed as the foundation for the Flame Wing Tribe to move as freely as possible within the cold universe.

"...What the? Isn't that too much?"

Sovereign Jessie's mumblings were heard during this explanation. He slouched in his chair as he sighed,

"The reason why earthlings are able to develop karma quickly is because we are

burning and distributing the karma Earth had accumulated over the past 6 billion years... Even then, we have to kill each other or monsters to reach the 3-star level... But they have a free pass to the 3-star level once they're born."

As if she heard him grumbling, the instructor from the Thumb tribe shrugged her shoulders.

"Well... The universe is unfair."

The Dark Tribe was a species that had become powerful enough to compare to the Flame Wing Tribe. They were karmalings born from dark matter, which made up 24% of the universe. (The instructor said, "For reference, matter you can see, like on Earth, only makes up 4% of the universe.") Although they were collectively known as the Dark Tribe because they shared a common ancestor, apparently, there would be a big difference in their individual capabilities depending on where they were born and their lineage. That was why those who were born in the heaviest and densest dark matter regions and were pure-blooded were separately called the Dark Clan. The Exalted Wing Dark-Sound was from this Dark Clan.

Also, there were occasionally cases where extremely advanced machines and artificial intelligences would inherit the fate of the extinct karmalings who created them, and those existences made one of the top four, the Armoured Soul Tribe.

Lastly, the Speckled Light Tribe, who were weak individually but displayed powerful group intellect and willpower, took the lowest spot of the four.

"To be honest, you can think that these four are supporting the bulk of the war. The Laniakea Supercluster is like the countryside compared to the regions these four are active in. In terms of Earth... It'll be like the difference between the U.S. and Greenland."

Greenland was a self-governing country in the Danish Realm and had a population of 55,000. Their individual GDP was \$37,000, and their capital city, Nuuk, had a population of 18,000.

"Isn't it difficult to call Greenland an independent country as it is still in the Danish

Realm?”

Camilla raised her hand and asked. Like a star student, she straightened her back and wrote notes from the beginning.

The instructor from the Thumb tribe shrugged her shoulders at her question.

“That’s why the Laniakea Supercluster is, in fact, maintained through the support of the army from the alliance. More than half the personnel in the Virgo Cluster army you will be part of have been dispatched from the central.”

This time, Jessie asked,

“But is our military strength even helpful? I mean, from the start, the Flame Wing Tribe, the Dark Tribe... Why is the war taking so long when we have such powerful beings?”

The instructor’s small face made a stern expression.

“The monsters are strong. We have been able to defend because they are from another dimension, if that limitation didn’t exist and there was an all-out war, it is difficult to predict what would have happened to the universe already. Every time the monsters slaughter karmalings and expand their territory, they are able to create a bigger passageway into our universe... That is why this is a war determining the fate of all karmalings. Whether you are weak or strong, we need to resist them. At first, when the number of monsters coming into our universe was small, the major species who formed the alliance didn’t find their invasion all too serious. But then, they occupied more and more galaxies, and there was a point where a ‘demise-rank’ monster crossed over. It was a disaster. During the fight that day, the one known as the strongest, the King of the Flame Wing Tribe, Flame-Sky, died in battle. It was an event which alarmed the entire universe and made them unite their power under the alliance.”

“Flame-Sky?”

Choi Hyuk mulled over that name. The Thumb tribe instructor turned her gaze towards Choi Hyuk.

“Yes. Because of that incident, the Flame Wing Tribe, which had been a monarchy,

changed into a parliamentary system. This was because the successor of Flame-Sky was too young to lead the entire tribe.”

It seemed like the aliens had their own complicated circumstances. He had thought that they were toying with earthlings... but they too had quite the intense history.

Choi Hyuk felt a slight sense of remoteness.

This war might be a long, intense war that earthlings couldn't even imagine with their narrow vision. Just how long would it last? Where would it go?

The instructor's explanations continued. They heard introductions on the indigenous species within the Laniakea Supercluster and the species within the Virgo cluster.

There was no break, but none of them tired with just this much.

Choi Hyuk suddenly looked out the window. When they said they designed it to be familiar... They even made the sky outside the window the same as the one on Earth.

He felt a sense of déjà vu.

It was strange.

When he closed and opened his eyes, it was almost like the math period before the Ring of Rebirth was made. That time when he would blankly stare at the sky whenever he got the chance. The classroom where Kang Minhoo and Lee Mingi bullied him and Jung Minji would look at them with an irritated expression.

However, when he opened his eyes again, he was at the core of the Laniakea Supercluster, Dark City. He was sitting in class beside Jessie, a sovereign from the U.S., and Richard from Germany, and an instructor from the Thumb tribe, who came from a place much further away from the Laniakea Supercluster, was lecturing them on top of the podium.

Choi Hyuk shook his head.

The blue sky tilted to reveal a red sunset.

# CHAPTER 92

## INDEPENDENT TROOPS (3)

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The instructor said,

“Forget the monsters you’ve fought until now. From now on, you will begin fighting real monsters, not those dumb, low ranked monsters. This means that the monsters aren’t simply strong. They will infiltrate your weak points. Let’s see... You said earthlings have fought with dimensional wasps and eyeless observers before? Remember the lessons you learned then, that monsters don’t fight us purely through strength.”

They learned about monsters through actual battle. They were personally fighting against various types of monsters that were active throughout the universe.

Kakakang!

The monster, a jaksam, was a giant with an outrageous amount of endurance. Sovereign Jessie stabbed the monster’s third eye, but his spear curved like a reed and bounced off.

Clang!

The Sovereign of Paradise Camilla’s sword, shining with silver karma, slashed down at the jaksam’s arm, but it bounced back like an explosion. There wasn’t even a scratch on its arm.

{Keulaahh!}

The jaksam’s mouth opened. Its face looked like it was splitting in half, and they could see teeth covering its throat.

“Erdbeben-Blitzschlag (Lightning Quake)!”

Richard’s Lightning Quake pierced into its throat.

Woosh!

An intense vibration swept across its head, and it staggered as if dizzy, but that was it.

“...Crazy.”

Dumbfounded, Richard closed his mouth.

They heard their instructor’s voice in their head.

{The monster jaksam, while weak in offensive power, is agile and possesses an enormous amount of endurance. No middle ranked warrior, using any method, can inflict an effective blow on it. That fellow will target and rush towards the troop’s commander or experts. If you are blocked by it, the key personnel won’t be able to fight properly, but that’s not all... }

The Ethiopian Sovereign Yohan momentarily revealed an opening while fighting. He was too close, and his body had temporarily exhausted its karma after launching a powerful attack.

{Kuoooh!}

Bang!

The 4-meter-tall mountain launched a swift advance. Its entire body suddenly emitted light, and that light gathered towards its fist. The moment the light gathered, its fist had already punched Yohan, and the light that had gathered in its fist was sucked into Yohan’s body before exploding.

Bang!

Yohan’s tough body flew away like a rag.

“Yohan!”

The Queen of England Diana shouted. Perhaps it was because they both became overseers who had been their respective country’s leader and because their fighting capabilities were low amongst the seven overseers, but the two quickly became friends.

Yohan staggered as he stood up within a cloud of dirt. Seeing this, Diana let out a sigh of relief.

“That light... scatters karma... cough.”

As if he had been inflicted with an internal injury, Yohan’s lips were pale, and blood dripped from the corner of his lips. Even though he was weak compared to the other overseers, he was still one of the seven overseers. A top warrior of humanity. Someone like him had sustained a significant injury with a single punch.

{The jaksam sticks to its opponents and launches a deadly attack when it sees an opportunity like that. The attack itself contains a lot of destructive power, but it’s even more difficult as it momentarily scatters the target’s karma. To receive its attack, a warrior with outstanding endurance must block it after properly preparing himself so his karma doesn’t scatter. After three attacks, its body will be unable to keep up the defensive strength it once had. If you attack then, you can kill it.}

“Do we have to receive them? Can’t we avoid them?”

Grumbled Jessie. It was immediately followed by the instructor’s remark.

{The jaksam is careful. It won’t punch unless it knows it will definitely hit. Even outstanding warriors take three hits from the jaksam before attacking it.}

“...Fuck.”

Sovereign Jessie clicked his tongue as he looked around. Eventually someone would have to take two more hits from that monster to take it out. However, there was no way anyone would want to be hit by such a powerful attack.

Only then did Jessie realize the fear of the monster known as jaksam.

‘It’s set up so someone has to sacrifice themselves. If a monster like that rushed into our headquarters during a war, then it would difficult to command the troops.’

The instructor pointed that out.

{Do you get it? A fight with a monster can’t be settled with only power. Monsters will endlessly drive into our selfishness and try to disassemble our unity.}

When everyone nodded their heads with heavy expressions at the instructor's words, Choi Hyuk stepped out by himself.

Kiririkang!

He unsheathed 'Imprint' from his waist.

{Ho? A karma-sword? He already got one? Is it a Weapon of Calling?}

The instructor showed interest. The other sovereigns reacted with a 'What's that?'

However, Choi Hyuk was simply curious.

'I finally get to use this sword.'

At least 300 points of karma would be distributed to his stats related to slashing attacks (Power, Speed, Endurance, Control, and Stamina). Ideally it would supplement his weaker stats and enhance the stronger ones. Depending on Choi Hyuk's capability, the distributed amount of karma could be 600 or 900 points instead of 300. A sword that theoretically didn't possess a limit. A sword awakened with Choi Hyuk's 'Deadly Will'.

Grrrp.

He gripped his sword as if he were trying to shatter it. His wrist became firmly fixed. His joints, such as his elbow and shoulder, became reinforced with karma. It was 'Imprint' supplementing his weaknesses.

The lowest stat Choi Hyuk possessed was 'Endurance - 100 (3★)'. Although he was making up for it with his superb Control stat, the low endurance of his joints, which had to endure the impact of his attacks, was an important reason for why his attack power lowered.

From the sensation of his firmly fixed wrist, his confidence surged as if he could even slash apart a star. Choi Hyuk's arm easily rose above his head. Like a breechblock fixing into place with a click, the karma pathway connected to his Karma Heart added resilience to his arm. Choi Hyuk could feel the power from his raised arm. In that moment, he surpassed his Power, which was at the 4-star level, and his Speed, which was at the 5-star level. He was brimming with power. Choi Hyuk's sword swung down like a ray of light.

“Instant Void Annihilation.”

Sliiiiice!

At the frightening sound, which seemed to rip the world apart, the shoulders of the six sovereigns, excluding Choi Hyuk, shivered.

Then, the body of the jaksam slowly split in two. The body, which could take any blow before it launched three lethal attacks, was easily cut as if it were paper.

{Impossible!}

Astonishment filled the instructor’s voice.



The training was like this.

{Like you know, the Dragon race was a tribe that once prided themselves on being a strong force. Commander Mack of the Virgo Cluster could be considered a part of the Dragon race. And the colonized land of earthlings, Dragonic, was a region where a lot of large Dragon races lived. However, at the beginning of the war, the monsters’ invasions were concentrated on the homeland of the Dragon race, and now, the tribe’s scale has been reduced significantly. Also, a portion of the monsters parasitized and caused a change within dragons. They are known as ‘changed dragons’. They are monsters that inherited the Dragon race’s characteristics. They are tough like jaksams, and they can use their breaths, which could be considered as lethal attacks, multiple times. Since they also possess the ability to fly, they could be considered as wide-scale killing machines.}

When the instructor’s explanation ended,

“Instant Void Annihilation.”

Sliiiiice!

Choi Hyuk, who was having fun using 'Imprint', immediately split his opponent.

{Overseer Choi Hyuk... Can't you step in later for the other overseers? The training can't progress properly like this... I'm really about to go crazy. For someone who just reached the level of a middle ranked warrior to possess, not a Weapon of Calling or a Weapon of Sentiment... but a Weapon of Vow! Now, really... Damn it... }

Although there were small events like this, the training went smoothly.

The time for the placement evaluation approached while he was having fun learning about and fighting middle ranked monsters he hadn't faced until now. The placement evaluation took place in virtual reality.

"Leader, I'm going in first."

In the virtual reality, there was Lee Jinhee,

"Do we charge in?"

And Chu Youngjin,

"Hmm... There are a lot of monsters we're seeing for the first time, leader. Do you know anything?"

And, of course, there was Baek Seoin as well.

They had transferred key figures' abilities and mentality using the data they obtained from observing Earth as a base.

"...Ah, uh. We are in the middle of our first mission, right?"

Choi Hyuk, who had been absentminded, was barely able to answer.

It was because the overseers had undergone a memory distorting procedure when they entered the virtual reality in order to evaluate them under normal circumstances. Currently, Choi Hyuk didn't know that this was a placement evaluation. He simply

thought this was a real situation.

There were hundreds of monsters on the other side, and each of the seven overseers was gathered on his side with their respective troops.

The monsters varied from low ranked monsters, which they had commonly seen before, to middle ranked monsters that they had learned about during their training. As the overseers' memories had been fabricated, they simply thought that what they learned during the training would be helpful.

Choi Hyuk began immediately.

“First, Baek Seoin’s troop’s team 1 and 2 are special teams. You see those 4-meter-tall giants over there, right? They are known as jaksams, and they will rush into our formation and target the commanders. We won’t be able to stab them with swords until we block three of their lethal attacks so those with tough bodies in team 1 and 2 need to receive their blows.”

“Understood.”

The Berserkers under Baek Seoin’s command equipped their swords and shields. They were influenced by the survival-optimized Baek Seoin and were famously known to survive in any battle. They were nicknamed ‘Berserk Roaches’. Of course, they themselves hated their nickname.

“Retreat when those changed dragons over there approach. Their breaths target a large area and have amazing destructive power. Even if the formation breaks a little, if you retreat, I’ll take care of them personally.”

The Berserkers’ normal tactic was to just charge in, but currently, because there were so many different types of monsters, there was a need to put more thought into it. Of course, Choi Hyuk never thought to think of it all by himself.

“Also, that monster over there is known as the surprise box. If you kill them, there’s a small chance they’ll explode. Also, that monster over there is called the ‘event’. If you kill them, then your karma will increase exponentially, but if you get crazy for them and only run around to hunt them, the formation will completely break.”

Among others.

Choi Hyuk tried to explain the various monsters' characteristics to Baek Seoin as briefly as possible. Then, he patted his shoulder.

“Baek hyung, you got all that, right? Then, work hard. I'll do my best to shake them up.”

The true commander of the Berserkers was Baek Seoin anyways. Choi Hyuk's best talent was his strength that could change the outcome of a war.

“Then! Off I go!”

Bang!

Choi Hyuk rushed into the fray of monsters.

At the same time, the other overseers set their own formations and began to advance.

{... They are fighting well. I heard that they aren't good at cooperating... Their fighting and commanding potential are really top level.}

Like the instructor's admiration, the overseers of Earth were fighting well. Although the monsters tried to use human's mentality to break their formations and turn them passive, it was no use. Regardless of what anyone said, the seven overseers had been screened from approximately 30 sovereigns. They had a definite hold over their direct followers.

If various humans gathered, they would fight and steal amongst themselves to fill their own selfishness, but when humans gathered together with those of the same mind and they had a leader they could follow with their heart, they would often display actions where they risked their lives. The troops led by the seven overseers were the top troops on Earth. This might have been an inevitable result.

As a result of the intense battle, the monsters' formation was ripped to shreds. The encircled monsters would be ground and smashed into the ground by the falling spears and artillery.

Although he didn't know why, the sky had suddenly become dark and then bright again as if he blinked his eyes. Choi Hyuk rubbed his eyes. 'Did I see wrong?' Although there was no way he saw incorrectly with his karma-enhanced eyes, the sky had turned dark then bright for some unknown reason.

"I think we won... Leader."

Chu Youngjin brushed off the blood on his sword as he approached.

"Looks like it."

When he casually turned towards Chu Youngjin, his eyes narrowed. 'What the? Why would Chu hyung?' Before the sky had suddenly become dark, and now, he was seeing another unbelievable scene. Thinking he saw incorrectly, he raised his Mind's Eye to the limit and examined him again, but it was the same. He was Chu Youngjin... and he was emitting a red light.

Puzzled, Choi Hyuk relaxed his shoulders and turned his defenseless back on Chu Youngjin.

"Is this the end?"

That moment.

Rumble!

Slice!

The unique sound of Chu Youngjin's karma explosion was heard, followed by a frightening sound. Chu Youngjin launched a surprise attack, stabbing at Choi Hyuk's back, while Choi Hyuk turned his body and sliced Chu Youngjin's sword and legs. Chu Youngjin miserably rolled on the ground like a garbage bag.

"I was doubtful but... why is Chu hyung trying to kill me?"

Choi Hyuk coldly stared at Chu Youngjin.

“...”

Chu Youngjin was blankly staring at his sword, the red sword created from his lover, Lee Hyejin's death, and didn't let out a single moan. His eyes flared as he began to crawl towards Choi Hyuk.

“Stop.”

Choi Hyuk warned.

However, Chu Youngjin continued to crawl with a rigid face.

Pscht.

'Imprint' pierced through the back of Chu Youngjin's head and into the ground.

Choi Hyuk's expression was cold. Since he wasn't aware he was in a virtual reality, he was currently in a very disturbed state.

'Should I have listened to him instead of killing him?'

Although he was swept with regret.

'He already had the face of someone determined to die.'

He simply shook his head. Above all, he was surprised by how uncomfortable the sensation in his hand was. Even though he was someone who lived thinking 'I can kill anyone', killing Chu Youngjin was too unpleasant. It was to the point where he thought, 'If I have to kill him again, would I be able to?' Choi Hyuk had grown attached to him more than he thought.

While Choi Hyuk was standing absentmindedly, similar events occurred around him. The angel-like Penelope stabbed the Sovereign of Paradise Camilla, and Richard's aide, Leah, stabbed him. Five overseers were simultaneously logged out due to the betrayal of those close to them. The ones who survived were Choi Hyuk, who killed Chu Youngjin, and Richard, who was injured but managed to kill Leah.

Choi Hyuk had been able to notice Chu Youngjin's killing intent with his 'Eyes of

Distinction', and Richard had seen Leah change from 'someone to keep alive' to 'someone to kill' though his 'Eyes of the Judge'.

Although they survived, the shock from the fact that the people they trusted attacked them was huge. 'Did I do something wrong?' 'Did I miss something?' While Richard and Choi Hyuk were standing absentmindedly, wondering about something they would be unable to find an answer for, the world suddenly brightened before darkening.

"...Hrk."

Choi Hyuk opened his eyes. His surroundings were in a mess.

"What was that at the end? If that was a joke, it was really unpleasant."

He heard Camilla's icy voice.

"It's not a joke. That is also a type of monster."

He heard the instructor's serious voice as well. Then he said,

"To be honest... Since the 'doppelganger' is a very rare top ranked monster, it isn't part of the evaluation. It is customary to put that monster in during the placement evaluation to make you alert after dying once... but to catch that... Two people to boot."

The instructor shook his head as he looked at a frowning Choi Hyuk and a dazed Richard.

Then he said,

"Overseer Choi Hyuk and Overseer Richard, your placement evaluations... were a perfect score."

# CHAPTER 93

## INDEPENDENT TROOPS (4)

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Since they were in the middle of a war, all the procedures were simple.

“With the name of Commander Mack of the Virgo Cluster, I grant the seven overseers of Earth the authority to use the military gate system.”

Along with those words, fingernail-sized metal shards floated up and rotated around the overseers, imprinting their souls and karma.

“Now, you have become warrior leaders of the independent troops of the Virgo Cluster. The exploration of the Virgo Cluster hasn’t finished yet. Your mission is to explore unknown regions and destroy regions occupied by monsters and their supply routes, ‘Kaluh Kabkun<sup>{1}</sup>’. As you aren’t being dispatched to other troops and are establishing your own independent troops, I hope for your energetic participation in this mission.”

The earthling’s placement evaluation grades were excellent. It showed that the seven overseers all had the qualifications to be assigned as independent troops. Two of them even received a perfect score.

Still, the opinion that a portion of them would join the division troops for balance was predominant. However, Commander Mack broke their expectations and gave every overseer of Earth the right to form independent troops. That was how seven independent troops were formed. It was thought to be because she hoped they would participate in the exploration more proactively.

Independent troops were granted the right to plan their own strategy while carrying out their missions without the interference of higher ranked troops. It was even possible for them to take action first and report later.

It was also normal for missions to be vague like ‘Explore XX Region’.

However, as their first mission was also a test, it was quite specific.

<Recover the Cayenne star, which has been occupied by monsters, and use the information left behind on historic sites to explore the space around it.>

Tangka, who heard the mission Earth's overseers received, evaluated it like this,

"It's a practice game. The Cayenne star system is a region discovered not too long ago, and the monsters there are weak, normally at the 2-3-star level. Also, that entire area doesn't have the supply route, Kaluh Kabkun."

Simply put, it was an easy mission. Perhaps it was because of this, but the day of the mission was imminent.

"Finish your preparations and leave in two days."

All that remained for the seven overseers to do was run around hurriedly.



The most important thing to do was without a doubt 'getting supplies'.

"Woahahahaha! What is all this! Did leader pop in and out of a place like this all by himself?"

"It's my first time as well."

It was Baek Seoin, whose mouth was agape, and Choi Hyuk who was shaking his head. Behind them were Ryu Hyunsung, Bae Jinman, Handke and Chu Youngjin. 6 people in total. That was the limit he could bring. The maximum number of people he could bring from Earth to the Laniakea using the 'military gate system' for 'free' was five people excluding the overseer. The cost would increase by an astronomical amount of Mission Points for every person he added after that.

"Looking around once will be like going around the entire world..."

Ryu Hyunsung said as he looked around with a pale face.

It was as he said. The 'Laniakea Supply Store' in front of them looked more like a planet than a supply store. Like those who believed the Earth was hollow, the floor of the

enormous sphere curved upwards until it formed a complete loop. Countless buildings, some which surged up towards the sky and others which surged towards their heads, were erected on the floor. There were buildings floating in the space in between the buildings with pathways going off in all directions. It was a suitable size for a supercluster which possessed countless clusters within it.

They soon heard the voice of the artificial intelligence in charge of this supply store.

{Welcome to the Laniakea Supply Store. Wherever you are in the supply store, you will be able to search through the supplies and receive samples through me. Also, it is possible for you to teleport to any store you like.}

They were currently in a situation where they didn't know what supplies there were. What item would increase the entire strength of the Berserkers? Choi Hyuk suddenly recalled something and asked,

“Do you have a store that sells karma weapons?”

{We do. 6 People. It will cost 1,000 points to teleport there. Will you teleport?}

“Is there a cost even though we're a teleporting within the supply store?”

{Yes. You need to be at least the rank of a commander of a cluster to teleport for free.}

“...We'll teleport.”

Warriors who could fight better would be able to obtain more Mission Points. If they didn't have any Mission Points, they wouldn't be able to receive any service. Although he was uncertain whether this was a ploy to train better warriors through competition or not, but the Flame Wing Alliance persistently fleeced its warriors' currency, Mission Points, off them.

Whoosh.

The moment they felt their bodies float up, they had arrived at their destination. The store which sold karma weapons.

There was a black pond in the middle of the room. A red carpet surrounded the pond, and the walls were built out of old-fashioned timber. An elderly alien was sitting in a jelly chair with his ears drooped downwards. When he saw Choi Hyuk's group appear, he mumbled,

“Earthlings? Hmmpf. It's good that they aren't from the damn top 4 tribes.”

By the top 4 tribes, he meant the Flame Wing, Dark, Armored Soul and Speckled Light Tribes.

The elderly alien bluntly asked,

“This is your first time, right? How much did you pay to teleport here?!”

Unsure whether he was asking or picking a fight and while everyone showed awkward expressions at the elderly alien's blunt behavior, Baek Seoin alone answered right away,

“1,000 points.”

“Damn. Although that's not much... Did you know those from the top 4 tribes don't have to pay that?”

“Pardon? It said that you needed to be at least a commander rank for it to be free...”

“That's only for scraps like us. Those exalted top 4 tribes, who made this alliance, can use it for free, regardless of their rank. Those bastards need to work in black-hole mines for the rest of their lives.”

As the elderly alien swore, he got up from his seat.

“Anyways, why have earthlings come here? You shouldn't be at a level to come to a store like this yet.”

“You know about earthlings?”

“Of course I do, you scoundrel! It's been a long time since another species joined the alliance. The top 4 tribes constantly make all sorts of excuses as they look down on other tribes. ‘You got lucky’ is what I thought. Either way, this is a high-rank facility that can make karma weapons. It's too expensive for rookies like you.”

The elderly alien continuously scolded.

While Baek Seoin felt awkward, Choi Hyuk asked,

“How much is a karma weapon?”

“Karma weapon? Ha! It’s the most expensive! You need at least 1 billion Mission Points to create a Weapon of Calling!”

“...!”

A billion points. Everyone’s jaws dropped at that unreal sum. As Consumables, they only earned 100 points after completing their first mission. Even until recently, they could earn thousands of points per mission, which took a few days to complete. They couldn’t earn 10,000 points per mission just yet. Until then, they didn’t think that they were ‘only’ earning thousands of points.

As a sovereign, Choi Hyuk earned at most 1 million points a day through passage and trade taxes. A billion points was an exorbitant sum, which Choi Hyuk, who was one of the richest people on Earth, would have to save every day for three years to collect.

“It’s expensive, isn’t it?”

The elderly alien giggled and said,

“But do you know what’s funnier?”

The elderly alien paused for a moment before breathing raggedly, as if he was mad, and said,

“The top 4 tribes get them for free. If they want a karma weapon, the alliance just hands them the points to make one! Those monster-asshole-licking bastards.”

They received not 1,000 points but a billion points for free? Shocked, Baek Seoin asked,

“Why do they do that?”

“To other species, they are saying that if you don’t even have the ability to collect a billion points, don’t even think about attempting to get a Weapon of Calling. That

they'll fail to complete one anyways. However, since their species are so great and because they will always succeed, they don't even need to earn a billion points. Damn bastards... Do you know how many I've seen fail?!"

Listening to him, even Baek Seoin became furious.

'I thought that if we became alliance members, we'd all be equals in formality at least, but I guess not. For discrimination to exist in space, how disgusting. Still, for a billion points to be free. I'm jealous!'

All kinds of thoughts crossed his mind. However, since the elderly alien was already raging with ragged breaths, Baek Seoin felt odd to rage together with him. All he did was sigh in exasperation.

"Haaa. Now, really..."

Then, Choi Hyuk, who had been silent, suddenly asked,

"Then how much does a Weapon of Sentiment cost?"

Choi Hyuk wasn't really interested in the unfairness. He simply wanted to use this opportunity to figure out the value of the Weapon of Vow he received.

The elderly alien replied,

"So you heard something, eh? But why are you looking for a Weapon of Sentiment here? At most, you can make a Weapon of Calling at the supply store. If you want to make anything beyond a Weapon of Calling, you need to go to the forge in the center of Laniakea, where the Dark Ocean is. Of course, that place can only be accessed by acknowledged warriors."

'The forge in the center of Laniakea...'

Choi Hyuk remembered it. As expected, the item Flame-Rain gave him as a present wasn't normal. Which meant her identity wouldn't be normal either.

After confirming it, Choi Hyuk asked nonchalantly,

"I see. Then, elder, can we see equipment and enchants for 4-5 star warriors?"

The lowest ranked supply store they had used until now was meant for lowest ranked warriors, so 4-star equipment and skills were rare. Eventually, everyone was fitted with equipment unsuitable for their level.

They wanted to use this opportunity to change out their equipment and skills and planned on using the remaining Mission Points to purchase items that would increase the strength of normal members.

The elder tilted his chin and answered crookedly,

“There are, but it looks like you’re a middle ranked warrior... It’ll be incredibly expensive to buy equipment for middle ranked warriors and engrave them... Will you be fine? Of course, it won’t be much if you think of it as a graduation expense...”

“Graduation expense?”

“Yeah. The moment you become a high ranked warrior, it is impossible to increase your karma artificially. There’s no use for equipment or enchants. From that point, you can only increase your karma through your own effort and karma weapon. You didn’t even know that? Karma weapons aren’t expensive without reason.”

Then the elder began to explain various items while mumbling.

Like the elder said, the equipment was really expensive. It cost over 200 million Mission Points to buy equipment and skills for Choi Hyuk and 6 of his top executives. With that, they used up all the Mission Points Choi Hyuk and his top executives had saved up. The elderly alien scolded them, saying, “You only have that much?” and looked like he was going to give them a discount, but it seemed as though he had to sell items at the set price. He only showed his regret by swearing, “Those damn top 4 tribes. They take whatever they want without paying a cent. Those bastards should be ripped up by the Big Bang.”

While paying, Baek Seoin worried,

“But leader, if it’s like this, then we can’t change the equipment of the other members.”

Choi Hyuk said,

“Nothing we can do since we never knew 4-5-star equipment would be so expensive. Since our members are at around the 3-star level on average, the equipment we bought from the lowest ranked supply store should still be useable... And we need to wait for the good news from Director Lee Jinhee.”



While Choi Hyuk and his top executives were busy going back and forth between the elderly alien’s store and other stores, where they were suggested to buy their equipment and skills from, Chu Youngjin stopped in front of an item.

The elderly alien explained,

“Ah, you sort of know what it is, right? It is a reinforcing stone. It’s called the Essence of Blood.”

The Essence of Blood repeatedly became soft, as if it would drip any moment, and then taut like jelly. It also looked similar to a beating heart.

“Normally... it’s better to get a new sword than reinforcing your old one... But it looks like you reinforced that sword multiple times as you used it in fights? Is there a story behind it? Either way, if you are planning on reinforcing it this time as well, then it’s a good choice. It looks like the Essence of Blood suits your temperament.”

As if he sensed there was a story behind his sword, the elderly alien didn’t swear and explained to Chu Youngjin in a relatively considerate manner. He glanced down at the red sword, which Chu Youngjin was very affectionate towards.

The red sword, which had been created when Chu Youngjin’s lover, Lee Hyejin, died. Chu Youngjin couldn’t give up on this sword. When everyone else changed their weapons, Chu Youngjin foolishly used this sword, which was an E rank, a weapon suitable for 1-star warriors. Then, when they gained access to the supply store, he requested Choi Hyuk to buy reinforcing stones and was able to raise the sword’s rank to C rank. This was the limit to what he could do at the lowest ranked supply store.

Currently, as a complete 4-star warrior, he needed a B rank weapon, but Chu Youngjin stubbornly used his red sword.

He now had a chance to overcome its limits. It had been a long time since Chu Youngjin smiled brightly.

“Yes. I’ll reinforce it.”

Ddang!

The elderly alien combined Chu Youngjin’s red sword and the Essence of Blood together, placing the sword into the pond of Dark Ocean water and swinging down at it with his hammer.

Chu Youngjin gazed down at his red sword, which was gradually becoming redder, as his eyes silently reddened.

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{1} Was mentioned back in Chapter 40 when the military was first transported. From what I can tell, Kaluh Kabkun are supply routes for monsters.

# CHAPTER 94

## INDEPENDENT TROOPS (5)

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{Chu Youngjin's Protection} \*Weapon of Calling

Rank: B+ Rank

Endurance: 1,000,000 / 1,000,000

Combat Endurance Ability +100 (Stamina, Endurance, and Recovery)

Earthling Chu Youngjin's soul and retribution permeated this sword. Although he doesn't have someone to protect, his heart, which longs to protect, permeated the sword, and it will not break or dull even if it supports a mountain. It is a Weapon of Calling, the most common type of karma weapon. As the level of its owner, Chu Youngjin, is low and the materials are slightly lacking to create a karma weapon, its performance is low in comparison to other Weapons of Calling. It can be strengthened later with more reinforcing.

It was originally an insignificant weapon made with steel, commonly found on Earth, and karma left behind by Lee Hyejin. Due to earthling Chu Youngjin's devoted reinforcing, it has been reborn as a karma-sword, a Weapon of Calling.

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"...What is this?"

The elderly alien blinked his eyes. All he wanted to do was create the best weapon a low ranked warrior could use. The materials used and the amount of effort he put in were only for that purpose. However, for it to result in a karma-sword used by those above low ranked warriors...

"...It seems there's an extraordinary story behind it."

Mumbled the elderly alien as he took the sword out of the black pond and cleaned it.

He handed it to the teary-eyed Chu Youngjin and said,

“Congratulations. Although after staying in this industry for so long I knew that occasionally incomprehensible weapons would be born... It’s my first time seeing it for myself. If it’s already like this... You might be able to complete a ‘Weapon of Sentiment’ someday. No, no, perhaps you might even see a Weapon of Vow be born.”

The elderly alien, who had been blunt until now, currently showed a somewhat careful attitude.

“My name is Gallahan. Come again.”

He even introduced himself in the end.

Baek Seoin, who had been watching them closely, said,

“Leader. Don’t you have a Weapon of Vow?”

Crackle!

Flames erupted above Gallahan’s head. It seemed this was how his species expressed surprise.

“Wh-what? What did you say just now?”

Astonishment filled Gallahan’s voice.

Choi Hyuk turned towards Baek Seoin as if asking why he brought up something so bothersome.

Baek Seoin quietly explained,

“Looking at the mood, it seems like he’ll treat us better if we say it. Maybe even give us a discount.”

Thinking Baek Seoin had a point, Choi Hyuk briefly showed his sword to Gallahan before sheathing it.

Crackle, crackle!

Flames similar to that of fireworks erupted above Gallahan's head.



"I am happy that rookies like you joined the alliance. I hope that you will be able to knock those damn top 4 tribes down a peg or two."

Due to Gallahan's aggressive discounts and advice, as well as his suggestions of other stores, they were able to successfully finish their shopping.

Before Choi Hyuk's group left, Gallahan praised them and left them a strange warning.

"Anyways, you're from the Virgo Cluster, right?"

"Yes."

"Be careful. I overheard a few things while working here, and it seems there's something going on over there. There's something going on, but seeing that everyone is hush-hush about it... It might be something dangerous. A wretched danger that those conducting the mission won't know."

After saying their farewells to Gallahan and going out to the streets, they met Tangka from the Armoured Soul Tribe. It looked like it had been looking for Choi Hyuk's group as it hurriedly ran towards them.

"Haa... So here you were."

When Choi Hyuk gave it a questioning look, Tangka opened its chest, and a black, 1-cubic-meter cube emerged.

"What's that?"

Tangka replied as it handed the item to Choi Hyuk,

"I don't know much about it either. They said it was some sort of exploration device. We suddenly got an order from the higher-ups to take it on the Cayenne exploration.

Here's the order."

Tangka's hand was dyed in golden karma light. Tangka's karma was originally a metallic color closer to silver. It was an order encrypted in karma form, making it impossible to fake.

"...This isn't an order from Commander Mack?"

"Yeah. It came from the higher ups above her. When we reported that the Cayenne exploration had been confirmed, the higher ups hurriedly sent this down."

"Even Commander Mack doesn't know?"

"Yeah. When she requested to know, they simply said it was a secret... Still, relax. They said it wasn't anything dangerous. There were talks about how it might be for exploring whether there were any scarce resources or something."

Maybe it was because he had just heard Gallahan's warning, but he felt uneasy. However, that didn't mean he could refuse the order either, nor did he want to.

Choi Hyuk placed the cube in his bag.

Seeing this, Tangka suddenly seemed to think of something as he advised,

"Ah, although you guys are the ones who are going to choose the composition of your army and its numbers, if I were to give you advice... Take as many as you can. It's not occupying a planet but a star. No matter how many you take, it still won't be enough. Also, the more battle experience earthlings have, the better. From what I've heard, this mission should be easy, but you need to train in times like this."

Gallahan told them to be careful while Tangka told them to use this opportunity to train... Choi Hyuk simply grinned.

"Yeah, thanks."

"Let's have a drink after you complete your mission."

Tangka waved his hand as he left.

They had now finished what they came to Laniakea to do.

Choi Hyuk activated the 'military gate system' and returned to Earth. It was an extremely long distance teleportation from the center of Laniakea to the Milky Way galaxy in the Virgo cluster, which was located on the outer boundaries of the Laniakea Supercluster. His mind momentarily went blank, and when he suddenly regained his senses, he had already arrived on Earth. He was inside Naro's spaceship, which was rotating in an orbit above South Korea. Although teleportation was now much more comfortable compared to when they were Consumables, there was no helping the slight nausea he felt.

"Leader, you've arrived?"

The one who met Choi Hyuk's group was Lee Jinhee, who was lying on the sofa exhausted.

Choi Hyuk asked,

"How was it on your end?"

"It went well."

The moment Lee Jinhee flicked her finger, Naro appeared and began to report,

"The deal between Director Lee Jinhee and the El Tribe ended successfully. Since technicians, weapons, and resources have already arrived, we are producing our first round of equipment."

While Choi Hyuk's group was shopping in the Laniakea Supercluster, Lee Jinhee alone was roaming around Dragonic and completing missions. Among them, the most important mission was a deal with the El Tribe, who lived in the inverted tree.

"Wasn't it difficult?"

Asked Baek Seoin. While still lying down, she massaged her shoulders and legs as she replied,

"It wasn't that hard. It seemed they gave us additional points for cleaning and occupying the entire region. Since, if a strong monster strikes, it'll have to face us first. And they can retreat in a pinch. They were also surprised by our fast growth."

Choi Hyuk nodded and asked Naro,

“Good. Then there aren’t any problems with supplying basic weapons for the Berserkers, right?”

“Yes, no problem. We can create the first round of necessary equipment in a day.”

Naro’s tone, which made it sound like it wasn’t difficult to do, was trustworthy.

The El Tribe’s technology was much more advanced than Earth’s. Earthlings could produce weapons with physical power as their base, but they still couldn’t create weapons containing karma. On the other hand, the El Tribe possessed the techniques to mass produce 3-star weapons consistently and could even produce a 4-star weapon if they put a lot of effort into it.

Although Naro possessed knowledge of weapons used by narolings, narolings were different from earthlings in various aspects. It was difficult to adjust their weapon systems for humans. In the end, the key point of the deal this time was to receive the support of the El Tribe, who were similar to humans, and for them to supply new weapons to the Berserkers.

Also, the Berserkers’ side of the deal was to give them a city. They handed ‘Pyungryu’, the slave city previously governed by Lao Ban, over to the El Tribe. This was also the first step of their promise where they would allow them to come out to the surface.

“Also, I got the pledges of all the small and medium-sized clans active in our various colonized lands. Now we can dispatch their forces however we want when we go on missions.”

Lee Jinhee’s speech sounded a bit boastful, ‘How about it, didn’t I work hard?’

She had the right to. In a single day, she had gone around to all the five colonized lands Choi Hyuk governed. It wasn’t just going around but also gathering the people in every city, bearing threats and receiving their pledges. That was why she was constantly massaging her arms and legs.

Currently, Choi Hyuk was the sole sovereign who governed five colonized lands. Including the Barhaloleun region he had governed over originally, he merged Lao Ban, Freeman, and Nasir's colonized lands as well as Lilo's, who had unluckily been caught up in the war. In reality, the Berserkers occupied many more colonized lands during the past war, but as there was a limit to the Berserkers' numbers, they couldn't continue to occupy all of them. In the end, excluding those five, the rest were left as they were. There were some that were returned to their former owners, and the ones without owners were distributed between the other overseers.

"Ah, the Great Warrior of the El Tribe Lantz said something strange."

"What?"

"About being careful, and that even if the colonization has been going smoothly until now, the monsters aren't easy opponents."

It seemed Lee Jinhee didn't find Lantz's warning important as she told them his warning with a lofty tone. The reason was because the monsters, which felt quite strong when they first started colonizing, were now not much of a threat. This was because humans had been continuously growing stronger through repeated intense battles.

Just then, Naro said,

"I think there is value in heeding his warning. There are still places in Dragonic that haven't been scanned by my radar. Although more people have migrated and there has been more trade between colonized lands after the war... From my calculations, the regions concentrated with colonized lands don't make up more than 30% of Dragonic."

Naro opened its arms wide and continued,

"We don't know what kind of monsters live in the remaining 70%."

Although it wasn't something they could do much about right away, Choi Hyuk nodded his head.



There were too many matters to handle at the same time. They had to comfort colonized lands that had become devastated, continue colonizing Dragonic, and finish

the migration of earthlings... On top of that, they had to conduct the mission given to them by the Virgo Cluster. Also, why were there so many people giving him warnings...

The more he thought about it, the more complicated his mind became. Choi Hyuk decided to set aside his problems for the time being as it was now time to successfully complete the first mission.

Choi Hyuk displayed his motivation,

“From now on, we cannot fail any missions. Okay? We will go towards the center.”

The Virgo Cluster earthlings were active in was located in the utmost boundary region. For earthlings to approach the innermost core, the ‘Exalted Wings’, and get revenge, there was only one way.

To complete each mission with overwhelming success. And make those at the center have no choice but to call for them.

Although there were some who said that the fact earthlings had become alliance members was a miracle, what Choi Hyuk sought to achieve from now on was an even greater one.

After finishing their preparations, Choi Hyuk went to battle faster than any other overseer.

The ‘military gate system’ operated following Choi Hyuk’s will.

{Destination, Cayenne star.}

{The applicant for troop transportation, Overseer Choi Hyuk.}

{Confirming whether there is a mission in the specified region... Confirmed.}

{Please choose participants of the mission.}

Choi Hyuk felt an odd sensation. After having always received missions from the

system, he was now personally handing down a mission through it.

“Participants of the mission are all Berserkers and all small and medium-sized clans under the influence of the Berserkers.”

{Targeting complete. Please create a mission message.}

“Subjugate all monsters existing on the Cayenne star. Clans have the autonomy to command themselves.”

{Mission announcement complete. Beginning to transmit.}

—————

{Subjugation of the Cayenne Star}

Subjugate all monsters existing on the Cayenne star.

Clans have the autonomy to command themselves. – Overseer Choi Hyuk

—————

This was the first mission announcement under Choi Hyuk’s name. The moment the announcement arrived, millions of warriors crossed through the dimension and over to the Cayenne star.

# CHAPTER 95

## AT THE RUINS (1)

---

The Cayenne star.

They had imagined a fiery land akin to the Sun because it was a star and not a planet.

They had thought that for those at the lower levels, even if they had awakened karma, it would be difficult for them to endure the heat.

However, the reality was very different from their imaginations.

Lee Jinhee mumbled,

“Wow... What is all this?”

It was a star filled with life. Although it was very different from Earth... It could be called something close to an ecosystem.

The red and yellow flowers, which bloomed plentifully on the ground, absorbed the star's heat energy and were composed of a mysterious material. The atmosphere, which allowed living creatures to breathe, was filled with gas and wavelengths that earthlings were unfamiliar with. There were also living creatures which consumed the flowers in this environment. The field was red like the sunset and transparent like dawn. The plentiful lights in the star split into countless wavelengths. An aurora with the colors of the rainbow fluttered in mid-air.

If they were to describe the temperature, it was hot enough for water to evaporate instantly. However, even still, there was a flowing river. A material, which had a boiling point of metal on Earth, created beautiful waves as it flowed alongside the field like water.

The earthlings, who had come to the star to go to war with the monsters, were momentarily stunned at the scenery. Earthlings had spent a lot of time looking for life out in space. To find life in space, they had looked for planets with a similar environment as Earth's. A planet with water that orbited a star at an appropriate distance. A planet humans could survive on. However, in reality, alien lifeforms were

born in environments unimaginable by humans, like the Flame Wing Tribe born from the Big Bang and the Dark Tribe born from dark matter. This place was the same. The fact that plentiful life existed on a star they had thought would be uninhabitable filled them all with emotion.

Handke, the artillery captain, said in a dazed voice,

“Wasn’t this a place invaded by monsters?”

This place was too beautiful for it to have been invaded by monsters.

Even Chu Youngjin, who didn’t express his feelings often, stroked his red sword, which had been reborn with a new name ‘Chu Youngjin’s Protection’, with complicated emotions. His expression looked somewhat bitter.

“We move,”

Said Choi Hyuk, who was the most emotionless out of the bunch, in an indifferent voice. There was only the goal ‘shocking mission completion ability’ in his mind.

As if waking from a dream, the Berserkers broke out of their daze and began to march at Choi Hyuk’s voice.



When they ran wearing the Shoes of Hermes, it didn’t take long for them to discover a city. No, to be precise, it was a ruin that was once a city.

“Just looking at the traces of the ruin, it looks like it was a civilization more advanced than Earth,”

Mumbled Ryu Hyunsung.

Bae Jinman expressed a different opinion,

“You can’t necessarily say that that’s the case since it’s a star with tens of thousands of more usable green energy than Earth.”

Being an elderly professor of medical science, Bae Jinman’s explanation got a nod from Handke, who graduated with a natural science degree.

“The ground is overfilled with energy. The flowers blooming in that field and the wavelengths that fill the atmosphere, if you know how to harness these energies, it might not be impossible for us to create a floating city during the industrial age. Of course, it’ll be difficult to make an ‘apples to apples’ comparison.”

That was right. The ruin in front of them seemed to be composed of the remnants of tall buildings, crashed floating city areas, and still floating city areas. At first glance, a high-rise floating city might seem like something from a civilization within the realm of parascience, but if there were tons of materials stronger than steel concrete, and if a random stone on the street possessed the energy of tens of liters of petroleum... it might have been much easier achieving this level of civilization than on Earth.

They looked around as they entered the city. Baek Seoin said,

“Hmm... It looks like they set up a line of defense here.”

Like he said, at the outer boundaries of the city, there were broken suit-like objects, numerous meter-tall barricades, and weapons similar to artillery.

No corpse could be found as if they had all been eaten.

When they made their way to the center, they began to see corpses of monsters amongst the wreckage. Crooks, mountain orcs, and bladed ghosts were among the other monsters they were seeing after a long time... They were 1-2-star low ranked monsters. Perhaps they were plentiful in numbers due to their low rank because they were monsters they had seen frequently.

“Were they annihilated with just these monsters?”

Lee Jinhee seemed doubtful. Especially since guns were somewhat effective against 1-star monsters, and as they could do significant damage to 2-star monsters with the help of heavy firearms. It seemed comical for a civilization, which had developed with high-energy as its foundation, to be annihilated by 1-2-star monsters even if they hadn’t awakened karma.

Baek Seoin shook his head.

“Or... It might be that the only monsters they could kill were these.”

He meant that since monsters above the 3-star level were immune to physical damage, they wouldn't die in the first place, leaving no corpses behind.

"And it's strange."

Baek Seoin frowned. Lee Jinhee looked back at him,

"What is?"

"Why was it that there were no monster corpses at the outer boundaries of the city?"

When they heard that, it was strange. The outer boundaries had tons of wreckage of destroyed weapons, but they didn't see any monster corpses. If only 1-2-star monsters invaded them, then those corpses should have been littered from the outside.

"Isn't this more like the monsters appeared within the city?"

"Unless... Strong monsters destroyed the defensive line, leaving normal monsters to invade afterwards."

While expanding on Baek Seoin's opinion, it seemed like Ryu Hyunsung thought of something as he glanced towards Choi Hyuk. 'Choi Hyuk shakes them up, and the Berserkers smash them apart.' That was the Berserkers' basic tactic. There was no reason that the monsters couldn't use this tactic either.

Just then, the world temporarily became dark. It looked like it was becoming darker from afar, and then at some point, it was night. A complete darkness in which they couldn't even see their own hands. Then, as if nothing ever occurred, it became bright again.

"Wha-what was that just now?"

People all around became confused. "Report!" "Report!" Shouting voices erupted everywhere. In less than three minutes, green flags were raised amongst the lines of millions of people. All clear.

"Huu... What was that? Was it a distinct natural phenomenon on the Cayenne star?"

While relieved, Baek Seoin didn't lower his guard against the mysterious occurrence.

On the other hand, Choi Hyuk felt a sense of déjà vu. He had experienced this occurrence during his training.

"A monster of night...?"

The monster of night Choi Hyuk remembered was a monster with enormous eyes. It would scan an immense area with its large eyes and then figure out and share the distribution of karmalings and their weak points to other monsters. When it blinked its eyes, a darkness, so dark that it was impossible to see anything, fell on a targeted area, making it useful for sudden monster attacks. Not only that, but it also had the effect of restricting the effectiveness of karmalings' detecting abilities.

"What the... My Mind's Eye suddenly isn't working properly?"

"It's like there's a fog in front of me..."

Were what the Berserkers were saying. It was the monster of night's typical detection obstruction effect. Choi Hyuk was sure that a monster of night had appeared here. At the same time, he knew what was wrong.

He had learned that monsters of night were high ranked monsters along with doppelgangers during the new recruit training... It was a monster that shouldn't appear in this supposed easy place.

Just then, a hologram of Richard appeared in front of Choi Hyuk. It was one of the convenient functions of the 'military gate system'.

<Demon King. Was that a monster of night just now? I was surprised that it suddenly became dark as soon as I arrived.>

It seemed Richard arrived with his troops just now.

"It looks like it."

<But it's a high ranked monster? It looks like the information about the mission was wrong then. I think we need to report this first.>

Richard attempted to contact Commander Mack. Then, annoyed, he frowned.

<I can't contact her. Now that I think about it, didn't the monster of night also have a communication obstruction ability?>

Glancing at Choi Hyuk, he asked,

<What are you going to do? When we aren't sure, retreating is an option.>

At Richard's question, Choi Hyuk indifferently nodded his head as if this didn't concern him,

"If you're going to retreat, do it."

Meaning he would stay and conduct the mission. Richard frowned. It was dangerous to recklessly conduct the mission without definitive information. However, he also understood Choi Hyuk's thoughts. As someone whose priority was to take revenge on the Exalted Wings, Choi Hyuk couldn't back down.

A massive number of troops crossed over using the 'military gate system', meaning they had already consumed an immense amount of karma. Even though the Virgo Cluster paid the expenses as it was an official mission, if they retreated their army without any gains in this situation, the Virgo Cluster would suffer a huge loss. And, after retreating, was he to make a request like 'We witnessed a monster of night. There might be more high ranked monsters so please dispatch additional troops or take us out of here.' Although it wasn't like he couldn't do it, it would be impossible to get promoted enough to approach the Exalted Wings' side within a thousand years at that rate.

In the end, whether the information was wrong or not, Choi Hyuk was planning on remaining here and completing the mission before returning. Although it could be considered reckless, Choi Hyuk always surpassed the limits of humanity. This might also be an opportunity to gain attention.

Richard nodded his head.

<Okay. I'll cooperate.>

Only, Richard left open an escape route as well.

“Ed. Go to the Virgo Cluster, report the situation and request for the dispatch of an investigative team before returning.”

“Understood.”

Richard sent one of his followers to the Virgo Cluster.

<Now. Reporting done. Let’s try to raise our performance as much as we can.>



Unlike the monsters on Dragonic that only wanted to protect their territory, the monsters on Cayenne were proactively aggressive. Was it because the monster of night told them their location? They crowded together in an instant.

However, the Berserker troops weren’t very nervous.

“What the? Only bladed ghosts? Shadow teeth?”

The monsters they saw from afar were only 1-2-star monsters. Even the small and medium-sized clans could slaughter them, let along the Berserkers. When the monsters rushed towards them, creating deep rumblings sounds, veteran colonizers weren’t very nervous.

However.

Blink.

Blink.

When the monster of night blinked consecutively, the situation changed.

The moment the monsters attacked the earthlings, the earthlings lost their vision, and the monsters penetrated their ranks.

“Guaack!”

Then, something incomprehensible occurred.

“What?! What’s wrong?! How could a 1-star monster stab a 3-star colonizer?”

The daggers the monsters held could pierce through veteran colonizers' endurance. It was an incomprehensible situation. Then, those veteran colonizers, who wouldn't die from such wounds, stood rigidly and screamed, unable to break free from the shadow teeth.

"Get lost, you bastard!"

A colonizer, who stood next to a victim, attacked a shadow teeth that was pushing its dagger further, but-

Ting!

His sword bounced off.

"Wh-what?"

"Vassal starving ghosts!!! The daggers they are holding are 3-star monsters! If you get stabbed by them, all your karma will be stolen! As the karma is been drained away, it creates a barrier around it! Attacks aren't very effective until the victim is dead! You can't get stabbed by them!!"

Executives, who had learned about middle ranked monsters from Baek Seoin beforehand, shouted out loud.

"Haa... Shadow teeth. This brings back memories."

Lee Jinhee, who had been chased out of her group after fighting with the shadow teeth in Kangdong District in the past, was engulfed by a strange emotion. Although she was able to meet Choi Hyuk because she was chased out... As expected, she especially didn't have good feelings towards the shadow teeth.

"They piss me off whenever I see them."

The shadow teeth were using their characteristically fast movements and stealth abilities to increase the number of victims every time the monster of night blinked its eyes.

Of course, the Berserkers weren't scrambling about just because they had lost their

vision.

“Spread your karma out! If something enters, swing at it without hesitation!”

Because of this, Lee Jinhee’s advice and support were directed towards the participating small and medium-sized clans and not the Berserkers.

A flaming karma sword surged from Lee Jinhee’s sword. Lee Jinhee’s weapon was purchased from the Laniakea Supercluster. Although she didn’t personally pick it out, it was a weapon Baek Seoin and Chu Youngjin had carefully chosen for her. It suited her well.

Kaching!!

Lee Jinhee split the barrier made by a vassal starving ghost and stabbed the shadow teeth within.

Splash!

“Huck!!”

When she forcefully tore off the vassal starving ghost from the victim’s chest, he slumped to the ground, panting.

“Take him to the guardian!”

The colonizers nearby helped the victim get up and retreated.

Lee Jinhee’s expression turned serious.

“The casualties of the small and medium-sized clans are large from the beginning...”

The Berserkers fought well without needing any advice. When it became dark, they would spread out their karma, and if something approached them, they would attack immediately. They didn’t even worry about mistakenly attacking the comrades near them since this wasn’t their first dogfight. However, the small and medium-sized clans had the tendency to be slow and clumsy.

Blink.

The monster of night blinked again.

“Where the hell is that monster of night bastard?”

Grinding her teeth, Lee Jinhee stabbed out with her 40cm long, silver sword. She split a shadow teeth’s head without even looking.

Their surroundings became bright again.

Then she heard Baek Seoin’s voice.

“Sululacks! Artillery! Focus fire!”

His voice sounded urgent.

# CHAPTER 96

## AT THE RUINS (2)

---

In the blink of an eye, the sululacks burrowed into the crowd of colonizers. The monsters, which looked like someone had piled rags into a human shape, screamed, “Shaaaaah!” an unpleasant sound, as they stood there.

“Euack!”

However, the nearby colonizers freaked out as they began to retreat.

“Karma! My karma is being sucked in!”

A fleeing colonizer screamed.

It was chaos.

Frustration surged within Choi Hyuk. Since they were told it was an opportunity to gain experience, each overseer had brought over all their combat-oriented colonizers. That was also why Choi Hyuk had brought millions of warriors himself. However, what could they do with numbers?

In Choi Hyuk’s perspective, they were pathetically weak.

Swish!

Choi Hyuk dived in. He swooped down like a ghost and sliced a sululack in two. Sululacks would try to suck in karma, and the closer you came, the more quickly they would suck, however, it was all a farce that only affected low level warriors who lacked both control and Retribution.

Choi Hyuk gave the hurriedly fleeing small and medium-sized clans a pathetic look. Sululacks weren’t monsters that could be avoided like that. Instead, they were dangerous monsters that would leave a serious blow in your troops if you didn’t take them out the moment they appeared. Yet, these clans didn’t even attempt to attack the

sululacks and were busy attempting to flee.

‘When will they be worth their salt?’

Choi Hyuk felt that they would only be appropriate to use when they were at the level of the Berserkers. When he thought about how long it would take for these clans to be of use, it felt so distant... yet, he currently had to save them.

Choi Hyuk jumped around as he took down the sululacks.

Crackle! Boom!

The Berserkers’ artillery focused their fire on the sululacks appearing in the distance and pre-emptively took them down.

Lee Jinhee’s troops, who possessed incredible mobility, jumped around like grasshoppers.

Yet, there were simply too many sululacks appearing around them.

“Quickly, quickly! Take them out before they explode!”

Baek Seoin shouted in an urgent manner.

Multiple sululacks would appear simultaneously whenever the monster of night blinked.

At the same time as their appearance, they would quickly absorb the karma around them and would explode that energy at some point. They were a type of suicide bombers. They were a nightmare in the current situation.

Baaang!

Baaaang!

Ferocious explosions erupted everywhere. Normal explosions would spread out horizontally, but the self-destruction of the sululacks didn’t spread out like that, instead, they utterly destroyed the area around them as if it was contained in a sphere.

The ground was completely shredded apart and vaporized. When the special surface of the Cayenne star, which absorbed the star's intense heat, disappeared, the flames emitted by the star surged up like a storm. As the Endurance of the colonizers, who were swept up by the flames, was pitiful, not even their bodies remained.

"...Their locations are too good."

Choi Hyuk frowned. Sululacks were already annoying middle ranked monsters, but with the support of the monster of night, they became truly irritable existences. They appeared like ghosts the moment the monster of night blinked, but of all places, they kept appearing in areas without any experts. Hidden from view, the monster of night clearly looked at the earthlings and stabbed at their weak points.

"Kuaah! Di... e... e..."

There was a courageous 2-star colonizer who attempted to take down a sululack before it exploded. However, he couldn't endure the quickening pace of karma absorption as he approached and collapsed at the feet of the sululack. His body dried up like a mummy and scattered like dust. Only those above the 3-star level could barely endure the sululack's karma absorption.

Eventually, the sululack, which no one could take down, exploded once it had collected enough energy.

Baaang!

Every time they heard that sound, the colonizers' fighting spirit diminished.

No one knew who first started this method. However, there was also no reason to discuss it either. On the intense border of life or death, people would instinctively find a way to live.

Pcht.

Why did the completely unexpected attack emit an unfamiliar yet frightening sound? Surprised, the colonizer who had been attacked turned to look at his comrade with a

pale face.

“Why... Why?”

Without a trace of apology, his comrade looked back at him with spiteful eyes. The weapon he stabbed him with was a vassal starving ghost that had been held by a shadow teeth just now.

Baang!

A sululack exploded from afar.

The man who stabbed his comrade was able to endure the explosion with the ‘barrier’ created by the vassal starving ghost. To survive, some gave up feeling sorry and rushed towards their comrades with a vassal starving ghost in hand. This occurred everywhere.

Those who could block the absorption of their karma, Choi Hyuk, his Berserkers, and the executives of the clans, hurriedly moved to take down the sululacks, but the sululacks, which were controlled by the monster of night, always found openings and exploded, leaving behind casualties.

Also... Traitors who killed their comrades to save their own lives remained as well.

“Tsk...”

Choi Hyuk, as he ran by, cut the necks of those he saw attempting to stab their comrades with vassal starving ghosts. However, he couldn’t control the entire mood by himself. It was also obvious for those who couldn’t endure the explosion and would die either way to choose the method that had even the slightest chance of survival.

It was like an endless nightmare for those who weren’t sufficiently strong. Comrades who tried to stab them with vassal starving ghosts. Should I stab first, or should I wait for someone to stab at me and act like I had no choice, or should I be honorable even if I die? If they didn’t want to die futilely, they had to make a choice within a few seconds.

Amidst this cruel choice, the sululacks kept exploding, and the nightmare seemed to be getting worse. However, there was soon an end to the nightmare. Perhaps the monster of night was tired, but its blinking became slower. Then, it stopped. When the

blinking stopped, so did the attack.

Their first battle on the Cayenne star concluded.

While the physical losses were huge, the morale especially took a hit. There were many who died in vain. There were also many who lived by stabbing their comrades. Rage and hostility towards each other and the commanders began to burn.



Conflicts were erupting in various places.

“Fuck... You bastard! You stabbed Dongsoo?”

“What are you saying?! Who’s Dongsoo?!”

An agitated voice interrogated someone who stabbed his comrade.

“Did you see those Leo clan bastards? All their executives were busy running away while our clan’s executives were putting their lives on the line whilst taking down the sululacks. They got a free pass...”

“The hell you saying? And you didn’t run?”

Disputes between clans.

“No, those crazy... How could they drag over all these troops without a plan...?”

“To be honest, he’s an overseer. Why is he dragging people around on whim...? If he dragged us out here, then he should command properly!”

There were also groups quietly expressing their rage towards Choi Hyuk.

“...I felt this during the subjugation war, but aren’t they honestly too weak?”

And Berserkers scorned other clans.

The mood of the army was the worst.

In this mood, Choi Hyuk gathered the executives of the Berserkers and the clan leaders of each clan and held a meeting.

The moment everyone gathered, Choi Hyuk went straight to the point.

“The composition of our enemy is very different from what we had heard from Commander Mack. We’ll give up our current tactic. First, we’ll establish formations and tactics to face the monsters we’ve encountered. Also, we will prepare ahead for monsters that are likely to appear.”

Then Choi Hyuk explained the new formation. The gist was that each clan’s experts and the magician troop’s members would be equally scattered and prepared for the sululacks. Also, that he would create a detached troop that transcended clans to prepare in case jaksams appeared.

‘Clans have the autonomy to command for themselves.’ He completely retracted this plan. It was an inevitable choice. It was originally a command which reflected what the commander of the Virgo cluster and other warrior leaders had said, but currently, the situation was completely different.

“Then discuss with Director Baek Seoin about the details of the formation. Ah, also, there are people who survived by stabbing their comrades with vassal starving ghosts in this battle. Come up with a method to track them down. For the teams’ trust, we cannot leave them alone.”

After finishing the short meeting, Choi Hyuk stood up. Behind him, Baek Seoin’s expression seemed somewhat resigned.

“Excuse me! Overseer!”

A clan leader raised his hand. Choi Hyuk, who was about to leave, stopped. Baek Seoin grabbed his forehead with an expression that seemed to know what was to come.

“Do... you have no thoughts about retreating?”

At the clan leader’s courageous question, the other clan leaders nodded in agreement. Casualties aside, their morale had hit rock bottom. Although Choi Hyuk said he wanted to track down those who stabbed their comrades to restore trust in each other, the

distrust wouldn't heal easily with just that. The clan leaders felt that this situation was enough to consider retreating.

Yet, Choi Hyuk tilted his head as if asking what he was talking about,

“Retreat?”

A word expressing incomprehension. That was all. Leaving that word behind, Choi Hyuk made no other response and left.

It was a clear refusal, and from Baek Seoin's perspective, an expected one.

‘The participating clan leaders might request for a retreat. Ignoring or pressuring them isn't everything. They will hold dissatisfaction. There's a need to comfort them.’ Baek Seoin had already warned Choi Hyuk, but Choi Hyuk's reply was, ‘Dissatisfaction? Let them have that if they want. To be honest, they were so weak that they were pissing me off.’

Baek Seoin suppressed his urge to sigh. If they showed that the Berserkers weren't on the same wavelength in this situation, it would only make things worse. Baek Seoin put on a face so cold that it looked like no blood would drip even if he was stabbed. Then, with a firm tone, he began to explain the details of the new formation to the dumbfounded clan leaders.

Although the clan leaders inwardly felt dumbfounded and enraged, perhaps it was because they recalled the ‘Demon King’ Choi Hyuk's indiscriminate subjugation during the war that they didn't express their emotions. They didn't express their strife, and it only became even more deeply rooted.



When Choi Hyuk came out, he looked around at the collapsed buildings and the floating city.

“Will there be any gains?”

Lee Jinhee, with the artillery as an escort, left to explore the ruins.

Looking at the wreckage, there were suggestions that it hadn't been long since it was destroyed, and the purpose of this exploration was to find clues within the ruins and

gather information about the monsters. It was to prevent another instance of increased casualties due to unexpected monsters.

Casualties... When Choi Hyuk thought of the casualties, he felt his insides sour. He unconsciously shook his head.

“We can’t go on like this.”

Even if they considered that it was a sudden, unexpected attack, the casualties were higher than expected. He wanted to clear away the clans and fight with only the Berserkers if he could. However, Choi Hyuk was fully aware that he couldn’t.

‘For an earthling to enter the core of the alliance... It is impossible by myself.’

He became convinced of this thought after experiencing Laniakea. Earthlings were currently outsiders to the alliance. They couldn’t avoid being undervalued. If Choi Hyuk was to get stronger by himself in this situation, he would only become a useful tool.

That was why, whether he liked it or not, he had to make the millions of incomparably pathetic colonizers into elites.

When he thought this, Choi Hyuk heard a roar.

“Fuck! Yeah, I’m a murderer, you bastard!”

A scream erupted soon after.

“Euaaack!”

He could clearly see the situation with just the noise. They hadn’t yet tracked down the traitors who had stabbed their comrades with vassal starving ghosts...

“...What a show.”

Choi Hyuk signed as he started walking in the direction of the scream.

“You bastard!”

“What?! Die!”

There was a murder. As well as a brawl.

# CHAPTER 97

## AT THE RUINS (3)

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“That bastard attacked me first!”

Berserker Kim Minhee shouted in a dejected voice. She was currently being investigated for murder. Lee Jinhee, who was investigating her, leaned on the back of her chair, displaying an indifferent expression.

“But, you see, there are many witnesses saying that you provoked him.”

“Provoke? I provoked him? That’s what those Kalin clan bastards are saying, right? Director, do you believe what they say?”

“There’s no reason not to. Either way, we’re all on the same side.”

“Same side?! I don’t know about other clans but that Kalin clan isn’t! Those bastards fled when we were dealing with the sululacks! How can we be on the same side as those who only look after themselves!”

“So you’re saying you’re innocent?”

“Ah damn... Since I killed someone, I’ll take the punishment.”

“What punishment?”

“...I’ll take charge of setting up the washroom pits.”

“Are you joking? Murder means a death penalty. You know this.”

“I told you! It was self-defence!”

She protested as if she truly felt this was unfair. Her voice also became louder.

“And I’m a Berserker! It’s really strange these days! Without listening to us properly about how things are unfair, you just say ‘death penalty’ like it’s nothing! We are like family! Aren’t you supposed to at least trust the words of your fellow Berserkers?! This

is unfair! Unni! Are you really going to kill me? Unni, you know me! I don't kill people for no reason!"

As if she really found this unfair, Kim Minhee slammed the table as she stood up. She was a Berserker who normally had a good and close relationship with Lee Jinhee.

This was exactly why Lee Jinhee was the one handling this incident. Although she was busy investigating the various murders and brawls that would break out every day, she wanted to personally conduct the investigation of Kim Minhee and volunteered for it.

Lee Jinhee said in a low voice,

"...Yeah. Berserkers. We are like family... Minhee, when did you join the Berserkers?"

Lee Jinhee asked as she picked up the file she left on the side. Although she didn't act like it, Lee Jinhee was very nervous right now.

'Please... Please... '

Lee Jinhee inwardly pleaded again and again.

"Me? About... 2 years?... Maybe 1 year?"

As if flustered by the sudden question, Kim Minhee's answer was vague. 'Ah... ' Lee Jinhee's hand, which was flipping through the file, slipped. Still, she continued to question her as if nothing was wrong.

"Okay. How did you awaken?"

"Ah... Don't ask me that. It's horrible."

Lee Jinhee frowned at her words.

"...Okay."

Thud.

Lee Jinhee placed the file down on the table with a thud. She unsheathed her new sword that had been smelted with semi-transparent metal, 'Silent Ice', and asked,

“I get it. Then let’s check one last thing.”

Lee Jinhee placed Silent Ice’s sharp blade on her own forehead.

“Haa... I really hate this.”

After letting out a sigh, she sliced her forehead.

Pik!

Her flesh and frontal bone<sup>{1}</sup> were cut instantly. As if she restrained it with karma, not a single drop of her blood spilled. In that state, Lee Jinhee showed the inside of her forehead to Kim Minhee. She could see a light gray brain inside.

“Di-director! What’s this!!”

Kim Minhee shouted as if she were freaked out by Lee Jinhee’s sudden self-inflicted wound. It seemed that Lee Jinhee found her noisy as she stretched her hand out to restrain her, and then took out two glass bottles containing a transparent liquid from her chest. She opened one of the two bottles and poured it on her wound. The moment the transparent liquid made contact with her brain, it emitted a golden light as it protected her open forehead and began to seal her wound.

“This is a liquid made by Guardian Bae Jinman. It won’t leave a scar.”

Without showing any sign that it hurt, Lee Jinhee calmly conducted this terrifying process. Then she tossed the remaining bottle and a sharp sword at Kim Minhee and said,

“Now it’s your turn. Do what I did. That’s an order.”

Kim Minhee became dumbfounded.



At the same time, Choi Hyuk was in the middle of a meeting with the important clan leaders.

“Do you know how many murders there have been? The monsters aren’t the problem! We’ll die by fighting amongst ourselves!”

Resolutely remarked Lumin, a popular clan leader. His words were also a direct attack on Choi Hyuk's commanding abilities. It was a 'dangerous' remark.

Yet, it wasn't like his words were wrong.

Choi Hyuk's army was currently swept with severe distrust and conflict. People killed each other. This didn't change even if they made the punishment more severe. Every few hours, another brawl would break out and someone would die. Whether there was a punishment or not, murders and fights didn't cease. They killed each without thinking of the consequences. They hated those next to them more than the monsters.

Even still, Choi Hyuk couldn't provide a clear countermeasure. It seemed he only wanted to quickly complete the mission as he only quickened his advance. However, the monsters didn't directly clash with Choi Hyuk's army. They simply avoided them and fled. If they kept subjugating and pushing the monsters into a corner, then they might eventually be able to take them out... But it would take too long to reach that point. The conflicts between the colonizers and clans had inflated to the point where war could break out at any moment.

Yet, there was no solution.

"...So what are we going to do?"

Clan Leader Jiro asked in an annoyed tone. He glanced at Choi Hyuk and Baek Seoin and said,

"Don't you already know? We can't return to Earth now. It's already been 3 days since we've been shut out of the 'military gate system'. So what do you want to do?"

That was so.

At first, they couldn't retreat because of Choi Hyuk's opposition, but now, that wasn't the case. Everyone became aware of this fact with Richard's message.

<The messenger I sent to the Virgo Cluster Headquarters returned... He said our mission changed. To find what is going on in this place. Until we do, the military gate system will be closed... Damn, I can't tell what they are thinking.>

The closure of the gate meant the closure of their escape route.

To the clan leaders who desperately wished to retreat, this was like a bolt out of the blue.

“That’s why if we had already retreated...”

Someone leaked the thought that everyone inwardly thought but couldn’t say. At the same time, the mood in the meeting room chilled. At that word, everyone became so nervous their spines stiffened. This was because everyone was afraid of Choi Hyuk.

However, Clan Leader Lumin didn’t read the mood and raised his voice,

“Even if we let bygones be bygones, we can’t go on like this! Everyone will die! We can’t ignore the conflicts between the clans these days either. A civil war might break out!”

“Ah, just stop it...”

Even when the clan leaders next to him tried to stop him, Lumin didn’t listen.

“No! I need to say what needs to be said! Overseer Choi Hyuk! I, Lumin, have never held dissatisfaction with the Berserkers’ actions! I always quietly cooperated! However, not this time. Overseer!”

When Lumin raised his voice, Clan Leader Jiro, who was very friendly towards Choi Hyuk, began to criticize Lumin,

“What are you doing? Don’t you know your current actions are bringing about more disorder?”

Another heated argument broke out in the meeting room. Jiro simply criticized Lumin while Lumin, frustrated, said that they need to take note of the current situation and find a solution. Some clan leaders joined in on the debate, but the majority of the clan leaders maintained an uncomfortable silence.

Choi Hyuk raised his hand.

Everyone became quiet.

“Isn’t it weird?”

Those were his first words.

“No matter how hotheaded colonizers’ tempers are... Isn’t the current situation too strange? Doesn’t it seem like we aren’t able to control the situation at all?”

“Yes! That’s what I mean!”

Lumin raised his voice.

“Be quiet and listen!”

And Jiro scolded him.

However, Choi Hyuk still didn’t care.

“Let me tell you something interesting.”

He instead began to talk about a story out of context.

“It’s a story about the day of the first murder... So the day Richard told us it was impossible to return to Earth.”



On the day they suffered heavy casualties with the sudden appearance of the sululacks and vassal starving ghosts and the sudden murders and brawls broke out, Choi Hyuk was contacted by Richard.

<Overseer Choi Hyuk, is there anyone around you? If there is, leave. There’s something we need to talk about privately.>

It just so happened to be during a meeting with the executives of the Berserkers. A frustrating meeting with no conclusion.

“...Good timing. 10-minute break. Everyone go out for a bit and come back.”

Once everyone left at Choi Hyuk’s request, Richard immediately asked,

<You have the black cube they said was an exploration device you received before the mission, right?>

“I do.”

<Take that out. Right now.>

With a bit of doubt, Choi Hyuk followed Richard’s words and took out the black cube from his bag. It was the item he had suddenly received from Tangka of the Armoured Soul Tribe.

“Huh?”

Choi Hyuk was surprised. The black cube was no longer black. It was tinged red as it pulsed.

After seeing that, Richard held his forehead.

<As expected, you too... >

“What? What is it?”

<The messenger I sent to the Virgo cluster during the day returned. From what he said... there’s no support. They said that they will restrict the right to use the military gate system as well. Meaning we can’t choose to retreat anymore.>

“What? Why?”

He never planned on retreating from the beginning. However, there was a clear difference between ‘not retreating’ and ‘not being able to retreat’. Even Choi Hyuk couldn’t help but become sensitive.

<This black cube... No, should I call it a red cube now? It’s an exploration device, but it’s not a resource exploration device like we thought.”

“Then what is it?”

<Doppelganger.>

“...What?”

<The doppelganger that appeared during the placement evaluation after the training. It’s a device for locating them!>

“ .. ”

Choi Hyuk recalled the placement evaluation which allowed him to receive the right to an independent troop. Then he recalled the doppelganger that imitated Chu Youngjin at the end. If Choi Hyuk hadn't noticed his killing intent through his Eyes of Distinction, Choi Hyuk might have been killed.

“...Didn't they say we wouldn't face them?”

That time, the instructor definitely said, 'You will rarely face doppelgangers. Only, it is customary to put that monster in the placement evaluation.'

<That's what's strange. For some reason, they never gave us proper information from the start. Whether it was because they were purposely trying to screw us over or it was a situation where they had to keep it a secret... Either way, what's certain is that the cube is currently red. If it's red, that means there are doppelgangers active around you. Doppelgangers are a species that are treated similarly to a top rank infectious disease. That means we can't leave until we completely take out all the doppelgangers or until the doppelganger-handling group arrives.>

“...When will the doppelganger-handling group arrive?”

<We don't know for sure... They are a team that is active in the vast universe... Since there aren't a lot of cases where doppelgangers are rampant, there aren't a lot of teams from the start.>

“ .. ”

The morale of the troops was a mess because of the sululacks and the vassal starving ghosts. If doppelgangers imitated colonizers in this current situation? Choi Hyuk grabbed his forehead. It was bleak.

“How do we distinguish doppelgangers?”

Although he possessed Eyes of Distinction, it was only semi-useful. Choi Hyuk currently led millions of people. It was impossible to examine each and every one of them, and among them, there were countless people who would possess killing intent towards Choi Hyuk without being doppelgangers. It couldn't be helped due to his violent subjugation of the clans. It was difficult to distinguish whether someone was a doppelganger or not with his Eyes of Distinction.

However, the method Richard told him was even less accurate.

<Doppelgangers invade your nose or ears in the shape of a small bug. Usually, only warriors below the 2-star level are at risk for infection, but if their karma is unstable, like during a war, they could infect warriors above the 3-star level. First, the invading doppelganger eats the brain and acts as the host, but during that process, they absorb the sacrifice's memories and abilities. However... even still, they aren't able to clearly remember their past, and their combat abilities are lower than before... Well, they said we can distinguish them like that.>

That inaccuracy made Choi Hyuk sigh.

As if he noticed Choi Hyuk's gloominess, Richard quickly proposed a more accurate method. But... they couldn't use that method currently.

<Besides that... We should be able to distinguish them with the cube... >

"But?"

<Because the monster of night is blocking it, it seems it is difficult to use that high-level function.>

It was a difficult problem all around. Yet, there still seemed to be a method.

"Then we need to take out the monster of night. Where is it?"

Richard smiled at Choi Hyuk's words. An expression showing 'I knew you'd say that.' In a quiet voice, he said,

<No one knows. But I have a plan.>

Choi Hyuk saw confidence in Richard's eyes. A confidence that showed they could take out the monster of night and clear the doppelgangers if they followed his plan. Richard had come up with a plan in this chaotic situation.

'As expected... '

Choi Hyuk nodded in admiration.

'Ah, but?'

With his sudden thought, he cut Richard off.

“Wait. Wait, but... How about we split their heads?”

<What? What do you mean?>

“Doppelgangers. You said their larvae eat brains.”

<That’s right.>

“So if we split open their heads, can’t we see whether they are doppelgangers or not?”

Richard froze at Choi Hyuk’s ignorant statement. Then he thought about it, contemplating whether it made sense or not. Then the surprising result was that it actually made sense.

<Uh... Yeah. A completely developed doppelganger will usually imitate the brain so it might not be useful, but we should be able to reveal doppelgangers that are still developing.>

“Really? Then what happens if we pour a healer’s karma into a completely developed doppelganger? Will it receive a similar effect like healing?”

<... I don’t think so.>

That was the conversation Choi Hyuk had with Richard that day.



“So-so there are doppelgangers among us now? That’s why we are fighting more than necessary?”

Clan Leader Jiro nervously gulped his saliva after listening to Choi Hyuk’s words. His eyes became sharp as he looked around.

“Then I suspect Lumin. Isn’t he the one interrupting meetings at every step and aggravating disorder?”

“What are you talking about?! Am I a doppelganger just because you don’t like me?”

The meeting room became rowdy once again. Not only that, but there was an overabundance of killing intent. When they thought that they didn’t simply have different opinions but that there were monsters pretending to be humans, it made their blood freeze.

The clan leaders were suspicious of each other and tried their best to prove they weren’t doppelgangers.

Amidst all of this, Choi Hyuk displayed a dumbfounded expression.

“Just what were you listening to?”

As he said that, he unsheathed ‘Imprint’ and placed it on his forehead.

Pik.

His frontal bone was cut and they could see the gray internals inside. Choi Hyuk poured the liquid containing Bae Jinman’s karma in it. Nothing happened. Only his wound was healed.

While no one could take their eyes off that scene, the elites of the Berserkers moved.

Chu Youngjin, Ryu Hyunsung, Baek Seoin, Bae Jinman, Handke and the other directors, as well as team leaders like Alexei, jumped out and surrounded the meeting room, preventing anyone from leaving.

In that state, Choi Hyuk aimed ‘Imprint’ at the clan leaders.

“Now, stick your heads out.”

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{1} Frontal Bone/Frontal Cranial Bone – The part of your skull in the forehead region.

# CHAPTER 98

## AT THE RUINS (4)

---

“What do you think you’re doing?!”

The clan leaders were agitated and scared. ‘No matter how scary the doppelgangers are, to ask us to split our heads and show him our brains... Entrust our heads to someone’s sword? When I’m not even a doppelganger? To split my frontal bone without anesthetics and show him my brain? On top of that, you’re going to pour a mysterious liquid on it?’

Humans would unconsciously close their eyes and stand awkwardly when someone was about to flick their forehead. But to ask them to stick their heads out so that he could cut their frontal bone...!

“I, I have allergies...”

“That sword! Did you disinfect it?”

“Wait! Wait!”

Because they were in such a hurry, the clan leaders said whatever came to their minds. However, Choi Hyuk didn’t listen to them.

“Now, now. It’ll be done in a jiffy.”

Choi Hyuk stepped forward.

“Euuuack!”

Each clan ‘leader’ was at least a colonizer of the 3-star level, yet they freaked out and scattered in different directions. They scattered faster than the metal balls of an exploding claymore mine.

However, the elites of the Berserkers had already finished calculating the clan leaders’ expected escape routes the moment they began to awkwardly flee. On top of that, they had already been assigned their marks beforehand.

Bang!

Bam!

The fleeing clan leaders were blocked by the Berserkers and fell down.

“Uck! No!”

Although they pitifully attempted to stand back up-

Pik!

Drip.

Choi Hyuk appeared like a shadow, sliced their foreheads and poured the medicine into their heads.

“Euuuuuoh!”

Even if they weren't doppelgangers, they couldn't help but freak out. They couldn't roll on the ground, fearing foreign substances might enter their brains, and didn't think to staunch their wounds as they spread their arms and crawled on their butts.

It was as if a tiger was released in a group of baby bunnies. Although the clan leaders tried their best to resist, Choi Hyuk skillfully stepped on their resisting arms and legs and cut their foreheads. He then poured the medicine before jumping and pressing down on another hurriedly fleeing clan leader.

Afterwards, the Berserkers standing by would rush forward and drag the treated clan leaders outside the encirclement. They put those who were so panicked that they didn't know what to do at ease.

“Calm down. Calm down. It's over now. To block an infection, you need to calm your heart and maintain a constant karma barrier. Take deep breaths and quickly make a karma barrier.”

“Ah... You crazy bastards, do you think I can calm down righ-“

“If you can't maintain your karma barrier, you'll have to be re-examined later.”

“Hiiick!”

Through this incident, the clan leaders were able to recall what they already knew.

‘As I thought, words don’t work on those Berserker bastards!!’

Clan Leader Lumin touched his forehead. It had, at some point, completely healed without a scar. In fact, his head felt refreshed, however, he wasn’t sure whether it was because of Guardian Bae Jinman’s karma or because of the explosive amount of adrenaline produced from this terrifying experience.

What was clear was that when Choi Hyuk split his forehead, he really thought he would die right then and there.

After being dragged out of the encirclement by the Berserkers, creating a karma barrier, and forcing himself to take deep breaths, his thumping heart calmed down and he started to take in the scene around him.

It was quite a sight.

“Puha.”

Leisurely looking at the scene from a distance, it really was worth seeing. Even though those gentlemen who acted refined, saying they were clan leaders, were currently fleeing for their lives, their struggle was so easily restrained, it was almost artistic, and they screamed when their foreheads were split. It couldn’t be any funnier.

Lumin watched this scene without any tension.

“Wait! Wait! Choi Hyuk! Overseer! I’m not a doppelganger! I’m not!”

Clan Leader Jiro was currently restrained below Choi Hyuk’s feet.

“Hey, hey! Cheer up, Jiro!”

Lumin unconsciously shouted due to his happiness. He felt refreshed that Jiro, who kept finding faults whenever he spoke, was suffering the same humiliation he endured. It was almost as if a non-existent comradeship was budding.

‘Maybe I should have a drink with that guy tonight.’

Although Lumin thought such leisurely thoughts, Jiro’s situation wasn’t the same. No, in reality, Jiro no longer had the capacity to judge his circumstances.

As the true him had died a few days ago.

“Euuuuaaackkkkk!!”

The moment Choi Hyuk poured the healing liquid into Clan Leader Jiro’s forehead, he began to flail crazily. It was a noticeably different reaction from the others up until now. Surprised by his desperate screams, the other clan leaders froze.

“Wh-what?”

Lumin unintentionally stood up.

“Sit down. There is a concern that there might be a secondary infection.”

A Berserker blocked him with a nervous expression, indicating this wasn’t his first time seeing this.

The liquid containing Bae Jinman’s karma was normally transparent. However, once it was poured in people’s foreheads, it would turn golden, heal the wound, and protect the brain from various impacts and infections. Yet, the liquid in Jiro’s head currently surged with a copper-red light. Jiro’s brain began to boil, and the thing that looked exactly like a brain writhed its body as it attempted to flee.

“Th-that...”

Only then did people recall the reason why Choi Hyuk was splitting their foreheads. Although they heard it through their ears, the story that they hadn’t felt was real or trustworthy had, at this moment, become a reality, making their hearts freeze.

‘Doppelgangers eat people’s brains, take their bodies, and act as the host.’

Tap.

When Choi Hyuk flicked his finger, scarlet flames suddenly swept up the doppelganger that was exiting Jiro's head as well as Jiro's body, causing them to disappear without a trace.

Choi Hyuk, who had calmly watched that scene, raised his head and said in a tone which seemed like he was asking them to go have lunch,

“Now, shall we continue?”

The clan leaders were unable to flee or readily stick out their heads as they froze in place, reading each other's gazes.



Blaze!

In total, he burned three corpses. Although it could be seen as though only three out of over a hundred clan leaders were infected... If they considered that they were all experts who were skilled enough to be clan leaders, it definitely wasn't a small number.

The clan leaders' expressions calmed. The cries of the doppelgangers kept echoing in their minds. Lies that seemed so true. Tears that looked real.

“Please... Please save me. There's something in my head. However, I am still Clan Leader Raley. I am fine! You know me, right?! Lumin! You know me! Right?! Save me. I want to live. Please kill the bug in my head and save me. Please. Please.”

However, Choi Hyuk said,

“No. The moment a doppelganger invades your mind, it starts by killing your brain. Although it does take a while for it to fully absorb your brain, that doesn't mean your brain is still alive. You have already died. Raley. No, doppelganger.”

The most terrifying scene was when they were dying. The doppelgangers never admitted they were doppelgangers until the end.

“Euuack! I'm not one of them! I'm not! What kind of bullshit is this?! This liquid is fake from the start, right?! You guys are just trying to eliminate those you don't lik- Euaack!”

Even when bugs that resembled brains crawled out of their split heads... Their mouths kept shouting that they were innocent.

Although they were clan leaders who had overcome countless life-or-death crises, the scene in front of them was more terrifying than any gruesome battle. They still felt pity and became enthralled when hearing their pleas and seeing their expressions, even as they watched the bugs crawl out of their heads. This fact made them so scared that their limbs trembled.

The doppelganger was that kind of monster.

A monster of suspicion.



“But you said the doppelganger identification cube doesn’t work. There’s a limit to Guardian Bae Jinman’s karma reserves, we can’t just split millions of heads... How will we examine them?”

A clan leader asked as they left the basement that was used as the meeting room.

Choi Hyuk opened the door. As they were on a star filled with light and one without night, the moment he opened the door a bright light entered the basement.

As he exited the building, Choi Hyuk said,

“We need to find and kill the monster of night. That’s why we’ve gathered here.”

When they exited the building, they could see troops spread endlessly in the bright light.

“Th-this.”

“The reason why we pushed ourselves to advance to this point was not to quicken the subjugation but to gather all seven overseers together.”

Wherever they looked, they saw people. As each overseer had brought at least a few million warriors, once they gathered together, there were tens of millions of warriors gathered, surrounding the boundary of a particular city on the Cayenne star.

“You finally came out.”

Richard was waving his hand. Intelligent looking colonizers were lined up behind him.

“Reflect on yourself. Among the seven overseers, the only one who didn’t properly total the total number of participants was the Berserkers.”

Choi Hyuk simply shrugged at Richard’s scolding. Richard sighed as he turned his gaze towards Baek Seoin, who was standing next to Choi Hyuk.

“If your sovereign is like this, then shouldn’t you at least pay attention?”

However, Baek Seoin replied in a faultless voice,

“Administration personnel are almost non-existent in our clan. What can I do by myself?”

At his shameless reply, Richard grasped his forehead and gestured at the intelligent looking colonizers behind him.

“Yeah, yeah. Now, that’s why I brought over some intelligent people, so quickly put them to work. You need to assign teams.”

“Yes, yes.”

Baek Seoin brought the administration personnel and clan leaders to a different location.

As he looked at this, Richard said to Choi Hyuk,

“Please take care of me. You know it, right? That your role is the most important.”

“As long as you can gain their attention, there’s no problem.”

“Okay.”

Richard nodded and stepped forward. While stretching, he said,

“Good. Then shall we begin the game?”

Richard described the game as a 'Mafia Game' to bring out the monster of night.

Baek Seoin and Richard's administration personnel displayed superhuman work performance. In a single day, they reorganized the Berserkers, numbering in the millions, into 10-person divisions. It wasn't random assignment either. They had reorganized them into groups with people whom they were familiar with. It was essential to reorganize them with people they knew as questioning their past was an effective method for determining whether they were doppelgangers or not. Following their karma growth, not only would their physical abilities increase but their cognitive abilities as well.

As the other overseers had already reorganized their troops into divisions, with the addition of the Berserkers, all preparations were complete.

After those who had yet to have their brains inspected disarmed themselves, they gathered in their specified divisions.

The elites who already had their brains inspected were either dispatched amongst the divisions to dispose of those who broke the rules and discovered doppelgangers, or stood guard on the boundaries in case there was a sudden monster attack.

In this situation, Richard declared to the tens of millions of colonizers,

"There are doppelgangers among us. The characteristics of doppelgangers are confused memories and reduced abilities."

He explained the dangers of doppelgangers and then explained what would happen now.

"After a vote in each division, the one suspected to be a doppelganger will be first bound and isolated. The observation teams will conduct brain inspections on the suspects within their capacity. Although you will be uncomfortable and uneasy, please keep in mind that, excluding the observation teams, we will not tolerate any violence or the leaving of your designated position."

After this polite speech, Richard smiled coldly.

“Now, with information we collected beforehand, we will first conduct a public examination of those we suspect to be doppelgangers.”

When Richard declared this-

Pikik!

With a sound, a few people who had been blankly standing there had their heads split. Although this only happened to around ten thousand people of the tens of millions, these colonizers, who had great hearing and sight, had no trouble understanding the situation.

“Huh?”

“He died?”

While everyone was shocked, the dispatched observation teams wordlessly poured liquid, created with their respective troop’s healers’ karma, into the heads of the first round of examinees.

“Euaaack!!!”

Two-thirds of the first round of examinees were flustered but otherwise fine, however, the remaining one-third screamed as they rolled on the ground. The liquid surged with a copper light. They were doppelgangers.

They had been able to expose one-third because they had selected those who possessed the highest probability of being doppelgangers.

“Wh... What?!!”

The colonizers, who had been sitting in circles of ten, suddenly stood up in panic. The person next to them had their head split by the observation team, but wasn’t there a brain-shaped bug crawling out of their head?

A physiological fear overwhelmed them.

“Now, now. Don’t be nervous. They are doppelgangers. If you don’t want to be infected, please calm your minds and create a thick karma barrier.”

Richard's words were spoken with leisure. However, the observation teams around them maintained an unmatched viciousness. A viciousness that felt like they would kill them even if they moved a finger. Although they were feeling an astonishment close to fear due to the sudden situation, the observation teams were too menacing. The colonizers awkwardly sat down. They rubbed their goosebumps and massaged their trembling legs as they gulped their saliva.

Even as he watched this scene, Richard maintained the light attitude of a show host. Although it looked inappropriate at a glance, in reality, this was all calculated. 'No matter how many die, I will eradicate the doppelgangers. We do not fear sacrificing our people.' This was the message he was sending the doppelgangers and the monster of night with his easy-going attitude.

"Now, you understand what we need to do now, right? Let's hunt doppelgangers. We will now start the game."

Was it a coincidence? At the same time as Richard's exaggerated declaration-

Blink.

The world suddenly turned dark. The monster of night, which had been idle for the past few days, began to act now that the doppelgangers were in danger.

'It's here.'

At the same time, Choi Hyuk concentrated.

This situation, where they had gathered tens of millions of people to track down the doppelgangers, was in fact somewhat of a show. It was a trap to make the monster of night make its move.

'I need to find it.'

The one acknowledged as the strongest on Earth, and the one who possessed the best detection abilities, Choi Hyuk, was using the monster of night's activity as a lead to track it down.

'If you can't do it, no one can.'

That was what Richard had said. Choi Hyuk thought the same as well.

'I will make it blink countless times, so find the monster of night and kill it.'

He liked Richard's request. What Richard was good at and what Choi Hyuk was good at, they were both doing things they were good at.

'We completely cleared the monsters in this area while gathering here. Still, there will be monsters rushing in from afar. I will take down the monster of night before they arrive.'

It was a difficult situation. Choi Hyuk caught his breath and concentrated his mind.

Blink.

The monster of night blinked again.

The doppelgangers, whose identities had been discovered, used this darkness as cover to find other hosts.

Choi Hyuk fumbled around in the edges of this darkness.

He began to track down this shadow to see where it led.

# CHAPTER 99

## AT THE RUINS (5)

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A dark night. When he got on the elevator, the child tightly held onto his mother's hand.

"Mom, mom, there's no ghost, right?"

However, the mother didn't reply. Her hand was unusually cold.

"Mom!"

The child pulled on his mother's leg. His mother's leg was cold and rigid.

"Mom?"

For some reason, he couldn't see his mother's face clearly. Like a foggy mirror. The child's neck suddenly became cold.

The mother said.

{Do I still look like your mom?}

This was a moment that made people recall those ghost stories of their childhood.

"...It's scary."

A weak-hearted person eventually spat those words as he steadied his shoulders. The doppelgangers were different from any monster they had faced until now. They were scarier than any foe.

It was as if they were standing in the valley of death. They couldn't see the ground, as it was covered by a thick fog, and if they took a wrong step, they would fall endlessly and die. The hairs covering their bodies were raised. They were suspicious that their comrades, who were protecting their backs, might be monsters. They were dismayed

as if the ground they had always walked on had disappeared.

The colonizers were stricken with fear.

Still, they clenched their teeth as they began to question each other.

“What monster killed your grandmother?”

There were only two points that could be used as clues.

1. Confusion in their memories.
2. Reduced ability.

“My grandmother? I didn’t personally see it so I don’t remember exactly.”

“...Use all your strength and activate your karma.”

“Why, why are you like this? You know me! I’m not one of them!”

“Be quiet! Quickly activate your karma!”

“Why are you all like this? Are you acting like this because my fighting skills have dropped recently? You know me! It’s a commonly experienced space syndrome!”

“Shut it! Your grandmother wasn’t killed by a monster but passed away from cancer! Much before all this mess!”

“...Wh-what?”

Clang, clang, clang!

A plenitude of weapons aimed at him.

“W-wait! Don’t be like this! You! You’re the one that’s strange! You’re just trying to push me to a corner to kill me! I’m not a doppelganger!”

Panic obstructed one’s ability to make rational decisions.

Paang!

The person who started the questioning activated his karma to his fullest. His karma had become stronger due to the recent battles against monsters. There was no reduction in its capacity.

“You see it, right? Now it’s your turn.”

“Don’t joke with me... There’s no way you can pick out who’s a doppelganger by activating your karma!”

His words were true. The ‘your abilities will drop’ was only a statistic, a common opinion. When looking at specific cases, there were countless exceptions. There was no way they could confirm whether someone was a doppelganger by only questioning them and making them reveal their karma. If it was that easy, then the alliance wouldn’t fear doppelgangers. This was a matter the alliance had already thoroughly investigated and was one that Richard already knew. However, Richard didn’t tell them details like this. The game Richard had started was a cruel tactic where it would be sufficient to sacrifice 5 people to take down 5 doppelgangers.

Yet... It seemed they were right this time.

“Kuaaah!”

He didn’t reveal his karma in the end and slashed his sword at the person next to him. It might have been because of panic, but in this case, it only made the others feel stronger about their suspicion that he was a doppelganger.

Puscht! Slash!

At the same time, the weapons aimed at him stabbed and slashed at his body, turning his body into tatters. Especially his head, which was where a doppelganger would reside, that was sliced into three to four times. Brain matter dripped. Looking at the cross section of his gray brain, which had been split into multiple sections... They saw the appearance of a bug.

“Euwack...”

Someone vomited.

“Lao Min... Lao Min...”

Someone sobbed. Then-

Blink.

Darkness fell. They could hear Richard’s voice in the darkness.

“Be careful of the darkness! Doppelgangers will look for another host within the darkness!”

“Aaack!”

Screams erupted all around them at the same time. Low level people couldn’t even sense anything in the darkness, let alone see, as the doppelgangers attacked those near them.

Some died, and others became infected by the doppelgangers while attempting to block their attacks.

The darkness cleared up. People’s faces were pale.

“Ahh...”

A more intense fear overcame them.

Just now, some were attacked by their comrades standing next to them and had become cold corpses. They didn’t know whether others were infected either.

“Who is it... Who is the doppelganger?”

Their comrade had died after being suspected of being a doppelganger, but the situation didn’t improve in the slightest. The divisions of 10 had instantly turned into 8, but their suspicions only deepened.

“I’m... I’m really not one of them! Alexei! Alexei! Split my head and confirm it! I’m not a doppelganger!”

A Berserker grabbed onto Alexei, who was patrolling as a member of the observation team.

“Nuna...”

Alexei looked at her with sad eyes. Although he was at the rank of a team leader, Alexei was still only a middle schooler. There were considerate Berserkers who were like older brothers and sisters to him. Even the currently suspicious Cao Lu was one of them. However, Alexei couldn’t listen to her request.

“Sorry, nuna. Just endure it for a bit longer. There is a limited supply of medicine, so we can only use it during critical moments. It’s not like the group vote is in, and they are only suspicious of you. If we kept using it for situations like these, then the medicine would quickly become scarce. I’m really sorry... It’s a guideline I received from the higher ups.”

He said this to her while tightly holding her hands. However, she shook her head.

“Do it now, Alexei. Look at everyone. They are becoming distant from me.”

The indiscriminate attacks of the doppelgangers when the darkness fell had an effect. The colonizers distanced themselves from those who they were suspicious of being doppelgangers and grouped up with members they could trust.

“If darkness falls again, then I’ll only be prey.”

When Cao Lu said this, Alexei couldn’t help it.

“...I’ll go get the medicine.”

In the end, Alexei bit his lips as he ran towards the observation team that possessed the medicine. Just then-

Blink.

Darkness fell.

“Aaah!”

Once Alexei returned, holding the medicine, and after the darkness passed,

“Nuna...”

He knelt next to Cao Lu’s corpse, who had her throat sliced and whose body had rolled onto the ground.

“Cao Lu died! Cao Lu wasn’t a doppelganger! Who was the bastard who said she was a doppelganger?!”

“Wh... Why are you looking at me?! You agreed to it as well!”

Endless suspicion. He seemed like a doppelganger because of this, and she seemed like a doppelganger because of that.

Grit.

Alexei ground his teeth.

“Shut up! Shut up! Calm down a bit! Slowly confirm their pasts and don’t just blindly accuse people!”

No matter how much they emphasized rationality, the situation kept becoming extreme.

There was a problem even if they caught a doppelganger. If there were two doppelgangers, what would they do if one of the doppelgangers had sacrificed the other to avoid suspicion? Although he doesn’t look like he’s infected, was that true? Could I entrust my back to him? What if I were to suffer because of it? Actually, dying was better. I would not want to have my brain eaten and become a doppelganger.

A game of suspicion with tens of millions of people.

While there were many cases where they had successfully eliminated the doppelgangers, the number of innocent sacrifices was no less.

They were in hell.

Blink.

The monster of night continuously blinked its eyes.

The darkness continued to eat away at their minds.

The 'blinking' seemed like it would make them neurotic.

However, Choi Hyuk was precisely waiting for this 'blinking'.

"Yeah... Keep blinking."

Choi Hyuk's eyes were dyed blue with karma. He had activated Mind's Eye to the fullest as he tracked down the monster of night. However, the darkness didn't come from anywhere. It would suddenly appear as if it was always there. No matter how much he tried to look through his Mind's Eye, he couldn't see it. Even when he concentrated so much that he felt as if he could grab the tail of light, which was the fastest thing in the universe, darkness fell without a trace. The speed at which darkness fell was faster than the speed light spread, as darkness would always be there.

Choi Hyuk couldn't look through the darkness.

"I'm lacking..."

Choi Hyuk clenched his sword, 'Choi Hyuk's Imprint'. However, his sword only provided additional beneficial effects on slashing attacks, and it would not strengthen his Mind's Eye. Although, if Choi Hyuk's weapon possessed the name 'Pledge' instead of 'Imprint', it might have been useful when using Mind's Eye, however, currently it wasn't of any use.

"I can't see... it."

Huuuu...

Choi Hyuk closed his eyes and took a few deep breaths. In this short period of time, many hypotheses and methods for dealing with the monster of night were proposed, compared and rejected in his mind. Although he considered countless solutions, it all took place in an instant. It was an investigation that went on within the boundaries of

his instincts rather than logic.

“...I think I know.”

That was Choi Hyuk’s talent. A talent that only strived for victory. He would always find the weakness of any skill, no matter how difficult or complicated it was. If he saw it, he would know how to confront it. Also, if he knew it, then he could execute a method for dealing with it as easy as breathing.

The new method he had come up with was more time consuming, the reason being because Choi Hyuk had to come up with a skill he had never attempted before. But now he knew, and because he knew, he could do it.

Choi Hyuk opened his mouth.

“Mind’s Eye.”

Whoosh.

When he opened his closed eyes, his eyes surged with a blue light. Mind’s Eye was the first karma trait Choi Hyuk had awakened back when he was at the 3-star level. The karma supporting his body became endlessly more sensitive. He received information about the world around him without any distortion.

“Identical Mind.”

Choi Hyuk’s entire body was flooded with a blue light. Identical Mind was the additional karma trait he had awakened when he reached the 4-star level. His karma went beyond being sensitive and stealthily, and naturally invaded into his surroundings. Based on the information he was receiving through his Mind’s Eye, he interfered with the matter, energy, and karma around him. He wasn’t only seeing what could be seen, but he was also unraveling what was ‘inside’ and exposing what was hidden.

However, he still lacked the power.

“Explosive Blood.”

This was precisely the trait Chu Youngjin and Lee Jinhee used as their main.

The moment he activated the trait, his karma, which was softly coiled around his body, began to go berserk. It felt like his blood vessels and muscles would rip apart. However, Choi Hyuk didn't even blink an eye as he controlled this power.

He activated three traits simultaneously. Choi Hyuk was able to smoothly complete this task, but it definitely wasn't easy. As 'Mind's Eye' and 'Identical Mind' were still interrelated traits, they were comparatively easier to fuse, but 'Explosive Blood' was the complete opposite of them, which used Control as a foundation. A wanton result could come about by the clash between these traits when one thoughtlessly activated all of three of them.

Yet, Choi Hyuk harmonized these three traits like it was nothing.

"Ah..."

At the same time, Choi Hyuk felt a sense of self-fulfillment from deep within him. He now felt as though his karma was truly his. He felt a sense of satisfaction that was similar to when clothes, which were close to being a perfect fit, fitted perfectly.

In fact, Choi Hyuk's karma had been too tame up until now. Mind's Eye and Identical Mind, which used Control as a foundation to see through and affect his opponents, were more like the traits of a magician than a warrior's.

However, as soon as Explosive Blood was added, everything fell into place perfectly like a jigsaw puzzle.

Choi Hyuk's fighting talent was composed of three elements: the ability to see through his opponent's weakness, no matter who it was, the ability to perfectly execute any attack he envisioned to pierce his opponent's weakness, and lastly, a ferocity that could crush his opponents with his vigor alone. These three talents perfectly suited the three karma traits known as Mind's Eye, Identical Mind, and Explosive Blood. They literally formed a trinity.

His karma, which was interlinked with these three traits, was like a perfectly fitted item of clothing to Choi Hyuk.

Boom!

Choi Hyuk's karma explosively increased its presence.

His Mind's Eye would look, and then he would search thoroughly with his Identical Mind. Explosive Blood reinforced these two abilities. It allowed him to look further and deeper.

Just then, Choi Hyuk's lips curved into a smile.

"Found you."

Choi Hyuk now knew that it wasn't somewhere far. It was in a four-dimensional space which lifeforms living in three dimensions couldn't see. Although it was right next to him, it was curled up, hiding in a small, hidden space folded in four dimensions.

Choi Hyuk's karma permeated into that space. According to his will (Identical Mind), Choi Hyuk's body was sucked into the folded space.

# CHAPTER 100

## AT THE RUINS (6)

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The place Choi Hyuk arrived at was a completely unfamiliar darkness.

It was different from the dark matter of Dark City. Although Dark City was dark as well, it was still a place within the third dimension. It wasn't very different from the familiar darkness of the night sky. However, this place was a darkness within the fourth dimension. It wasn't a place a lifeform from the third dimension could perceive.

Shapes in the third dimension looked completely different in the fourth dimension. His arms and legs curved however they wished, and his back stretched and curled around. Like a surrealistic picture, Choi Hyuk's body lost the original shape he was familiar with. Even the darkness was the same. When he thought there was light, it was dark, and what he thought to be dark seemed to shine as if there was a light. The darkness felt like a hard surface, then rolling waves, and then an endless fall.

However, Choi Hyuk didn't fall into a state of confusion. Karma was a power of fate created by lifeforms. It didn't adhere to the fourth dimension. That was why, even though his senses were chaotic, his mind was clear.

"Is it you?"

Choi Hyuk asked. The darkness all around him was leering at him. Perhaps Choi Hyuk was already within the monster's maw.

Tik.

Choi Hyuk unsheathed 'Imprint'. Instead of a pleasant ringing sound, a flat 'tik' noise sounded out. Imprint had lost its shape in the darkness as well. It became wide, flabby, and mushy. It didn't look like it could slice anything.

However, that was only for a moment. When Choi Hyuk raised 'Imprint' above his head in preparation for a slash, the blade of the mushy 'Imprint' formed a cold, sharp line. 'Imprint' surged with karma, stood rigidly and displayed its vigor. A Weapon of Vow could overcome matter and become a weapon of pure karma. This limit, however, depended on its owner.

Currently, at this moment, over 80% of 'Choi Hyuk's Imprint' was composed of pure karma. The karma, which reflected his will of wanting to deliver a fatal blow with one strike, surged dangerously. Along with it, Choi Hyuk's body, which had been scattered like a mist, had returned to its original form in the darkness.

In a darkness where everything was distorted, only Choi Hyuk was clear.

"Instant Void Annihilation."

Riip!

His sword, which could even rip apart space, swung down. The fourth-dimensional darkness was sliced and ripped apart. Like in the moment of creation, darkness retreated for light to fill the surroundings.

{Heuuuu.}

He could hear the monster of night's scream from somewhere. It had been wounded. However, it wasn't a fatal blow. Choi Hyuk's strike missed its core.

Seu...

Darkness, once again, clouded the momentarily bright surroundings.

Choi Hyuk could tell instinctively that if he didn't slice its core, it wouldn't die no matter how many times he sliced it. He wouldn't be able to defeat it.

With his sword raised, Choi Hyuk closed his eyes.

Thump. Thump.

Choi Hyuk's karma heart began to pound furiously. Mind's Eye, Identical Mind, and Explosive Blood mixed together and began to search through the darkness.

Whoosh.

It felt as though the darkness became darker. At the same time, Choi Hyuk understood that the monster of night's gaze was fixed on him. It withdrew its power that been

outside to 'blink'. Choi Hyuk searched for its core, and the monster searched for Choi Hyuk's weakness.

Who would find it first?

{Heuheuheu.}

An unpleasant laughter could be heard from somewhere. Then, immediately after, Choi Hyuk heard a voice he could never forget.

"Hyuk?"

"...Mom?"

The one who walked out of the darkness was Choi Miyeon, Choi Hyuk's mother.

"What are you doing here?"

She said in the same appearance and voice she had before she died.

It was her who embedded him with the order to 'not fight'. Although he was bullied because of this, she was still the most important person in his life.

Sssss.

Karma was released from 'Choi Hyuk's Imprint'. The blade that had been sharp became blunt, mushy and distorted.



"The monster of night... Didn't you say it was a particularly tricky monster to deal with even amongst the high ranked monsters? No matter how strong he is, Overseer Choi Hyuk is only a middle ranked warrior... Can he win?"

Leah, Richard's aide, showed a worried look.

"There's nothing we can do. He's the only one who can find and approach the monster of night. Whether we like it or not, this is our only method."

Richard had a relaxed expression. Although he said that there was 'nothing they could

do', it seemed like he didn't expect Choi Hyuk to lose.

"But what if he fails? Although the monster of night specializes in commanding and support rather than fighting... You said it is dangerous when it has so many monsters under its command like now. Especially if they are doppelgangers..."

"Ah, right. The doppelgangers and the monster of night are an especially good match. Since they say monsters of night are able to use the abilities of monsters it leads as its own... Choi Hyuk is probably facing an ordeal beyond our expectations. However, I still don't think he'll lose."

"In the case he does, what are you going to do then?"

Richard frowned at her words. He then carefully thought about it.

"Although I haven't thought about it in detail..."

Richard shook his head and looked in front of him. A cold-hearted light shined in his eyes.

"Then I'll have to kill them all."

Leah knew exactly what he meant.

Richard possessed the innate skill 'Eyes of the Judge', which could distinguish between who he should kill and who he should keep alive. What he meant by 'kill them all' was that he would kill anyone who was identified as someone to kill. This would include doppelgangers, but it would also include countless others as well. Although they wouldn't be able to avoid the loss of many lives, it would certainly get rid of the doppelgangers.

Gulp.

Leah gulped her saliva. She knew that Richard was someone who definitely possessed the ability to do so. No matter how great the losses or what methods he had to use, if it was for the best, then he would do it. Only, there was currently a better method, which was why he hadn't yet done so.

There weren't many who knew of Richard's true nature. There were also almost no one who knew that he was stronger than Jessie, possessing a 5-star stat. This was reasonable since Richard had become known for his politics rather than his fighting abilities.

'How was it that Richard, who fought less than Jessie, let alone Choi Hyuk, could have a 5-star stat?'

The reason was simple.

Richard had, in reality, killed more colonizers than anyone. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that Richard was the greatest murderer of all-time. He had indirectly murdered people by making others act in the darkness (although the majority of them weren't aware that they were following Richard's will), and depending on the situation, he had personally assassinated others. His 'Eyes of the Judge' clearly distinguished between those he should kill and those he should keep alive. He made use of his outstanding insight by killing and saving people as nonchalantly as possible. Behind the 'balance' he created existed a countless number of murders.

His 'Tuner' fate, which gained karma every time he successfully killed or saved someone, was a big help to his growth. Because of this, Richard could consider himself as having progressed at a rate only second to Choi Hyuk on Earth without any eye-catching battles.

His karma had increased rapidly by killing countless people from behind the scenes.

To be able to maintain a clean, trustworthy image despite all this was evidence of how fearful Richard's ability was.

Leah's shoulders trembled when she saw Richard's cold eyes.

"I guess... I need to hope for Overseer Choi Hyuk's success."

"Yeah. I hope so too."

The two turned their gazes towards the hell, in which people were divided into 10-person groups and were interrogating each other.

Right after Choi Hyuk had disappeared off to some place, the 'blinking' had also disappeared without a trace. Although the fear and unease the people felt lessened a little... It was still difficult to identify the doppelgangers.

The fact that there were only tens of thousands of members in the observation teams compared to the tens of millions of people was a critical problem. On the other hand, the doppelgangers were shrewd.

In this short period of time, groundless rumors had spread and the truths were covered up.

"Why are you refusing questioning? What are you doing? Please stay in your assigned location!"

"Shut up. Bring our clan leader. There are rumors that this is all a political ruse. Where is our clan leader? Did you kill him? Bring our clan leader out here immediately. Or bring Richard. We need an explanation."

There were cases like these throughout the crowds where men, who considered themselves as having thick arms, went against their orders and gathered in groups.

"You're going to cut my head? Isn't this all just a witch hunt? When you cut our heads open, if there's a bug, good job, but if there isn't, too bad. Either way, the examinee will die!"

"No. The medicine has been made with the power of the healers. The wound will immediately close."

"How do you know that? Do you think that only one or two people have died up until now?"

"They died because they were doppelgangers."

Although the majority of observation teams were composed of elites, their numbers were small. There were also an overwhelming number of elites who weren't part of the observation teams. The control in various places began to fall through.

Also, when the doppelgangers had their heads cut, they acted out until the very end.

“Handel! Help me! I’m not one of them! I’m really not, Handel! Aack!”

When observation team members unsheathed their swords to conduct the examination, they would scream like this. The woman’s lover, Handel, couldn’t hold back any longer.

Bang!

Handel threw a punch at the observation team member, who was about to cut her head.

“As I thought, I can’t. No matter what, I can’t. I can’t hand Rika over to you. Rika isn’t one of them!”

The affection humans possessed went beyond reason. No matter how much evidence they had, showing that they were doppelgangers, it was useless. They couldn’t help but go crazy when the person they loved cried and pleaded in front of them.

This was occurring everywhere. The commotion wasn’t easily calmed, especially when experts, who even the observation teams couldn’t restrain, joined the fray.

Then Chu Youngjin was dispatched to calm this commotion.

Rumble.

Once his characteristic thundering sound was heard-

“Gaaah!”

Both arms of the one causing the commotion fell to the ground. Shock spread amongst the crowd.

“Berserker Chu Youngjin!”

Chu Youngjin’s eyes were dyed red. His heart was burning right now. When he saw those who blocked the observation teams to protect their lovers, Chu Youngjin would especially experience a deep pain. He recalled his lover, Lee Hyejin. Perhaps this was why Chu Youngjin was becoming crazier.

Chu Youngjin silently took care of those who were causing a commotion with a heart that felt as though someone had put salt on his wounds and then picked at the scabs. No one could take even a single sword strike from him.

His innate skill 'Berserker' was added to his karma trait 'Explosive Blood', while his Weapon of Calling 'Chu Youngjin's Protection' added sharpness to his strikes. Due to his 'Protection', which rapidly increased his 'Combat Endurance Ability +100 (Stamina, Endurance, and Recovery)', he didn't easily tire either. Chu Youngjin could feel at ease as he used his strength.

A crowd that had gathered together and pressured the observation teams, a clan-sized group that insisted they bring out their clan leader, and even warriors who stood in front of their lovers like vanguards... they all spurted blood under Chu Youngjin's sword and collapsed.

Chu Youngjin was continuously controlling his mind.

'If Hyejin was still alive... One of those fucking doppelgangers might have eaten her brain.'

When he thought this, rage rapidly surged from his heart. He projected his anger onto those creating a commotion.

"Wahh... Long Chen was defeated with one sword strike. Isn't Long Chen a well-known expert from China? Even Overseer Jessie might not be able to do that."

"Was Chu Youngjin this strong?"

Every time Chu Youngjin slashed out, a shock reverberated out. They knew that Choi Hyuk was a monster, but below him, Chu Youngjin was also an incredible monster as well.

This was how they were able to maintain some sense of order while Choi Hyuk was absent.

They were endlessly tangled in a fight about who was right, who was wrong, and what was real. Like always, the Berserkers would rather cut that tangled knot than untangle it. Chu Youngjin and even Ryu Hyunsung were the same. Everyone passed by others

after cutting them down without asking any questions.

Choi Hyuk was the same.



“Weakness... Yeah. You kept exposing and stabbing at our weaknesses.”

Choi Hyuk said in a tone that seemed as though he was sick of this.

“That’s why I don’t look back.”

“Uck... Ah...”

Choi Hyuk’s distorted body had, at some point, returned to its clear state. His sword was pierced through his mother, Choi Miyeon’s abdomen.

Choi Hyuk whispered in her ear,

“Did you think I’d give up if you hid inside my mother?”

Pscht.

Choi Hyuk twisted the sword embedded in his mother.

{Heuuuuu.}

The darkness surrounding him shook violently. Its scream continued without end. Like a song on loop, it echoed and grew louder.

“We lost everything. Because we lost everything, we have no weaknesses. Because we know all too well that we lost everything, we won’t be fooled by your illusions. When we acted like we were fooled, you quickly showed your true colors. Thanks to that, we were able to end it quickly.”

Choi Hyuk injected more and more karma into his sword. At some point, his sword began to burn. The flames grew as if trying to swallow the darkness surrounding him.

The night was being burned.

“It’s the end.”

Choi Hyuk stared at the face that was identical to his mother’s. Even its expression, which was distorted due to pain, was the same as his mother’s. However, Choi Hyuk’s heart didn’t waver. Choi Hyuk had already accepted her death. If he hadn’t accepted it, then he wouldn’t have despaired and the fires of his thirst for revenge wouldn’t have raged. The fact that his rage had never blown out was proof that his mother was dead. Choi Hyuk wasn’t misled by this.

“Hii... Hihi...”

It seemed it knew this was the end. His mother’s pained, distorted expression slowly turned expressionless, and a strange laughter escaped her lips. Her bright eyes turned into a deathly black. When she opened her mouth, he could see a black abyss.

It said in a voice that seemed to be neither male or female,

“Hihi... I saw it. I saw it. I saaaw it.”

Its face had become so terrifying that it was difficult to call it human. Choi Hyuk stared directly at its face as he poured the last of his strength into his sword. Choi Hyuk raised his sword, still pierced into its body, and then swung down forcefully.

“But you’re going to die here.”

Riip!

The monster of night, which had impersonated his mother’s figure, collapsed into two pieces. He had cut it cleanly. The night ripped and light beyond it began to permeate in.

The monster of night was dead.

At the same time, the doppelganger identification device Richard possessed surged with a red light. The power of the monster of night, which had been obstructing its function up until now, had disappeared.

The spreading light left a mark on specific warriors’ heads.

“Uh? Huh?”

The ones who received a mark were taken aback as they looked above their heads.

There was no room for doubt. Richard’s orders sounded out like thunder.

“Kill all the ones with marks!”

The ones with marks were doppelgangers.

A bloody wind blew.

# CHAPTER 101

## SOMEONE (1)

---

“...What did it do?”

Choi Hyuk tilted his head in the fourth dimension, which was now permeating with light.

Like how Choi Hyuk had seen through the monster of night's core, it too had thoroughly seen through him. It seemed it had used its 'seeing' ability to look into Choi Hyuk's past as well. It must have seen his mother during that. Although it was unpleasant to the extreme, there was nothing he could do about it. It was a high ranked monster. Going purely by rank, it ranked higher than Choi Hyuk. Choi Hyuk had no way of finding its core without giving it his past. It was a tactic of 'giving up one's flesh to strike their bones'. That was how he eventually came out victorious.

However, Choi Hyuk frowned.

He clearly recalled its last words, 'I saw it. I saw it. I saaaw it!' followed by its karma moving.

“It definitely did something...”

It had been difficult to find the core though.

The reason why Choi Hyuk was able to beat it was because he had paid sharp attention to finding its core from start to finish. On the other hand, the monster of night had been careless enough to read and learn of Choi Hyuk's past, finding his weakness, his mother, and rejoice. Additionally, it had even occasionally paid attention to the fight between the doppelgangers and humans outside. This was how he had been able to win.

That was all. Choi Hyuk had only found its core by using its carelessness. He had no way of knowing what sort of trick it pulled at the last moment.

Choi Hyuk shook his head.



“How futile.”

Ryu Hyunsung lamented as he buried a corpse.

Although it had been a long time since human lives had become as worthless as flies, Ryu Hyunsung was still not used to death.

He brushed the dirt off him and looked at his hand. As a national athlete, he had wielded the saber with this hand countless times. His hand, which had been covered in calluses, was now soft and smooth due to karma.

He had personally killed people with this hand that looked like it had never met any hardship. Countless of them.

Was it nonetheless or because of it? He hadn't become used to death, and it gradually felt heavier. These people had been chatting and laughing just this morning, yet, now they were gone. If there was such a thing as fate, then when were their deaths decided?

Tap.

Someone placed their hand on his shoulder. When he turned around, it was Guardian Bae Jinman. Although his complexion seemed healthy due to karma, his white hair was still that of an old professor's.

“Guardian.”

Ryu Hyunsung greeted in the glum voice of a guilty middle schooler but bowed in the awkward manner of someone who didn't want to reveal their gloominess. Bae Jinman nodded his head and turned his gaze away from Ryu Hyunsung. His eyes took in the scene of the buried corpses, comrades holding their tears back, and the colonizers who plainly seemed to find all of this a bother. Although Ryu Hyunsung, who was immersed in his sadness, wasn't aware of the colonizers who didn't seem to care for their fallen comrades, Bae Jinman could see it all.

‘Human lives were more precious than anything.’ This common notion was an illusion that had only been created in recent times. In fact, many people were shockingly apathetic to the deaths of those unrelated to them. What if they saw someone die right in front of their eyes? It wouldn't affect them as much as one would expect. The

moment it was meaningful was either when the person who died in front of them was someone precious to them or if they felt that they would be next.

However, when looking around at those who found this bothersome, there were many colonizers who were even beyond that stage. 'I want to live.' 'I can live.' They had already lost this hope. Perhaps they were even of the mind 'Since we're going to die anyways, we should be enjoying every moment before we die. What a waste of time.'

Bae Jinman turned his back on Ryu Hyunsung and asked,

"Director Ryu Hyunsung. Do you know why I pledged myself to Overseer Choi Hyuk?"

Ryu Hyunsung's eyes widened at the unexpected question.

"No... You didn't tell me when I was curious."

Ryu Hyunsung and Bae Jinman had both been leading their own forces before joining Choi Hyuk for the first colonization. Afterwards, they had decided to become Choi Hyuk's followers and had been working together since then.

It was a question Ryu Hyunsung had always been curious of because Choi Hyuk, who slaughtered lives, didn't seem to match Bae Jinman, who considered life as something precious. Even if he could accept the fact that Bae Jinman had joined the first colonization because it was a critical moment for humanity, he thought that there was no reason for him to stay by his side as a follower. There was no way Bae Jinman wanted crumbs from the colonized lands either.

"Cancer... I thought of it as cancer treatment."

"Cancer?"

"At Kangdong District, I had already thought the world had fallen. However, when we killed the Wyvern of Destruction and came out, what was this? That wasn't the case. Although the world was collapsing, people didn't know it. Even until recently."

It was probably after two-fifths of the non-awakenees had ceased to exist during the advancement evaluation when the entire world was undoubtedly aware. Before then, there were still many who lived without this sense of reality.

"There's a saying 'true crisis is when you aren't aware there is a crisis'. It was exactly

that. It was like seeing patients who refused examinations, let alone surgery, while their insides were rotting with cancer. That was why I joined Overseer Choi Hyuk. Although he was more extreme than the others, I believed it was precisely because he was so extreme that he could make the world aware.”

Ryu Hyunsung slowly nodded his head. Many people in the world would often say Choi Hyuk and the Berserkers were ‘crazy’, but in Ryu Hyunsung’s perspective, the world was already crazy. In a universe where entities from the alliance and monsters were fighting each other, earthlings couldn’t continue to live the way they had when they simply lived harmoniously with each other.

“However, this choice was also giving up ‘myself’”

Ryu Hyunsung looked at Bae Jinman with slightly surprised eyes. Bae Jinman had a bitter expression. Ryu Hyunsung had never seen him look so vulnerable before. He had always taken the lead and focused on treating the wounded. However, Bae Jinman was currently shaking his head, saying it was not so.

“I had the realization that the dream I had my entire life, everything I believed that was ‘me’, and everything I loved and found precious had been crushed. Once the game began in Kangdong District... The moment patients and doctors began to kill each other, the moment I was no longer able to see my family, my world had already died. No, I had already died. What that means is...”

Bae Jinman, who had been looking off into the distance, turned his gaze and looked directly at Ryu Hyunsung. His voice was trembling with rage, sadness, and eventually, resignation.

“There is nothing more I hope for in this life. There’s nothing that makes me angry, sad, or regretful, since, for me, everything has ended. Perhaps, I have already died, and this is some sort of bonus game. That is why I can partake in Overseer Choi Hyuk’s actions, whom I would have never cooperated with in the past. If it was the past, no matter how beneficial his actions were to humanity, I would first be haunted by those he killed. But that isn’t the case now since this life has already ended for me. Only... Since I still have time left, I am only doing what I can do to make the next generation a generation where humanity can hope again. I don’t reflect on my actions or differentiate between this and that. I don’t have the power to do so anymore. When I think that this is truly my life, I find my ruined life unfair and am unable to endure the longing of wanting to see those I can no longer see. However, when I think of it as an

extra life, a bonus game, it's not that bad. Everything has already ended. The world has collapsed, and if it ever comes to the point of regeneration, that is not our responsibility. And if it's Overseer Choi Hyuk, even if he can't save us, he will one day end this ruin... That is what I think."

Ryu Hyunsung could somehow understand Bae Jinman's jumbled words. He also knew why he was telling him this when he had never said it before.

That was why he said,

"Thank you."

Bae Jinman had comforted Ryu Hyunsung in his own way. Perhaps he knew that Ryu Hyunsung had never had a day in the past 3 years where he didn't lose sleep due to nightmares, which was why he had told him his own 'coping method'.

Ryu Hyunsung had an especially good memory. He first remembered all his dead friends. He thought that, by not forgetting them, he was respecting them. That was why every day felt heavier.

Bae Jinman was telling him to let go. However, he shook his head.

"Still, I can't forget them yet."

This was his inevitable nature. He couldn't forget those who died first. He couldn't stop his affection for them. That was why he was scared.

"I am scared. Although I can still raise my sword... I'm scared I won't be able to lift my sword due to my pressing depression... Still, there's nothing I can do."

Ryu Hyunsung forced a smile as he said this. Bae Jinman patted his shoulder twice before leaving.



The battle had ended, leaving everyone with their own wounds.

Once the monster of night had been slain, the monsters on the Cayenne star fell into a

state of chaos. It was then when the mission became as Tangka of the Armored Soul Tribe had said, an 'easy' mission. They were able to conquer the Cayenne star with no particular losses.

Instead, what was more exhausting than the actual battle was the negotiation process with the alliance.

The alliance's attitude was clear.

{There was nothing wrong with the operation order.}

"What are you saying? In a region expected only to have moderate battles, high ranked monsters, doppelgangers and a monster of night appeared!"

At Camilla's retaliation, the artificial intelligence tasked with inspecting this mission repeated its rigid message.

{Reconnaissance cannot be completely precise. As monsters do their best to trick us, this sort of error is a common occurrence.}

"...Then how do you explain the doppelganger identification device that the alliance sent? Didn't you withhold information even though you knew of the possibility of doppelgangers appearing ahead of time? Even though we know that it is grounds for violation of the alliance law?"

{Doppelgangers are considered as a rank 1 species for caution by the alliance. As we never know when or where they will appear, it is only normal to randomly send it as an exploration device to new unexplored regions. It is difficult to determine that they were aware of the possibility of doppelgangers ahead of time with this.}

"...Then why didn't you tell us it was a doppelganger identification device?"

This time, it was the Ethiopian Sovereign Yohan who asked.

{As there is always a risk of doppelgangers, it is common to give low ranked troops an identification device, however, it is a fact that the actual frequency of doppelganger appearances is low. As there have been cases of setbacks due to the first-line troops becoming excessively intimidated by this rare possibility, relevant information may be hidden depending on the commander's judgment.}

“ .. ”

The overseers had nothing to say at the artificial intelligence’s words.

It was their first mission after being commissioned. The mission they said would be easy was a mission that could have resulted in their annihilation with the slightest fault. Lingering bitter feelings remained in the hearts of the warriors who had to kill their own comrades with their own hands. However, it said no one was responsible for this tragedy.

It was... simply a slip-up.

What did it matter if they had mouths, they could only stay silent as they were powerless.

The one who took action was Commander Mack.

“Well. Good. Theoretically, you are right. In fact, since you’re an artificial intelligence inspector, that can’t awaken karma, of course, you will reply according to the rules. But... You just said ‘Depending on the commander’s judgment’, right? Their commander is me, Mack. Yet the doppelganger identification device wasn’t reported to me either. The higher ups ignored the chain of command and made my subordinate Tangka deliver the device. Isn’t that a problem?”

While looking back at the silent overseers of Earth, Mack criticized in an orderly fashion.

{They made the explanation that, due to the urgent situation, they did not follow the chain of command and personally made the order. However, if you are not convinced by the above explanation, then you can request an additional explanation from the Laniakea Supercluster or Commander Mack can personally take legal action.}

“Yeah. It should be like this. After a long time, it looks like there will finally be a big scene at Dark City.”

Commander Mack gave a satisfied smile at the artificial intelligence’s reply.

After the artificial intelligence inspector had left, Commander Mack turned around to look at the overseers of Earth. She looked terribly sorry.

“Sorry. There probably won’t be an apology issued by the alliance or any compensation from this issue... The higher ups never admit their mistakes.”

“Haa...”

At her words, the overseers let out a sigh. How could they not know? They were all well-known figures on Earth. They knew the characteristics of those in power better than anyone. They wouldn’t apologize... Only... They were simply dejected that this characteristic was unchanged even in space.

“But! I’ll take responsibility for the victory reward and get you a lot. That’s the best in the end. Even if it’s unfair... no, the more unfair it is, you more have no choice but to get Mission Points and become stronger and more respected. Only then, can you go up.”

Silence hung in the air again.

A cold-hearted logic. Facing this logic, the overseers might have recalled their followers who had died due to this incident. It was the cruel balance between life and vested interests.

Within this silence, Choi Hyuk shot his hand up.

“Yeah, speak.”

When he received permission to speak, Choi Hyuk said,

“I killed the monster of night by myself.”

Then, feeling embarrassed, requested,

“Please let them know.”

'No choice but to go up.' There was no one who agreed with this more than Choi Hyuk.

Commander Mack grinned at Choi Hyuk's words.

"Okay."

Just as she said that, Richard quickly said,

"I planned the operation of dragging out the monster of night!"

"Yeah, yeah. I got it."

Mack nodded her head, saying she understood, and left.

"..."

Dumbfounded, the five other overseers stared at Choi Hyuk and Richard.

"...Dis-disgusting..."

The Queen of England Diana mumbled in a quiet voice everyone could hear.

# CHAPTER 102

## SOMEONE (2)

---

The alliance's method of 'broadcasting' was directly transmitting telepathic messages to the viewers' heads. They would suddenly hear a voice, and when they focused on that voice, they would see a clear scene as if they standing in the broadcast.

{There is news that Earth's independent troops, who have recently joined the alliance, have eradicated doppelgangers and a monster of night, and subjugated the Cayenne star. We take you now to Reporter Leleo on the Cayenne star.}

After the news anchor finished speaking, a white-skinned, pointed-eared, beautiful woman appeared in the middle of a field of shining flowers. Her long, thin tail swayed elegantly behind her.

{This is Reporter Leleo. I am currently here on the Cayenne star. Can you see the plentiful shining flowers here? They are amazing flowers that convert the heat and energy from the Cayenne star into various matter and energy necessary for life. Overseer Richard, who was the first to report this, called them 'solar flowers'. Like you can see here, many different lifeforms have evolved throughout the Cayenne Star's long history, the most recent inhabitants of the Cayenne star having a glorious civilization, one where they could even build an enormous floating city.}

Following Reporter Leleo's words, the viewers were shown the past appearance of the Cayenne star deciphered using psychometry. A beautiful city floating in the sky, a beautiful field, and the now ruined city. Once they walked through this, the viewers would be standing in the middle of the great ruins.

Reporter Leleo walked next to them as if she were on a hike.

{However, due to the invasion of the monsters, the 'cayennings' have become extinct, not leaving a single descendant behind. Even the enormous amount of karma they had accumulated throughout the star's long history had lost its path and degenerated into the monsters' energy source. However, the independent troops of Earth have avenged the now extinct Cayenne star residents. We were also able to collect a significant amount of karma that had been about to be completely absorbed by the monsters. It is the precious inheritance the Cayenne star residents left behind for the life and

freedom of karmalings.}

Leleo took a few steps forward, twirled around and, while looking back, said,

{Now we will meet the heroes of Earth who eliminated the monsters from the Cayenne star.}

A black-haired man appeared next to Leleo.

He was tall and gave a cold impression. He was Choi Hyuk.

{Hello, Overseer Choi Hyuk.}

{Hello.}

{Excuse me, but I heard that your karma level was at the level of middle ranked warriors.}

{That is correct.}

{Although the monster of night isn't a combat-oriented monster, it is still a high ranked monster. While it must have been difficult to handle it with the strength of a middle ranked warrior, there are many warriors who were shocked to learn that you killed the monster of night by yourself.}

{It wasn't that difficult.}

Although Choi Hyuk's reply was short, Reporter Leleo skillfully continued to ask questions and made the interview interesting. The key point she was attempting to highlight was the fighting capabilities of the newly joined earthlings, and among them, Overseer Choi Hyuk's fighting talent.

While talking about his fighting talent, there was no way Choi Hyuk's sword wouldn't catch her eye. Choi Hyuk didn't hide it and revealed his sword. She showed a dramatic reaction.

{Whaaat?! A middle ranked warrior with a Weapon of Vow...?? Oh my god.}

Reporter Leleo, who couldn't close her mouth as she examined 'Choi Hyuk's Imprint', had difficulty continuing to speak.

{Fr-from what I know, isn't this unprecedented? There's no doubt that the emergence of a Weapon of Vow after such a long time is a fortune for the alliance... but I thought that if a Weapon of Vow were to emerge, it would be from the hands of a top ranked warrior. For a middle ranked warrior...!}

Reporter Leleo's tone, which had been calmly complimenting and giving reactions up until now, dramatically changed. Her voice became louder and she stuttered her words. The reaction she was showing now was real and not because this was her job. She couldn't hide her excitement.

Choi Hyuk's interview became longer than expected. Only after a long while later did Reporter Leleo end it, while still excited, and hurriedly followed the original script.

{Yes. However, the reason why earthlings, who have joined only recently, could come out victorious against the much stronger high ranked monsters, doppelgangers, was largely due to Overseer Richard's outstanding commanding ability.}

Richard was briefly called out at the end of the interview. Leleo analyzed and complimented his outstanding commanding ability. It seemed she had pulled herself together as her previous excitement was no longer apparent.

After watching the end of the interview, Commander Mack opened her closed eyes. With a smile, she asked,

"How was my present?"

"...Exhausting."

"Haha! It's still the best present. It was an actual interview on Laniakea's central broadcast. This means that there will be those in the alliance headquarters who watch it, let alone those in other superclusters. Then they will start handling information about you over there. Your name will spread throughout the universe. On top of that... Since you were hiding such a huge secret, your name will be spread to countless people. You must be happy. You're only a middle ranked warrior who recently just joined, yet you're much more famous than me."

Commander Mack was leaning against the air as she gave a sidelong glance. Her gaze fell on 'Choi Hyuk's Imprint' hanging from his waist.

“Although it wasn’t really a secret.”

She said to Choi Hyuk, who followed her gaze and looked down at his weapon. He had thought he knew better than anyone else that his weapon was amazing, but after receiving such heated reactions... It seemed it was more amazing than he thought.

Looking at Choi Hyuk’s dull reaction, Mack shook her head.

“It’s fine if you brag and put it out there a little more. You... want to go to the center, right?”

“Yes, I do.”

Choi Hyuk replied without a sliver of hesitation. Commander Mack shook her head as if saying there was no stopping him.

“Haha, what a troublesome subordinate. So troublesome.”

After mumbling ‘troublesome’ a few more times, she raised her slouched body and, with a lower voice, said,

“Although I don’t know too much, looking at the mood, there seem to be a few people up top that don’t like that earthlings joined the alliance... That in itself isn’t strange. Recently, joining the alliance has become very picky, and even if they did join, I heard that many go through a harsh hazing. However... If this incident wasn’t simply an accident but the result of someone’s trickery, then this is an incident that significantly crosses the line, even considering other incidents up until now... That’s why I was curious. If this really is true, then why? What did the earthlings do for them to act this way...? And I was extremely curious, okay?”

She had leaned her face in closer and closer before leisurely leaning against the air with a disinterested expression as she said,

“But you had a Weapon of Vow. How did you make it? Even I’m only using a Weapon of Sentiment.”

A blue crystal, which had been hidden beneath her blue hair, poked out a little. Although Choi Hyuk wasn’t aware of it, it was a strong weapon with quite the reputation in the Laniakea Supercluster. A karma-crystal ‘Mack’s Desire’.

Choi Hyuk looked down at 'Choi Hyuk's Imprint', which was a new Weapon of Vow currently making waves throughout space, and replied,

"A friend... gifted it to me."

"...Although you were the one who made it, the cost of the materials and the necessary facilities must have been no joke... What an amazing friend. A real amazing friend... Even your friends are troublesome."

"Do you know Flame-Rain?"

"Although I don't know a lot... I know that she's the young lady of a great family in the Flame Wing Tribe. She's famous for being an eccentric young lady who goes around to different clusters and joining the war... And while there are a lot of absurd rumors, even I don't know of her true identity. But what's clear is that I don't want to know her identity either. I get a hunch that nothing good will come out of it if I knew."

Mack clasped her hands and said,

"The incident this time might have actually been because of her and not you. Looking at how she goes around the boundaries of the alliance shows that there definitely is a story behind her... Meaning it could be a family who wants to obstruct her or one that possesses a grudge against her. But if she shows great interest towards you, then that'll be more than enough for you to become a target."

"...They'll entrap all of humanity because I'm a target?"

"I told you. She's the young lady of the Flame Wing Tribe. If they are a family with direct ties to the Flame Wing Tribe, then they can shake the fate of a newly joined species on the palm of their hands. Although it's a classic example of the irrationality of the alliance... it's still a fact."

"..."

Mack moved and placed her arm over Choi Hyuk, whose mouth was tightly shut. Then she said,

"I'll give you a piece of advice. If you want to be friends with such a troublesome people, then you have no choice but to quickly become successful and scam off to the top."

“I’ll do my best.”

“Yeah. I’ll thoroughly make use of you, so do your best to accumulate contributions.”

To reach the top, one needed the help of someone up top.

“If you go up, don’t forget my help.”

Choi Hyuk needed Mack’s help, and Mack was also looking for a way to use her subordinate, who had become a hot topic throughout space, for her own benefit.

“This interview is only the start. With their own wrongdoing and because of the public opinion about you... You should be able to get a great reward. You can look forward to it.”

“Thank you.”

Mack slowly nodded at Choi Hyuk’s reply. She took her arm off his shoulder and, with a serious voice, turned to a different matter.

“Yeah. One more thing. You reported that the monster of night ‘saw’ something, right?”

“Yes.”

“That’s why I looked into it... And I found a trace that something had escaped towards Earth during that time.”

“To Earth?”

He was slightly taken aback. For the monster of night’s final trick was aimed at Earth and not himself. It was a result he had never expected.

“There are cases like this. Cases where they read a warrior’s past and inversely invade their home star... Looking at how weak the detected karma was, it might have sent an immature doppelganger queen to avoid detection... is my guess.”

“Isn’t that dangerous?”

“It is dangerous. Very dangerous. Depending on the situation, it might even result in the early shutdown of Earth. It’s a situation where even Dragonic might be in danger if there’s a slip up.”

“What do we need to do?”

“If it’s an immature doppelganger queen, then it’ll take around 2 months before it starts laying larvae, meaning we need to find it before then. But, since it’s a queen and immature, it’ll be difficult to find it using the wide area identification device. There is no other way besides using a small identification device to search for it. A doppelganger queen in an undeveloped state is in a spirit form. That is why you can’t see it with your eyes and must use your karma senses to find it, and confirm it once more with identification devices. That is why it’s complicated, but if someone hides it as well, then the problem becomes even more serious.”

“...Hides it?”

“Yeah. There are cases like that since they burrow into the openings of people’s hearts. If it’s one the monster of night sent, then there is an especially high chance it’ll make use of the information the monster of night collected. The person might not simply hide it but even offer to grow it.”

“I understand.”

Although it was a headache, Choi Hyuk calmly nodded his head. Since there was a month left and they had identification devices, they could find it even if they had to do a total inspection. Because they were going to progress forcefully, it didn’t matter whether someone hid it or not.

Mack nodded her head as if pleased with Choi Hyuk’s calm expression.

“Yeah. I’ll keep a lookout, and if the resolution takes too long, we’ll intervene. Of course, if you are able to resolve it yourselves without our intervention, then people’s evaluation of you will rise.”

She was pressuring him, telling him to try and resolve this by himself. Of course, Choi Hyuk had no thoughts on asking for help either.

“Understood.”



Once he returned to Earth, Chu Youngjin suddenly began to see 'her'.

On corners, on crowded crosswalks, beyond store windows, on the other side of the street, and behind strangers, he saw the figure of a girl who couldn't possibly be there.

This was a frequent occurrence ever since the moment Lee Hyejin was murdered in the gym 3 years ago. When he ran towards her figure, hoping it was her, he would be met with nothing or strangers. A sweet illusion, a cruel reality.

However, the frequency of occurrences was especially high these days. Then, when he turned at a corner, she was standing there. She didn't disappear.

“ ... ”

Chu Youngjin didn't say anything and neither did she. If she (it) had said something, then he would have been suspicious. However, like the illusion he had always seen, it didn't say anything. It simply stood in the corner of his vision.

Chu Youngjin slowly passed by her (it). She slowly followed behind him. No matter where he went, she wouldn't leave his sight.

'It seems I really am crazy now.'

Even as he thought this, Chu Youngjin was simply happy at the fact he could see her.

# CHAPTER 103

## SOMEONE (3)

---

A group of people carefully jumped over the roof of a building. Although they were in a group, they all kept a wide distance from each other. They were using their karma-reinforced sight to stalk their target from afar.

However, when their target entered an alley, she disappeared without a trace.

“...!”

Although they were taken aback, they didn't let out a sound. The leader gave a hand signal to his team members and ordered them to look for their target again.

“What are you doing?”

The voice of their target, Lee Jinhee, was heard behind him. Flinch! Before the leader could even turn around, he heard her voice right next to his ear.

“Well, not that I need to ask.”

Crack!

It was instantaneous. The building and sky reversed in an instant. He only felt a pain from his leg afterwards. A cute, pretty face abruptly appeared before his face, which had been smashed into the floor. She was their VIP target, Lee Jinhee.

“Who sent you?”

“...”

“You're not going to tell me?”

“Why... Why are you doing this?”

“What do you mean why? You guys stalked me.”

“Pardon?”

The man sneakily acted like that wasn't the case. Lee Jinhee let out a sigh.

"Haa. Fine. Naro! Find out where they are from."

{Yes. I'll check all the CCTVs registered on the computer network... Here is the result. They are executives of the Lee Jungmin Clan. His name is Min Chunsu.}

"So this time it's the Lee Jungmin Clan...? Haa... Do you guys want to die? Why are you constantly stalking me?"

Min Chunsu showed no signs of being flustered when he heard Naro's voice. However, his expression turned resolute as he ground his teeth.

"What do you mean stalking you? It's just a justified surveillance."

"Ah, really? Is it justified even though you're stalking me? Well, I mean it's not like it's a DUI when you drink, right?"

Slap!

Lee Jinhee slapped Min Chunsu's cheek. Even though his body was reinforced with karma, the impact was enough to shake his teeth.

Yet, Min Chunsu glared at her fiercely. Instead of becoming downhearted, he stated his justifications for stalking her more vigorously.

"Are you acting like this because you really don't know? Isn't it the Berserkers who are ransacking everything, saying that a doppelganger queen has invaded us? You said there was around a month remaining. Yet, it's already become a mess within 3 days of investigations. Subordinate clans like us are even showing their underwear to you guys! But what about the Berserkers themselves? Aren't the Berserkers supposed to conduct an internal investigation as well? But are you doing that properly? Even when it's risking the fate of Earth?! Aren't you guys busy covering for your own family? Even when the situation is like this, aren't you just helping yourselves?"

"...What are you talking about? Although I don't know where you heard these rumors, but of course we conducted an internal investigation before we investigated you."

"Ah, so the answer to this problem is that we simply retreat just because you said you investigated internally? In the presence of the Berserkers, every damn one of us has

to disarm their karma barrier and let you look around our every nook and cranny with your karma. However, how do we know you guys are investigating each other? Honestly, since Overseer Choi Hyuk was the one who fought the monster of night, isn't there a likely chance that one of the Berserkers was infected by the doppelganger queen? Can you say with 100% certainty that none of the Berserkers conducting investigations right now are doppelgangers?"

"Hey. What are you saying? We told you the doppelganger queen isn't like that. Since it's still immature and in a spirit form, it's difficult to see and doesn't have the power to make doppelganger larvae. And we are the ones carrying the doppelganger identification devices, yet you think we'd be the doppelgangers? You sound like the Berserkers are already being controlled by the doppelgangers. Huh? Do you think I'm a doppelganger too?"

"Hmmp! Do all Berserkers carry around an identification device? When we don't even know the whereabouts of Director Chu Youngjin!"

"Hey! He has his own circumstances!"

"Circumstances? Have you even considered our circumstances? This is what's not transparent. If you find this unfair, why don't you have an open investigation! If you guys are doppelgangers, then we're the ones who die, yet you're telling us to suck our thumbs and just blindly trust you?"

Lee Jinhee was at loss of words at Min Chunsu's constant counterarguments. The most fearful thing about doppelgangers was that they planted suspicion amongst the people. All kinds of groundless rumors were running rampant, and those who had been traumatized by suspecting and killing their comrades couldn't take those groundless rumors as simply rumors. They would turn into 'likely possibilities' as they spread among them.

Within this mess, the attempts of trying to keep the Berserkers, who wielded absolute power, in check never ceased.

Of the major groundless rumors, one was about the victory reward. An enormous amount of Mission Points was given to Choi Hyuk as a reward, and he possessed the sole authority of distributing the reward. After a lot of consideration, Choi Hyuk decided to distribute it depending on their contributions, yet there was a groundless rumor that the Berserkers received a much higher reward. Dissatisfaction surged,

asking how he could do this when they all risked their lives together.

Lee Jinhee grabbed Min Chunsu by his collar.

“Is that all? If you want proof, then I’ll show you proof. All executive-level Berserkers are going to partake in an open investigation soon. I suggested it and the leader approved it. We even announced it. But are you truly so nervous that you’re continuously acting this way? Or is this your trick in trying to find the Berserkers’ weakness and increase your influence?”

Lee Jinhee harshly interrogated him. Yet, Min Chunsu became even more vigorous. He was acting too righteously for someone who had been caught stalking.

“What do you mean influence! This isn’t a problem of influence but of whether humanity survives or not! All of us have to unite under Overseer Choi Hyuk’s command! All procedures must be conducted with transparency! In a situation like this, aren’t the Berserkers the ones who are clinging to their vested interests? Aren’t you fulfilling your selfish interests and desires by using Overseer Choi Hyuk’s favor and covering his eyes and ears?!”

Lee Jinhee became startled. She didn’t expect him to express his loyalty for Choi Hyuk.

It was like this. This was all nothing more than a mess. The content and aspect of these groundless rumors were too extensive and various. Using the power struggle was clever.

The power and authority Choi Hyuk possessed were already stable. Sensible people didn’t go against Choi Hyuk. They thoroughly proclaimed themselves as ‘Pro-Choi Hyuk’. Instead, their enemy was Choi Hyuk’s followers, the Berserkers. They competed for loyalty and targeted those who had traditionally been near Choi Hyuk. After highlighting the Berserkers’ weakness, they would shout, ‘How can you advise Choi Hyuk like that?! Screw off! We’ll do it!’

Although this attitude hadn’t been explicitly expressed, practical people were progressing with this thought in secret. They would gather information about the Berserkers and distinguish who to cooperate with and who to push aside before picking an objective, finding their weakness, and building a public opinion... They were very hard-working.

They used plausible words to package their motives. Since their words made sense, there were many who simply agreed with their cause. Also, Lee Jinhee was a simple person. She was someone who believed in the goodwill of people. She was someone who would listen and think about the words of others even if only 1 person was truly innocent and the remaining 99 were bastards.

It was the trait of a hero. However, if she didn't have the compassion to match it, then she would simply be a 'pushover'.

Although Lee Jinhee felt repelled by his words, she couldn't reject them. She simply flinched and expressed her dissatisfaction.

"Do you think the leader will be happy if you guys act this way?"

"An authority without checks or balances will rot. Director Lee Jinhee, although I deeply respect your valor and contributions, don't think that you are always right. If you truly care for Earth and Choi Hyuk, then do not think about simply pushing us small and middle-sized clans aside, and instead think about coexisting with us! Do not fear being kept in check!"

"Heu..."

Lee Jinhee simply clicked her tongue. She had thought this Min Chunsu specialized in stalking, but it turned out that he specialized in using his silver tongue. Although she didn't like it, he made her think about it again.

So Lee Jinhee's decision was her fist.

Punch!

"Keuk!"

Lee Jinhee's fist collided with Min Chunsu's stomach. Min Chunsu felt a pain that even sent shivers down his spine. He couldn't breathe. He was crushed by the aggressive karma in Lee Jinhee's fist, and the karma in his body shrank.

Lee Jinhee shook her hands and got up.

"I've never seen an honest person amongst those with a silver tongue. If you really do care for the leader, then don't do this and polish your fighting skills."

Although she felt unpleasant, she had no reason to kill him. Although Min Chunsu himself disgusted her, there were a few points she agreed with him on. If it was some other Berserker, they might have killed Min Chunsu without reason, simply because they felt irritated. However, Lee Jinhee thought differently.

‘Those idiots... It’s because of them they are trying to keep us in check.’

Although she held affection for those Berserkers, who risked their lives and fought alongside her, to be honest, it was difficult for her to cover up their violent acts and nonsensical killings.

‘Yeah. To make a bigger, stronger force, won’t Berserkers also need to reflect on themselves? Ah... I don’t know.’

While thinking this, Lee Jinhee said,

“Go. And don’t try to stalk me again. If you try it again, it won’t end with just a punch to your stomach.”

“Gue... Guak...”

Lee Jinhee raised another fist at Min Chunsu, who couldn’t get up.

“You’re not going to leave? You want another hit?”

“Hiiek! Hiiek!”

Pale-faced, Min Chunsu immediately got up and forced himself to jump over the building and run. Due to his shrunken karma, his running figure looked unstable.

Staring at his figure, Lee Jinhee let out a sigh and continued on her way. She was on her way to meet Chu Youngjin.



‘Just what is that?’

Chu Youngjin was stuck repeatedly thinking about this.

The ‘thing’ that started following him one day. At first, it was hazy, but now, it had

become more and more distinct. It was as if Lee Hyejin had returned alive. Although it seemed like others still couldn't see her, to Chu Youngjin, it was identical to when Lee Hyejin was still alive. Even its expression and trivial gestures were identical.

The 'thing', that was quietly following him, suddenly became surprised and took off, examining its shoes. Chu Youngjin was almost about to cry. Lee Hyejin did the same thing. She couldn't handle a single drop of blood and had an abnormal aversion to killing things. Like its current actions, she would carefully check her shoes in case she stepped on an ant.

Although others would call Lee Hyejin's actions foolish, Chu Youngjin loved her every action. No, he was crazy about her. He even had the heart to put the ant on a piece of A4 paper and move it somewhere else if she was worried she might step on it. Although Chu Youngjin's personality was unhesitant and aggressive, in front of her, he was a fool.

Chu Youngjin and Lee Hyejin were completely different. That was why there were many people who had directly asked,

'Do you like her that much? Why? Do you have some sort of reason?'

To Chu Youngjin, there was no question more foolish than that. A reason? There was no way there was one. Lee Hyejin was in every moment of his memories. She was his childhood friend. It wasn't a normal relationship either. They would always spend time together and rely on each other. Who was the person who had saved him when he was about to die after he had fallen in water? Surprisingly, it was Lee Hyejin. The cowardly Lee Hyejin had been so courageous at that moment. Who was the person who had saved Lee Hyejin who was being fiercely chased by a dog? That was Chu Youngjin. And who was the one who called for an adult when Chu Youngjin was, in turn, chased by the dog? Lee Hyejin. The person who cried along with him when he was in pain was Lee Hyejin. The person who stopped crying and joked for the crying Lee Hyejin was Chu Youngjin, and the person who stopped crying and laughed with him was Lee Hyejin.

The moment Lee Hyejin died, Chu Youngjin had lost most of his life.

That was why Chu Youngjin couldn't take his eyes of 'that', which looked identical to Lee Hyejin.

'Am I seeing illusions after going crazy? Is this what people called schizophrenia?'

'No, is that really an illusion? Maybe it's the doppelganger queen people have been talking about recently?'

'No. Doppelgangers kill living people and imitate them. Hyejin died without even leaving a corpse... Fuck... '

'No... But it's not simply a doppelganger, but a queen. They said that, unlike normal doppelgangers, the queen is currently in a spirit form. Since the monster of night could read people's pasts, it could know of Hyejin's appearance. It may be because it's the queen that it can imitate Hyejin's appearance with just information.'

'No. No... There's no way a measly doppelganger can perfectly imitate Hyejin.'

'I might just be crazy.'

While Chu Youngjin's gaze was fixed on 'that', he was thinking all sorts of conflicting thoughts and was fighting in his head. Then he eventually pushed those thoughts aside.

'Whatever it is, it's fine. Just a little... Just a little bit more... '

Swish.

Just then, the 'thing', that had been walking a few steps away from him, suddenly became surprised, and came close to Chu Youngjin, hiding behind him. It clung onto Chu Youngjin's arm.

His body trembled. Even its surprised and scared reactions were identical to Lee Hyejin's.

"What the? Why are you spacing out?"

Chu Youngjin became surprised at the sudden voice.

"Ah... Ah! Jinhee nuna?"

He didn't know when she came next to him, but Lee Jinhee was standing there with a frown on her face. Chu Youngjin glanced at the 'thing' hiding behind him. He hid her behind him and asked,

"Why are you here?"

"What do you mean why am I here? I came because I was worried."

Lee Jinhee stepped towards Chu Youngjin and placed her hand on his forehead. Her hand was small and soft, however, Chu Youngjin only stood there blankly.

"No fever. You're completely absent-minded. Haa... You're having a hard time, right? As expected... Did you think of her?"

Lee Jinhee thought Chu Youngjin was having a hard time because of the doppelganger clean-up operation. There were colonizers who had thrown their lives away to protect their then doppelganger lovers. She assumed that Chu Youngjin had recalled his past lover and was suffering after seeing them like that.

Her assumption was only half-correct.

"I'm fine."

Chu Youngjin avoided her gaze and replied half-heartedly. Lee Jinhee simply made an expression showing she felt bad for him.

"I already told the leader. Since you're going to continue not participating in missions like now, don't worry and rest. Still, there will be an open investigation of the Berserkers a week from now, so even if it's hard, come out for that."

"...Yes."

Ironically, the only reason why Chu Youngjin could avoid being investigated was because of Lee Jinhee's consideration for him. All the Berserkers had participated in the doppelganger queen search at least once, and because of this, they were naturally able to know that they hadn't been infected by the doppelganger queen. However, Lee Jinhee, who noticed peculiar symptoms from Chu Youngjin right after returning to Earth, gave him a break, unintentionally allowing Chu Youngjin to avoid the first round of inspections.

The majority weren't aware of this hole. However, Chu Youngjin himself was well aware of this, yet, he didn't come forward and point it out. Which was how he was able to come up with this last excuse.

'The inspection... is in a week...? Yeah, if it a week, then nothing will happen. Everything will be clear then... Yeah. Until then.'

He didn't want to think about this anymore. His rationality had become paralyzed due to the fact that the person he wanted to see the most was right in front of him. 'Even if... she was a doppelganger.' Even though his heart was terrified of that thought, Chu Youngjin tried his best to suppress it. Even if he were to rage then... Chu Youngjin only wanted to see her for a while longer.

Lee Jinhee let out a sigh as she looked at the spaced-out Chu Youngjin.

"Haa... Chu Youngjin. Even still, keep yourself together. Look at your appearance. Even though you picked 'Explosive Heart' instead of 'Mind's Eye' for your second trait, how does it make sense that you didn't know I was right next to you?"

Like how Choi Hyuk chose Mind's Eye at the 3-star level, Identical Mind at the 4-star level, and Explosive Blood at the 5-star level, they could pick another trait every time they increased a level after reaching the 3-star level. At the 4-star level, Lee Jinhee chose 'Mind's Eye' to expand her control and strengthen her detection abilities, while Chu Youngjin chose 'Explosive Heart', which was an advanced version of 'Explosive Blood'.

"There were people stalking me today. If you're like this, you might not be able to detect whether you're being stalked or not. Hmm?"

Lee Jinhee, who had placed her hand on his shoulder as she spoke, suddenly frowned. It seemed something had been detected with her Mind's Eye.

"Huh? Just now, something..."

As if finding it weird, she looked around Chu Youngjin. At the same time, Chu Youngjin felt 'that' as it pressed closer to him. 'It' burrowed into Chu Youngjin's karma and hid its existence.

'Ah...'

An ominous premonition ran down his spine. Just what was this premonition? A premonition that 'it' might be a doppelganger? No, the uneasiness that he might not be able to see her any longer? He couldn't figure out which one it was. Although his heart tightened at the uneasiness, he turned his back on it once again.

'Yeah. A little longer. Either way, it's only a week.'

Chu Youngjin smiled awkwardly.

"Yes. I'll be careful."

Lee Jinhee, who ended up not finding anything through her search, looked at Chu Youngjin. His face was haggard. She felt sorry for him, but she eventually let out a sigh and withdrew.

"Yeah. Then let's see each other in a week. Pull yourself together by then."

When Lee Jinhee left, that 'thing' came out and motionlessly stood next to him. Chu Youngjin looked at 'it'.

'It' lightly stretched and sat down next to a wall. Then it exercised its knees by squatting up and down. Even though it had been scared just a moment ago, it acted bravely as if it wasn't scared.

...No matter how he looked at it, it was Lee Hyejin. Chu Youngjin's cold, tense heart relaxed.

'A week...'

Chu Youngjin mumbled again as he turned around and headed home.

# CHAPTER 104

## SOMEONE (4)

---

Baek Seoin was spending his days very busily.

He currently had to cooperate with all the overseers and fully investigate 2 billion people on Earth in only a month. Although Choi Hyuk had lightly said, 'Then we just need to do a total investigation,' for Baek Seoin, who had to oversee this investigation, it felt like his head was splitting apart.

He didn't even have time to finish his preparations before beginning the investigation. He had to start immediately while still completing the system.

Even alternating the Berserker who held the identification device within each team, therefore naturally investigating them, was a method Baek Seoin came up with to reduce time.

However, there was a big flaw in it. The one who assigned teams and oversaw everything was Baek Seoin, yet the one who granted Chu Youngjin special vacation time was Choi Hyuk, and the one who hushed the members of Chu Youngjin's team was Lee Jinhee. A very small opening had been created due to the considerations of Choi Hyuk and Lee Jinhee, who were indifferent to the heavy workload and administrative tasks given to Baek Seoin, and Chu Youngjin's high rank. And eventually, this small opening would become the crack which would collapse the dam.

For the establishment of international cooperation, Baek Seoin had multiple meetings today as well.

"Yes. So that's why the doppelganger queen is very different from the doppelgangers we know, right?"

"That's right. I've personally confirmed these details at Dark City."

Richard's aide, Leah, was on the screen. If Choi Hyuk had Baek Seoin, then Richard had Leah. What Baek Seoin and Leah had in common were the dark circles which came

down to their cheeks.

Leah was sharing new information she had gathered about the doppelganger queen to Baek Seoin.

“Rather than transforming or acting, it is closer to ‘imitating’. The conscious of an immature doppelganger queen may even be very virtuous.”

“Then... It will be difficult to distinguish its wickedness without a device that can detect doppelganger queens.”

“Correct. Even if you pass by it, you will only feel something strange, you won’t feel any wickedness.”

“Hmmm... Still, the draft of the plan has been made, and since we were able to receive more identification devices from the alliance thanks to you... If things continue like this, then we might be able to investigate all earthlings within the time limit. Then we will be able to find its imitation or whatever.”

“Yes. Only, since we are all human, I’m worried there may be human error. The doppelganger queen can drastically lower one’s guard with its ‘imitation’, but there is also research stating that it can emit waves that can meddle with their mind. It makes one unconsciously feel goodwill towards it and makes them ‘accommodate’ it. Things like the good faith and feelings between people... these things can create a serious problem.”

“...We should cross-investigate three or four times. If we are going to, then we need to move the execution of the plan forward... Haa, it seems I need to quit sleep for a month.”

Baek Seoin showed a depressed expression. Leah expressed her sympathy.

“We definitely have healthy bodies that can withstand a month without sleep... But we’re already so exhausted after only four days...”

Their karma reinforced bodies didn’t easily tire. However, Baek Seoin and Leah were currently handling a huge amount of work that would even make a computer buffer. They had only spent four days without sleep, yet they were exhausted to the point their eyes were already flickering. If they didn’t have Naro’s help, then they would never have been able handle this amount of work. It was a horrifying thought.

“Once this incident is over, I want to go on a vacation to a secluded place. Haa. Then work hard, Ms. Leah.”

“Yes. You too, Mr. Baek Seoin.”

Tik.

The screen turned black. Baek Seoin pressed his temples with his fingers before rubbing his face. Now, outside of Korea, he had to check the progress in the U.S., China, the United Arab Emirates and others, all which had portals leading to Choi Hyuk’s colonized lands. Then he had to assign investigation teams for small and middle-sized cities and islands that didn’t have an overseer and plan transportation routes for them. As they had no idea where the doppelganger queen was, it was necessary to investigate every single person.

There was just too much work.

“Haa... Although they are a hassle to deal with, is it lucky that the clans under our command are proactively helping out?”

Baek Seoin recalled the people who came to him today, asking to participate in the investigation, and borrowed a few identification devices.

“Urk. I should dispatch them to mountain villages tomorrow. But I don’t know whether they will follow regulations properly.”

There weren’t enough identification devices. There was still some time left before the additional identification devices Leah obtained would arrive, yet even they weren’t enough. There was no choice but for those with identification devices to run around more. The problem was whether they would be properly regulated. In the end, those in the minority, whom he could trust, had to run around more diligently.

“Haaa...”

Just as Baek Seoin let out a long sigh and pulled his chair forward to start working again, Lee Jinhee appeared.

“You look busy.”

“Yeah. I’m very busy. I’m already busy, but because someone suggested we conduct an

open investigation of the Berserkers, I'm even busier."

Lee Jinhee quickly made an excuse when Baek Seoin gave her a look mixed with resentment.

"No, when you go around outside these days, the mood is really bad. I was even stalked yesterday. Although it's only this bad for me, there have already been clashes and fights between Berserkers and other smaller clans..."

"Those dirty bastards. Why do they love fighting so much...? Yeah, yeah. It's good that we are doing an open investigation. No matter how busy we are, we need to stop the complaints. You came at a good time. You bring around some guys and regulate the minor clans. It's impossible to investigate 2 billion people with just the Berserkers alone. I handed out some identification devices today so make them cooperate. Check to make sure they aren't slacking off."

"Got it. Whether I threaten or coax them, I'll make them listen to me."

"Yeah. Like you said, it looks like they are bent on ripping the Berserkers apart these days, so keep them in check."

Even while he was saying this, Baek Seoin continued to rub his temples.

Lee Jinhee was also exhausted with her heavy workload. She handed a drink to the exhausted Baek Seoin and, to relieve some stress, attempted to chat a little.

"Got it. Those guys have a lot of suspicions. The guy I met yesterday kept talking about Chu Youngjin."

Baek Seoin, who had been rubbing his temples, showed a reaction to her words. He stopped his hands and looked up at Lee Jinhee.

"Chu Youngjin? What about him?"

"No, he made a fuss, saying that the Berserkers aren't being investigated and that we are only hard on them since Youngjin's currently on vacation. Asking if we are covering our own. They clearly know that there will be an open investigation in a week."

Although Lee Jinhee said this hoping for sympathy, Baek Seoin became serious when he heard her words.

“Wait. Chu Youngjin’s on vacation? But I clearly remember putting him on the list of investigators?”

“Ah, he wasn’t in his right mind once we returned from Cayenne star so I suggested he take some time off. The leader approved. Since he was on vacation before the queen incident broke out, I already told his investigation team.”

“What? Then Chu Youngjin hasn’t been investigated even once yet?”

“Probably?”

“What?! Hey. Send Chu Youngjin to the investigation team immediately.”

Lee Jinhee flinched at Baek Seoin’s fierce attitude.

“Uh? Uh? Why? There’s still a month before the doppelganger queen matures. The open investigation is in a week, no, it’s 6 days, there’s no problem if we do it then, right?”

Lee Jinhee never considered the possibility that it might be Chu Youngjin out of the 2 billion. Lee Jinhee simply wanted Chu Youngjin to rest easy. However, Baek Seoin frowned.

“Hey! What are you saying?! The doppelganger queen isn’t the problem. It’s the trust in Berserkers. You yourself even said that the clans are already filing complaints. Then we need to set it straight. Why wait 6 days?”

This was the first time Baek Seoin directly fumed at Lee Jinhee. Lee Jinhee backed down.

“Ah... Okay. Then I’ll go personally.”

Seeing as she was personally going to go, it showed how much she cared for Chu Youngjin.

Baek Seoin let out a sigh and calmly persuaded her.

“Don’t feel bad. We aren’t a small-scale clan anymore. If we want to lead tens of millions of people, we need to be thorough with ourselves. Although there’s no problem with waiting 6 days like you said, others may find it as abusing our power. Okay?”

Lee Jinhee reflected on his words.

“I got it. I’ll handle it right away.”

After resolving her mind, Lee Jinhee wanted to go immediately. However, before she could, they heard some news. They heard Naro’s urgent voice.

{An armed clash broke out between a minor clan and Director Chu Youngjin!}

Baek Seoin frowned.

“What? Why?”

{It seems they requested to investigate Director Chu Youngjin for the doppelganger queen, but it ended up becoming a clash!}

With his head aching, Baek Seoin grabbed his forehead.

An incident broke out before they could set the misaligned piece straight. This was similar to a sticky incident that could have been resolved internally, but before they even could, it was broadcasted by reporters.



The smaller clans, who received identification devices from Baek Seoin, immediately chose and dispatched their elites to Chu Youngjin. Like they had stalked Lee Jinhee, they had also stalked Chu Youngjin. They were suspicious of his recent abnormal behavior before anyone else. Also, they didn’t notify the Berserkers because they wanted to make it so that they were the ones who resolved this situation.

The attitudes of those who appeared in front of Chu Youngjin were intimidating.

Chu Youngjin held back his laughter.

“You’re going to investigate me?”

“That’s right. Please cooperate. You need to get rid of your karma barrier and accept our karma.”

“With what authority? Did the leader order you to?”

“Is now the time to be nitpicking these things? Everyone must unite and overcome this danger. You have yet to be investigated. So please accept this investigation.”

Chu Youngjin glanced back at the ‘thing’ hiding behind his back. He couldn’t help but think, ‘Is that the doppelganger queen?’ Although he couldn’t believe that it was such a wicked existence... It wasn’t as though he couldn’t accept being investigated.

However...

“Go back. If I am going to get investigated, it’ll be by myself. Or through other Berserkers.”

“No. You need to be investigated now.”

Chu Youngjin surged with irritation at their stubborn attitudes. Still, he endured it and said,

“There’s an open investigation in 6 days anyways. Why are you making a fuss right now?”

“Since you’re going to be investigated anyway, why not now?”

They didn’t back down a single step.

Chu Youngjin, who had already been very emotional these days, became more and more irritated at their attitudes.

‘If there’s no difference in being investigated now or later, then can’t I just be investigated later?’

However, he didn’t say it and simply stared at them.

Then someone new joined in.

“Now, now, that’s enough. Since you’re constantly like this, it seems you’re hiding something?”

It was a provocative voice. Chu Youngjin turned towards him.

“You said your name was... Kim Honghyun, right?”

It was a face Chu Youngjin knew.

“That is right. And I am Kim Saehyun.”

The one who said this was the person who had been arguing with Chu Youngjin until now. Kim Honghyun and Kim Saehyun were famous fraternal twins who had reached the 4-star level. Excluding the Berserkers, they were two of the most well-known warriors among the minor clans.

Now that he thought about it, the 20 colonizers surrounding him were all emitting an extraordinary vigor. There was no doubt that they were the elites chosen amongst the smaller clans. Their intentions were clear.

“Tsk.”

Chu Youngjin clicked his tongue. He felt vexed as it wasn't the Berserkers but minor clans who were trying to pressure him. Even if he were to be investigated today, he would be investigated by the Berserkers later, and he didn't want to be investigated by them.

“Move. Since I'm going to take care of my own investigation, don't interfere.”

“What if we do?”

Kim Honghyun blocked Chu Youngjin, who was trying to pass by. He didn't simply block him but stretched out his arm and pushed Chu Youngjin's chest. It possessed quite a bit of aggressive karma.

Chu Youngjin, who had been pushed back a step, looked at Kim Honghyun with an agitated expression. He revealed his teeth as he laughed.

“Why is the great Berserker Chu Youngjin talking so much?”

“Haa...”

Rumble.

At the same time as his sigh, Chu Youngjin's karma surged. The karma in Chu Youngjin's karma heart exploded into an incredible power. His contracted power instantly expanded as he stepped forward, pivoting his waist and throwing a punch.

Baang!

His punch created a shock wave that seemed to shake the heaven and earth.

He never thought to hurt him. He only thought to send him flying.

However, Kim Honghyun wasn't blasted away. He reflected Chu Youngjin's fist with his arm and was pushed back a step.

"Hyah. It's quite heavy, isn't it?"

He leisurely mocked as he took out an enormous ax. He held it with both his hands as if it was a tennis racket and declared,

"Let's see who's stronger."

As if he had been waiting for this, he increased his vigor.

Chu Youngjin frowned.

# CHAPTER 105

## SOMEONE (5)

---

The most insane person among the Berserkers, the most Berserker-like Berserker, was, without a doubt, Chu Youngjin.

He was different from Choi Hyuk. Choi Hyuk was someone who looked towards the future instead of the past. To him, his past was despair and his future was rage. This was why he hadn't fallen for the monster of night's trick when it masqueraded as his mother. His rage began by wholly accepting his past.

However, Chu Youngjin was different. He was completely possessed by his past. He was someone who always wanted to reject the present and return to the past. That was why his heart was easily smitten by the doppelganger queen sent by the monster of night.

Around 20 experts from the minor clans surrounded Chu Youngjin, and the doppelganger queen hid behind him. Although he wanted to simply smash them apart, a guilty conscience remained in the corner of his heart.

'Am I in the wrong?'

While Chu Youngjin was thinking about this, the doppelganger queen made its move. It was currently immature and its conscious had yet to awaken. It wasn't even aware it was a doppelganger queen. Its heart and thoughts were the same as Chu Youngjin's lover, Lee Hyejin. As it had yet to awaken, it was truly good. However, its personality had been appropriately tuned by the monster of night.

"Huh?"

Chu Youngjin felt a soft hand grab his shoulder. He felt that thing's... no, 'her' head resting on him. She didn't say anything, however, like Naro's telepathy, he clearly felt her sadness and will.

I'm scared.

Everyone hates me.

Is there something wrong with me?

Did I do something wrong?

Did I... did I turn into something I'm not?

Will I hurt you if I change?

Then kill me.

I don't want to hurt anyone.

In its imitative state, the doppelganger queen sincerely wished this without any ulterior motives. Its thoughts, which was identical to Lee Hyejin's, squeezed at Chu Youngjin's heart.

Thump.

The memories he had never forgotten, yet had turned mirthless like black and white, were restored of their colors at once. Each cell awoke and shouted its joy.

After spending a few days together with the doppelganger queen, Chu Youngjin's mind had already become infected. The doppelganger queen's 'sincerity', which stealthily encroached in his mind, was a device that provoked 'brainwashing'.

No, instead of brainwashing, it was more like a madness-ridden tenacity.

Chu Youngjin's mind turned strange. He was certain.

'If it's a doppelganger queen, then there's no way it'll act like this.'

His remaining suspicion disappeared. Chu Youngjin began to see the clan experts blocking his path as Choi Junsung, the man who had killed Lee Hyejin. His eyes reddened.

"Berserker, Explosive Blood."

Chu Youngjin activated both his innate skill, Berserker, and his karma trait, Explosive Blood.

Ruuuumble!

Thunder roared over the ground. A humid, fierce wind, hinting at a typhoon, blew at the same time.

“Hmmp! {Toughness}!”

Kim Honghyun gripped his axe. Karma rolled with him as the center.

Rumble!

It was unknown as to when he had unsheathed it, but Chu Youngjin’s sword struck down at Kim Honghyun’s head, and Kim Honghyun swung his double-bladed axe at his sword. Rather than the sound of a sword and axe colliding, a thunderous roar sounded out.

At the same time, Kim Honghyun’s twin brother, Kim Saehyun, unsheathed a flexible sword<sup>{1}</sup> from his waist.

“{Sharpness}!”

His flexible sword shot out like a spring and lunged at Chu Youngjin’s thigh like a snake. Chu Youngjin, who was confronting Kim Honghyun’s weapon, didn’t avoid it. Instead, he changed his direction and shot towards Kim Saehyun. The flexible sword glanced off Chu Youngjin’s thigh. Although blood spurted out, the wound quickly closed.

‘Chu Youngjin’s Protection’ aimed at Kim Saehyun.

Rumble!

Another thunderous roar sounded out.

Kim Saehyun’s sword coiled like a spring as it deflected Chu Youngjin’s sword. Although he was violently forced back, he wasn’t greatly wounded.

“Attack him!”

As soon as the three began to tangle together as they fought, the surrounding experts simultaneously rushed towards Chu Youngjin. However-

Rumble! Bang!

As soon as a thunderous sound erupted, their necks were either cut or sliced in two. If they were lucky, they were able to retreat with a fatal wound. However, even if they were successful in wounding Chu Youngjin, the wounds would close immediately.

“Mo... monster...”

Aside from Kim Honghyun and Kim Saehyun, no one was able to endure a single strike from Chu Youngjin. They couldn’t wrap their heads around it.

“How?”

Although Kim Honghyun and Kim Saehyun acknowledged that he was strong, they didn’t expect him to be this strong. Yet, when he revealed his strength, only the two of them could face him.

---

{Chu Youngjin}

Power: 200 (4★) Speed: 202 (+150) (4★) Control: 0 (3★)

Endurance: 100 (3★) Stamina: 217 (+210) (4★) Recovery: 53 (+47) (4★)

{Kim Honghyun}

Power: 107 (+95) (4★) Speed: 0 (4★) Control: 372 (3★)

Endurance: 310 (+100) (4★) Stamina: 100 (+95) (4★) Recovery: 2 (2★)

{Kim Saehyun}

Power: 153 (3★) Speed: 321 (+110) (4★) Control: 137 (+85) (4★)

Endurance: 50 (3★) Stamina: 110 (+95) (4★) Recovery: 117 (3★)

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It was hard to predict the outcome of the fight by merely looking at their stats. Although Chu Youngjin’s stats were at an international level, they couldn’t be called

‘absolute’. He lagged behind sovereigns such as Overseer Jessie or Overseer Richard. There was nothing more to say about Kim Honghyun and Kim Saehyun. Although they were top-notch, when looking at it from a global perspective, there were many experts at their level.

But, they had something special.

‘Innate skills’. A skill awakened by those born with special fates. As only the minority possessed these skills, the majority were still unaware of them. Not only that but unlike Richard or Choi Hyuk’s innate skills, theirs were specialized for combat. Their actual fighting abilities went beyond their stats.

For example, even though Chu Youngjin’s Recovery stat was 53 (+47) (4★), with the addition of his innate skill, Berserker (which sharply increases one’s Power, Speed, and Recovery), Explosive Blood (which increases Power, Speed, Endurance, Stamina, and Recovery), and ‘Chu Youngjin’s Protection’ (Combat Endurance Ability +100 (Stamina, Endurance, and Recovery)), his Recovery reached the late 4-star level.

Most wounds would close immediately.

Rumble!

Like a war god from myths, Chu Youngjin charged without fear of being wounded.

“Explosive Heart!”

The karma trait Explosive Heart was added to that. It was a trait that could support his chronic weakness, his Control.

Under the influence of Explosive Heart, Chu Youngjin’s explosive power was concentrated on a single point. His sword struck out like a comet. It was a strike most opponents couldn’t even perceive.

“Kuaaap! Fortitude! Reflex!”

Wooong!

Yet, Kim Honghyun blocked it.

“Keepup...!”

Although he was pushed back a few steps, he received his strike. Even though both his Power and Speed were more than a level lower than Choi Hyuk’s, he also possessed an innate skill. He had blocked Chu Youngjin’s attack with his karma trait {Reflex}, which assisted his reflexes, and with his innate skill {Toughness} and his karma trait {Fortitude}, both of which greatly increased his Endurance and Power.

Chu Youngjin’s next strike was blocked by Kim Saehyun’s precise counterattack. His innate skill {Sharpness} allowed him to attack exquisitely, stopping Chu Youngjin’s attack while also wounding him.

They exchanged approximately 10 attacks in an instant.

Chu Youngjin attempted to split Kim Honghyun’s head, yet Kim Honghyun blocked it with his double-bladed ax. He used the rebound from the clash to turn around, swinging at Chu Youngjin. Chu Youngjin reflected his attack and attempted to take Kim Honghyun’s leg. Kim Saehyun joined in and aimed for Chu Youngjin’s wrist. Chu Youngjin lowered his body, received the strike with his shoulder, and wielded his sword again. Kim Honghyun blocked his attack with the head of his double-bladed ax.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Explosive sounds boomed and blood spurted at every step. Even though his body had been sliced and turned into a bloody mess, Chu Youngjin pressed on against Kim Honghyun and Kim Saehyun.

The experts, who couldn’t even think of joining in and ended up becoming spectators, couldn’t help but open their mouths.

“It looks like it’ll be a long fight...”

He was mistaken.

‘Chu Youngjin’s Protection’ became the decisive difference. It distributed its Combat Endurance Ability +100 (Stamina, Endurance, and Recovery) depending on the situation. When Chu Youngjin was wounded, the sword would shine and pour all 100 points into Recovery, closing his wound immediately. When he was about to attack,

the 100 points, which had been poured into Recovery, would pour into Stamina and Endurance. His tough Stamina and solid body supported his Power and Speed, maximizing their effects.

Even as a weapon, there was a huge difference in performance.

When Chu Youngjin wielded his karma-sword 'Protection', he could, in fact, be called the strongest on Earth aside from Choi Hyuk.

Kirik!

Along with a terrifying sound, Kim Honghyun's axe shattered.

"Dodge!"

Kim Saehyun's flexible sword coiled into a spring as he blocked Chu Youngjin's path.

Kirik!

Although he stopped Chu Youngjin's charge, Kim Saehyun's sword shattered like glass.

Like a blizzard, the shattered metallic pieces were violently swept up with the wind.

Chu Youngjin's eyes had turned completely red.

"Kill..."

He had lost all sense of reasoning. The pain from {Berserker} and {Explosive Blood} combined with the doppelganger queen's brainwashing. Everyone looked like Lee Hyejin's killer in his eyes.

"Ru... Run!":

The experts, who had been watching the situation, picked up Kim Honghyun and Kim Saehyun and retreated from the battlefield.

"...I'm going to kill you!"

Chu Youngjin attempted to follow and kill them. Just then, the doppelganger queen, who was a bit behind him, made its move. Still sincere, it shed tears as it held Chu Youngjin.

Don't. Kill me instead. Don't do it.

“Uh...? Lee Hyejin...?”

Chu Youngjin, who had been gathering his strength to chase them, stopped in his tracks. He blinked.

“Yeah. You're right. Saving you comes first.”

Chu Youngjin held its hand. Even though there was no way he could hold its hand as it didn't have a physical body, but as Chu Youngjin was already thoroughly out of his mind, he mistakenly thought he held its hand.

“Let's run.”

Chu Youngjin held its hand and escaped. He headed towards Yeouido. It was the closest place with a portal to Dragonic.



At the same time, Choi Hyuk and Naro were spending their time busily.

“Aaaah. It's impossible. Impossible.”

Naro wrapped its arms around its head and buried its head between its knees. However, Choi Hyuk didn't let it go.

“I'm tired too. That's why we should finish it quickly.”

“Can't we take it easy? I mean, how can you tell me to compile information about space routes, the history of the war, and information about various skills in this short period of time? No matter how great of an amazing artificial intelligence I am, this is

impossible.”

“We can’t. We don’t have time. We might be duped multiple times while we’re still stuck on Earth like now.”

“But Earth is already in a fuss about the doppelganger queen problem, why do we have to do this now?”

“I supplied Baek Seoin with enough memory to resolve that problem. That should be enough.”

“Aahh, I’m tired. Tired!”

Naro stood upright and simulated choking itself to death. Still, Choi Hyuk didn’t let it slide.

“You have to do it even if you’re tired. We need to advance to space as soon as possible.”

The cause of this incident were the resources for dimensional travel given as a reward. They were the necessary fuel and parts that would allow Naro, who had been stuck on Earth until now, to attempt dimensional travel.

“There’s no future if we keep getting dragged around. We need someone within the core of the alliance who can be our eyes and ears.”

They were only permitted to travel within the Laniakea Supercluster through the military gate system. However, with the rewarded resources, Naro’s spaceship could attempt dimensional travel, and they could even travel beyond that. Choi Hyuk had no thoughts on pushing this back. What he needed now was a scout who could work at the core of the alliance.

“If we consider the future, the doppelganger queen isn’t what’s important. You said it yourself. That you can sufficiently handle that.”

Choi Hyuk put the doppelganger queen, which was a hot issue at the moment, aside and told Naro to download all the information it could about the alliance. He himself was learning about the alliance and analyzing the information about their various commonly used fighting techniques.

The flood of information made even Naro, who was the ultimate artificial intelligence

left behind by the narolings, feel pressured. Naro was suffering while Choi Hyuk urged it.

Just then, Naro, who had been in pain, abruptly raised its head.

“Ah! The warriors of the minor clans are fighting against Director Chu Youngjin!”

Even though Naro’s voice was filled with urgency, it also clearly contained its expectations of finally being able to rest.

“What? What are you saying?”

“Please wait. I only handled this data. The one who directly communicated with people was Director Baek Seoin so he should know more about it than me. I’ll connect you now.”

Baek Seoin’s face appeared on the screen. He had an urgent expression.

“Leader!”

“What’s wrong?”

“The minor clans claim Youngjin is the doppelganger queen’s host and are chasing him down.”

“Chu Youngjin’s the host?”

“It seems like it. He completely lost his rationality. In fact, he’s headed towards the gate<sup>{2}</sup> to Dragonic. There are Berserkers who have locked down the gate so there shouldn’t be a problem, but if we want to reduce our losses, I think it’s best if you personally stop him.”

Baek Seoin’s voice sounded urgent. It definitely would be troublesome if Chu Youngjin crossed over to Dragonic. However, there was something else that got on Choi Hyuk’s nerves.

“But why are the minor clans, and not the Berserkers, chasing Youngjin?”

“The clans are very dissatisfied with the Berserkers these days. It seems like they were trying to capture Youngjin themselves and gain the right to speak. The situation isn’t good. They say Chu Youngjin has already been greatly wounded... Leader. Although it’ll be tough, we can’t just gloss over this. Even if it’s Chu Youngjin, we need to punish him to set an example.”

“Punish Chu Youngjin?”

“Yes. Since you are an overseer who has to take care of tens of millions of people. If you just gloss over this incident, dissatisfaction will surge explosively. We need to provide generous compensation to the victims as well.”

Baek Seoin reminded Choi Hyuk with the same words he scolded Lee Jinhee with.

But Choi Hyuk was different from Lee Jinhee. There was a definite difference between Choi Hyuk and Baek Seoin’s judgment of the situation.

“So what’s the current situation? The minor clans are blocking Chu Youngjin? Is that something we requested?”

“That’s not it. This wasn’t a report given by them but rather a situation we figured out by ourselves. Although the minor clans are blocking Chu Youngjin, he is about to break free from them. I already gave the order for the Berserkers blocking the gate to intervene right away. It will be a headache if the minor clans take any more losses! Leader, please hurry. Director Lee Jinhee left already, but it’ll be difficult to stop his charge without suffering any losses.”

Baek Seoin sounded urgent. Choi Hyuk momentarily became lost in thought. Then he shook his head.

“No, don’t get them to intervene. The Berserkers will continue to concentrate on locking down the gate. Just stop Chu Youngjin from going through the gate if he tries to. Don’t help the minor clans. We don’t need to compensate them for their losses either.”

“Pardon?”

Baek Seoin’s expression became blank at the unexpected reply.

Choi Hyuk was firm.

“Why are the minor clans acting and making the problem bigger? If they are suspicious of Chu Youngjin, then they should report him to the Berserkers, why are they personally making a move? Like now, even if Chu Youngjin attempts to cross through the gate, why are they moving by themselves instead of reporting him to the Berserkers, who can stop him? If they are going to act without knowing their place, then they have to pay the appropriate price.”

Choi Hyuk had been silent about the conflicts up until now. However, it seemed he was disgusted by the minor clans.

Baek Seoin became more urgent. By his judgment, they had to embrace them right now.

“That’s how deep the misunderstandings between the Berserkers and the minor clans are. It is currently time to stitch things up. We can’t always be a small group of elites. Don’t we have to become an army of tens of millions of people?!”

Baek Seoin’s plan was to unite the strength of the earthlings and cultivate a powerful force. He believed that, beyond the Berserkers suppressing them with their power, they needed the political power to merge countless forces and rule over them. It reflected his unbiased, fair personality.

However, Choi Hyuk’s judgment was different.

He called Baek Seoin in a low voice.

“Baek hyung.”

Hearing the weight carried in his voice, Baek Seoin quickly looked at Choi Hyuk’s eyes. They were chilly. Baek Seoin felt his spine shiver. Then he realized once again.

‘Ah... Right. Our leader isn’t right in the head.’

Choi Hyuk said,

“That’s a method Richard is good at, but we are Berserkers.”

Each of Choi Hyuk’s words stabbed into Baek Seoin’s heart. Choi Hyuk, who lacked

administration and political skills, left Baek Seoin to govern most matters. However, it eventually fell onto Choi Hyuk, who was an overseer, to make the decisive judgment and decide their ultimate aim.

And Choi Hyuk's aim wasn't justice, only revenge.

"I don't need tens of millions of people who are going to make their own judgments. I only need crazy warriors who can raise their swords at death. What's the point if we are large in number? You know how strong our enemies are. When we fight them, how many of the tens of millions will be able to wield their swords?"

"..."

Baek Seoin was silent.

"I can't leave Chu Youngjin, who has been deceived by a monster, alone. Even still, I have no thoughts of embracing the minor clans either. They do not have the right to judge the Berserkers. No, they don't have the skill to. If they want the same rights as the Berserkers, then tell them to raise their strength. Or join the Berserkers. If they moved to personally capture Chu Youngjin, then they need to try by themselves."

Choi Hyuk stood up. After stretching, he said on his way out,

"Tell them to try to stop Chu Youngjin. Though, I think Chu Youngjin will eventually come to me."

Choi Hyuk left like that.

His policy was clear. 'Discrimination'. He had no thoughts on giving the minor clans rights. He had no thoughts on acknowledging them. If they found it unfair, they would have to obtain it themselves.

Although Choi Hyuk didn't plan on leaving Chu Youngjin, who had been deceived by a monster, alone, he also had no thoughts on acknowledging the minor clans either.

Both of them would pay the price.

"It's better this way,"

He mumbled as he jumped down from Naro's spaceship.

As he fell to the surface, he saw Chu Youngjin, who was trying to charge through the minor clans like a furious lion.

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{1} Possibly similar to the 'urumi'.

{2} Not sure why the author called the portal a gate.

# CHAPTER 106

## A NEW START

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“What about the Berserkers? Are they still not here yet?”

“No. They said that they aren’t coming to back us up at all!”

“What?”

Clan Leader Lee Jungmin ended up shouting.

“What are they thinking by not sending backup? Are they just going to watch Chu Youngjin cross over to Dragonic?”

“That is... It seems they are at least planning on stopping him from going to Dragonic. That’s why the Berserkers, who were on their way here as back up, changed directions and returned to lock down the portal.”

“Ha!”

Lee Jungmin ground his teeth.

“So they don’t care if we live or die?”

It felt like his insides were surging with flames. Yet he had no choice. The situation was progressing completely differently from their expectations. The reason was simple. Chu Youngjin was just too strong.

“Guaack!”

Lee Jungmin saw a warrior flying away with a smashed arm. He was an expert who had come over from Macau. He was a famous figure known for his powerful strength. He wasn’t someone who should have flown away like that.

There wasn’t an expert who could endure a single strike from Chu Youngjin. They couldn’t block his attack even if they could see it either. Rumble! Whenever they heard a thunderous roar, there would always be a casualty or someone who had been fatally

wounded. It was impossible to use hit-and-run tactics. The moment they 'hit' would be the moment they died.

“Block him! He’s only one guy! There’s a limit to his stamina!”

The clan leaders tried to encourage them, but their clan members were busy hastily backing away. They were gradually becoming more and more passive.

They couldn’t help it. Chu Youngjin was simply trying to get to Dragonic. As long as they didn’t attack him first or block his path, he wouldn’t attack them.

The clan members grumbled,

“The Berserkers are locking down the gate... Then why do we have to act?”

There wasn’t much benefit relative to the risk. Their clan leaders’ aspirations were insufficient in persuading them. Chu Youngjin charged forward like a lion while the clans dispersed like lambs.

Then, at some point, the tables had totally turned. While Chu Youngjin was running down the street in front of the National Assembly building, the clan experts slowly retreated, and eventually, turned their backs and fled.

Whoosh.

Hundreds of people ran. They fled as fast as they could. Some stepped on building walls and jumped onto the roof, while more urgent people shattered windows and hid inside. The somewhat slower individuals didn’t even think to retreat into the side streets and instead continued to run straight down the street as fast as possible.

Chu Youngjin followed the empty street and headed towards Yeouido Park. He was now a short distance away from the portal. He saw the tense expressions of the Berserkers blocking the portal.

“Hu... Hu... Huhuhu.”

The clan leaders couldn't help but laugh at this absurd scene. This wasn't their original plan. They were going to secure Chu Youngjin's whereabouts, and after having forcefully investigated him, they planned on using him to get an apology from the Berserkers. They hoped to get their capability acknowledged through this.

However, everything went awry.

The main character was presently not the minor clans but Chu Youngjin.

He was dazzling. Currently, in this moment, the guilty Chu Youngjin was shining brightly, while the minor clans looked like unsightly villains.

Then, suddenly, the main character changed.

Baaang!

Something fell from the dark sky and slammed on the ground. Dust clouds reached the top of the surrounding buildings, and shattered asphalt collided and smashed into the walls of the surrounding buildings.

There were even minor clan experts who were in pain after unluckily being hit by a stray flying piece of asphalt on their heads or legs.

Even Chu Youngjin, who had completely lost all sense of reasoning, flinched in surprise at the force and stopped in his tracks.

Choi Hyuk walked out, making his way through the dust cloud. He laughed when he saw Chu Youngjin.

“Chu hyung, why do you look like that?”

Chu Youngjin's clothes were ripped, and his entire body was caked in blood. His eyes went beyond being red and formed blood tears.

Chu Youngjin raised 'Chu Youngjin's Protection'. He was completely different from before when he charged forward recklessly. A tension that could cut one's flesh hung in the air.

Choi Hyuk opened his mouth wide.

It had been a long time since his heart pounded like this before a fight. The Chu Youngjin in front of him didn't look trivial. He also wasn't so weak as to quickly die in a fight.

Choi Hyuk didn't unsheathe his sword.

Fist clenched, he placed a lot of strength into his right shoulder.

"This will bring you to your senses."

Bang!

No one knew who moved first as they shot towards each other. Rumble! With a thunderous sound, Chu Youngjin's figure became blurred like an oncoming storm. However-

Bang!

The terrifying sound smacked the hearts of the masses.

"Keu... Kuuu..."

They heard Chu Youngjin wheezing as air escaped him. Chu Youngjin's sword didn't reach Choi Hyuk. Chu Youngjin's gut took the full impact of Choi Hyuk's short jab. As Choi Hyuk cut his attack short, Chu Youngjin wasn't blasted away. Only, his insides were in a mess.

Baaang!

Before the lingering aftereffect of his first strike could disappear, Choi Hyuk displayed his explosive strength. His fists relentlessly rained down on Chu Youngjin. They weren't piercing punches but ones that gradually piled on.

Crack. Bang! Riip!

Chu Youngjin's Endurance, which was at the 4-star level, was useless. His ribs broke

and stabbed his lungs, his eyeball popped and dribbled down, and he received a concussion. Even his insides burst at the sudden pressure.

Yet, Chu Youngjin didn't stop. Even though he was hit countless times, his karma heart continued to beat explosively. His sword continuously targeted Choi Hyuk.

Rumble! Boom!

Every time a thunderous roar sounded out, a nearby building would explode. The karma blade that extended from Chu Youngjin's sword sliced through the ground like tofu.

The more Chu Youngjin raged, the higher his karma surged. His karma surged to the point where his Recovery stat was close to reaching the 5-star level. The moment his eyeball exploded, a new eyeball would regenerate, and when his shinbone broke, it would immediately snap back into place and adhere together. When he spat his mushed insides out, new ones would regenerate within his body.

It looked like he was invulnerable.

Did Chu Youngjin recognize Choi Hyuk in his unconscious state?

Or, did he instinctively know that he couldn't head towards Dragonic without beating Choi Hyuk?

Chu Youngjin didn't back down at all.

Boooooom!

Lightning struck. Seemingly in correspondence to their intense fight, rain began to fall from the sky. The escaping experts and even the Berserkers, who were locking down the portal, blankly watched their fight. The drizzling rain soaked their clothes. A shivering cold lingered in the air as they got goosebumps.

Bang! Baang!

Every time Choi Hyuk punched, raindrops drew lines in the air. Choi Hyuk continuously punched Chu Youngjin as if he were trying to nail him into the sky.

"Keeuck!"

Chu Youngjin desperately shouted.

“Kuaaaah!”

And a resounding roar followed after.

Baang!

Blood splattered. Blood surged against the flow of raindrops. Blood began to gradually dye the building windows red. Choi Hyuk’s left shoulder was inflicted with a deep cut, dying it red. It was the first effective attack by Chu Youngjin. On top of that, it was quite deep.

However, Choi Hyuk smiled more furiously.

He ignored his wound and smashed Chu Youngjin’s face with his right fist. A cloud of blood burst from his face as his teeth flew away. Like slow motion, Chu Youngjin’s body slowly tilted backwards before flying backwards, as if he had fallen from a tall cliff, and was nailed into the building behind him.

“Kuaah... Haah...”

Legs trembling, Chu Youngjin walked out from the pile of concrete rubble. He spat a broken tooth out. A new tooth grew out from his mouth, foaming with blood. Chu Youngjin’s blood-caked face smiled. However-

Thud.

The tooth that was growing fell out as well.

Thud, thud.

It happened again. It seemed like it would stop this time, but it fell out a third time with a thud. It only stopped at the fourth time. This was because Choi Hyuk’s karma, which had invaded his body, had obstructed his recovery. It was also because Chu Youngjin’s recovery was slowly weakening due to him having exhausted his karma to the extreme.

“It’s finally kicking in.”

Choi Hyuk said as he rotated his arm. His attitude showed he was still at ease. However, his wound hadn't yet closed. A lot of blood was still dripping from his deeply wounded shoulder. This was because Choi Hyuk's Recovery was a chronic weakness of his and he had consumed a lot of stamina. It was also a large wound. Choi Hyuk had almost never been inflicted with a wound of this magnitude.

If he had instead tried to kill Chu Youngjin, then it might have been easy. Choi Hyuk's Weapon of Vow was a deadly sword, and as it was rare for even middle-ranked warriors, who have reached the 5-star level, to block his slash, there was no way for Chu Youngjin, who was only a low-ranked warrior, to block it. However, this act of beating him up so that he couldn't fight anymore wasn't easy for Choi Hyuk. Choi Hyuk's Endurance (100 - 3 ★) and Recovery (371 - 3★) were very low, and each of Chu Youngjin's attacks had been reinforced, matching middle-ranked warriors. To avoid each of his attacks while pummeling an explosive Chu Youngjin into dough required incredible concentration and stamina.

So...

Choi Hyuk enjoyed this fight.

"Chu hyung, I'm coming!"

With a swish, the distance between Choi Hyuk and Chu Youngjin became non-existent. The rain that had been falling within that distance was swept up and scattered in every direction.

Chu Youngjin raised his sword and blocked Choi Hyuk's punch.

Gong!

'Chu Youngjin's Protection' quivered. Below his blade, Chu Youngjin's eyes were noticeably less red.

"Are you back to your senses?"

Choi Hyuk asked. At the same time, Choi Hyuk's left foot struck at Chu Youngjin's right thigh.

“Keuk!”

An extreme pain gripped his entire body. However, Chu Youngjin endured this pain and instead shot forward, pushing against Choi Hyuk. Choi Hyuk used Chu Youngjin’s strength to throw him over his shoulders. It was a clean throw, and by Choi Hyuk’s standards, it was clean starting from the head.

Chu Youngjin was slammed upside down onto the ground. Choi Hyuk kicked Chu Youngjin’s back. His spine looked like it would snap. It was the critical blow. Chu Youngjin’s body folded completely in half. Then shot out and slammed into a building. From then on, the situation proceeded one-sidedly.

Choi Hyuk pummeled Chu Youngjin as he expressed his victory, while Chu Youngjin’s counterattacks became duller than before. It seemed the effects of Berserker and Explosive Blood were ending as Chu Youngjin’s combat strength was dropping.

Thud. It slowly took longer for Chu Youngjin to stand back up.

“Chu hyung. It’s still far from over.”

It looked like Chu Youngjin had finally regained his senses. His red eyes had returned to normal, and his shattered and ripped wounds didn’t stanch easily.

Even in this situation, Chu Youngjin continued to stand up, albeit unsteadily.

He didn’t even utter a single excuse.

Punch! Punch! Punch!

From then on, instead of a fight, it was a one-sided beating. Choi Hyuk would hit him, and Chu Youngjin would silently take the hit. Chu Youngjin resolutely stood back up, and Choi Hyuk resolutely beat him down.

Thud.

After falling, Chu Youngjin was no longer able to stand back up as he squirmed on the ground. His face was embedded into the ground as his hands kept slipping from the rain. He swallowed rainwater.

Choi Hyuk motionlessly looked down at him before raising his hand. Lee Jinhee, who had been watching this unfold with mixed emotions from afar, threw him an identification device. A fist-sized sphere fell onto Choi Hyuk's hand. Choi Hyuk placed the device next to Chu Youngjin's head and activated it.

Zzzing.

The light emitting from the device pushed its way through Chu Youngjin's worn-out karma and searched every nook and cranny. Even before the results were out, Choi Hyuk was staring at something next to Chu Youngjin's head.

Whoong!

The light emitting from the device shook. It turned red and created a shape next to Chu Youngjin. It was the doppelganger queen, who was crying next to Chu Youngjin, holding his body which couldn't stand anymore.

"Ah... As expected..."

"That's the doppelganger queen..."

"It looks like a real person? Makes sense to be fooled by it."

Although they had guessed it, the feeling they felt after finally confirming it was different. Chu Youngjin's sins were fully displayed to the entire world.

Chu Youngjin, who had gotten up after falling multiple times, gave up at this moment. He vacantly looked at the doppelganger queen that looked like Lee Hyejin. As if he couldn't hear the murmurs of the people around him or see Choi Hyuk approaching, he passionately gazed at the queen.

However, Choi Hyuk said with indifference,

"You know it, right? That it's only a monster."

Blaze.

Soon, the flames that bloomed in his hand wrapped around the doppelganger queen. The doppelganger queen, who had yet to awaken, was still kind as ever. As it looked at the flames wrapping around it, it smiled brightly, seemingly thinking that this was for

the best. As it gazed into Chu Youngjin's eyes, it smiled, trying to put him at ease.

It smiled-

"Aaaaah!"

Then screamed. Choi Hyuk's scarlet flames could cause terrifying pain even to spirit forms. An intense heat spread everywhere as it evaporated the falling rain. Even the mist was burnt up by the flames and disappeared.

"Aaaaack!"

The more disfigured Lee Hyejin's appearance became, the more fiercely the doppelganger queen screamed. Just then, black energy surged out from within its body. It was the queen's core. The flames even spread to that core.

{Aaaack! Aaaaaah! I hate you! I haaate yooouuu!}

After completely ridding itself of its imitation of Lee Hyejin, the queen let out a terrifying scream. Then it burnt up cleanly, not leaving a single speck of ash.

The flames died down, and the rain fell once more.

Thud.

After having watched the entire scene, Chu Youngjin's face dropped. His forehead fell into a puddle of water. His face was completely soaked with rain.

Choi Hyuk bitterly looked back at him before turning away.

He declared to the surrounding experts of the minor clans and Berserkers.

"Effective immediately, Director Chu Youngjin is stripped of his position. He hid the doppelganger queen and committed an inerasable sin against humanity. While capital punishment is a suitable punishment for his sin, taking his contributions up until now into consideration, I will not kill him. Instead, he will be forever exiled from Earth."

Exiled from Earth. Everyone murmured at the unexpected judgment.

“All his Mission Points gathered until now will be confiscated, and he will be sent to a war zone beyond the Laniakea Supercluster with no connection to Earth. He will never again be able to step forth on Earth and will not be able to hear any news about Earth.”

Things would progress according to his declaration. No one could question it.

Then Choi Hyuk looked at the minor clan experts just standing there. He passed judgment to them as well.

“The clans under the Berserkers have contributed by noticing Chu Youngjin’s abnormality. However, they did wrong by not reporting his abnormality to the Berserkers and by trying to resolve it themselves. The price for which is the following.”

As he said this, Choi Hyuk grinned. It was clearly a mocking smirk.

“The wounded or dead will be compensated from a moral standpoint. Do not overstep your bounds and interfere with Berserker matters. If you are confident in your skills, we will always welcome your application.”

With that, Choi Hyuk turned his back. Rain endlessly fell onto the heads of the experts standing there foolishly.



That was how the curtains fell on the doppelganger queen incident.

It wasn’t only an incident that revealed the external conflict between the Berserkers and the minor clans, but also one that revealed the problems with the internal communications between the Berserkers.

Using this incident as an opportunity, Choi Hyuk changed the organization of the Berserkers. He gave Baek Seoin the position of vice-overseer and gave him clear-cut authority. For symbolic reasons, he left Baek Seoin to deal with Lee Jinhee, who didn’t report the exclusion of Chu Youngjin from the investigation teams. Baek Seoin concluded by giving Lee Jinhee 3 months of active military service as punishment.

Not only that, but the relationship between the Berserkers and its subordinate clans became clear. A public announcement declared, “The only military organization

acknowledged within Overseer Choi Hyuk's territories are the Berserkers.' Then they sought policies to absorb their subordinate clan experts into the Berserkers.

Chu Youngjin had to leave without witnessing these changes.

Only Choi Hyuk, Baek Seoin, and Lee Jinhee saw him off when he rode the 1-person spaceship Naro prepared for him and left Earth.

Unexpectedly, Chu Youngjin had a carefree expression.

"Thank you."

Although it was a doppelganger queen, Chu Youngjin had seen Lee Hyejin die twice. He could no longer live on Earth, which made him recall his memories of her.

"Be happier in your next life."

Choi Hyuk joked as Chu Youngjin was leaving.

"Whatever you do is fine, just don't die. We need to see each other again."

At Choi Hyuk's words, Chu Youngjin smiled bitterly and shook his head.

That was how he left Earth forever. Like ending one life, he left Earth.

For the first time, Choi Hyuk was able to send a human beyond the Laniakea Supercluster.

Whatever convention he used, he had sent one of the people he trusted the most to the heart of his enemy.



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