

심판의 1 군주

오늘도요 현대 판타지 장편소설
DONG-A MODERN FANTASY

Sovereign of Judgment

- 심판의 군주 -

- Episode 8 -
Recruit Training

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[**Myoniyoni Translations**]

CHAPTER 126

ESTABLISHING TROOPS (1)

The God Dragon Leviathan was maintaining the 'Net of Fate' today again.

He was the 1st seat of the 13 seats of the Exalted Wings, the strongest dragon. At the same time, he was also known as the 'Dragon of Beginning' as he was the longest living member of the alliance.

The Pyrio Tribe called him 'Kangtwearoa' and the Quasar Tribe called him 'Kirihareulak'. Rather than saying that they actually called him that, it was more apt to say that this was how the names would sound like if the earthlings were to imitate them through human speech. Of course, the words would be incredibly distorted, even more than when one used Google Translate to translate Korean into English and then back to Korean.

Even if they had different names for him, the meaning behind them was the same – The 'Snake of Terror', the name of something large, powerful and terrifying. Because of this, although the earthlings didn't know him yet, they would come to know him as the 'Leviathan'.

If they were to dig deeper into his name 'Leviathan' and his nickname the 'Dragon of Beginning', they would discover a logical rift in their meanings.

In fact, this would be the case if they thought about it objectively.

No matter how close the function of the 'Language Resonance Device' was to telepathy, it was almost impossible for the earthlings and aliens to communicate with no discomfort. Humans used air waves to communicate while the Dark Tribe used gravity, and the Flame Wing Tribe used light waves. There were also species that used telepathy like the narolings. Their cultural backgrounds and the matter that individual alien species were made up of were completely different.

When such beings communicated with each other through telepathy, it was inevitable that there would be fragments of thoughts that were difficult to comprehend. This was similar to how Koreans would think in Korean what Japanese would think in Japanese. If a Flame Wing Tribe member transmitted the thought 'Choi Hyuk is stronger than I thought' to an earthling, the feeling of surprise he felt would be sent along with an image of quickly alternating red and blue lights mixed with infrared and ultraviolet lights, which earthlings couldn't see. It was impossible for an earthling to understand this.

However, when they used the Language Resonance Device, all alien species could communicate easily and naturally as though they were using their mother tongues. The Steel Battleship wasn't created with steel, but the language of the aliens who called it that was so fantastical that the earthlings instinctively called it the 'Steel Battleship'. It didn't matter even if they knew the Steel Battleship wasn't made of steel. Like how one might call a powerful punch a 'rock fist', the earthlings clearly understood the 'meaning' behind it.

This wasn't something that could be explained entirely by the Language Resonance Device.

There was another rift in logic. Leviathan was called the 'Dragon of Beginning'. This was because he was born in the very center of the universe and was an ancient dragon who had experienced the longest life out of everyone else in the alliance.

However, strictly speaking, there were many members of the Flame Wing Tribe who were older than him. Even still, Leviathan was the individual with the most experience in the alliance.

This was because the passage of time was different throughout the universe. Time moved differently for a quickly moving target compared to one that stayed still. In the great universe, one second for someone might be ten thousand years for another.

This was the case for the Flame Wing Tribe. As those who were born in the fires of the Big Bang, they were born on the edge of the universe's expansion. From the perspective of Earth, which was located near a cold star, it looked like time had 'stopped' for the Flame Wing Tribe. They said Earth's history was 5 billion years old, but from the perspective of the Flame Wing Tribe's homeland, the Big Bang occurred

only a few million years ago.

Even on Earth, if people's languages and time zones were different, there would be difficulties when working together.

However, the alliance embraced aliens, who were incredibly different from each other, as one. Within it, aliens were able to overcome the obstacles of language and time. They were able to communicate in real-time and perceive the same time as each other.

How was such an 'impossible feat' possible?

What bridged this logical rift was the 'Net of Fate'. It was the most fundamental infrastructure which allowed the alliance to function properly, and the key tactic in fighting the war against the monsters.

The primary duty of the Exalted Wings, who were the alliance's greatest leaders and most powerful warriors, was to maintain this 'Net of Fate'.

{Whoo.}

Leviathan let out a deep sigh within the 'Net of Fate'. The 'Net of Fate' he saw was actually a single, enormous net. It was a net created by interlacing the entire universe's fate and the fates of individuals within it together.

The Net of Fate, which filled up the entire space, shined blindingly. There were people, oceans, stars, and galaxies. All things in the universe gathered to create what seemed to be a brilliant light from afar. It bound the fates of alliance members together with a powerful karma. Within this one fate, the members of the universe were able to overcome the laws of physics and communicate with one another.

However, there were holes here and there within the net. These holes were dark and terrifying, and they seemed to infest the net like maggots. These holes signified the invasion of the monsters. However, looking at it as a whole, the holes, fortunately, didn't take up a large portion of the net.

{Is it a blessing in disguise? Although I don't know how long it'll continue, the situation

has turned for the better right now.}

After overcoming the monsters' extensive invasion, the monster forces set up in various regions throughout the universe shrunk in return. It was due to the destruction of a countless number of Kahur Kabkuns. Because of this, the net was in a better condition than before.

{We need to reinforce our fate in times like this. Whooo... }

Leviathan let out another long sigh and drew out his karma. The 'Net of Fate' emitted a more brilliant light as it was guided by his karma (retribution) towards his fate.

The brighter the Net of Fate shined, the more advantageous it became for the alliance in the war against the monsters.

It became harder for the monsters to create Kahur Kabkuns and they were oddly unlucky, while things would go well for alliance members no matter what they did. This was why the 'Net of Fate' was not only an 'infrastructure' but a 'tactic' as well.

As such, it wasn't an easy task for Leviathan, who exceeded the level of highest-ranked warriors by an extreme degree, to reinforce the 'Net of Fate'.

Crrrk. Crrrk.

His long, ocean-blue body was crushed by a powerful pressure.

Kaching! Kaching!

His scales, which were incomparable in toughness, shattered like glass and red blood gushed out.

Still, Leviathan didn't stop using his power. His large eyes were fixed onto a particular corner of the Net of Fate.

Grin.

The enormous dragon smiled, revealing his terrifying teeth.

{My relatives on Dragonic... I didn't think I'd see them again. Barhaloleun, how happy would that child be if he was still alive? Since they are helping out this much, I need to

put more of my strength into it.}

He was gazing at the newly born baby dragons in the embrace of the El Tribes with delight.



The 'Brain' was 13 stone plates, which were so large that it seemed they would reach the sky, gathered in a circle.

The stone plates, which were as dark as gravestones, began to emit a light one after the other, and the meeting of the Exalted Wings began without so much as a greeting.

{Leader of the reconnaissance troops.}

When someone began to talk, the Exalted Wings began to quickly share their opinions. The topic was who to select as the leader of the reconnaissance troops that would explore the monsters' headquarters.

Countless names were mentioned in a moment. They were reduced to three.

{The problem is that they are all commanders who are assigned to key strategic points.}

{It is only natural for those who have reached the level of transcendence to occupy such positions. But, regardless, it's time for us to make a decision.}

The level of transcendence was the next level beyond highest-ranked warriors. It was a supreme level that only a little over a hundred in the entire universe had reached. It was also the first qualification in becoming an Exalted Wing. The level of transcendence was so long and arduous that it was almost impossible for one to reach its limit. No, it was as though every moment was an obstacle. Because of this, there was an extreme difference in strength between those at the early stages of the transcendence level and those in the later stages. The majority of warriors at the transcendence level were between the early and experienced stages, and it was known that only the Exalted Wings reached the later stages of the transcendence level. Only the legendary king of the Flame Wing Tribe, Flame-Sky, who was also considered as the strongest in the history of the universe, was known to have 'perfected' the transcendence level and seen its limits. In reality, if it wasn't for him, they wouldn't have even known there was a 'limit' to the transcendence level. Before then, the

reasonable opinion was 'to group the obstacles together as the transcendence level since they were faced with too many of them to name them all individually'.

However, no matter how they put it, they were existences who had reached the same level as the Exalted Wings. There was no way their duties would be mundane.

{Considering the difficulty of the mission, we definitely need at least one warrior at the transcendence level. If not, they will not be able to return.}

{However... If there's a slip-up, it could result in a huge political problem... }

Depending on who they chose to be the leader of the reconnaissance troops, the species who would suddenly lose their reliable leader would undoubtedly oppose it.

Still, they needed an outstanding leader.

The Exalted Wings ceaselessly attempted to probe each other's thoughts. Such a long silence during their meetings was odd.

At that moment, someone broke the silence and said.

{... In times like this, I think it's right for the species appointed as the head of the alliance to bite the bullet. I'll try to persuade the princess.}

{Absurd!}

{There's no other choice. I also agree.}

{... If it's the princess, she'll accept.}

{... }

{... }

They were Exalted Wings from the Flame Wing Tribe. One opposed the decision, another agreed, while another condoned it.

Looking at them, the other Exalted Wings from the other species kept their mouths tightly closed and read each other's mood.

{Would it be okay to progress like this? Like you all know, the princess is a warrior who is almost proficient in the transcendence level. Of course, there is the flaw that she doesn't have a lot of experience commanding an army, but since the reconnaissance troops are a small group of elites and not a large one, it might be better that way.}

{... Well, there's nothing for us to say. If the noble princess of the Flame Wing Tribe will make a move, then we can only be grateful.}

{Then we'll progress like this.}

That was how the leader of the reconnaissance troops was nominated. While expressing his agreement through silence, Leviathan clicked his tongue inwardly.

'The princess of the Flame Wing Tribe is always suffering hardship. Tsk, tsk.'

Although he felt bad for her, Leviathan wasn't in a position where he could interfere. Also, the matter he had been waiting for was brought up next.

{Next is... the matter about the earthlings. The mayor of Dark City personally requested this. He suggested that we drop the restrictions on earthlings and give them the 'right to establish troops'.}

{I agree.}

Leviathan, who had kept his silence this entire time, quickly agreed.

{... But, wasn't the reason we set restrictions on their rights because of their selfish tendencies? If we drop those restrictions, it will cause chaos. And to add the 'right to establish troops' on top of that... When they are barely able to keep their own species in check? If we gave them this right, the problem will become worse. From the start, establishing troops isn't a part of civil rights.}

Someone immediately opposed.

'Establishing troops' wasn't a concept that lay within civil rights but a right related to the alliance's military.

The alliance's military organization was largely split into three sections – regional troops, division troops, and independent troops. Regional troops were comprised of

lifelong positions (composed of residents living in the particular region) and term-length positions (composed of those dispatched by the alliance) and had a duty to defend the specific region autonomously. Commander Mack's Virgo Cluster Army was one of them. On the other hand, division troops were special troops comprised of members dispatched from various regions, and they received orders directly from the center and were active in various regions. The famous 'Steel Battleship' of the Laniakea Supercluster was an example of these troops. Finally, independent troops were, like the name implied, troops that could operate independently. They weren't assigned to a region and weren't restricted to certain duties. They were troops that had intense competition for military merit but was also a rapid promotion pathway, where those who were skilled could quickly distinguish themselves.

The rights to establish troops was the right to establish 'independent troops'. If they were granted this right, they would also receive the right to establish their own troops and receive resources from the alliance. Their ranks were decided by their military merits, and depending on their rank, the quantity and quality of resources they could receive changed.

Until now, the earthlings were affiliated with the regional troops, so their area of movement was limited to the Virgo Cluster. To them, receiving the rights to establish their own troops was a huge benefit.

Because of this, Leviathan responded more determinately.

{The earthlings have proved themselves a lot this time. They completely drove out the monsters that invaded Dragonic. This means they firmly recovered the territory we lost in the past. That's not all. They also allied with the native species there and revived the 'Dragon Tribe' from the past. What I'm saying is that the earthlings' forces aren't only comprised of earthlings but also the El Tribes and 'Dragon Tribe', thus already possessing the trait of an allied force. Also, they made a decisive contribution in protecting Dark City. Especially when looking at Choi Hyuk, you can tell the earthlings possess great potential. They are a species that can do greater things for the alliance. There is no reason to not give them the right to establish troops.}

Following Leviathan's persistent assertion, Dark-Sound of the 'Dark Tribe' stepped forth.

{Although I'm not sure about expanding their civil rights, giving them the right to establish their own troops is worth considering. At least, Choi Hyuk. He is the real

deal.}

The opposing Exalted Wings read Dark-Sound and Leviathan's expressions. Dark-Sound was an existence who received the absolute support of the Dark Tribe, while Leviathan was the type to foam at the mouth when it came to matters related to his species. In times like this, they needed to compromise.

{... I still oppose expanding the civil rights of the earthlings. However, I believe there is meaning to giving them the right to establish troops. How about a condition automatically granting earthlings who satisfy certain qualifications the right to establish troops? While maintaining the seven overseers, we grant this right to any troop commanders who satisfy these qualifications. From the start, competition is a virtue among independent troops.}

{... }

{... }

Everyone expressed their agreement to the newly suggested compromise with silence.

It was the same for Leviathan.

'Now, I opened up a path to make you guys grow faster. Whether this is good or bad will depend on you... I have high hopes for you.'

That was how the earthlings' fate was decided once again.

CHAPTER 127

ESTABLISHING TROOPS (2)

{We grant the earthlings the right to establish troops. We also accept the El Tribes as members of the alliance as they are already under the protection of the alliance. Unlike the earthlings, there are no restrictions on the civil rights of the El Tribes. However, we do not grant the El Tribes with the right to establish troops.}

This short announcement made waves throughout Dragonic. The earthlings and the El Tribes separately racked their brains at this great change.

The right to establish troops was a new opportunity for the minor clans. If they could exercise this right and establish independent troops, they would be able to request resources from the alliance depending on their military merits, which would weaken the authority of 'overseers'. Until now, the overseers were their only window in trading with the alliance so they held enormous authority, but there now was a method to go around this exclusivity.

The El Tribes had their own share of headaches. In their position, they couldn't openly welcome the news of joining the alliance as this meant the El Tribes would have to participate in the war as part of the alliance from now on. Their best option was to get a free ride under the earthlings and peacefully live on Dragonic, but the earthlings and the alliance weren't such easy organizations. Whether this turned out to be a glass of poison or not, they would have to drink it. To reduce their losses even by a little, each tribe went around looking for colonizer clans to ally with. As they had no experience in space missions, they undoubtedly needed the earthlings' experience and power.

Also, Richard's clan, which boasted of being the most powerful and prosperous, completely disbanded due to Richard's passing.

Dragonic's power scene was facing an extreme change.



Choi Hyuk was still lying in bed.

The war ended while he was still lying down.

In fact, he was very surprised.

‘They protected Dragonic without me?’

Perhaps it was arrogance, but Choi Hyuk thought that they wouldn’t be able to protect Dragonic without him. However, the result was different from his expectations. Without Choi Hyuk, the earthlings and the El Tribes were able to completely chase the monsters out of Dragonic. Although Richard died in battle during this process, either way, it was a complete victory.

The earthlings became stronger through this process.

‘... Maybe I underestimated them too much.’

Choi Hyuk smiled. This was a happy miscalculation.

A few people visited him.

The first ones to visit were Camilla and Jessie, both who suffered hardships with him during the expedition.

“I heard you slashed a highest-ranked monster? I was busy running away from hellhounds, which were only high-ranked monsters... Haaa, to think I raised my sword against someone like you... When I think about it now, it sends shivers down my spine. I was crazy... From now on, let’s get along as friends! I’ll be good!”

Sovereign Jessie gave an amiable, crafty smile as he stretched out his hand. Choi Hyuk didn’t hold his hand and blankly stared at him for a moment.

He saw the white light (goodwill) Jessie was emitting and the vivid shield symbol above his head.

‘A person to keep alive.’

Because Choi Hyuk was blankly staring at him, Jessie awkwardly pulled back his hand. That moment, Choi Hyuk calmly grasped his retreating hand.

“Please take care of me.”

Jessie smiled like a child.

“Yeah. Let’s do our best!”

Jessie harbored respect for Choi Hyuk after this incident.

Jessie, who had been heralded as a hero in the extreme sports industry before awakening karma, shared similar qualities with Lee Jinhee. They both possessed endless passion towards challenges. Of course, there was also an important difference. Lee Jinhee was the type who kept truer to herself while Jessie had outstanding showmanship and a disposition of wanting to be the center of attention. Because of this, Jessie had been envious and competitive towards Choi Hyuk rather than admiring him until now. However, the incident this time was on another level. Jessie couldn’t envy him, not when he slashed a highest-ranked monster. On top of that, he wasn’t so immature to feel envious of this fact either.

Jessie now admired Choi Hyuk.

‘I want to be strong like him.’

On the other hand, Camilla placed her hand out with an ambiguous expression. She was smiling, but it wasn’t a smile that couldn’t keep itself contained like Jessie’s.

“Thank you. It’s thanks to you that we were able to return quickly and defend Dragonic.”

Choi Hyuk carefully examined Camilla before holding her hand.

She emitted a faint black light (hostility), and there wasn’t any symbol above her head.

‘She has her guard up against me. And I can’t tell if it will be better to kill her or keep her alive at this moment.’

Choi Hyuk nodded and held her hand.

Camilla, like her title ‘Sovereign of Paradise’, was sensitive to ‘justice’

She would willingly endure sacrifices if it was for the weak, and she would willingly raise her sword at 'injustice' even in disadvantageous situations. Because of this, she was someone who could be hostile to Choi Hyuk and the Berserkers at any moment since, if they were to classify them, Choi Hyuk and the Berserkers were closer to the side of 'evil' than of justice.

That was why she was uneasy right now. In the current political landscape without Richard, there was no one who could keep Choi Hyuk and the Berserkers in check.

Although she smiled outwardly, inwardly, she was very wary of Choi Hyuk.

And Choi Hyuk was estimating her value.

'In Richard's eyes, she was probably considered 'someone to keep alive' since his goal was humanity's survival and prosperity. However, my goal is... revenge. I don't know if she was a necessary existence for the survival of humans, but she could be an obstacle in my path for revenge.'

One thing was clear. She and her clan were people who could raise their swords against the Exalted Wings without hesitation. If that was justice, then they would be willing to fight even a hopeless battle. The problem was whether they would classify the alliance as 'evil' or not.

Also, another point of importance to Choi Hyuk was whether the Camilla Clan possessed the strength to attain justice. There was a likely chance she would obstruct Choi Hyuk's actions at every step in times of chaos in the future. When facing her obstruction, how useful she and her clan were as troops would determine if he acknowledged her obstruction or not. If it was more beneficial to go against her than to accept her, then he would deal with her without any hesitation, though he currently wasn't sure how things would progress.

Choi Hyuk strengthened his grip on her hand as he told her,

"Get stronger. At least as strong as Richard."

Camilla bit her lips at the terrifying feeling she felt from those words.

'... Damn it... Is he really injured?'

Choi Hyuk had lost his lower body and his karma wasn't in a good condition. Yet,

Camilla became discouraged like a mouse standing in front of a snake. It was so upsetting.

Drip.

As blood dripped from her lips since she bit on them too hard, Camilla replied,

“Definitely.”

Her eyes gleamed with resolve. They contained a madness-laced belief which asked who would save the world if not her and an animosity which indicated that she wouldn't lose to him. Pleased with her demeanor, Choi Hyuk's lips curved up into a smile.

Richard's aide, Leah, and the head of 'der Schatten', Zero, visited after them.

They brought over another one of Richard's wills.

“...You want to join the Berserkers?”

“Yes, that was Overseer Richard's final order.”

Leah said while showing his will. Zero was silent.

“Overseer Richard entrusted his dream to you along with his Eyes of the Judge.”

At Leah's words, Choi Hyuk tilted his head.

“Yeah, he did, but my dream is different from Richard's. You know that, right?”

“I don't know, but Overseer Richard believed that it would be fine if it was you.”

“Why?”

“...He said he had a hunch.”

Leah stared directly into Choi Hyuk's eyes.

Choi Hyuk smiled bitterly.

Richard too placed the Exalted Wings as his final goal. He was similar to Choi Hyuk in this respect. However, he was someone who dreamed of the earthlings' survival and prosperity in the end. He was different from Choi Hyuk as the only thing important to him was revenge. Contained in his heart wasn't survival or prosperity. To him, the world had already fallen into ruin. Even if he dropped all the earthlings into the depths of hell, it didn't matter as long as he could realize his revenge.

Because of this, Choi Hyuk was uncomfortable with Leah and Zero. Even though they were outstanding warriors, they weren't as simple as the Berserkers. Also, it wasn't like their relationship wasn't built upon comradeship like it was for Ryu Hyunsung, Lee Jinhee, Baek Seoin, Bae Jinman, and Handke. It was uncomfortable to use them as he wished.

"My path will probably be different from what you think."

Choi Hyuk distanced himself from them. No matter how outstanding a troop was, it was dangerous for distinctive entities to join a united army.

It was Zero who answered this time.

"That doesn't matter. Der Schatten doesn't ask questions. We do not think. We only follow the orders given by Overseer Richard."

Since Richard's final order was to follow Choi Hyuk, they wouldn't hesitate to follow him. That was what he was saying. Zero was 'colorless' in Choi Hyuk's eyes. He was indifferent towards Choi Hyuk to a surprising degree, similar to how Jung Minji was in the past.

On the other hand, Leah was slightly different.

"...I don't really know. However, if there was anyone else who could make the world move besides Overseer Richard, it would be you. That's why I plan on realizing Richard's dream even if it means using you."

Leah was emotional. Her color was gray, a mixture of white and black light. Yet, if he were to strictly classify it, it would be closer to black. She was more hostile towards Choi Hyuk. 'How was it that Richard died and Choi Hyuk survived?' It seemed she held this sort of resentment. She didn't hide her intentions. Her eyes currently burned,

seemingly in anger.

She calmly said,

“I will do my best to assist you. Der Schatten, as a secret organization, will be your eyes and ears. Also, I am in command of the Richard Clan’s most elite troop. It won’t be lacking compared to the Berserkers. We will definitely show you our usefulness.”

She meant that they would persuade him with their skill.

‘I will do my utmost to serve you so that you will lend us your ear.’

She didn’t hide her intentions.

Choi Hyuk now began to become interested in them.

Looking at their self-control, Choi Hyuk recalled how talented of an overseer Richard was. Now that he thought about it, he was curious about something.

“I have something to ask.”

Leah raised her head at Choi Hyuk’s question.

“How did I look in Richard’s eyes? Was I someone to keep alive? Or someone to kill?”

He felt that he was probably someone to keep alive considering what he did for him, but he was somehow doubtful.

‘I was necessary for the survival and prosperity of humanity?’

Even Choi Hyuk had difficulty believing that.

Leah gave him an unexpected answer.

“...I heard it was both. He said that both a blue shield symbol, indicating you were someone to keep alive, as well as a red blade symbol, indicating you were someone to kill, were clearly above your head.”

“There are cases like that?”

“You were the only one. When I asked if that was dangerous, he said it was fine, that you were needed, and that he had a hunch. Overseer Richard had high hopes for you, saying that you were, without a doubt, someone who would accomplish the impossible. Although I didn’t really understand, Overseer Richard interpreted the information in front of his eyes his own way. And he was never wrong. In fact, in this incident, he didn’t kill those labeled as someone to kill and only locked them up, which produced a better result in the end.”

She was referring to those, like Penelope of the Camilla Clan, who would have obstructed the decision to launch a pre-emptive attack. In the end, the decision to launch a pre-emptive attack was achieved smoothly, and they, who joined the war later, achieved brilliant military merits.

“Overseer Richard requested that we work hard for your unknown fate.”

Choi Hyuk shook his head at Leah’s words.

To trust someone he didn’t know was an ally or foe? Unless he possessed tremendous confidence in himself, it was impossible. Yet, Richard always proved his confidence was correct.

‘Admirable.’

This was why Leah and Zero showed such loyalty for him even when he was dead.

However, he was already dead.

If Choi Hyuk accepted Leah and Zero, he couldn’t depend on Richard’s order. Choi Hyuk didn’t need two troops. He only needed the Berserkers.

Choi Hyuk met eyes with Leah then Zero.

“Remember. I’m not Richard. I can’t promise big things like him. I can only promise you one thing. Victory. The power of never losing that won’t allow anything or anyone to play around with our fates. Can you follow that?”

Choi Hyuk’s words meant that he would accept Leah and Zero.

Leah nodded his head and Zero smiled faintly.

“That’s enough.”

The two replied simultaneously.



While welcoming visitors lying down, Choi Hyuk felt frustrated. The situation in Dragonic was rapidly changing, yet he was still bedridden. Since his body was like this, he couldn’t even analyze the enlightenment he had obtained.

Even though he tried not to, he kept feeling a sense of urgency. When he welcomed visitors, he showed off an imposing and confident appearance, but he didn’t feel well when he was alone as he kept feeling powerless.

It was Commander Mack who came to visit this time. She, who had been fighting at the forefront until recently, was dirty as though she didn’t wash before coming here.

“How have you been? Sorry, I’m late. My duty in Dark City finally ended.”

“What is there to be sorry for?”

“No, no, still, you saved my life.”

Although she looked very exhausted, she really seemed to be in a good mood. She smiled like a child without worries.

“You saved me from Narci’s grasp and... You revived my race.”

“You’re right about Narci, but I wasn’t the one who revived the Dragon Tribe.”

“I know. It was Overseer Richard. He chose to sacrifice himself, believing in you. You were handed his dying wish, right?”

“...”

Although he wasn’t thinking of accomplishing Richard’s dying wish, since it was true he received everything, Choi Hyuk simply kept his mouth shut.

“So I thought about your reward.”

Mack sat next to Choi Hyuk. Choi Hyuk didn't refuse.

“A reward would be nice.”

“Ehh, be happier about it.”

“Although I want to stand up and dance, it's difficult since I don't have legs.”

Mack revealed a meaningful smile at Choi Hyuk's truthful words.

“You will be able to.”

“Pardon?”

Mack raised her left arm.

Thud.

As her hand brushed past it, her left horn fell with a thud. A brilliantly shining golden horn. It was the only dragon trait she possessed on her beautiful, human-like body.

“Although I'm from the dragon race, as you can see, I'm quite far off from them. Still, the reason why I can be considered a part of the dragon race are these horns.”

She placed her horn on Choi Hyuk's chest.

“Absorb it.”

“...”

Choi Hyuk blankly stared at Mack.

“Will it be okay if I do?”

“Ahh, all it is is me dropping to the experienced stage of high-ranked warriors. Even though it will take me a while to recover, it's not long from the perspective of the dragon race. Since I was at a loss in trying to become a highest-ranked warrior, I'll just think of it as relearning the basics.”

Commander Mack was a powerful warrior who had reached the peak of high-ranked warriors. Dropping down to the experienced stage of high-ranked warriors was a huge loss. Yet, she didn't hesitate in the slightest.

"This is also a bribe as well as repaying you for saving my life. The baby dragons who were born recently absolutely need the El Tribes and Dragonic. If it's you, you should be able to take good care of them. I entrust you to take care of the baby dragons from now on."

"...Understood."

Choi Hyuk didn't refuse. If it was Commander Mack's horn, he would be able to not only recover from his injuries but step forth onto a higher stage. Fragment Light definitely said that he would be able to recover if a warrior that was at or above his level were to pass down a part of their body to him.

"Good thinking. The bed isn't a place where a hero should be."

Mack smiled brightly.

Mack's horned scattered and was absorbed into Choi Hyuk's heart.

Whoooo.

A karma that overwhelmed Choi Hyuk's power swarmed into him. This was an inheritance of fate. The retribution which Commander Mack, a descendant of the dragon race, had accumulated her entire life was passed down to Choi Hyuk.

Thump. Thump.

His heart thumped crazily, and every time, a strong karma surged from his heart.

The karma spreading from his heart pushed down towards Choi Hyuk's lower body.

His bones formed with golden light. His nerves and muscles formed as well. A body composed of pure karma.

Then the remaining karma began to fuse with his own. The power of dragons, which could fundamentally manipulate flames, suited Choi Hyuk very well. Not only that, but their unique karma, which could communicate with the universe since they were born, awakened an entirely new sense in Choi Hyuk.

Choi Hyuk felt an extreme sense of transcendence.

Never losing and slashing without fail.

The fate he had engraved onto the universe shined in a more brilliant light and became larger and more resilient.

From a bent tree trunk grew roots which were thicker and tougher than before. Golden leaves scattered.

Although the time he spent lying down powerlessly in bed was long, his recovery was instantaneous.

“Ah...”

Choi Hyuk shot up from the spring water he had been lying in. His entire body overflowed with power.

“Congratulations on becoming a high-ranked warrior.”

Commander Mack smiled meaningfully as she tidied her remaining horn.

CHAPTER 128

ESTABLISHING TROOPS (3)

Choi Hyuk, who brushed himself off and stood up, was the first to use the right to establish troops.

Accompanying him, it was inevitable for the Berserkers to reorganize as well. As he wanted to establish troops to launch independent military operations in the great universe, he needed a massive increase in personnel.

Choi Hyuk was an overseer who managed five colonized lands by himself. Among all the overseers, he possessed the vastest territory. Although the average population of each colonized land was significantly lower compared to the colonized lands of other overseers, still, the combined population was over 100,003,000.

However, Choi Hyuk wasn't interested in managing his territory. He was still only interested in leading the over 20,000 elite Berserkers into ferocious battlefields. However, as there was a need for more soldiers to maintain public order in his territory, Baek Seoin had recruited people separately as well. They were Berserkers known as the second and third string. As their numbers weren't small, their numbers reached 200,000 after the war. As Choi Hyuk wasn't interested in increasing the size of his organization, this number was the maximum Baek Seoin could manage. When even this was insufficient, he would cooperate with minor clans to maintain public order.

Although they were known as second and third-string Berserkers, officially, their positions were ambiguous. There was a need to grant them a proper status during the reorganization this time around.

"We need to increase our military forces to at least 600,000."

"That many?"

"Definitely. If we want to capture a planet or destroy higher ranked Kahur Kabkuns, we need at least this many. However, it's only 600,000 when considering superhuman

warriors. In the past, 600,000 would only be enough to capture a few countries, how could we capture an entire planet with this number?”

“That’s true, but our troops only need to fight. With the trifling matters, such as the administrative processes and supplies, being handled by the alliance, do we even need 600,000? Where will we even recruit that many people? I say this clearly, we don’t need weak warriors.”

“Still, after enduring the tidal wave of monsters this time, all of humanity has advanced significantly, so recruiting that many won’t be too difficult. Also, the El Tribes, which recently became alliance members, are also targets of recruitment.”

“Still, 600,000 is too many. If that’s the case, then, even if we include all the second and third-string Berserkers, we still need to recruit double our current numbers... That’s not good. It could harm our culture.”

“Since there will be more frequent expeditions from now on, don’t we need forces to protect our colonized lands?”

“Then let’s reorganize them separately and not into the Berserkers. There’s also no need to reorganize the second and third-string members into the Berserkers either. The only important traits are that they are skilled and that they possess a mentality that doesn’t care if they die in a fight. Let’s only go with elites. To be honest, if you want to go around the universe, you need to at least be a lowest-ranked warrior. 200,000... No, let’s go with 100,000.”

“That’s too small...”

“No, I even yielded a lot with this number. 100,000. I can go lower if possible, but I won’t go higher. Let’s launch a massive recruiting campaign and try to assemble all the war-maniacs of Dragonic.”

“...Haa...”

Baek Seoin let out a sigh. In reality, he never thought Choi Hyuk would accept 600,000 from the beginning. It was simply a trick to start high before compromising. Originally, the number he expected they would compromise on was 200,000.

‘But... To cut that number in half.’

Baek Seoin counter-argued,

“The scale of missions will increase in the future... How will we cover an entire planet with only 100,000 people? Although it’s not a planet, tens of millions of people participated in the Cayenne Star capturing operation.”

“That’s why I’m saying we pick warriors who can do the work of 200 or 300 people. Also, why do we need to cover an entire planet? We just need to kill everything in sight. 100,000 is already too much when just smashing and killing things. I really yielded a lot. What I need are Berserkers who don’t die even in situations where it seems like they will. If we pick a lot and a lot die every time, what’s the point? The number of applicants will drop as well.”

“...”

Baek Seoin eventually raised a white flag.

“Ah, understood. Then, please pay a bit of attention towards the Berserker school so that we can consistently recruit new warriors.”

“That’s something I’ll leave to you. You can distribute the budget however you want.”

“No, not that. I’m asking you to go and give lectures. Do you know how many people with potential enroll because they admire you? If you’re going to lead troops and not fight by yourself, you also need to focus on training new recruits. Even if we gloss over the past by saying it was run as an experiment, now that we are going to run them more diligently, please show a little interest in them?”

Choi Hyuk flinched at Baek Seoin’s words. The top executives of the Berserkers had all given lectures after being pressured by Baek Seoin. Among them, Ryu Hyunsung pretty much lived in the school as teaching seemed to suit him. However, Choi Hyuk, who was busy with training himself, had never gone to the school.

Yet, like Baek Seoin had said, if he needed his own army, he couldn’t neglect his warrior training school. In the end, Choi Hyuk nodded.

“Okay.”



“Hyungnim, hyungnim. Let’s enroll in the Berserker school.”

“What now? I’m already exhausted.”

“Ah, those are words ignorant of the world. Don’t you know there’s now a right to establish troops?”

“Doesn’t that only matter to the guys who call themselves clan leaders? What does that have to do with us enrolling in the Berserker school?”

“No, no, hyungnim. The status we earthlings have held in the alliance until now was nothing more than a neighborhood watch in a town on the countryside. Since we’re a part of the regional troops of the Virgo Cluster, though we are considered as independent troops with the right to take independent military action, in the end, we’re simply regional troops. Ones that slave away in various regions following the orders of a district magistrate.”

“...So?”

“But, independent troops, which were created with the right to establish troops, are formal armies that are ranked by the alliance. Think about it. Regional troops are weak and are pretty much a service job, but what about formal armies? Won’t they have benefits? I mean, we even gave soldiers pensions on Earth. In places like the US, they even paid for their children’s education.”

“So... You want to earn more Mission Points? I’m fine. You do that on your own. Independent troops or whatever... and the Berserker school? Although I don’t know what they have to do with each other, either way, I heard their lessons are harsh. I heard that there were so many deaths during the training that more died than regular colonizers. Is money of any use when you’re dead?”

“Ah, hyungnim, don’t be like that and listen to me. Didn’t you contemplate whether to stick to the president or Choi Hyuk last time?”

“I did. And I followed your words and chose Choi Hyuk. That’s why I went through hell. I fought against monsters for the first time in my life.”

“Yes. Yes, you did. But did you suffer any losses? To be honest, if we didn’t progress

here, do you think we would have endured the tidal wave of monsters this time? You know that the number of casualties in Choi Hyuk's colonized lands is much lower than other colonized lands, right?"

"...Well, that's true. Since the front lines were like holes in a sponge... Didn't they say those who weren't skilled were too slow to escape in time? They were slaughtered when they encountered a 1-star monster. That... I did well to listen to you."

"Yes. This is the kind of world we're living in. Hyungnim. The world these days isn't a world where you can live by trying to spare yourself. What I'm saying is, even if it's a bit dangerous, becoming stronger is a way to increase your chance of survival. Rather than trying to avoid the dangers of this world all the time, isn't it better to jump into it and live in style? Trust me. We need to join the independent troops. It's not simply a problem of earning more Mission Points and living better. We will gain the backing of the alliance. Right now, we can't take a step out of Dragonic without the approval of the overseers, right? Even if we wanted to, the fee to use the portal is insanely expensive. And continuing to stay in outer space isn't logical. But when we're part of the formal army, do you think they won't let us enter a city in the alliance? As long as we join the independent troops, hyungnim, we'll be nobles. Nobles. What this means is we can enjoy even a small bit of the authority the overseers exclusively possess. And the future, hyungnim? A world where all the peasants living on Dragonic will go out and die. A time where they say 'Welcome warriors of the independent troops' will come. Hyungnim, don't you want to live in style?"

"Koff, koff. Ah, well. If I can live like that, it'll be great bu--"

"That's why we need to join the independent troops. If we want to do that, we need to go to the Berserker school. The Berserker school is like a royal road leading to the independent troops the Berserkers will create."

"What? You're going to join the Berserkers? Are you crazy?"

"Hey, hyungnim. We worked well together until now. We put our backs against each other and protected each other. If we were scared, we would flee together. Like this, we became stronger faster than anyone else and survived."

"That's true."

"It's the same when we go there. As long as we do whatever it takes to survive over there, our lives will become easier afterwards. After enduring hardship once, it'll get

easier. Or are you going to be a fool, trembling and begging to live?”

“What? Fool? You bastard.”

“No, no, I didn’t mean to say that to you. Haa.”

“Bastard, watch your mouth... Anyways, I get it. Since you’re going that far, let’s do it.”

“You made a good decision, hyungnim!”

“But not Berserkers, okay?”

“Haa, okay. I get it, hyungnim. I do.”

Strength in itself was a spell.

Even people like them, who were quite different from Choi Hyuk’s ideal Berserkers, applied to be Berserkers. Each possessing their own desires, warriors from all over Dragonic gathered.



{The ‘Berserkers’ have been registered as independent troops of the alliance. 1 high-ranked warrior (6-star), Choi Hyuk, 8 middle-ranked warriors (5-star), 3,174 low-ranked warriors (4-star), 85,317 lowest-ranked warriors (3-star) as well as 10,000 probationary warriors belong to this troop. Their fighting power is evaluated at C-rank.}

The total number of casualties from the tidal wave of monsters reached 500 million... It was the greatest number of casualties since the advancement evaluation. 500 million out of 2 billion. Before, it would have been such an absurd number that people would have burst into laughter, but it was the reality the earthlings were living in right now. Especially after the expedition left, the front lines were pushed back ceaselessly and gaps opened up in their front lines, allowing monsters to trample the rear. During times like those, non-combat-oriented colonizers were massacred. Due to this, the voice urging for the reformation of earthlings gained power.

Paradoxically, the earthlings' fighting power improved through this terrifying war. Compared to before the war, where there were 7,000 low-ranked warriors (4-star) and 700,000 lowest-ranked warriors (3-star) in the total population, currently, there were 10,000 and 1 million respectively. Although many warriors had died in the battle, the numbers had increased significantly. When looking at the ratios, the number of low and lowest-ranked warriors increased by the same rate. However, since the death rate for lowest-ranked warriors was actually overwhelmingly higher than low-ranked warriors, advancements were so common that it felt like the person sleeping next to you had advanced to the 3-star level overnight. It was simply that intense of a war.

During this time, not only Lee Jinhee and Ryu Hyunsung, but even Baek Seoin, Bae Jinman, Handke, the newly joined Kim Honghyun, Richard's aide Leah, and Zero had all advanced and became middle-ranked warriors.

Was it because they had experienced this war? Countless warriors applied to be Berserkers, who were notorious for being an organization of crazy war-maniacs. Not only that, but even the El Tribes, who now had to serve in the military after joining the alliance, lined up to apply. It was because Choi Hyuk's independent troops were appealing to them as well.

As a result, 3,000 low-ranked warriors (4-star) became affiliated with the Berserkers, and they were even able to reach 80,000 lowest-ranked warriors (3-star). In reality, they accepted all low-ranked warriors, but they rejected some lowest-ranked warriors after evaluating them. They strictly assessed one's fighting senses and their potential for future growth rather than their current stage. Even Choi Hyuk attended the evaluation after being pestered by Baek Seoin.

Also, in the same way, they accepted 2-star warriors whose talents were especially eye-catching as probationary warriors. This too was because of Baek Seoin's strong insistence that they needed to always be prepared for the future.

Among those who weren't picked and from the second and third-string Berserkers, they established a formal army consisting of 300,000 members assigned to maintaining public order and defending the colonized lands. They were called the 'supervising troops'. Although everyone opposed that name (Lee Jinhee even said loudly, "Hey! Why is the name of the unit maintaining public order the supervising troops?!"), Choi Hyuk went through with it. The supervising troops were not

independent troops and were left affiliated under the Virgo Cluster as regional troops.

That was how the first independent troop established in Dragonic, the 'Berserkers', received the C- rank.

The establishment of troops from each overseer and sovereign, as well as clan leaders who had a bit of power, followed soon after.

Complete control of Dragonic and establishing independent troops. With these, the earthlings once again entered a new era.

Due to the great changes that had occurred almost every year, the earthlings could now quickly familiarize themselves with these changes.

Rather than feeling fear or anxiety, the number of people who felt excited gradually grew.

CHAPTER 129

ESTABLISHING TROOPS (4)

When selecting new Berserkers, Choi Hyuk didn't exclude those who were hostile towards him.

However-

"What was your reason for applying?"

"I want to fight without hesitation like Overseer Choi Hyuk!"

He rejected everyone who held hostility towards him that said this while smiling.

Choi Hyuk believed that there was sufficient reason to be hated considering the things he had done.

"Although I hate people like you... I hate monsters more."

"To kill you one day."

It was people like them who he would accept after evaluating their skills and checking that they weren't 'people to kill' with his Eyes of the Judge.

The problem wasn't that they were hostile towards him.

He didn't need people who spoke differently from their actual thoughts.

The Berserkers were crazy warriors, and those whose inner thoughts differed from their external appearance weren't crazy.



When Lee Jinhee moved, beads of sweat and blood splattered upwards.

Pakang!

"Keuk!"

She was unable to endure the backlash as their swords clashed, and her hand had become tattered. Blood dripped down, but she didn't drop her sword once. Her eyes didn't lose their determination.

Although her appearance was quite horrible, Baek Seoin didn't bat an eye while looking at her.

He was, for a completely different reason, grumbling to someone else since wounds like those were normal for Berserkers.

“Leader! Please talk while doing it!”

Pakaang!

Puch!

“Keleuk...”

With blood spewing from her lips, Lee Jinhee was thrown backwards.

Unable to endure Baek Seoin's urging, Choi Hyuk, who had reflected Lee Jinhee's sword and kicked her stomach, opened his mouth.

“Director Lee Jinhee's sword swung in a straight line. That's why if you hit it, it'll reflect off with a 'ba-bang'”

Baek Seoin held his forehead when he heard his explanation.

‘Who will know what you're saying with that sort of explanation?!’

Just in case, he glanced behind him, but the students of the Berserker school simply stood there with wide eyes. They didn't look like they understood at all.

Looking at them, Choi Hyuk tilted his head.

No matter who saw him, it seemed like he was asking, ‘You don't understand?’

Turning around, Choi Hyuk faced Lee Jinhee, who was rushing towards him with gritted teeth, and kindly added a bit more detail.

“So... Like this. ‘Ba-bang!’”

Baang!

When Choi Hyuk’s practice sword tapped Lee Jinhee’s short sword, Lee Jinhee’s right hand, which was holding her sword, was pushed upwards.

“Grrr! Damn it!”

Lee Jinhee screamed in anger. She tried her best to endure, but her power wasn’t able to overcome the impact in the end and she rolled on the ground. She got back up as soon as she started rolling and shot towards him at the speed of light.

“I’ll see it! I’ll definitely see it this time!”

However, Choi Hyuk was calm. He once again kindly explained,

“Like this, ‘ba-bang!’”

Thud!

Due to Choi Hyuk’s downwards swing, Lee Jinhee’s hand slammed onto the ground while still holding her sword.

“Keeuhup!”

Swallowing her scream, she quickly dissipated the strength of the swing and escaped from Choi Hyuk’s attack range, but Choi Hyuk followed her this time.

“When attacking first, ‘ba-bang!’”

Ting!!

Roll, thump.

Lee Jinhee, who had hurriedly retreated, was unable to dissipate the strength behind Choi Hyuk’s sword and spun in midair before collapsing on the ground.

Choi Hyuk, thinking that he had explained enough, turned his back on Lee Jinhee and faced the students.

“They probably understand now, right?”

His expression soon became one of bewilderment. He tilted his head...

‘... Don’t tell me they still don’t understand?’

His confusion was wholly revealed through his expression without the need for words. The students of the Berserker school avoided his gaze. In the end, Choi Hyuk frowned.

“It’s not like you’re copying my actions. I’m just telling you to look at it and sense it but you can’t even do that...”

The words he had mumbled in disappointment dug into the hearts of the students.

Just then.

“I get it! I get it! I get it now! You damn leader!”

Lee Jinhee, who had been collapsed on the ground, stood up and charged at him like lightning.

However, Choi Hyuk didn’t even look at her properly and swung his sword in the same way as he did in his examples. Ba-bang!

Yet, the sound which resounded out was lackluster compared to before.

Tik!

“Huh?”

“I get it now!”

Shouting triumphantly, Lee Jinhee let Choi Hyuk’s sword pass her with the gladius in her right hand. In her left hand was another short sword. Imbuing the short sword with karma, she aimed at Choi Hyuk’s neck.

At the same time, Choi Hyuk’s disinterested eyes sharpened.

Clang!

Choi Hyuk reflected Lee Jinhee's short sword and simultaneously kicked her.

Thud!

Lee Jinhee didn't avoid his kick, instead, blocking his kick by lowering her elbow and continued to charge towards him.

The two clashed in close quarters.

As it was no longer suitable to swing his sword in such close quarters, Choi Hyuk punched Lee Jinhee's face.

Thud!

Accompanied by the sound which was quieter compared to the vigor behind the punch, Lee Jinhee's face tilted backwards. Lee Jinhee had purposely tilted her head back to reduce the impact. With her blue eyes observed Choi Hyuk, she rotated her body and slashed with her sword. The tip of her sword definitely made contact with Choi Hyuk's forehead.

"Yes!"

However, Lee Jinhee's joy was short-lived.

Choi Hyuk's sword completely pierced through her body.

Puscht!

"Ah..."

A dejected sigh escaped her lips. Choi Hyuk added more strength to his sword, which had pierced through Lee Jinhee's shoulder, and pushed her down to the ground. Lee Jinhee grabbed his sword with both hands and resisted, but she pushed back slowly and her butt touched the ground in the end.

Choi Hyuk asked,

"Surrender?"

Yet, Lee Jinhee didn't reply to his question.

"Grr..."

Biting her lips while looking up at him with her blue eyes, she didn't give up and resisted Choi Hyuk's sword.

"Die!"

Then it seemed like the blue light from activating Mind's Eye grew brighter as she flung her body like a spring and attempted to bite Choi Hyuk's sword-wielding hand. She didn't care whether the blade in her shoulder dug in further or not. It seemed she even utilized her karma as her teeth were dyed blue as well.

'I'll take your hand at least!'

Lee Jinhee only saw Choi Hyuk's hand. She revealed such a resolute competitiveness that she would wound her opponent even if she died.

Choi Hyuk's hand approached from a close distance.

Then he smashed Lee Jinhee's face.

Punch!

Choi Hyuk threw a punch at Lee Jinhee without the slightest hesitation.

Her teeth, which had been imbued with karma, flew out, and she collapsed rigidly, unconscious.

The students of the Berserker school watched this with horrified expressions. Although their training was tough, it wasn't this insane. On top of that, wasn't the Berserker who was collapsed on the ground with swollen eyes Lee Jinhee, one of the top three experts in the Berserkers?

After mercilessly crushing such a great warrior, Choi Hyuk calmly stretched his arms.

"Ah... It was fun."

He even unintentionally mumbled this.

A drop of red blood dripped down from his forehead. That one drop of blood made him very happy.

“Jinhee nuna, I was surprised this time.”

Although it was only a drop of blood right now, if Lee Jinhee had wielded a karma-weapon, it would have been quite a dangerous situation.

The fact that she accomplished such a feat against Choi Hyuk, who was a high-ranked warrior, was incredible. Even considering how he had matched his karma to her level, there was undoubtedly a wall, which middle-ranked warriors couldn't overcome, between high-ranked warriors and middle-ranked warriors.

Expressing his admiration, Choi Hyuk flung Lee Jinhee on his shoulder. Looking at this, Baek Seoin said in surprise,

“Wait! You have to finish your lecture!”

Choi Hyuk shrugged his shoulder holding Lee Jinhee and said,

“This is what Berserkers are.”

Choi Hyuk's lecture had somehow ended well thanks to Lee Jinhee.



As he was walking out after leaving Lee Jinhee in Bae Jinman's care, a small hand tapped his shoulder. A woman he couldn't sense.

“It's been a while.”

Choi Hyuk said as he turned his head slightly. As expected, Flame-Rain was there.

“Hey~ This place looks nice!”

She pretended to look around at her surroundings. Her gaze landed on the territory pyramid erected in the center of the Berserker school then glanced at the various shops and the students discussing and training there.

“It’s because Baek Seoin kept telling me we needed a school. It’s my first time here as well.”

Flame-Rain giggled at Choi Hyuk’s words.

“Good. For this to be your first time. It’s my first time as well.”

Choi Hyuk simply grinned. Choi Hyuk no longer asked Flame-Rain why she came or who she was.

However, this time, it was Flame-Rain who spoke first.

“I came to say my farewell.”

“Farewell?”

“Yeah. I’m going far away... I don’t know if I’ll be able to return.”

She looked up at Dragonic’s rippling white sky.

“As I thought... Your homeland’s sky was prettier.”

Choi Hyuk stepped towards her, who was immersed in her emotions, and asked,

“Where are you going?”

“The world where monsters live. I have been dispatched to the reconnaissance troops. I leave tomorrow.”

While saying this, her voice didn’t contain any fear or regret.

“...The reconnaissance troops the princess of the Flame Wing Tribe is commanding?”

“Have the rumors spread even here? Well, since you’re a high-ranked warrior, you’re considered an elite of the alliance.”

She looked proud.

That moment, Choi Hyuk impulsively asked,

“It’s you, right?”

She replied as though it was a trivial matter,

“Yeah.”

Her thoughts seemed to be ‘it might be our last meeting, so why hide anything?’

Choi Hyuk’s insides twisted.

“Is it okay for the princess of the Flame Wing Tribe to be dispatched to a mission like that? Don’t the top 4 avoid stuff like that?”

“Like you already know, there are some people who hate me.”

Flame-Rain really didn’t seem to care and Choi Hyuk bit his lips.

Although anger suddenly surged within him, he was strangely relieved.

‘Is it okay to not consider her my enemy...?’

To be honest, the Flame Wing Tribe was an existence which stood at the top of his list of enemies.

However, Choi Hyuk had already unconsciously considered Flame-Rain to be different. He had simply been unaware of this change.

“Maybe, if they were to send someone other than me... A warrior who wasn’t one of the top 4, I probably would have been angrier.”

Flame-Rain revealed her white teeth and happily burned her hair as she gave a meaningful smile.

“When we have received so much... We need to repay what we can.”

Choi Hyuk could see a faint golden light (sacrificial will) emitting from her through his

eyes. The golden light that he wouldn't see many times during his lifetime he had seen multiple times from her.

"...You..."

He stopped what he was about to say and shut his mouth. As there was a saying 'What you say will come true' so he couldn't bring himself to ask, 'Are you planning to die?'

With his Eyes of Distinction, he could tell that Flame-Rain was willing to die for the mission. The golden light which indicated a sacrificial will was proof of this. Normally, he would have simply glossed over the golden light even if he saw it, but since he saw the golden light as she prepared for such a dangerous mission, he felt torn by anxiety.

'I really have no idea what she's thinking.'

Flame-Rain was always like this. She would suddenly show her sacrificial will to Choi Hyuk. Since she did it back when they weren't really close, Choi Hyuk could tell that this sacrificial will wasn't only for him. She wanted to embrace all the small and weak tribes. Choi Hyuk was one amongst them.

Looking back, the first time he met her was in the first mission he went on as a Consumable. A great warrior of the transcendence level wandered onto the battlefield of lowest-ranked warriors and became friends with many people, regardless of their status. Although the majority of them were unaware of Flame-Rain's status.

"Anyways, now that we've become friends that know everything about each other, I'll give you some inside information... You're going to be getting busier."

Suddenly changing the topic, Flame-Rain's eyes began to fill with sadness.

She had been calm when she said that this might be their final farewell.

"Why?"

"Old Mr. Dragon seems to have taken a liking to you this time... They are assigning you a key duty of the alliance... Recruit training."

"Recruit training?"

“Yeah. When you guys awakened, the thing you experienced on Earth. It was probably... <Ring of Rebirth>, right?”

Choi Hyuk, who had been hung up on thinking about Flame-Rain’s sacrificial will, suddenly felt as though he was suffocating. The name that felt like a sudden attack, <Ring of Rebirth>.

His voice became heavy.

“...We’re going to do that?”

“Yeah. The method and rules, you guys will be deciding everything.”

“...”

He had never trembled in front of any enemy, yet his hands were trembling right now.

“If I were to request something as a friend... Don’t be so harsh on them.”

Flame-Rain lightly held Choi Hyuk’s hand. However, Choi Hyuk was too preoccupied to notice. His mind was churning rapidly.

“They want us to do it? Are they telling to become a definite part of the alliance? Then do we have to do it? We have to make people kill each other like we were forced to? Do we really have to do it? No, there might be a different method. Since it all depends on what we decide. However... Will we be able to foster warriors who can survive in fights against the monsters by going easy on them?”

Flame-Rain said as if singing,

“Although rage makes a strong warrior... Doing it this way won’t make them my ally.”

“...”

Although Flame-Rain’s voice was pleasant to listen to, Choi Hyuk didn’t pay attention to it. Flame-Rain’s words went in one ear and out the other as he was lost in his own thoughts.

Looking at Choi Hyuk’s blank expression, Flame-Rain eventually realized he wasn’t listening to her and became annoyed.

“Hey!”

Punch!

“Kak!”

Although Flame-Rain only swung her small fist, Choi Hyuk vomited blood while standing. Her punch possessed a terrifyingly superhuman strength.

However, as a warrior among warriors, Flame-Rain didn't care about this amount of blood.

“When someone is speaking... I, hmm? Came all the way here, hmm? To see you, hmm? When I'm so busy, hmm? When I have so many friends, hmm? I only came to say farewell to you, hmm?”

Flame-Rain hectored him as though she was trying to fix his manners.

Although the place he was hit hurt, Choi Hyuk smiled when he saw her like that.

“Okay, okay.”

Flame-Rain, who had been hopping up and down, eventually let out a sigh when she saw Choi Hyuk's plain reaction.

“Haaa...”

After sighing, she changed the mood again. Her eyes turned serious as she said,

“To be honest, I hoped that the earthlings wouldn't be assigned to this duty... However, it'll be a chance for you. The fact that you are in charge of training recruits means that you have already been acknowledged. In fact, if the results are good, you'll even accumulate great merits.”

'Acknowledgement'. 'Merits'. Choi Hyuk hadn't hoped for any of them.

“Whether you pick an easy path... Or a hard one... I hope that you consider it carefully, friend.”

Tap.

Flame-Rain’s fist lightly touched Choi Hyuk’s chest.

“I’m going.”

Taking a step away, she waved her hand. Choi Hyuk hurriedly called out to her.

“Flame-Rain!”

“Huh?”

“...Let’s see each other again.”

Flame-Rain grinned. Placing one hand in her pocket, her entire body surged with flames. Flame-Rain disappeared, and cleanly burning flames remained in her place. The flames seemed to be waving, and they disappeared while waving.

Blaze.

For some reason, Choi Hyuk couldn’t easily leave the place Flame-Rain had disappeared.

CHAPTER 130

KUNDLE TRIBE (1)

With Choi Hyuk being the first to establish troops, troops began to be competitively established by others. There was nothing more to say about the five overseers, excluding Choi Hyuk and Nasir, but even the nine great sovereigns and four regular ones acted quickly. Even if they weren't sovereigns, leaders of large clans competed to attract experts and establish their own troops.

They needed to establish troops to be able to leave Dragonic.

If they could leave Dragonic, they would be able to reach a land of opportunities.

"Have you been to the city in the center of the Virgo Cluster, 'Virgo'? That place is no joke."

"Are you teasing me...? You know that my clan hasn't established our troops yet..."

"Ah, ha! That's right. Haha, sorry. But that place really is no joke."

"Why? Is it different from the lowest-ranked supply store?"

"Supply store? You crazy. What do you think is better, commercial goods or military supplies?"

"...How is it, really?"

"First, the quality of equipment is incomparable. Also, we get a discount as D rank independent troops. But, do you think that's all? I enrolled in the Virgo Cluster Warrior School. It was also free as one of the benefits! I trained there for a day, and it was on another level compared to the techniques we find in the supply store. Also, above all, just staying there feels different. It's more refined and lively, and warriors discuss amongst each other... I could easily tell how much of a backwater place Dragonic is! Hahaha!"

"Damn it... If there's a good place like that, shouldn't they share it with everyone? When we are all members of the alliance anyways?"

“What can they do when resources are limited? Isn’t it natural for the alliance to invest in more skillful and devote warriors?”

“...Good for you. God damn it.”

Although there were instances when silence would follow due to their excessive bragging, this silence wouldn’t last long. They couldn’t help but ask,

“So... Have you been to Dark City?”

“Even if I get a discount as a member of D rank troops, the cost to travel there is too expensive... Still, if I diligently collect Mission Points, it’s a place that is worth taking a plunge for. Like the cost of traveling from Seoul to New York on business class?”

“You crazy, to compare... Either way, I’m envious. Ah, when will my clan be able to establish independent troops? Should I just join your clan?”

“Yeah, if you’re going to join, join quickly. The later you join, the larger the difference will be.”

The conversations between warriors around this time were all like this.

New cultures were like this. Even if it hurt their pride, they were envious.

As the situation was like this, clan leaders hurried to establish their own troops. However, they couldn’t do it as easily as Choi Hyuk did.

Due to wanting to recruit a few more warriors to increase their beginning rank slightly, they set aside ample time to prepare before they established troops. Also, as they didn’t utilize tactics that disregarded their lives like the Berserkers, they had to train their newly joined clan members.

During this time, where everyone was in a hurry but delaying establishing troops, the one who rose to overwhelming prominence was Camilla. She established her troops right after Choi Hyuk. It was a shocking speed.

The Berserkers were able to quickly establish their troops because of the Berserkers’ simplistic spirit and Choi Hyuk’s popularity.

On the other hand, Camilla was able to quickly establish her troops because she didn't expect any more people to join her clan. This was because the Camilla Clan only accepted those with the hero's fate, 'Savior', which increased their karma when they helped others and gained their trust. Also, because all the heroes in the world had already joined her clan, there was no need to consider whether they should accept more people or not. They only decided to accept members of the El Tribes who were compatible with them.

{The 'Valkyries' have been registered as independent troops of the alliance. 2 middle-ranked warriors (5-star), 1,492 low-ranked warriors (4-star), 135,317 lowest-ranked warriors (3-star) as well as 300,000 probationary warriors belong to this troop. Their fighting power is evaluated at D rank.}

Camilla's troops 'Valkyries' received a normal D rank. A matter of significance was that 400 of the low-ranked warriors (4-star) were members of the El Tribes. They were El Tribe members who owed a life debt to her clan members or were charmed by their characters.

She was the clan leader who had accepted the most El Tribe members after Choi Hyuk, who accepted a thousand members.

The alliance gave priority to quality over quantity.

To be a B rank, one needed at least 1,000 members and at least 500 of them had to be middle-ranked warriors (5-star).

To be a C rank, one needed at least 10,000 members, a commander who was at least a high-ranked warrior, and at least 5,000 members had to be low-ranked warriors (4-star).

To be a D rank, one needed at least 100,000 members, a commander who was at least a middle-ranked warrior, and at least 50,000 had to be lowest-ranked warriors (3-star).

Below them were E and F ranks, which weren't allowed to be independent troops. Those were troops which were operated like 'boy/girl scouts' of the young warriors of the top 4 tribes.

That was why, with barely 15,000 low-ranked warriors (4-star) among the El Tribes and earthlings in total, it was difficult for independent troops to be established on Dragonic with a rank exceeding C. Choi Hyuk was the only high-ranked warrior, and the top elite troops on Dragonic, the Berserkers, only had around 3,000 low-ranked warriors.

"But how did the Berserkers receive a C rank? Even if it's a C-... They didn't fulfill the minimum requirements."

Camilla's devoted follower, Penelope, asked with widened eyes. She sounded as though she had just thought of it.

Camilla calmly replied,

"That's because Choi Hyuk isn't just a normal high-ranked warrior but a high-ranked warrior with a Sword of Vow."

"Is a Sword of Vow really that amazing? Enough to compare with 2,000 4-star warriors?"

"Since he slashed a highest-ranked monster with that sword when he was a middle-ranked warrior... It's an unbelievable treasure."

"Wow... Unni, aren't you going to make one of those?"

"I will. That's why I came this far."

As she replied, Camilla looked in front of her.

They were in the dark and vast outer space. The three Kahur Kabkuns, which had created a triangular formation in outer space, were completely destroyed. Around them were monster corpses, which had poured out from when the Kahur Kabkuns were destroyed, floating in space. Her troops, the 'Valkyries', were treating their wounds as they rested. They were all observing the brightly shining light in front of them.

Three suns were rotating around each other as if they were affected by each other's gravity, and a large planet was revolving around the three suns. As there were three suns and the distance between the suns and the planet were short, all the liquid on the planet seemed to have evaporated as gray steam covered the planet.

“And here I had thought it was weird for three of the new type of Kahur Kabkuns, which were rare to find these days, to be gathered in the same place...”

Camilla sent a wary look towards the planet covered in gray steam.

“To think that karmalings were living on a planet like that...”

A lone planet was emitting powerful karma within this dead space. Karma was the energy of fate created when intelligent lifeforms, who wanted to change their fates, despaired against the world and, at times, came out victorious. For karma to be so concentrated here was a decisive proof that karmalings lived here.

It was at this time when the reconnaissance team sent to the planet returned.

“There's no doubt. We confirmed that there are aliens that are capable of communication. Although they are weak, ranging from no-star to 1-star levels, they are a species that knows how to use karma.”

As she heard their report, Camilla nodded her head.

“Nonetheless, if they know how to use karma, their starting point is better than ours.”

Then her gaze saddened.

“Three Kahur Kabkuns and the discovery of karmalings... Although we'll probably receive a generous amount of Mission Points... It will now be the start of a nightmare for them.”

Earth should have undergone the same process. Someone from the alliance discovered Earth, which had then begun the long, hellish journey for the earthlings.

“Let's return.”

After saying this, she turned her back. However, due to an inevitable sense of sympathy, she gazed once more at the steam covered planet. It was a planet which

would be later called the Kundle Planet.



Choi Hyuk was in the free city, the 'Holy Land'.

The El Tribes' sanctum, where the dragons were born, was granted the name 'Holy Land', and it became a type of public land. Although the El Tribes were the ones who were actually managing the city, to show respect towards the earthlings, who protected Dragonic and their sanctum, they opened the city to everyone. All earthlings could freely enter the Holy Land and were allowed to use and research the dragons' inheritance.

Only one location was restricted from public access.

It was the 'sanctum' where the baby dragons lived. The El Tribes, who had the duty of protecting and teaching the dragons, patrolled this area with glaring eyes.

Choi Hyuk was precisely in this 'sanctum'.

{Kiyaah!}

{Kiroorook!}

The dragons, which were only slightly larger than dogs, stretched their heads out of their nest and acted cute towards him. It was to the point where Choi Hyuk felt embarrassed.

"Haha... They don't even act this happy to us..."

The Great Warrior Lantz, who was selected as one of the guardian warriors of the nest, burst into a hearty laugh when he saw this scene.

Choi Hyuk parted from the baby dragons who were biting his sleeves and licking his face and asked,

"Why are they acting like this?"

"I think it's because they sense the energy of dragons and Overseer Richard from you."

“Let’s say the dragon one makes sense, but why Richard?”

“Since everyone was able to live because Richard gave his life. Even if they are young, dragons are dragons. They know who protected them.”

When he heard this, Choi Hyuk felt a greater burden. The affection of the dragons wasn’t directed at him. When he thought about how it was the affection Mack and Richard were supposed to receive, it felt more burdensome.

He wasn’t used to this sort of affection from the start, and for some reason, he recalled his childhood where he followed his mother around everywhere, which made him emotional. It didn’t feel good.

As he separated from the dragons surrounding him, Choi Hyuk moved away and sat at a desk.

“Anyways, you became stronger, Lantz.”

Like Choi Hyuk said, Lantz had rapidly become stronger. When Choi Hyuk first met him, he was a low-ranked warrior (4-star). Yet, currently, Lantz had reached the peak of the middle-ranked warriors. No matter how diligently he trained or how rapidly he progressed through experiencing the tidal wave of monsters this time, it was still an incredible progress.

That wasn’t all either. The majority of the El Tribes became stronger at such a rapid rate that they increased by at least one level.

“Ah, we received the blessings of the dragons.”

The El Tribes perceived this phenomenon as a blessing they received after making a pact with the dragons. It was as though the El Tribes’ true potential awakened after they fulfilled their promise. If they were to explain this with the knowledge of the alliance, they could describe it as ‘inheriting the fates of the past species that had lived and gone extinct on Dragonic after gaining full control over it’.

It was good anyways since Choi Hyuk was able to fill up the lacking number of low-ranked warriors (4-star) with them.

“Anyways, leader. It seems they really like you.”

Baek Seoin, who was swaying on a chair, pointed behind Choi Hyuk.

Flap, flap.

The baby dragons flapped their underdeveloped wings as they flew and ran towards Choi Hyuk. They sat on Choi Hyuk’s knees, rested against his feet, and even took spots on his head and shoulders. It was a mess. Choi Hyuk couldn’t bring himself to treat the baby dragons badly since he recalled what he received from Mack and simply sat there rigidly.

“Puhahaha. You really are the dragons’ lover!”

Lantz laughed loudly as he saw this.

Choi Hyuk gave up and let out a sigh.

To be honest, this wasn’t a bad situation. Although the baby dragons annoyed him, the mood was more gentle thanks to them.

This situation was better for getting their agreement.

“Anyways, please take care of us. You guys won’t be losing anything through this proposal either.”

Lantz nodded at his words.

“Yeah. Although we guardian warriors are tied to the sanctum, which will slow our progress, your proposal asking us to join the Berserkers as honorary members when we have the time isn’t bad for us either.”

“Exclusively with the Berserkers.”

“I know, I know. Also, if they saw your current appearance, everyone would agree.”

Choi Hyuk was surrounded by baby dragons. Looking at his appearance, Lantz’s gaze couldn’t be gentler.

On their way out, after successfully concluding the meeting with Lantz, Baek Seoin's expression was serious.

"Anyways, leader, you said our next mission will be training recruits, right? We have to do the opposite of what we experie-"

"It's what Flame-Rain said. Since the rewards will be generous... We have to do it. I don't know about anything else but we are in urgent need of Mission Points. All those who have newly become middle-ranked warriors need to possess a karma-weapon. And, if possible, Weapons of Sentiment."

"That's right... It's not like it's just a couple Mission Points or anything. We can't miss such a big mission. However, leader, if we are assigned to train new recruits, aren't we allowed to make our own curriculum?"

"Probably?"

"...Then isn't there no need to use the method we suffered under?"

Choi Hyuk stood in place when he heard Baek Seoin's words. To be honest, it was a thought that never left his mind after he heard it from Flame-Rain. 'Do we need to train them in the same manner we suffered under? So cruelly? Then how are we different from the alliance?' There was no way such questions of morals left his mind either. However, Choi Hyuk shook his head every time. It was the same now.

"If that's the best method, then that's what we'll do."

What did he care about what was morally appropriate? Choi Hyuk prioritized revenge.

"No. Leader, please think about it carefully. Even if it's difficult, we have to act in a way that doesn't garner their resentment."

Yet, Baek Seoin didn't retreat.

Choi Hyuk looked back at Baek Seoin with eyes devoid of emotion.

"How so?"

Baek Seoin didn't lose heart and replied,

"Only then will you get your revenge. Leader, to get revenge on the alliance means that you are going to make the entire universe your enemy. No matter how deep our resentment towards the alliance is, the alliance is also the last stronghold that can protect our lives. If we become hostile against the alliance, those who are hostile towards us will crop up successively, not because they like the alliance but for their survival."

Baek Seoin's comment struck the point Choi Hyuk had overlooked. Until now, he had thought of revenge in a simple way, to kill everyone at the top of the alliance. However, unless he killed all of them at once, there would be a snag in Choi Hyuk's revenge like Baek Seoin said.

"...So?"

"That's why we need to show them that we can do better than the alliance."

Baek Seoin's argument included 'proposing an alternative' rather than a simple revenge. Instead of blindly trying to get revenge on the alliance, it was a revenge that included creating a new order afterwards. His plan was already too grand to consider it as getting revenge.

That was why Choi Hyuk felt frustrated. An 'alternative to the alliance'? It felt like they were taking an excessively long roundabout path.

"...I'll think about it."

Choi Hyuk couldn't help but push back his decision.

"We don't know what kind of people will receive the recruit training yet anyways."

With great timing, this conversation took place the same day they received a new mission.

{The independent troops 'Valkyries' have discovered a new karma species. The assessment and training of them will be assigned to the 'Berserkers', 'Sur', and 'Jangkok'.}

The Sur and Jangkok troops were troops from outer space and not from Dragonic.

To the Berserkers, who had established their troops, a completely different mission from the ones they had undergone until now had begun.

CHAPTER 131

KUNDLE TRIBE (2)

It was the alliance's custom to have three troops cooperate in training recruits.

This was because there was no one right way to train. What might be the best learning experience for one might end up being useless to another. It depended on the student. When it was like this amongst earthlings, how much more would it vary between species?

As the alliance didn't know the personality of the newly discovered species, the alliance gave the duty of training them to three separate troops to diversify the teaching methods. In the beginning, these troops would compete against each by using their own methods, but in the end, things were set up so that the other troops would have to follow the one with the best results.

The alliance accurately calculated each troop's performance at each stage, and the troops with the best results received the right to use the most resources. Also, the alliance made it disadvantageous for those who were excessively competitive, negatively affecting the results by reducing their rewards or, if severe, taking disciplinary action against them.

Because of this, in the beginning of the training, they competed to take leadership, but around halfway through, it became more structured, with one as the leader and the other two as assistants.



It was cold in outer space.

At the 5-star level, the empty space around him should have felt as comfortable as his living room, but strangely, Baek Seoin's body kept trembling.

He could see the three suns and the single, large planet in outer space.

He suddenly recalled his past. Looking up at the vast sky, in a small room, he and his friends would discuss if they thought there were aliens 'over there'. The Fermi paradox

and the SETI project... They would bring up things they had heard about and talk for a while before always ending with, 'Ah, if there are aliens, I want to see them while I'm alive!'

How reckless those words were... Baek Seoin shook his head.

"Baek hyung, what are you thinking about?"

Baek Seoin was vacantly looking out into space when Choi Hyuk tapped his shoulder.

Baek Seoin didn't show much of a reaction and simply said,

"Just... As a lowly human from the Pale Blue Dot, I can't believe the circumstances we've experienced."

"What are you saying? Anyways, pay attention. Aren't you the one who said we needed to focus on this matter?"

At his urging, Baek Seoin dragged his sights, which had been looking far off into the distance, to the front and began to focus.

As expected, it was an unreal sight.

Within the expansive, lonely universe, there was an untimely banquet.

Three space vessels were anchored in a triangular formation, and in the middle of this formation, all sorts of rare foods were floating in mid-air. Aliens and Berserkers mingled with each other as they ate and drank their fill.

To Baek Seoin, this scene felt awkward. Although he had gone to Dark City and Virgo, this place, similar to how Dragonic used to feel, felt like a completely different world. However, although this place felt unfamiliar due to its three suns and planet, it also felt somewhat familiar as well. This was why he was more bewildered. In the middle of outer space, which he had only seen in movies, there was a party? On top of that, one of the three anchored space vessels was the Berserkers' – Naro's spaceship.

'We've reached a level where we can party here.'

Change would sometimes suddenly surprise people.

“Now, now, what are you doing by not eating? It seems you are still inexperienced, but there aren’t many days when the alliance allows us to hold a get-together. There are tons of food that you won’t be able to eat if you don’t now. Hurry up and eat. Hey! Artificial intelligence over there! Sing something to heat up the mood! Let’s see what kind of music earthlings listen to!”

The one who was shouting loudly was the leader of the Jangkok Troops, Hashishi. He only reached one’s waist and had fur covering his entire body, giving him the impression of a cute fox. However, his voice was husky and his nails were as long as blades, giving him a dangerous look. With his long nails, he stabbed the pieces of unfamiliar meats floating in the air and shoved them into his mouth. He could open his mouth so astoundingly wide that Baek Seoin thought he could swallow him whole.

“Can’t you hear me? Artificial Intelligence! I told you to sing!”

Hashishi urged Naro again. His attitude was undoubtedly that of a superior ordering his subordinate.

Naro’s face bulged to twice its size as it glared at Hashishi. Looking at it, Hashishi’s expression became strange.

“What? Are you mad right now? Kelungkeleung!”

Hashishi laughed.

“How cute! What emotions does a simple artificial intelligence, who isn’t an Armored Soul Tribe member, have for it to act angry? Ah, Leader Choi Hyuk’s hobbies are quite unique. To express emotions... The settings for the artificial intelligence on your spaceship is fun. Keleung! Keleung! Now, really.”

Hashishi ridiculed Naro while covertly rubbing Choi Hyuk the wrong way.

“Naro is my comrade.”

Choi Hyuk said this as he stared at Hashishi. It was a warning to not be excessive. However, Hashishi’s attitude didn’t change. Instead, as if he took offense from Choi Hyuk’s informal speech, he immediately responded informally,

“What? Then are you saying you didn’t program its emotional settings? Then that’s really its emotions? Wahahah! The hell... Then what? Why don’t you just say it awakened as an Armored Soul Tribe member like the Steel Battleship? But considering that, isn’t your spaceship too shabby? Haaa... It looks like a relic from ancient times.”

Hashishi fouled Choi Hyuk’s mood more straightforwardly this time. Since Naro’s spaceship was the last inheritance of the narolings who went extinct a long time ago, it wasn’t exactly wrong to say it was a relic from ancient times, however, that didn’t change the fact that his attitude was incredibly disrespectful.

Naro, who heard Hashishi’s mockery, quickly extinguished its large head. Like a still drawing, Naro really did look angry as it glared at Hashishi.

Looking at this, Choi Hyuk fiddled with his Sword of Vow.

‘Should I pick a fight? Will he take the bait when I provoke him?’

If Hashishi was his superior, it might have been different, but Choi Hyuk and Hashishi were meeting in this place as equals. When he was acting like that, there was no reason for Choi Hyuk to simply take it.

Just then, as if he noticed Choi Hyuk’s change in mood, Manta, the leader of the Sur, joined in. He stuck his large hand in between Choi Hyuk and Hashishi. His hand was so large that the small Hashishi was completely covered by his hand.

“This is an important mission. They set this event up so that we can get acquainted. If we cause a commotion, what will they think of us?”

He was right. Choi Hyuk took his hand off his sword for now, but he didn’t take his eyes off Hashishi, who was covered by Manta’s hand. He couldn’t hide from Choi Hyuk’s senses just because he was covered by a hand.

“Ah, ah, okay. Okay. Was I rude again? I always get confused since this is normal on my planet. I’ll apologize. Leader Choi Hyuk, I didn’t have any other meaning, it’s just a difference in cultures. Earthlings are more sensitive than I thought! Keleung! Keleung!”

Hashishi apologized with his mouth, but the tone of his voice was still one of arrogance.

“Is that so? Now, what a trashy species.”

Baek Seoin, who was behind Choi Hyuk, said in an irritated voice as he joined in on the conversation.

Hashishi’s nails, which had been extended out, retracted before extending out again with a swoosh.

“Ha?”

Choi Hyuk smiled. It was just then that he saw Hashishi’s eyes emitting a faint red light (killing intent).

However, Hashishi casually laughed,

“Keleung! Keleung! What a funny guy! Leader Choi Hyuk! It seems that the earthlings’ humor does match ours!”

As if he was simply playing with his fingers, he kept extending and retracting his nails as he laughed. It was as though Baek Seoin’s words hadn’t put him in a bad mood.

Bowing slightly, Baek Seoin greeted them before stealthily glancing at Choi Hyuk. Choi Hyuk nodded his head subtly. He was indicating that Hashishi’s attitude was simply a disguise.

Seeing this, Baek Seoin also acted friendly as well. While smiling brightly, he replied to Hashishi,

“It’s great that you looked on me favorably. Thank you. Hahaha.”

Just as the Jangkok and the Berserkers had finished testing each other, the enormous Manta changed the topic. He was as big as three earthlings. His hands and shoulders were especially large, emitting a large pressure even when simply seated. He had angular goggles on his eyes, and he gave the impression of a public official.

“Anyways, let’s continue what we were discussing before. We have to ‘commence’ soon so let’s discuss our methods since we’re all here.”

‘Commence’.

Baek Seoin rolled this word in his mouth. The reason why he was unreasonably emotional before was precisely because of this word. 'Commence' literally meant 'the start of training'. The early process which let them know everything would change from now on.

The 'commencement' the earthlings experienced was different for each individual. In Baek Seoin's case, it started with him witnessing the Wyvern of Destruction, and in Choi Hyuk's case, it began with the 'Ring of Rebirth'.

Although they were only aware of it now, the reason why the methods were different was because there were multiple troops with control of the training. Like now.

"Ah, commencing by having them kill each other is the best! Glancing through the data, it seems like they are a species that have experienced very few wars. If you want to jolt them back to their senses after having lost their determination, you can't use monsters. There's nothing better than having them kill each other to jolt them back to their senses. Isn't that right?"

While saying this, Hashishi threw a piece of meat at Choi Hyuk. Choi Hyuk hit it away with his hand as he said,

"That depends on what kind of species they are. Aren't we lacking in information?"

Unlike Manta and Hashishi, who had experienced training recruits multiple times, Choi Hyuk, who had no experience, expressed caution.

Hashishi laughed and Manta slowly shook his head.

"It's not too late to observe what kind of species they are after we commence. They will show their true nature in extreme situations."

"..."

As his words weren't wrong, Choi Hyuk stayed silent.

When he did, Manta spoke to Hashishi. It seemed his method of commencing was different from Hashishi's.

"I said it before, but having them kill each other wastes too many resources. When dealing with such a weak species, it's better to start with mining. Then, by looking at

their reactions, we can just use them as resources if they aren't worth using as soldiers. There will be no waste then."

The mining Manta was referring to was the process of forcefully extracting the planet's karma. It was the same method Earth suffered under. Earth became a barren planet that could no longer support any life after having all its karma extracted and losing its fate thanks to the alliance. There wasn't much time left before it too would cease to exist. Also, the earthlings who died during the advancement evaluation, they too also underwent a type of mining process.

When looking at Manta and Hashishi discussing nonchalantly, Baek Seoin felt shivers run down his spine as he thought, 'So this was how Earth suffered...'

"Ah, Manta. What are you saying? You're saying this when the successful case of a species killing each other is right in front of you?"

At Hashishi's words, Choi Hyuk's eyelashes flickered.

"...Success?"

Choi Hyuk's voice was grim. However, Hashishi continued as though he didn't notice it,

"Yeah. Success! The legendary case of someone becoming a high-ranked warrior within 5 years after the training is right in front of you. Kyah, although I don't know who was in charge of the training then, they are probably earning a ton of royalties? Right?"

Yeah, there was even something called royalties.

If the trainees showed outstanding results, those in charge of their training received a portion of their merits. Although it was a frustrating situation in Choi Hyuk's position, Hashishi continued to casually rub Choi Hyuk the wrong way.

"The majority of rewards are paid out once they become alliance members... But since a high-ranked warrior appeared, those in charge of the training must have received a hefty reward."

If there was one thing Choi Hyuk regretted, it was that who trained who was kept strictly secret so no one could know who it was. As this was a law created by the

Exalted Wings using the 'Net of Fate', it was a type of secret that couldn't be divulged no matter how much they wanted to.

"Probably. However, if we risk everything on such a rare case, we'll lose it all. It's best to be safe. I honestly think that mining the species living on this planet is the safest way to earn benefits."

Manta, who seemed rational, wasn't much different. To them, the karma species living on this planet were nothing more than 'resources'. This was how they treated non-alliance members.

Choi Hyuk couldn't hide his disgust. At this moment, he hated those in front of him more than the Exalted Wings.

Which was why he said emotional words that he wouldn't say normally.

"Aren't they people who might become alliance members like us? You're being too harsh."

"Alliance members like us? How romantic. While doing this, I've never seen that happen before. The majority are useless species."

Manta coldly drew a line when he heard Choi Hyuk's words.

Hashishi laughed.

"Yeah! So let's go with them killing each other. Leader Choi Hyuk should know since you've experienced it, right? How great of a method it is."

"..."

'I'll do it if it's effective.' Choi Hyuk certainly was of this mindset, but when looking at the guy acting up in front of him, he didn't want to admit it.

In the end, Manta made a conclusion.

"Then it's set. Since we can't come to an agreement, we'll all each choose our own method. Which one is the most effective will be judged by the alliance."

"That's good for us. First place in contributions will be us, the Jangkok Troops. Kek!"

Kek!”

After ending the discussion, they resumed eating.

Pieces of strange meat floated in the air.

When looked into, it was discovered that the meat was from other karma species.

Whether it was the meat of the dragon hunters, who had gradually ventured deeper into the deep seas throughout their lives like seekers of truth, or the meat of a species that weren't suited to be warriors but had accumulated karma by enduring endless hardships, eating these meats would not only better one's flow of karma but, if lucky, could even develop their karma, which was why the alliance deemed these meats to be valuable.

This was another side of the alliance, which said they pursued the prosperity and survival of all karma species.

Facing this cruel truth, Choi Hyuk regained a bit of his senses.

Once he did, he laughed.

'Keuk, keuk. Whether they are the alliance, earthlings, or monsters, they are all the same. All monsters. They are all dying to devour each other.'

You would be eaten if you were weak.

This was law, wherever you were.

If this was law, then Choi Hyuk was ready to eat anything in his path.

Choi Hyuk observed Manta and Hashishi with his Eyes of the Judge.

CHAPTER 132

KUNDLE TRIBE (3)

“You saw them, right? How were they?”

After the meeting, Baek Seoin stuck right next to Choi Hyuk and asked.

Although he hadn't told anyone about his 'Eyes of Distinction', which he had from the beginning, he told his executives about the 'Eyes of the Judge' he inherited from Richard.

Baek Seoin was curious about the evaluation the Eyes of the Judge gave Manta and Hashishi.

However, Choi Hyuk shook his head.

Seeing this, Baek Seoin rubbed his chin as if it was troublesome.

“They didn't have any symbols? What should we do in cases like this...?”

The reason why Baek Seoin was curious about the symbols wasn't because he was going to kill them or keep them alive because of them. The laws of the alliance weren't easily glossed over, and Manta and Hashishi were strong, having reached the level of proficiency as high-ranked warriors. Which was why the Berserkers didn't have the power to decide whether they would kill them or keep them alive yet. Only, he was planning on deciding whether they should be warier of them or respond positively depending on their symbols.

‘But what should we do if they don't have symbols...’

While Baek Seoin was in thought, Choi Hyuk thought about it simply.

“We can ignore them. It means we can do whatever we want.”

Whether they were friend or foe, it was something they could think about when their symbols appeared later. If their symbols never appeared, then they didn't have to be concerned about that either.

This was how Choi Hyuk comprehended the symbols.

“No, I just wanted to consider the symbols since we don’t know whether doing whatever we want is good or not,”

Mumbled Baek Seoin behind him.

“Don’t worry,”

Choi Hyuk said as he looked back slightly.

Meeting his gaze, Baek Seoin felt shivers run down his back. Since some time ago, even if his eyes seemed to glance over him, an afterimage remained like a brand. Choi Hyuk simply looking at him gave a terrifying feeling as though a sword hung over his neck. These shivers didn’t stop quickly.

Was it because he had become a high-ranked warrior? But he didn’t get this feeling from Manta or Hashishi.

‘... Is it my Intuition?’

Perhaps this was Baek Seoin’s innate skill ‘Intuition’ peering into Choi Hyuk’s true nature. A rage that could burn the entire world and surge towards the sky. It might be that his ‘Intuition’ felt Choi Hyuk’s extremely dangerous aggression and kept sending him warning signals. Someone whose existence itself was dangerous.

Baek Seoin relaxed because of this as well.

“Yes, yes, we’ll win anyways.”

Even though he replied in a joking manner, he was being sincere.

Since there was no way Choi Hyuk would lose.



How would they go about with the recruit training?

This problem brought a heated discussion amongst the Berserker executives, who all had unique personalities.

“Damn it! Then how are we different from the alliance?”

Lee Jinhee, who was very affectionate and had a very just personality, raised her voice.

Bae Jinman didn't raise his voice like her but rather tried to persuade Choi Hyuk.

“...Wouldn't accomplishing a difficult task that others can't do be a bigger feat than succeeding at something everyone else can?”

On the other hand, Hanke, who prioritized profit, suggested they go with Manta and Hashishi's methods.

“The shortcut to success isn't choosing a path of difficulty and greatness, it's taking the fast and easy path. There's a reason everyone else does it. Isn't that right, leader?”

Leah, who had been listening silently, raised her hand.

“I too think that following what other troops are doing and learning from it is better than being too ambitious.”

She too was the type who didn't care about the lives of the aliens.

After listening to their words, Lee Jinhee leaped up and down.

“Ah! Really! There are things you shouldn't do if you're human!”

“No? There is nothing a human can't do.”

Lee Jinhee and Leah's gazes tangled with each other in mid-air.

After quietly observing them, Choi Hyuk abruptly asked,

“So what does Jinhee nuna think? What do you think we should do?”

Lee Jinhee replied as though she had been waiting for this,

“There are a lot of methods! We can found a school! We can even become gods and lead them!”

There were a few murmurs at her words. A school, gods? As earthlings, who advanced while being stepped on like dogs, this sort of gentle thought was hard to believe.

“I checked the data! There are tons of examples of this in the alliance! We experienced a harsher training than others from the start! Isn’t it strange? You don’t have to kill your own race or have your homeland destroyed to become stronger! A troop approached them as if they were gods and trained them as though they were selecting warriors for the gods! There was even a species who received the approval of the Exalted Wings to reveal their identities to the species they were training before they started to teach them step-by-step! They even became strong enough later to join the alliance!”

“Just hearing those methods is a pain... It’s easier to just let them fight each other... But where did you find that data? There weren’t any examples of that in Dark City...”

Handke grumbled, but his voice was quieter than before. It was because he had never imagined that Lee Jinhee would have found data he didn’t know and bring it up here.

“That’s because we’re on the border and there is an especially large number of psychos! I went beyond Laniakea. I went to the ‘Armored Constellation’ that can confidently be considered a city by the alliance! I spent all the Mission Points I had saved up until now as travel expenses! Just going there, there’s an overflowing amount of data. The alliance is a massive organization. They aren’t simply a gathering of abnormal people!”

Baek Seoin joined in after Lee Jinhee’s ardent shouts.

“There definitely... is something strange about this as well. I heard that the reason they assign three troops to train recruits was to promote various methods of training... But the two troops besides us are pursuing methods similar to what we endured. As though... it’s a scheme to make us become the same as them.”

The same as them.

There was something that people who were extremely angry and hurt despised. It was ‘becoming the same as that bastard’. Just thinking about it made them shudder.

However, if, for some unavoidable reasons, they acted in the same way as them, then everything would change from that moment on. The endless rage directed at those bastards would slowly simmer down. This was because, once they were in the same

position as them, they would gain an ‘understanding’ rather than feel rage or horror. There were even instances when these adverse changes felt like ‘growth’. It would be similar to how a private might think, ‘I’ll never be like those assholes!’ but might understand ‘why those bastards acted that way’ when he became a sergeant.

“The incident this time might, in fact, weaken the justification for our anger.”

Baek Seoin said seriously. As the executives knew that Choi Hyuk’s goal was ‘revenge’, they could do nothing but groan. Baek Seoin’s words were reasonable.

They all looked at Choi Hyuk.

Choi Hyuk’s lips slowly became crooked.

A laugh that sounded like air was escaping his mouth flowed out from his lips.

“Same as them? So what?”

He ridiculed.

Baek Seoin felt a terrifying sensation once more.

Choi Hyuk’s attitude was clear.

‘Whether I become the same as them or lose my justification, what does that have to do with revenge?’

This was a truly blind thirst for revenge. A pure thirst for revenge that didn’t require any moral emotions. This blindness was also the best virtue Choi Hyuk possessed.

Choi Hyuk, who had been troubled over what sort of attitude he should display, clearly decided on his guidelines.

“Don’t look at anything else. Don’t tarnish your heart. Whether we are the same as them or not, and whether they were right or wrong isn’t important. Killing. Killing every fucking thing. Only this is important.”

If they were still living in the peaceful world of the past, it was a declaration that would

label him as a psychopath.

It was also a declaration that directly faced off against Lee Jinhee and Bae Jinman's opinions. Even if they were to use a reconciliatory gesture, it wouldn't be because of 'respect for life' or 'out of moral justification'. It was a declaration that the Berserkers wouldn't act on reasons like those.

Even still, his voice moved the hearts of the executives as though they were under a spell.

Who here hadn't seen hell?

Who here hadn't witnessed everyone they loved die and felt their entire life crash down on them one morning?

Who here didn't have nightmares? Who here was sane?

Choi Hyuk's words were absurd, but at the same time, they gave them a strange sense of satisfaction.

'Killing every fucking thing.'

These words even moved Lee Jinhee and Bae Jinman's hearts. They even felt ecstasy as if they had taken opium.

Also, the fact that they were moved by those words and that things had changed this way made them sad and angry.

With her eyes brimming with tears, Lee Jinhee said as though she felt wronged,

"So, if we do that, what remains?"

Choi Hyuk scratched his head and answered,

"What remains once we kill everything? I don't know, we'll have to see once we do."

"..."

Silence.

Only silence accompanied his words.

Choi Hyuk, who brought this mood upon them, decided,

“What Jinhee nuna said about a school, I’ll think about it. However, it probably won’t be the type of school you’re thinking of.”



{Welcome to the environment control system. Choi Hyuk, in charge of the training. Identification complete. It is the day to commence training. What training would you like to commence?}

“Change the outer appearances of the Berserkers so they look exactly the same as the Kundle Tribe members and scatter them throughout the planet. Have them return tomorrow.”

{Understood. It will consume a total of 100,000,000 Mission Points. All expenses for training will be supplied by the alliance. However, you may receive a penalty if your training performance is lacking compared to your expenses.}

“Got it.”

Although the system said it as though it was trying to scare him, 100,000,000 Mission Points was a trivial amount in respect to such a massive project like training recruits. It was an amount that Choi Hyuk could pay if he slipped up.

While Manta and Hashishi were both planning on using billions of Mission Points each to mine the planet and launch a large-scale slaughter of the same race respectively, Choi Hyuk simply disguised the Berserkers and sent them down to the planet.

“See you tomorrow.”

This was simply a preliminary step in preparation for the true start of the training.

The species receiving the training were called the ‘Kundle Tribe’.

Their limbs were thin like string while their bodies were thick like sausages.

“Don’t their appearances look pathetic? What the hell?”

Following Choi Hyuk’s order, there was one mission given to the Berserkers scattered throughout the planet.

‘Check their personalities... Drag it out of them.’

Everyone thought it wouldn’t be hard.

Sinkholes appeared throughout the planet because of the mining of the planet started by Manta, and Hashishi commenced a brutal game where they could never escape unless they killed each other.

Like how Earth had been in the past, this place would be a melting pot of fear and chaos so dragging out their true personalities would be very easy. No, that was what they thought.

However, this was their miscalculation.

“Just what the hell is wrong with them?”

The Berserkers scattered throughout the planet grumbled.

Those known as the Kundle Tribe were endlessly at peace.

A Berserker cut off the arm of a passing Kundle Tribe member without a word.

“Haa, what’s the matter with you?”

Even though his arm had been cut off, he smiled once as though he was looking at a strange person before going his way. His thin arm had grown back at some point. They didn’t get angry nor did they try to fight them.

Other Berserkers infiltrated Hashishi's training and incited that they needed to kill each other. The reactions they received were dumbfounding.

"Hey... They'll disappear when we wake up after sleeping."

"What are you saying?! If we don't kill, then we'll cease to exist!"

"Ehh... We won't die. We won't."

There was no one more at peace than them.

"I... I want to live!"

When an infiltrated Berserker acted like this and stabbed the bellies and cut off the heads of the Kundle Tribe members who were lying down-

"Huh? Why is that mister acting like that?"

"Let him be. He'll tire out eventually. Let's just sleep."

The Kundle Tribe fell asleep as a group.

"What the hell?"

The heads and limbs of these sleeping Kundle Tribe members were sucked into their sausage-like bodies. After turning into individual lumps, they stuck to the ground like barnacles. Then their weak karma was energized.

"What the hell... Are they completely focused on recovering?"

The karma the Kundle Tribe possessed had strong traces of the recovery property. Their attitude was that this scary incident would have passed by the time they woke up. When they fell asleep, nothing could wake them up as if they had lost consciousness.

When they returned, the Berserkers reported everything they heard and observed from the Kundle Tribe. Naro collected and organized all the data.

“The planet of the Kundle Tribe is very hot because it has three suns. That’s why they say early lifeforms either lived underground or in especially cool areas. Then a species that awakened the karma of ‘recovery’ appeared. That was the Kundle Tribe.”

“As they possess an outstanding regeneration ability, they might not fear dying anymore. Not only that, but they have no reason to fear their natural enemies as well.”

Speaking up to this point, Naro acted like it was collapsing before opening its eyes wide and saying,

“Whatever scary foes they face would either hide underground to avoid the sun or be burned by the suns and die by the time they wake up.”

The executives nodded. This was precisely the attitude the Kundle Tribe had. When they perceived danger, they would quickly hibernate.

“It looks like the Kundle Tribe members won’t age or die if they don’t want to thanks to the recovery ability of their karma. That was why their civilization developed in a way to overcome the boredom of their long lives, which is why there are so many weirdly shaped buildings. Rather than out of necessity, they made them out of boredom... Apparently, their cities seem like large antique stores.”

This time, Naro acted as though it was absentmindedly making something. Its every hand movement was half-hearted.

“According to the observations of the Berserkers, they can’t devote themselves to one thing. They said that if they bothered people who were working, they would just shrug and leave without showing any lingering attachment to whatever they had been working on until then... They were just doing it for fun. They won’t do it if it became hard.”

“Haa...”

Sighs erupted amongst the executives.

“If this is the case, then weren’t the Sur Troops correct? I don’t think there’s any other way besides mining to profit.”

Handke said.

They didn't become angry or fight. They didn't even show any backbone. They were utterly ill-suited as warriors.

However, Choi Hyuk shook his head.

"No. In this situation, I think the school Jinhee nuna brought up is pretty good."

"A school? When they will probably sleep if things became even slightly difficult or dangerous?"

At Leah's question, Choi Hyuk shook his head once more.

"I said it already. It won't be an easygoing school like that."

Choi Hyuk looked down at the Kundle Tribe's planet below his feet and said,

"You're saying that they don't feel fear or anger... Then we just need to teach them in school."

"Pardon?"

A school that taught fear and anger... They felt a chilling feeling for some reason.



Hashishi frowned while Manta smiled.

"As expected, just mining is best. Since we are coming up with a planet mining plan, you just need to help out."

Manta had said that it was safer to simply mine everything than to train them as warriors from the start. At this rate, he was certain to become the greatest contributor of this recruit training.

Hashishi didn't like it, but he couldn't find any other way. No matter how vicious his methods were, they simply slept.

"Keung! Keung! Haaa... It can't be helped. Please take care of me, Manta."

Hashishi decided to yield and work with Manta. This time, Manta looked at the empty

seat.

“It looks like Leader Choi Hyuk won’t come?”

Hashishi laughed.

“Let him be. He’s a child who doesn’t know what’s good for him.”

Hashishi held Choi Hyuk in complete disregard. However, Manta was looking at Choi Hyuk’s empty seat with a thoughtful expression.

CHAPTER 133

KUNDLE TRIBE (4)

Baek Seoin nodded his head as he asked,

“How are we going to teach them fear and anger?”

Choi Hyuk looked down at the planet spread beneath Naro’s spaceship. It was incredibly big. It looked to be five times the size of Earth. But since its rotation was quick, its entire surface was being evenly fried by the suns. Since there were three suns, the days were also much longer than the nights on the planet.

Lee Jinhee said that its appearance reminded her of a rotisserie chicken.

Choi Hyuk brought up a topic that seemed to be unrelated to the question.

“Karma is the record of successes and despair lifeforms have accumulated over time. It’s created from happiness, rage, sorrow, joy, love, hate, and greed.”

“That’s true.”

“Earthlings are as greedy as any other species, but the Kundle Tribe awakened karma by themselves while we hadn’t been able to.”

“That’s right. Well, I understand why. They have three suns, and it’s not like the lifeforms on the planet are completely immune to heat... It must have been hell before they awakened karma. It was probably difficult to breathe in such a hellish environment. They should have been emotionally sensitive- Ah, don’t tell me?!”

Baek Seoin’s eyes shined. Choi Hyuk nodded.

“Yeah. Although it seems like they lost their sense of pain entirely thanks to their recovery ability, there will definitely be traces of that period remaining deep within them. Fear of the suns. Also, there is the rage from being unable to do anything but watch as their comrades burned to death.”

“Wow... Leader, when did you think that far?!”

Baek Seoin looked sincerely impressed. With a happy expression that said, ‘Our leader has changed’^{1}, he looked at Choi Hyuk as he asked,

“Then, how do we drag out their true nature?”

Choi Hyuk leaned back and replied dully,

“That I don’t know. Figuring that out is Baek hyung’s job.”

“Ah...?”

Baek hyung looked at Choi Hyuk with his mouth agape, like a developer looking at his company’s CEO.



Although the majority of the buildings created by the Kundle Tribe were so weirdly shaped that it was difficult to guess their use, they still had a practical part to them. It was the minimal trait for something to be called a ‘building’. Which was also why it had previously been glossed over.

It was that they had roofs. Even if they didn’t have walls, they all had roofs. This was very significant.

“I always felt this, but their buildings are really dark. Their roofs are so long that they darken the streets. It was already looking a lot like an antique store with all the junk... But doesn’t it feel gloomier?”

Lee Jinhee mumbled.

Currently, Choi Hyuk, Lee Jinhee, and Baek Seoin were disguised as Kundle Tribe members and were on the surface of the planet. While the Sur and Jangkok Troops were busy mining the planet, the Berserkers, who had yet to set a training plan, were wandering around the planet and diligently collecting information about the Kundle Tribe. Although this looked pathetic in Hashishi and Manta’s eyes, they didn’t care.

The Kundle Tribe’s city had especially long roofs and an unnecessarily abundant number of outdoor structures, and the shadows from these structures covered all

corners of their city. Due to the substances that evaporated under the sunlight and crumbled dust, the weather was hazy and suffocating as though there was a thick fog regardless of night or day.

The group, who had been walking down these streets which were so dark and gloomy that it felt like ghosts would pop out, soon entered a market.

Markets in Korea would be filled with clothes, household items, and food, but the Kundle Tribe's market was a bit different.

“Is this really a market?”

It was to the point where Lee Jinhee even asked this question.

First, this place wasn't a long passageway but a wide plaza.

While there were market stalls, there weren't a lot of them. Also, they didn't have clothes or food.

“Due to the Kundle Tribe's regenerative ability, they don't wear clothes. Also, as they evolved to digest the overabundant solar energy, evaporated substances, and airborne dust, they don't really need food... but this is strange.”

Baek Seoin shook his head beside her.

Rather than a market, it was more like a workshop. Various materials were spread amongst the stalls, and the Kundle Tribe members gathered together and chatted while they made unidentifiable objects. These objects didn't look practical. Seeing as how they chatting noisily, it seemed like they were objects purely created out of interest.

Rather than a market, it was more like a playground where they made objects on the spot, enjoyed them, and then made more.

“Now that I think about it, I received a report about this. I heard that there was an area where the Kundle Tribe members were especially absorbed in creating things. It seems this is the place. But, apparently, even if they are enjoying it, they will immediately leave elsewhere with disinterested expressions if Berserkers start to cause a fuss.”

“...How tiresome.”

Choi Hyuk said with a tired expression. The Kundle Tribe members here looked to be having more fun than anywhere else. It was clear that they were having fun as their sausage-like bodies rippled, but to not get angry when they were bothered... They were matchlessly tiresome lifeforms.

However, not everyone here was creating objects. There were also ‘feats of strength shows’.

Some of them spat hard bubbles from their mouths and others melted their bodies into what seemed like mud and were creating weird sculptures. Spectators gathered around them and were chattering noisily.

“Look at this. This. It’s a new gene we discovered.”

The ‘feats of strength performers’ shouted before scooping parts of their bodies and passing them amongst the spectators.

As they didn’t have a concept of currency, everything was free. To them, who had no worries of eating or surviving, everything they did was for fun.

The spectators, who implanted themselves with parts of the feats of strength performers’ bodies, trembled before performing strange acts like spitting out solid bubbles, covering their bodies with needles or even grow fur like the feats of strength performers.

Looking at this, Baek Seoin sincerely admired them.

“Wow... It’s even possible to do this with the regenerative ability of karma?”

Extreme heat, noxious sunlight, and a regenerative ability that exceeded the laws of science. With these combined, the Kundle Tribe members could function as gene factories. The ability to artificially increase the mutations within their genes and only cultivate the traits they liked. They also had a regenerative ability that went ‘outside the laws’ and could make them return to their original forms.

The Kundle Tribe members used their bodies like blackboards, repeatedly sharing various genes and erasing them. The aim of all this was for ‘fun’ as well. Since the traits of the shared genes created couldn’t be maintained for a long time due to karma.

Baek Seoin, whose eyes were shining as he looked at them with an interested expression, sighed,

“Haa... They are a species who are more carefree than we thought. I wonder if there really is fear deeply ingrained in their true nature...”

Unlike Lee Jinhee, who was enjoying herself as if she were on a trip, Baek Seoin was constantly thinking about the work Choi Hyuk had given him... the training plan to teach them fear and rage.

Since Manta and Hashishi were focused on mining, they needed to quickly obtain results as well.

Although the mining of this enormous planet wouldn't end in a year or two, if they didn't obtain any results within a certain period of time, they would be deprived of their right to use the alliance resources, which included the 'environment control system'.

“Baek hyung, why is your expression so dark?”

However, Choi Hyuk, the culprit of his headache, was acting in a leisurely fashion. Looking at him like that, Baek Seoin felt like a hole might form in his stomach due to stress.

‘Ah... really. Should I just start by capturing the Kundle Tribe members and dissecting them?’

Although he even considered such extreme thoughts, this method was useless against karmalings. Bodies fused with karma couldn't be analyzed by scientific means.

‘Well, nothing else I can do.’

In the end, Baek Seoin compromised. Even though he wanted to go on with more concrete evidence, he didn't have any more time.

To be honest, there was a method he wanted to test as soon as he heard Choi Hyuk's

words. Since it was so simple and imprecise, he had hoped to find a better method, but there was nothing more he could do in his current situation.

'Please... I hope they react to this at least.'

While hoping earnestly, Baek Seoin requested Choi Hyuk who was beside him,

"Umm, leader. Why don't you light some flames?"

"...Like this?"

Choi Hyuk followed Baek Seoin's request and lit some flames. As soon as he did, the Kundle Tribe members on the streets were shocked as they murmured amongst themselves.

"Ah, damn! That shocked me! Why the hell would you light flames on the streets like that?"

"I know, right? There are too many rude people these days."

"Haa, there isn't much time before the day ends either, this sucks... I guess I'll go home, purify mud and shake off liquid."

"I mean, wasn't it just too rude?"

The Kundle Tribe members showed a more intense reaction than when their arms or heads were cut off. Of course, all they did was pass by while murmuring to each other, but they couldn't hide their displeasure as their thick, brown necks folded three times.

Only then did Baek Seoin reveal a smile of relief.

"They react to this at least... Ah... What a relief. Their true nature of fearing the sun remains in their culture."

Although their bodies had already developed to the point where it was no longer necessary to fear fire or the suns, the Kundle Tribe members still held fire and the suns in contempt.

They had found a minimal amount of evidence. As pitiful as it was, this was all Baek Seoin had. They no longer had time to gather more data. Even if they repeatedly

underwent trial and error, they had to push forward with this.

‘Ah, damn. I’ll take the risk.’

The moment he decided to run with it, the scenes Baek Seoin had observed during his investigation arranged themselves in an orderly manner in his mind.

The especially long roofs, the shadows cast over the city, the game where they gave and received genes, and their nature of holding fire in contempt... When these things gathered together, they formed a single picture.

Baek Seoin decided to bet on it.

‘Well, if it fails, the leader will have to take responsibility for it.’



Five days since the Sur and Jangkok Troops commenced their training (mining).

Baek Seoin finally briefed Choi Hyuk on the training plan.

“The aim of this training is to awaken the Kundle Tribe as outstanding warriors and create a positive relationship between them and the Berserkers.”

Although having them awaken as warriors was obvious, the ‘positive relationship’ was Baek Seoin’s greed. Knowing this, Baek Seoin subtly attempted to read Choi Hyuk’s mood. Choi Hyuk wordlessly nodded his head. Slightly relieved, Baek Seoin continued his report.

“First, we will use Guardian Bae Jinman to expand and arouse their hostility towards sunlight and fire. So that it can apply to other targets as well.”

Choi Hyuk tilted his head.

“The guardian can do something like that?”

“Yes. It seems it’ll be possible. In the past, we used his buff to incite madness amongst the Berserkers when we fought against the eyeless observers. It looks like it’ll be possible if we combine the knowledge related to the mind we obtained when we joined the alliance and the guardian’s abilities.”

“However, isn’t it just temporary?”

“We have no choice but to leave that part somewhat up to chance. As the Kundle Tribe members start to learn how to fight... We can only hope they create aggressive genes and actively share it among each other...”

As he said this, Baek Seoin hunched his shoulders slightly.

It was because there were too many jumps in logic. He wasn’t even sure if Guardian Bae Jinman could make the Kundle Tribe fight. On top of that, whether the Kundle Tribe members shared their aggressive genes or not was an issue he had no control over.

If he could, he wanted to use the alliance’s technology to personally change their genes. However, that was impossible. This was because there was no doubt the Kundle Tribe’s karma, which was fused with their bodies, would reject artificial gene segments. In reality, the genetic changes they accepted by trading genes would return to ‘normal’ after a while due to their karma. It wasn’t some lasting, repetitive evolution. It didn’t go beyond being a game.

Which was why sharing the altered genes relied entirely on the Kundle Tribe’s ‘willingness’. It wasn’t once or twice either, they needed to be continuously willing, like a game of baseball or soccer. This was something Baek Seoin could do nothing about.

While Baek Seoin was feeling intimidated after losing confidence during his report, Choi Hyuk coolly nodded his head.

“Okay. Since it was me who decided to look for another method from the start, this much risk is expected. Anything else? What are we going to do afterwards?”

Brightening up at Choi Hyuk’s positive reaction, Baek Seoin quickly replied,

“We need one approval and two preparations.”

“What?”

“First, we need the approval to reveal our identities to the Kundle Tribe. This is something you need to personally request to the center. Only when we get this

approval can we consider establishing a good relationship with the Kundle Tribe or not.”

Choi Hyuk nodded.

“And? The preparations?”

“There are two preparations. As human resources... I want the assistance of Overseer Jessie and Overseer Camilla.”

At the unexpected reply, Choi Hyuk’s eyebrows twitched. Yet, he didn’t immediately ask for the reason and accepted it.

“And?”

“Monsters. We need an army of monster powerful enough to give the Berserkers a hard time.”

“Hmmm...”

Choi Hyuk began to become interested in Baek Seoin’s plan.

A monster army that could give even the Berserkers a hard time... Although he wasn’t sure what it was about, it was a preparation that would inevitably lead to a battle.

Just thinking about it made his heart race. Choi Hyuk, who had inwardly been bored since this was a mission that didn’t involve a lot of fighting, brightened for a change.

‘Ah, jeez. He really likes anything to do with fighting.’

While Baek Seoin was inwardly clicking his tongue as he saw this, Choi Hyuk suddenly said,

“Ah, also, I came up with another method.”

“What kind of method?”

“A method to help the Kundle Tribe revive their sense of fear and rage. It’ll probably be of great help to Baek hyung’s plan.”

“So what is it?”

“Wait a moment.”

Still sitting down, Choi Hyuk called for the environment control system.

{Welcome to the environment control system. It has been 5 days since training has commenced. The leader of the Berserkers, Choi Hyuk, has yet to distinguish himself. What additional environment would you like to control?}

Without the slightest hesitation, Choi Hyuk said,

“Seal all the Kundle Tribe members’ karma.”

“What?!”

Shocked, Baek Seoin looked at Choi Hyuk.

{It is impossible as your contribution is too low.}

“Then as many as possible.”

{... Environment control complete. The karma of a hundred million Kundle Tribe members has been sealed.}

“Leader! We decided to get in a good relationship with the Kundle Tribe!”

Baek Seoin protested with wide eyes. However, Choi Hyuk replied without any change in his expression,

“They won’t know we did it anyways.”

Shiver.

Baek Seoin felt shivers run down his spine again.

He looked at Choi Hyuk, who was still sitting in front of him, in a new light.

The demon king was there.

“Euaah!”

On the Kundle Planet, the Kundle Tribe members who had been walking outside screamed as they fainted. Their flesh slowly burned under the hot heat.

{1} A play on ‘Our children have changed’ – A show about the difficulties of raising children.

CHAPTER 134

KUNDLE TRIBE (5)

The Kundle Tribe members moved.

The expressions of the Kundle Tribe members, who had laughed it off when the Berserkers made a fuss, when the mission of slaughtering each other was announced, and when earthquakes and sinkholes appeared, became serious.

“Euaahh!!”

The Kundle Tribe members carried other members whose flesh were sizzling under the heat. They evacuated deep underground. Thanks to the cool environment underground and their resistance to the heat that had been developed throughout their long evolution, no one had lost their life. However, they were still distressed.

The Kundle Tribe members, who had never felt any pain in their entire lives under the protection of their karma, couldn't endure the degree of pain they felt from the burns and suffocating heat.

“Aah... Euu...”

“Haa... Haaa... It's hard to breathe. So hard. Aaack...”

The Kundle Tribe members felt a sense of futility as they gazed at others who were groaning, unable to endure the pain.

“Just what is going on...?”

They couldn't understand what had happened to them.

They had never experienced the 'pain of others', let alone their own, in their entire lives. The word 'pain' had long since been forgotten from their language.

However, their hearts were thumping heavily right now.

Although their minds didn't understand, their bodies knew.

Their bodies remembered their fear of the heat that had been ingrained at a genetic level.

Just watching others, they could vividly recall this pain that they had never experienced before.

Even those Kundle Tribe members who could maintain their karma were shocked as they felt a terrifying heat on their flesh.

The ability to sympathize with others, which had evolved since the distant past when the Kundle Tribe was powerless, activated. It wasn't only those who were suffering that felt pain but even those who were watching.

“Just what is happening?!!”

A Kundle Tribe member shouted suddenly. Its wrinkle-free, stumpy face distorted greatly.

The feeling of sorrow. The feeling of rage. An unbearable pain.

These emotions, which had been forgotten for a long time, began to bud again.

However, they were only budding.

Like children throwing a tantrum for the first time, they didn't know anything besides wailing and throwing their temper.

They were still a pathetic species.

“Okay, I acknowledge it,”

Said Manta.

“Yeah, I acknowledge that you were able to drag out their true nature which I couldn't do with the mission I created. I acknowledge that. But so what?”

Hashishi, who spoke immediately afterwards, had a somewhat thorny tone of speech.

“If it’s freedom due to karma abilities, then you just need to restrain the karma. Who wouldn’t know something so simple? We thought about that too. However, think about it logically. Just because they’ve awakened their true nature now, will it make them excellent warriors? Could we even use them as Consumables? 10 years? 100 years? No, we might not even be able to use them even after all that time. Do you know how many karma species are discovered throughout the universe every year? It’s more beneficial to simply mine those without potential and use the rest of our capacity to develop more promising species. Can’t you even do such simple calculations?”

Because Choi Hyuk didn’t answer their calls, Manta and Hashishi had come to Naro’s spaceship.

Choi Hyuk found them bothersome.

“You just focus on your job.”

Manta’s face stiffened and Hashish’s gaze sharpened at Choi Hyuk’s rebuke.

“You, just because we overindulged you... Hey, rookie. Don’t you understand the situation? Because of you, this simple job became much more complicated! Do you have to drag this mission, which could have been ended quickly by mining through our cooperation, on for years? Since you’re going to fail anyways, we’re telling you to join us now rather than come crying to us later. It’s not just you who suffers losses but us as well! You selfish bastard.”

Whether it was because Hashishi completely decided to be at odds with Choi Hyuk or because he thought Choi Hyuk had decided to be at odds with him, Hashishi didn’t hold back his words.

Manta didn’t try to hold him back either.

He stared solemnly at Choi Hyuk and said,

“If you restrained the karma of a hundred million Kunde Tribe members, you probably used up all the resources you could use in the beginning. If you can’t obtain any results from this, then you, the leader of the Berserkers, will not be acknowledged for any contributions and might end up assisting us. No, if severe, you might even receive disciplinary action.”

Yet, their warnings went in one ear and out the other.

“Leave.”

He said while unsheathing his Sword of Vow a little.

“Or be chased out on the grounds that you are interfering with my work.”

He smiled like a child as if he thought this method was good too now that he thought about it.

“Leaving an arm and a leg each.”

It was a clear provocation.

“What?! You bastard, a new high-ranked warrior relying on your weapon!”

Hashishi was about to throw a fit when Manta held him back.

“How foolish, overseer of Earth. There were a lot of talks about earthlings... yet you are a species of unmatched foolishness.”

Manta shook his head and left with Hashishi.

Only Baek Seoin was a nervous wreck.

“Guardian, please take care of me.”

Returning to the planet’s surface, Baek Seoin said this once more. He couldn’t remember how many times he had said it.

If the Berserkers couldn’t obtain any results here, they would inevitably be reprimanded by the alliance. However, there were unfortunately too many leaps of logic in Baek Seoin’s plan. A plan that didn’t rely strictly on evidence but was rather one ‘that might work’. Since Choi Hyuk observed this with an attitude that read, ‘I’ll leave it all to you, Baek hyung,’ Baek Seoin couldn’t help but suffer from stress.

Fortunately, Bae Jinman was highly motivated.

“Although we’ll only know once we try it... I am quite confident. We experienced the

method of influencing one's emotions and nature during the eyeless observers incident as well as the monster of the night and doppelganger incident. There was also a lot of data from the alliance as well. Also..."

Guardian Bae Jinman watched the Kundle Tribe members who walked the streets with depressed expressions.

"Isn't this the only method for these lifeforms to survive in this universe? I researched a lot. I'll definitely succeed."

As he said this, he thought of Choi Hyuk.

Earthlings picked Choi Hyuk and Bae Jinman as the oddest combination. Bae Jinman, who devoted himself to all lifeforms, didn't seem suited for Choi Hyuk, who thought of lives like insects.

Yet, in this cruel universe, Choi Hyuk's method unexpectedly overlapped with Bae Jinman's goal and path.

The essence of life was, perhaps, the struggle against death.

Life that could only be protected through an endless struggle.

Although Choi Hyuk was cruel, as someone who loved fighting, his method paradoxically made life 'life'. The struggle of life, where one didn't endure a beating, but, was instead, hitting back. Choi Hyuk constantly demanded this.

Manta and Hashishi's method, which didn't consider life as life and decided to 'mine' them, could, in fact, be considered the most 'anti-life' method.

"I will make them fight."

Hiding his appearance, Bae Jinman went down underground and observed the Kundle Tribe members, who were lying down, groaning, and the members who were looking at them with worried expressions.

"Against this damn universe, I mean."

Bae Jinman closed his eyes.

“For the guide to life to reside in them...”

Bae Jinman’s chant continued like a prayer.

Change began within the hearts of the Kundle Tribe members.

The Kundle Tribe members who didn’t know what to do against this pain they were experiencing for the first time in their lives, and the Kundle Tribe members who didn’t know what to do as they watched those in pain... they gradually began to become aware of this change.

A line was being drawn in their hearts.

A sharp blade was being raised.

At the same time, this was also a ray of light within the darkness.

Bae Jinman’s karma permeated their hearts and led their pain, which had nowhere to go, towards a single goal. He made them resolute and gave them courage. He gave them a ‘motive’. It was a great buff but also a powerful mind control.

The pain which suddenly began one day.

The fear of the sun, which they couldn’t avoid as long as they were living on this planet. Aversion to heat. They, who didn’t know what to do against this ancient hateful past that had come upon them like a calamity, began to grind their teeth.

Yes, like the time they first awakened karma a long, long time ago.

Thump!

A Kundle Tribe member, who had been flailing on the floor, slammed his head against the ground. He made wrinkles throughout his body and shouted. It wasn’t the appearance of a Kundle Tribe member, who had always smiled friendly.

“Do you think we’ll lose?!”

Thump! Thump!

It wasn't only him. Other patients acted the same. While slamming their bodies against the ground, they then kneeled and stretched their arms out before getting up.

Their bodies were stained with burns. Unperturbed by these sore, acute wounds, they stood up while slamming their heads against the ground and walls.

Although they didn't know the origin of this pain, they couldn't keep crying like children.

Even if they were to cry, they decided to cry while standing up.

With their eyes, blurry from the pain, wide open, they gazed at the other Kundle Tribe members around them.

"It's like a part of my body has disappeared. Something inside me suddenly disappeared. We have to find what has disappeared."

They were referring to the karma they had instinctively awakened. They, who didn't know what to do and had simply been groaning, began analyzing their symptoms and looking for a solution.

"Yeah, let's look into it."

The Kundle Tribe members who had been watching this agreed.

"But first,"

One of them opened his body and took out a blood vessel that had been flowing deep within him.

He cut the vessel, drawing blood. When the wound closed, he cut it again.

Refreshing blood, which acted as a coolant within his body, gushed out. His blood soaked the patients exhausted from the heat.

"Since we're going to find a method even if it means destroying the suns... Bear with it."

“No, like how blood flows within our bodies, let’s first make something flow down here. Let’s try to make this place cooler.”

The Kundle Tribe members, who liked to create new toys, began to utilize their talents in a practical manner.

This time, it wasn’t for fun. Their eyes were brimming with desperation.

“Wow... This is beyond our expectations.”

Baek Seoin admired as he saw this scene. He rubbed the goosebumps that ran down his arms. He hadn’t expected to see such seriousness from the friendly Kundle Tribe members.

Looking exhausted, Bae Jinman smiled faintly as he shook his head.

“But it’s only temporary. Using their pain as a catalyst to come up with a single goal... It wasn’t from their own strength but required my intervention. When my karma scatters over time, they will become muddled once more. Even though I only used my power on the small group gathered there, I am quite exhausted. I don’t know what we should do to cover this entire planet.”

Bae Jinman did his best for the Kundle Tribe, but his expression wasn’t bright when thinking about facing the bleak task which lay ahead.

However, Baek Seoin’s expression was bright. The anxiety he had just now was gone without a trace.

“No. This is enough. We’ve resolved the most uncertain part. With this result, we should be able to persuade the alliance.”

Baek Seoin held Bae Jinman’s hand.

“Now it’s my turn to work. You worked hard.”

Baek Seoin observed the Kundle Tribe members who were brimming with determination. The picture in his mind became even more detailed.

He mumbled to himself,

“Now we just need to keep this good mood going. If it’s Camilla, who has a strong sense of purpose, and Jessie, who had an outstanding talent for directing... We’ll definitely be able to continue with this momentum. Let’s do it. Let’s try. Our situation became much better!”

Baek Seoin said as he stretched his arms happily.

“The leader will get the approval of the alliance. We earthlings will reveal our identities and become their mentors. Earthlings, who confidently became members of the alliance after being Consumables, and the Kundle Tribe, who are suddenly faced with the fear of extinction. Also, an outpour of monsters! Can’t you picture it? A hardship overcome by the seniors and their juniors! Let’s film a drama, guardian!”

“Huhuhu, I have high hopes.”

At Baek Seoin’s energetic vigor, Bae Jinman became slightly relieved as he laughed.

However, his heart wasn’t completely at ease.

While he felt hopeful, he couldn’t help but feel guilty.

Even if everything proceeded as planned, many Kundle Tribe members would die.

Also, this whole plan was also deceiving the Kundle Tribe as well.

‘Still, it’s better to punch and kick out rather than just suffering.’

Thinking this way, Bae Jinman was able to lessen his sense of guilt.

‘But... ’

Bae Jinman’s conscience couldn’t easily be relieved.

His resentment towards the alliance and the universe, which only functioned if people deceived and killed each other, became deeper.

His rage towards the world and himself.

His rage that even burned himself.

He lived his life, not for wealth and fame, but to someday end everything, for the end.

Since the day he lost all the patients he had been caring for, this became his life.

In this respect, Bae Jinman was an outstanding Berserker.

CHAPTER 135

SPECIES BLOOM AND WILT (1)

To the earthlings, who had recently joined the alliance, the alliance seemed god-like – A centralized organization that functioned on a thorough, standardized system... but that wasn't the case. As a gathering of countless species, it was an organization where everyone's rights and values were tangled together with no solution. This was the alliance.

The division troops were the slaves of the top 4 tribes.

The regional troops were slaves maintaining their specific region.

The independent troops were the slaves of desires.

Although there was only one war, everyone saw this war from different perspectives, and their goals were infinitesimally different. As this was the case, establishing the alliance's tactics was more pluralistic than unitary, and it was always accompanied by endless disputes and competitions.

An example of this was the existence of the 'tactic market'.

{Investigation Project for the Hourglass Cluster}

There has been a lull since the large-scale invasion of monsters last time.

However, we know that it is currently the calm before the storm.

The monsters' next attack will be fiercer. Also, when we recall the monsters' strategy, there's a high chance that this attack will start in regions of the universe that remain a mystery rather than parts of the universe the alliance controls.

During this time, exploring unexplored lands and controlling the resources there,

before the monsters can, will be a very important tactic.

During this time, a... can be of a big help to the alliance and might be able to discover a new species that has a great potential in earning an enormous amount of Mission Points. Like the jackpot in the Virgo Cluster!

The Mer species, who showed an outstanding performance in building defensive fortresses, the Lenoss Troops, who are exceptional at exploration, and the Bota Troops, who are excellent in training recruits, are all participating in this project.

Over 95% of the Hourglass Cluster is unexplored. There haven't been any karma species discovered yet. However, a karma index of 1,500 has been detected after checking the flow of interstellar karma, and it is expected that many karma species reside there...

“Do you think the Hourglass Project will take off?”

“I don't know. It's not bad index-wise... But exploring has too much risk. After exploring 90% of the cluster, the treasures might only be gathered in the remaining 10%. Before that, it could collapse facing the monsters' invasion. There are even cases where people explore all of it and find that there aren't any useful species despite the karma index...”

“But still, isn't it high risk, high return? To be honest, who knew that Earth, which was discovered in the Virgo Cluster, would become so prominent? Those who invested in that project must be reaping in profits.”

“Ah, stop there. It's not like one or two species have kicked the bucket trying to get rich overnight. In times like these where uncertainty is growing, it's better to put your hand in the alliance's center strategy.”

“Doesn't the alliance screw up? The independent troops had to clean up after their shit multiple times.”

“Still, they screw up less.”

This place was similar to a stock market.

It was a place that invested Mission Points and various resources in tactics that looked like they would take off and troops that seemed to have potential. A plaza that was responsible for a variety of tactics which the bloated organization known as the alliance couldn't fully take in.

However, the side effects were considerable as well.

It was originally created as an assisting role, to fill empty holes in the alliance's strategy and vitalize alliance member activity, but now the bloated 'tactic market' could shake important strategies of the alliance.

"Anyways, wasn't the alliance's evaluation of the Nathaniel Defense System too exaggerated? I don't think it's able to display that sort of effectiveness? Since they say they are going to introduce a controversial system like that to more galaxies... Ah, there needs to be a limit to wasting the budget..."

"The Nathaniel Troops have an incredibly strong influence in the alliance. They probably had some sort of deal. They have a lot of contacts with the top 4... More than half of their executives are from the top 4."

"Damn it... Can those without connections survive in such a sad world? What are the Exalted Wings doing?"

"They are busy just managing the Net of Fate. Also, aren't they just a part of the top 4 in the end?... Also, the truth is something that changes depending on the perspective you look at it from. If their experts come out and say, 'It wasn't the defense system but something else that was the problem. We were able to defend this much thanks to the defense system,' what can we say?"

"I don't know. I just can't believe there are people who think about making money in a war that risks the fates of species. Damn it. Don't they know how many species disappear overnight out on the borders...?!"

"It's because the war is too long. In the end, those in the center were able to endure such a long time without much danger. They've fallen into simple mannerisms."

In the past, the earthlings had unilaterally followed the alliance as Consumables and under the Virgo Cluster Regional Troops. However, by establishing independent troops, they gained the right to participate in the 'tactic market' as investors and planners as well. It was the start of their lives as true alliance members.

This change brought with it a huge opportunity as well as an enormous risk.

"Tactic market? Forget it. We don't need to care about things like that and focus on our job."

Camilla struck down this new opportunity.

"However, they say there are species who earned a ton of Mission Points in one go? If we have that much, we can prepare karma weapons and set a good foundation for the warriors we develop in the future. To be honest, our clan's finances aren't good compared to other clans of the same size. There's nothing much we can do since this is our style, but couldn't we research this market and participate in it as well? Although they say it is a negative influence, it's also a greatly positive one as well."

Penelope said in a slightly worried tone.

However, Camilla shook her head adamantly.

"We can't lose our essence. The goal of our Camilla Clan is the survival and prosperity of species. You can't have such naïve thoughts that the alliance will protect us just because we joined them. I felt this during the tidal wave of monsters, but their priority is the alliance. If the war becomes difficult, we could be cast aside at any time. Although Mission Points and equipment are helpful, we need to obtain them through our own strength. Don't think about earning them through risky games. What we need to focus on right now is significantly improving ourselves. As independent troops that have only now become D-ranked, if we get caught up in such nonessential matters, we won't be able to do this or that."

"Yes... If you're firm on it, why don't we at least receive some investments? To be honest, we only have two middle-ranked warriors including me... We need to pick out at least one good karma weapon, unni. Overseer Choi Hyuk has been on a roll ever

since he created a Sword of Vow... Haa, where did he get the money to create one...?"

"The moment we receive investments, we need to take the thoughts of our investors into account. Why do you think they call independent troops slaves of desires? There are a ton of those who don't look back at the safety of their species as they act to obtain more investments and more profits. We can't be like them, can we? Let's think about this matter once we accumulate results where we no longer have to be so mindful of what our investors think."

Eventually, Penelope sighed.

"Yes, unni. It seems I became a little greedy after learning about this new information."

Of course, not everyone was like Camilla. A new world, a bigger opportunity. There were many more who attempted to sink their feet into it.

There were even some who daringly jumped into it.

"Leader. Isn't there a high risk? They say there are quite a few troops that ruin themselves because of it..."

It was rather the members of the Jessie Clan who were worried about their daring leader. However, there wasn't the slightest sliver of fear in Jessie's shining eyes.

"Fool. That's why we need to do it. In the end, whether they are early or late, everyone will end up participating in the tactic market. Humans won't change even when the world has changed this much. There is no end to greed and they repeatedly make the same mistakes. Then what should we do? We need to take the lead and become pioneers. As we tread towards this demon-abode-like tactic market, isn't our role to be explorers who find constellations before anyone else? Isn't that good?! Sovereign Jessie's tips on tactic investments! Then we can set up a legitimate investment company! Look back at Earth. Wasn't being an investor more exciting than being a producer?"

"That's true, but we are a clan founded on the banner of supplying refined fighting techniques? We aren't a finance company that deals in money..."

"Hey, don't say such words. Do you think this is really like investing in stocks just

because it's similar? This is tactic investments. Tactics. Don't we know how important tactics are? To be honest, during the tidal wave of monsters, earthlings would have gone extinct right there and then if it wasn't for Overseer Choi Hyuk and Richard. And Richard died in battle... Damn it! Do you want to want to only look towards Overseer Choi Hyuk if a situation like that arises again? Normally, you can't give up on tacticians even if you give up on soldiers. This is the only path if guys from the country without any connections like us want to understand and take hold of the alliance's strategies. This is a kind of fight as well! It's not simply just dealing with enemies in front of you with a sword. What I'm saying is that tactics are the fighting techniques that can skillfully deal with enemies on the scale of troops and the universe. There's a need for earthlings to broaden their perspectives."

"Haa... Well, who can stop you, leader?"

"Yeah. Let's use this opportunity to gather some clans who want to jump into the tactic market but aren't qualified to and clans that are too nervous to even try. Looking at it, it's not something we can do with one or two points, and it's safer if we have more capital."

"How are you going to bear all the resentment if we all go bankrupt?!"

"Don't worry and don't be nervous. We just need to keep our heads in the game. Aren't challenges and adventures our mistresses? Wahaha!"

Jessie laughed like an innocent child.

While the earthlings were heading to this new opportunity, the Berserkers, who were the first to establish independent troops, were quite a distance away from this change.

As their key members were caught up in the important mission 'recruit training' soon after they became independent troops, they didn't have the time to figure out what the tactic market was.

Well, even if they did know, it wouldn't change much. Choi Hyuk and his subordinates were like seekers of truth. Seekers of truth drenched in blood. They simply fought. If they fought and fought, things would approach them on their own. They never looked or snooped around.

Hadn't the Sword of Vow in Choi Hyuk's possession and the opportunities the Berserkers received come to them first?

In this respect, the Berserkers' method was closer to the Camilla Clan than the Jessie Clan.

Maybe it was because of this? Camilla, who had been quite wary of the Berserkers, looked upon Choi Hyuk's proposal in a positive manner.

"So, are you saying you'll plant our will of wanting to take care of species into the Kundle Tribe?"

"That's right. I think when the Kundle Tribe's fear encounters the Camilla Clan's will, it will advance fantastically."

Baek Seoin replied simply at Camilla's question.

"Then what do we need to do?"

Asked Jessie.

"You simply need to direct them such that they think that everything we did was for the Kundle Tribe and so the Kundle Tribe members are moved and proud that they created history. So that their hearts race. The Berserkers just aren't good at stuff like this."

"Make them feel moved... It's easier said than done."

While he picked at Baek Seoin's vague explanations, Jessie smiled leisurely. His attitude showed that he was confident either way.

"Then what will the Berserkers do?"

Asked Camilla.

Baek Seoin smiled as he replied,

"We will prepare the props and take the lead role."

The meeting regarding the distribution of rewards followed afterwards.

As the Berserkers used up all their allocated resources to restrain the Kundle Tribe's karma, they needed to make up the resources they would consume from now on. The Camilla Clan and Jessie Clan decided to take up this role, and in return, they decided to split the rewards, where the Berserkers took 60% and the Valkyries and the Extremers took 20% each.

“Ah, if the training happens to flop, we might receive disciplinary action... But that's something we Berserkers will take care of on our own so you don't need to worry. All you will lose is your investment.

Baek Seoin said it in such a way that it was uncertain whether he was trying to scare them or make them relax.

However, Jessie and Camilla had already decided.

“You'll become our first investment. I hope for your success.”

Jessie said while smiling brightly.

“Although the risk is high... Knowing how to train warriors is a skill we absolutely need. Since there is something to be obtained if we fail, it's fine. If we can reap some profits from this, it'll reduce Penelope's nagging.”

Camilla showed her enthusiasm.

Screenplay and leading role: Choi Hyuk's 'Berserkers'

Director: Jessie's 'Extremers'

Acting guide: Camilla's 'Valkyries'

All preparations were done.

Regardless of whether it would be a success or flop, the true recruit training began.

CHAPTER 136

SPECIES BLOOM AND WILT (2)

In a place where the Kundle Tribe didn't know, their history and fate were being smashed into pieces.

Two forces fought. The victor took the loser's karma and the loser would lose everything. This rule, which the earthlings had become familiar with since the Ring of Rebirth, applied to the planet and its destroyers as well.

Boom! Boom!

Violent explosions didn't cease within their planet. Rather than calling it mining, it was a war against the planet.

The members of the Sur and Jangkok Troops held karma vitalizing devices in their hands as they fought intensely to advance even another step. The karma vitalizing devices emitted rainbows, and these rainbows gave off the scent of grass and blood. Every time these rainbows, which emitted a scent of bitter, bloody iron and flowers, made contact with the planet, the planet's hidden karma pulse clearly revealed itself. If one were to look at the karma pulse, the original scene would turn black and reveal a stream of stars flowing in the darkness. It was as dark as outer space and as radiant as a galaxy. Each shining star was melded with a memory of the planet. Ancient lifeforms which were the first to go up to the surface of the planet and burn to death. The first lake formed underground and the colony of lifeforms which flourished in this lake. When one looked at it closely, each of their figures were present like hallucinations.

The Sur and Jangkok Troops wanted to completely smash this stream apart, while the planet resisted vehemently with earthquakes, lava, tidal waves, and storms.

Boom!

Accompanied by a loud noise, the mine the Sur and Jangkok Troops had worked hard to create began to crumble. Even as they faced the thick cloud of dust approaching them, they didn't back down.

“How dare this thing struggle...! Push onwards!”

The Sur Troop members, who possessed large shoulders and were thrice the size of earthlings, supported the collapsing ceiling with their hands. Their arm and shoulder joints creaked. The falling gravel and sand hit their thick goggles. However, they didn't even bat an eye as they endured the weight of the earth with their powerful bodies and tough karma.

Within the planet, the stream of karma, which stretched out like oceans and lakes, emitted a brighter light as it writhed. Using the karma like muscles, it squeezed out lava and made the earth collapse. However, this didn't work either.

When the Sur Troops blocked the planet's counterattacks, the Jangkok Troops used this opportunity to rush towards the flow of karma. They each had a 'planet karma pulverizing stake' in their hands and stabbed them into the 'pulses' where the streams of karma overlapped.

Gong!

Kang! Gong! Creak!

The shining karma desperately resisted the stake, but in the end, the stakes stabbed into the pulses where the streams gathered.

Kureung! Kureung! Kiyaaah!

The planet let out a scream of deathly agony. The lights, which made up the streams of karma, scattered and flowed into the Sur Troops' 'karma storing device'. Every time this happened, an earthquake erupted on the surface and a sinkhole was formed.

The planet, which had resisted by moving its insides, fell into an eternal silence.

“Suppression complete!”

When a Jangkok Troop member shouted, a Sur Troop member stretched his stiff shoulders as he shouted,

“Good! We advance!”

Bang! Bang!

Accompanied by these sounds, they destroyed rocks as they dug a hole that led deeper inside the planet.

“It looks like we’ll have to mine a bit faster.”

Manta, the leader of the Sur Troops, said as he adjusted his goggles.

“I agree. You received an investment proposal, right?”

Manta nodded at Hashishi’s question.

“Of course, since planet mining is a safe tactic where we never take any losses.”

“Yeah. Though the fools from Earth don’t know this. They don’t even know that the first goal of recruit training is to ‘not leave any resources for the monsters’. If we took years dealing with such worthless species, how would we obtain the resources of this vast universe first?”

“Yeah. ‘It’s better to have three resources in reserve than train one warrior species.’ The basics of recruit training. But why are they acting like that...?”

“They just don’t know the ways of the world. Let’s just take the investments and quickly finish mining. Let’s not give them a chance to join in later at all. They’ll only learn once they hit the ground in regret.”

Hashishi said this easily, and Manage tilted his head.

“They don’t know the ways of the world, huh? While that may be true...”

Manta crossed his arms and closed his eyes.

His relationship with Choi Hyuk had broken down somewhat. While Hashishi kept looking down on Choi Hyuk, Manta was concerned about the potential Choi Hyuk might possess. Even throughout the universe, it was rare to see a warrior at the no-star level rise and become a high-ranked warrior within a few years.

‘Now that things have come to this, I need to look into them.’

Manta, who was careful, decided to look into Choi Hyuk and the earthlings just in case something happened in the future.

“Let’s try to accelerate our mining and employ earthlings from Dragonic at the same time.”

“Why earthlings? Won’t they all be as dumb as Choi Hyuk?”

“We’ll have to see about that. There might be a reason to use them. We need a cheap labor force anyways. Isn’t it obvious for there to be sacrifices if we want to quickly mine this planet?”

“Well, do what you want. This is your business and we’re only taking part of the credit for it.”

This was how the Sur Troops, true independent troops of the alliance, attempted to contact Dragonic.

To the clan leaders of Earth, who desired to enter a larger world, this looked like a terrific opportunity.



The world of the monsters didn’t have stars or a dark outer space. It was an enormous anthill split into different dimensions. Mountains and oceans taken from various universes, and even planets themselves, were stacked up like piles of garbage, creating pathways towards 13 different dimensions. This place, which looked like an ant hill, was the garbage landfill of universes.

“Princess, you have to rest...”

A highest-ranked warrior from the Flame Wing Tribe worried about Flame-Rain, who was wounded.

It had already been a month since they crossed over to the monsters’ world. Battles continued endlessly and there were countless casualties. There weren’t any able-bodied warriors remaining. However, amongst them, Flame-Rain’s appearance was the most terrible. Her brilliant flame wings had dwindled to the point where it was difficult maintaining them, and the stab and slash wounds to her abdomen and chest didn’t heal easily.

While the other warriors had time to treat their wounds, she didn't.

This was because she was the only warrior at the transcendence level amongst the reconnaissance troops.

She showed a faint, tired smile.

"You know... that we need to access the Net of Fate."

The reason why the reconnaissance troops could move about within their enemy's territory was because she was connected to the Net of Fate and hid their whereabouts.

Because of this, she couldn't rest at all.

This was because there was a more intense struggle for the Net of Fate following the intense battles. The reconnaissance troops were smaller than a grain of sand relative to the vast world of the monsters. If they could get 0.1% share of the Net of Fate, it would be enough to hide them.

However, this was simply too difficult. Because it was, there were times when they had to sacrifice others by using them as bait for the monsters. Flame-Rain was tormented every time they had to do this.

She gritted her teeth.

"The monsters are much stronger than we expected..."

Initially, the Exalted Wings believed that Flame-Rain would be enough to take care of the reconnaissance troops. However, the monsters' strength went way beyond their expectations. Every fight was so intense they were on the border of life-and-death, and to obtain 0.1% share of the Net of Fate, Flame-Rain had to endure a pain so severe she felt like she would faint.

"The alliance's strategy was way off. What we need are more powerful warriors. Simply trying to occupy resources before the monsters... Mining new species... We won't be able to escape ruin like that. Even for one warrior, we need to develop planets. I must put this in the first report I send the alliance."

With this burning resolve, Flame-Rain closed her eyes and said with a slightly dispirited expression,

“...Of course, that is if we can survive until then.”

She accessed the Net of Fate with closed eyes. Not long after, her face distorted and blood began to flow out from her eyes, nose, and ears. This always happened.

“Princess...”

The highest-ranked warrior of the Flame Wing Tribe held back his furious tears.



{We give the ‘Berserkers’ approval to reveal some information to the Kundle Tribe. The information that can be revealed are ‘personal details about the Berserkers’ and ‘information about the monsters’. Revealing any information besides this is strictly prohibited.}

{There are 43 days before the first contribution evaluation. Currently, the Berserkers have made 0 contributions. If the contributions are below the threshold, you may receive disciplinary action.}

“Ah... My stomach hurts...”

Baek Seoin let out a sigh.

“Everyone’s expecting us to fail... On the other hand, investments are pouring in for the Sur and Jangkok Troops, so it seems the mining will proceed faster...”

Baek Seoin sighed as he examined the movements of the tactic market he had learned from Camilla and Jessie.

“Ah, how can the troop leader say such weak words? It was you who insisted we find another method besides mining... Ah, damn it. I had hopes that I could get a karma-weapon after this mission... Won’t we flop?”

Handke, the artillery captain, scolded Baek Seoin. He had been restlessly standing up and then back down for a while now.

“Although when I think about how Earth suffered, I want to find a different method

than that cruel one... I'm nervous now that we're actually about to do it. I also think that there's a reason so many people use that method... When I read the data Jinhee brought, cases where they trained species who were as bad at fighting as the Kundle Tribe were rare even in the history of the alliance..."

Unfitting of his nickname 'Knight Captain', Ryu Hyunsung, who was quite weak-hearted, revealed his nervousness.

Then Guardian Bae Jinman, who had been silently sitting, calmly said,

"We'll know soon enough. Don't worry. Haven't we, the Berserkers, always tread the path others don't? We will come out victorious this time as well."

Although they weren't much, his words possessed a strange strength. The executives, who had been nervous before the start of their plan, were finally able to calm down.

"Hey, the man's right. Well, have we ever acted while calculating this and that? We just shut up and fought when the leader told us to. Whether it's the alliance or the tactic market, you'll only get a headache thinking about them. Didn't we get Clan Leader Camilla and Jessie to do those annoying things for us anyways?"

Handke grinned while agreeing with Bae Jinman's words and sitting back down. Only then did his attitude seem calm.

Looking at him, the other executives relaxed their stiffened shoulders. Unlike the past, where they simply had to fight, there was a moral and political element this time, and when profits were added into the mix, their minds unconsciously became more complicated. However, their job right now was basically the same as before. They simply had to advance with all their might until they reached their goal. Whether they were dealing with monsters or getting results for the recruit training, nothing changed.

However, the tension that had relaxed slightly tightened up with Baek Seoin's next words.

"We're starting!"

Gulp.

They heard someone swallow his saliva.

Ggoong!

Space distorted on the Kundle Planet and a gate opened. It was a long-distance gate they had rented with the Mission Points the Camilla Clan and Jessie Clan had invested.

The Berserkers, led by Lee Jinhee, jumped out from inside. Then monsters poured out right behind them. Endlessly.

“...Aren’t there too many?”

Ryu Hyunsung said with a gulp.

“The leader did say to gather enough that it would be difficult for us... But that’s going to be really tough...?”

The Berserker troop Lee Jinhee was leading was a bloody mess. Monsters poured out endlessly from the gate. Each and every one of them wasn’t easy to deal with.

The Berserkers shook off the monsters’ endless pursuit and ran towards the Kundle Tribe’s cities. Saliva dripping from their mouths, the monsters chased after them.

As soon as a Kundle Tribe’s city entered their sights, the Berserkers fiercely shook off the monsters chasing them and teleported to Naro’s spaceship.

Lights from teleportation flickered throughout the planet.

All that was left were the cities in danger and the monsters.

Hell arrived on the Kundle Planet.

{Hey, you crazy bastard! What are you doing bringing the monsters here?!! If you’re going to bring them, you should have brought in a moderate amount! Just how many Kahur Kabkuns did you drag over here?! You pieces of monster shit! We’re doing recruit training to take control of resources, yet are you going to just offer up these resources to the monsters?! What are you doing?! Are you screwing things up because you can’t win?!}

It seemed he was very angry as Hashishi's message came down on Naro's spaceship like thunder. His message was so loud it seemed like he ignored the communication channels and turned the speakers on.

{The New Recruit Evaluation Agency expresses their concern for the Berserkers' actions. Losses to resources may be immense due to the monsters' slaughter. We hope that you will wrap this situation up as soon as possible. Once again, this is a warning.}

They even received tons of messages from an alliance agency.

The situation on the Kundle Planet was that severe.

The Kundle Tribe was faced with extinction within half a day. This place was hell.

If it was like before, they would have all gone into hibernation, but the Kundle Tribe weren't certain of what to do because of the other members who had lost their karma.

"Le-let's sleep."

A Kundle Tribe member said.

"Then what about Kunkun! Shut up and run!"

They carried those who had lost their karma and ran down the streets.

"Stop them! We won't die so let's block them with our bodies!"

Many Kundle Tribe members blocked the monsters for their tribe members who had lost their karma.

"Gack! Pointy! Hot! What is this?! Aaah!":

"What? What?! Lunlun!! Lunlun! Why aren't you moving?? Hey! Hey!!!"

The others fell into a greater state of panic.

If they had all went into hibernation together, they would have died in peace without knowing they had died, but as they didn't hibernate to protect those without karma,

they watched as their tribe members were ripped apart and killed by the monsters, their regenerative abilities being powerless. Even if they somehow survived, they couldn't keep their heads straight under the pain they had never experienced before. Their wounds ached and felt as though they were burning.

The Kundle Tribe's karma was completely overwhelmed by the monsters' power and their wounds didn't close.

"Hehe, I'm fine. I'm fine. I'll be fine when I wake up from a nap..."

"Pointy, hot fire... It's not something we can beat... It'll be fine if we fall asleep."

Their instinctive fear of heat was overlaid on the monsters. The Kundle Tribe members began to call the monsters 'pointy fires'. Out of instinct, the Kundle Tribe members tried to go into hibernation to avoid this danger. Their long force of habit didn't disappear.

Bae Jinman, who had been nervously watching this, got up from his seat.

"It's time for me to act."

Like what he did in the underground before, Bae Jinman granted resolve to a few Kundle Tribe members. His steadfast karma swept the ground.

"No, no. We need to do something... Or we'll all die...!"

Those affected by Bae Jinman's karma raised their heads and shouted. However, there was a limit to Bae Jinman's power so there wasn't even a handful of those who pulled themselves together.

"There's nothing we can do... It'll be fine when we wake up. Hasn't it always been the case?"

The majority of the Kundle Tribe members still chose to disconnect from their surroundings and hibernate.

{I'll help as well.}

It was Naro who acted in this moment. Naro, who could perfectly transmit one's emotions and thoughts through telepathy without the need for language, copied the emotions of those who were affected by Bae Jinman and transmitted them to all the Kundle Tribe members.

Although the Berserkers used up all the karma fuel they had bought with their Mission Points in the process, this mission was no different from risking everything. They couldn't hold anything back. They focused on one result.

"Huh...?"

Those who received the emotions of the members who felt that they absolutely had to find a solution blankly stood in place.

'We can't hibernate. We need to find another way. Or else we'll all die!'

Those earnest hearts moved their own slightly. They asked themselves,

'Then what do we need to do? What can we do?'

There was nothing. No matter how much they thought about it, there was no solution.

As they thought this, the emotion of 'fear', which had been in deep slumber until now, grew larger and larger.

"What is this feeling? I don't know. I can't bear it. Can't I just sleep?"

"No, I hate the pointy fires..."

The faces of the Kundle Tribe members distorted. This was the first time they were making this expression.

However, this was as far as they changed.

It was impossible to change the attitude of an entire species with only Bae Jinman and Naro's power.

They only made them hesitate for a moment and made them more emotional.

The Kundle Tribe members were a bit more distressed, but they still were about to choose to hibernate.

However, it was at this moment when Baek Seoin felt shivers run down his spine.

The 'slight distress' was all Baek Seoin had hoped for.

The crack that would make their always-calm hearts waver.

Baek Seoin clenched his fists and stood up.

“Good! Now start stage two!”

Following his shout, the Berserkers, who had been observing the situation from Naro's spaceship, got up simultaneously.

“Descent!”

All the Berserkers simultaneously prepared their bodies for teleportation. Their destination was the Kundle Planet's sky.

Rumble!!

At the same time, dark clouds covered the planet.

“Haha! The alliance's technology is the best! Anything is possible as long as we have Mission Points!”

Overseer Jessie shouted as he jumped up. The scene progressed naturally as though he had become a god. Rain covered the hot planet. This supernatural scene was under his direction.

Rain began to fall from the dark clouds, which covered the sky. It was the first time there was rain since the birth of the planet.

“Huh?”

The bodies of the Kundle Tribe members, who were about to sleep, trembled as they

felt the rain fall on their cheeks and bodies.

“What’s this?”

It was their first time seeing rain, but their hearts surged.

Cool rain fell as it covered the sun.

The rain fell while soothing their hearts, which had been filled with fear of the ‘pointy fires’. More and more rain began to fall. They couldn’t see in front of them. It wasn’t that the monsters had disappeared, but once their vision was covered, their hearts became calm for some reason.

“Ah, ah, ah...”

The Kundle Tribe members all began to cry. Even if they had teared up from laughing before, the Kundle Tribe members, who had never cried from sadness or from being moved, cried because of the falling rain.

The refreshing rain gave their hearts, which had been trembling from the fear of those ‘pointy fires’, hope.

Also, the Berserkers fell from the sky.

Bang, bang, bang!!

The Berserkers split the heads of the monsters as they dropped down.

The Kundle Tribe members widened their eyes.

The monsters they had no way of fighting against were being pulverized like rotten tomatoes.

It was at this time when Choi Hyuk stepped onto the ground.

Thump!

The moment his foot touched the ground, the raindrops which had covered their

vision was cut up with a splash. They clearly saw the monsters collapsing after being cut in two as their vision cleared up.

Then Choi Hyuk mumbled.

{Let's fight together.}

His voice pierced the hearts of the Kundle Tribe members.

CHAPTER 137

SPECIES BLOOM AND WILT (3)

In the central square of Naro's spaceship was a sky.

The sky, which imitated the exact sky of the naroling's past planet, was a light-yellow color. A fist-sized celestial body was emitting a slightly yellowish-green sunlight which gently blended into the sky, much like cream.

The light-yellow color and yellowish-green sunlight swayed on the floor of the central square, which was composed of glass plates, like an illusion.

The illusionary light rays fell on the expressionless naroling corpses below the glass and made it appear as though they were smiling somewhat.

Camilla was sitting on her knees in the middle of the central square.

Next to her was Penelope, also known as the Knight of Honor, standing with her hands clasped together.

"Are you okay, unni?"

Penelope asked carefully after discovering a teardrop running down Camilla's cheek.

"Huh...? Ah, a teardrop..."

Camilla wiped the single teardrop on her cheek with her right hand. She raised her head and took a deep breath.

"The narolings' planet is beautiful as well. As much as Earth."

Her voice was thick with nostalgia.

"I went to our homeland before we came here... Since it might be the last."

At her words, Penelope's body flinched as though she had been hit.

"Unni... Why did you go...? It's obvious anyways..."

“You’re right. It was obvious. The sky turned into an ash-grey. The ground was dried up and cracked. There wasn’t a trace of a river, and the cities were piles of concrete with sinkholes so deep they reached the core.”

Camilla chuckled.

“To be honest, I wasn’t even sure that it was our homeland.”

The sky and land the earthlings had loved were gone forever. Even from outer space, Earth was now a lump of grey rock. Most likely, it would turn into dust and disappear into outer space forever by the time this mission was over.

Camilla swept the tips of her fingers on the glass. The species that had only left behind the A.I. known as ‘Naro’ before going extinct. Only their external appearances remained here. While some could say that they could revive them with biotechnology... It was useless. This was so karmically. Their fate and history had already been smashed to pieces, and even their remaining feeble fate had already been collected by the alliance. Even if they genetically revived the narolings, they couldn’t be the narolings. They only looked similar, the paths of their fates would be completely different. The cloned narolings would not have any retribution and, accompanying this, they wouldn’t have a fate or any rights. Although they might appear the same as the narolings, they would face malicious coincidences and degrade over time. This was fate.

After spending a vast amount of time in this endless degradation, they would create a new karma suitable for them, and the newly born species would be very different from the narolings. What decided the identity of an existence was the path of retribution it had walked, not its biological composition. The basics of karma. Naro knew this as well and so did the earthlings now.

Camilla gazed at the completely extinct species as she was overwhelmed with grief.

“We are all different but the same. Existences appear and disappear like a sudden shower. Which is why they are beautiful...”

Camilla gently swept the top of the glass. Her hand couldn’t reach the naroling corpses. It was like the fates of the earthlings and narolings that would never intertwine.

Camilla stood up. Next to her was a screen displaying the Kundle Planet.

Her gaze was now fixed on the Kundle Tribe members fighting alongside the Berserkers.

Driven by the Berserkers' madness, the Kundle Tribe members threw themselves at death.

It was all in vain. Even if they had the assistance of the Berserkers, they were only at the 0-1-star level. They were of no use against the monsters that were at least of the 2-star level and on average were at the 3-star level. They simply caught the monsters' attention and made the Berserkers' fight easier while they died regretfully.

The pouring rain and the mountain of corpses washed by this rain.

Camilla's eyes regained their calm.

"They are weak... but there is no god. Even if they struggle, no one will look back at them. This is the universe. You either survive through your own strength or die. If that's the case..."

Swish.

A sword and shield appeared in the air and were grasped by Camilla's two hands. She said,

"We will be each other's gods. If not me... Who else?"

Swoooooosh!

It sounded like flowing water. A refreshing fragrance spread out from Camilla's body.

Unlike Choi Hyuk, whose flames gushed out with his karma heart as the core, her karma ran down her spine like a waterfall and spread out densely like mist. This was the result of improving the karma training method she had obtained from the alliance in her own way.

Seeing Camilla finish her preparations, Penelope opened the communication channel connected to the Valkyries.

“All forces...”

After saying her preparatory command,

“Valkyries, advance.”

And following Camilla’s words, she commanded,

“Advance!”

The third stage of Baek Seoin’s new Kundle Tribe training method began.

Vrroooooom!

A change occurred on the battlefield where the corpses of Kundle Tribe members were plastered over the monster corpses. A milk-white, semi-transparent dome surged up along the frontlines.

At the same time, the restricted karma of the hundred million Kundle Tribe members was released. The Kundle Tribe members who dragged their heavy bodies to fight suddenly felt their bodies become lighter.

“Huh?”

They felt as though something was changing. It was different from the change they felt when the Berserkers appeared previously. This time, the change was warmer and gave them relief.

Sovereign Jessie proposed that this would be the best time to release their restrictions. Also...

“Gaah... Huh?”

“Huh?”

The wounds that didn’t heal because they were suppressed by the power of the monsters began to stanch like magic. This was the effect of the Valkyries, who were known as Earth’s best healing organization.

“Since their regenerative abilities are outstanding already, a buff that raises their spirit is enough!”

Penelope commanded,

“Slowly send the Kundle Tribe members back as you heal them! Have them evacuate inside the dome!”

Following her orders, the Kundle Tribe members, who were fighting the monsters, were led by the Valkyries and backed away from the frontlines. The Kundle Tribe members, who had fought amongst the Berserkers without knowing whether they would die, were able to catch their breath under the Valkyries’ gentle care.

On the other hand, Camilla stood on the frontlines next to Choi Hyuk.

“The Swords of Paradise will create a defensive line around the dome! Hold down the frontlines with the Berserkers!”

Shwah!

Her karma, which spread densely around her, recovered the Berserkers’ exhausted bodies and heavily suppressed the monsters’ raging karma.

Her single strike didn’t possess the intensity Choi Hyuk’s did, but in front her, monsters would become unenergetic like cockroaches that had been sprayed with bug spray and die.

When the Kundle Tribe members fell back, the Berserkers would face more pressure, but with the support of Camilla and her elites, the Swords of Paradise, they were able to maintain the frontlines without many losses.

Plip, ploop, plip!

Rain continued to fall. They finished evacuating the Kundle Tribe members, who had fought like they were entranced until they died, inside the dome. The sky was dark. As the heat from the battle and the coldness of the rain, which ran down their skin, mixed together, the Kundle Tribe members shivered.

The intense battle didn't stop once during this time.

“What the heck is going on...?”

“Haa... Haaa... Are they still alive...?”

“What are they...? Incredible...”

While soaked in rain, the Kundle Tribe members gathered together and watched the battle ongoing outside the dome as their bodies shivered.

As expected, the most eye-catching person was Choi Hyuk. Choi Hyuk, who hadn't used flames in case the Kundle Tribe members would become chaotic, used flames without care on the battlefield now that they were gone. His flames surged upwards as they devoured the heavy rainfall. His flames even devoured the thick mist and scattered their brilliant lights. Even when his flames, which were terrifying and as red as blood, met the heavy rain, it was a beautiful sight, like an illusion.

The scary monsters couldn't flee when facing Choi Hyuk and became ash while trembling.

“The shadow of flames...”

A Kundle Tribe member said exasperatedly. The Kundle Tribe, which disliked the suns, had a particular meaning in the word 'shadow'. Hearing this, the other Kundle Tribe members nodded and spread the word. The shadow of flames. Shadow of flames. “Flames of protection...”

The Kundle Tribe instinctively felt fear when they saw the flames, but what they felt this time wasn't simply fear. A mixture of fear and respect, 'awe'. To them, Choi Hyuk was a hope and fear that descended from the sky. He was like a god.

There was also Camilla. Her karma squirmed as it mixed with the pouring rain. As if a dragon was ascending into the heavens, every place she passed, the rain would distort to create a fantastical scene. Also, the monsters fell down as though they fell asleep under the cold rain.

Behind them were the Berserkers and the Valkyries. The monsters pushed forward endlessly, but they couldn't reach the dome. They were pounded into meat paste and washed down by the rain before they could.

When they took a step back to watch, the scene sent shivers down their spines. They couldn't believe the fact that they fought alongside them in this great, frightening war.

'Could I fight amongst them again?'

They didn't dare to.

Their hands simply trembled with shock and emotions. As his body trembled, a Kundle Tribe member asked a Valkyrie who let them inside the dome,

"Who are you?"

The Valkyrie replied,

"We are the Berserkers who fight monsters. We came here to fight alongside you who have been invaded."

At the reply, the Kundle Tribe members let out a shout.

"As expected... They came to save us."

"They came down from the sky to save us..."

The Kundle Tribe members, who had only now awakened their forgotten emotions, were naïve like children. The recent incidents were too difficult for them, who had never encountered monsters before. The rescue that arrived when they were at their wit's end, like welcome rain, gave them an entrancing sense of comfort that they had never experienced before. In their eyes, the Berserkers were the envoys of gods, angels.

Like newly hatched baby chicks, they imprinted the name 'Berserkers'. This was all according to Baek Seoin's script. The Camilla Clan and Jessie Clan involved in the plan couldn't reveal their affiliation. In this moment, their role was to simply engrave goodwill in the hearts of the Kundle Tribe members towards the Berserkers.

The Kundle Tribe members were touched to an uncomfortable degree.

However, the Valkyries didn't only provide the Kundle Tribe with goodwill.

“We didn’t come to save you.”

“Pardon?”

“Didn’t you hear what Leader Choi Hyuk said? We came here to ‘fight alongside’ you.”

“Ah...”

Only then did they awaken to their reality. Their bodies unwittingly flinched. Although they fought previously because they were led into a frenzy under Choi Hyuk’s words, their instinct to survive awakened now that they had a short break. To fight again... They couldn’t.

However, the Valkyrie’s smile was full of confidence as he gazed at them.

“Don’t worry. We will fight alongside you.”

Was this a signal?

The Valkyries, who had all awakened the karma trait ‘Heal’, used their powers simultaneously. The emotion sharing device they had prepared with the investment from the Camilla Clan activated. The milk-white dome shined brightly. Bae Jinman and Naro gave a hand on top of that.

The Camilla Clan was a gathering of all the self-sacrificing people amongst the earthlings. Their noble hearts influenced the Trundle Tribe’s minds.

Something warm and gentle yet steadfast filled the hearts of the Kundle Tribe. A heart that was more broad and steadfast than anyone’s came down on the Kundle Tribe’s hearts.

Camilla’s voice faintly brushed their ears.

‘Let’s not go extinct. I will fight for you.’

This wasn’t a normal vow of protection. When Camilla said ‘I’, each Kundle Tribe member, whose hearts were being influenced, thought of ‘themselves’. An oath that, not ‘you’, but ‘I’ would ‘fight for myself’ even if ‘I’ was weak. The eyes of the Kundle Tribe members shined like stars.

This was the third stage of Baek Seoin's plan. The script where the Kundle Tribe would awaken as warriors had passed the beginning and developmental stages and had now reached the 'turning point'.

It was the tempering stage.

In the second stage, with the addition of the Berserkers' madness and Jessie's directing, they drew out the Kundle Tribe's forgotten emotions to their extremes. Since it was to the point where the well-behaved species would throw themselves at the monsters, it was a great success. However, a passing flame would simply burn everything and only leave ashes.

Hot steel would become stronger once it was cooled then reheated. Camilla's appearance was the cold water, which cooled the hot steel, the anvil, and the hammer.

The entire process progressed as smoothly as flowing water.

"Inside this dome, you will rest and learn fighting techniques!"

Jessie's troops, the 'Extremers', who could be considered the greatest in developing and supplying refined fighting techniques, appeared and taught the Kundle Tribe.

"Those who have recovered while training will be sent to battle in teams!"

With Naro's transcendental intelligence, they were instantly divided into teams. A healer from the Valkyries was assigned to each team to reduce the death rate of the Kundle Tribe.

It was now the real fight.

"Woaaah!!!"

"Block them! That's right! Block and hit! What are you doing?! Hit them! You fool!"

It was a real fight without even the slightest mercy. The Berserkers, who didn't know how to act, stubbornly pushed the Kundle Tribe members.

"No matter how strong the monsters are and no matter how weak you are, block and attack when you need to!"

They were Berserkers straight and through. They didn't hesitate to kick indecisive Kundle Tribe members in front of the monsters. If the Valkyries' healers weren't present, then countless Kundle Tribe members would have died. After experiencing the hellish real battle, they would take a break in the cozy dome and receive training.

Following the system that was created while they were dazed, the Kundle Tribe was thrown into battle and then allowed to take a break while learning and polishing up their fighting techniques before being thrown into battle again.

The monsters were as strong and numerous as the time Dragonic struggled under the tidal wave of monsters. It wasn't a war that would end overnight.

Even the Berserkers, whose karma were exhausted from fighting, moved into the dome at the back. However, they didn't simply rest there either. Like workaholics, they didn't take a rest as they taught the Kundle Tribe.

Unlike the considerate and refined training style of the Extremers, theirs was rough and explanations were nonexistent.

“Guuueeeck!”

A Kundle Tribe member was cut in half by a Berserker's strike. A healer from the Valkyries quickly came over, put both halves of his body together and healed him. The body of the Kundle Tribe member, who almost died, trembled.

However, the Berserker gave him a pathetic look and mocked,

“How can someone who can't even block this attack block monsters?”

This was the Berserkers' training style. Pushing them to overcome their obstacles. Their attitude was, 'if they could overcome it on their own, they could become Berserkers, if not, they should apply to a different troop'.

Of course, many Kundle Tribe members couldn't overcome the obstacles. However, there were people hired for situations like this. The Extremers guided the Kundle Tribe members, who were dispirited because of the Berserkers, courteously once again.

“When you think you see a flash, move your feet this way and bring your karma from the left to the right...”

Like this, the Kundle Tribe members, who learned these techniques, repeatedly challenged the Berserkers again and again, before they were rolling on the ground screaming. They repeatedly went from hot to cold, and their emotions kept going back and forth between being calm and desperate, gradually tempering them. The steel-like will provided by Camilla’s troops kept the weak-willed Kundle Tribe members together.

This period, which felt like an eternity, passed day after day, and the Kundle Tribe members slowly became stronger.

Everything was proceeding as planned. However, this wasn’t a leisurely situation.

The training the Kundle Tribe members were undergoing was incomparably systematic and safer than the training the earthlings had undergone... But their progress was slower than the earthlings.

It wasn’t the Kundle Tribe’s fault. It was because they couldn’t use the ‘warrior training system’ where they received a portion of the karma mined from the planet. Since the Berserkers chose a completely different path from the Sur and the Jangkok Troops, the mined karma was in the complete possession of the alliance and the two troops. While the Kundle Tribe diligently killed monsters, since they couldn’t receive extra karma from the planet, their progress couldn’t help but be slow.

There were 40 days until the first contributions evaluation.

They had to obtain results within this time. If they didn’t, they would be in a situation where they couldn’t avoid disciplinary action from the alliance and would suffer losses.

Since Lee Jinhee rounded up enough monsters to suit Choi Hyuk’s preferences, if the Kundle Tribe, who numbered more than the monsters, didn’t pull their weight, it was an intense war where the Berserkers, Extremers, and Valkyries would not be able to avoid taking huge losses.

It wasn't only the Kundle Tribe that was desperate.

Within this war where blood didn't even have a chance to dry, time kept flowing.

CHAPTER 138

SPECIES BLOOM AND WILT (4)

A Kundle Tribe member was being chewed on by a monster. The monster, which looked like a wolf, shoved its head in, biting into the Kundle Tribe member's sausage-like body and swallowing.

"Ahhh..."

The Kundle Tribe member, completely restrained by the monster, could only shed tears as he pled,

"Please... Please... Stop... Acck!"

However, as though it couldn't hear his words, the monster bit off his head and swallowed it. There was no one to save him. Team 8,321 had completely collapsed and had been utterly trampled by the monsters.

"Huck!"

The healer from the Valkyries, who had tried to save everyone in Team 8,321, was pressed under a monster. The monster, whose limbs were transparent like glass and possessed a long tongue like a snake's, chuckled. It was a monster at the 4-star level that knew how to talk.

"Are you scared? Scared?"

The monster chuckled as it used its long tongue to carve out one of the healer's eyes, swallowing it.

"Euaah!"

The healer squirmed, but the monster stepped on his arms and legs as if he was a toy, turning them into paste. Closing his remaining eye, the healer shook his head. When the monster's fingertip brushed past the healer's eye, his eyelid was sliced off. The monster gently licked his eye, which couldn't blink without an eyelid.

“Should I let you live? Huh? Do you want to live?”

The monster brought a dying female member of the Extremers, whose stomach was pierced, in front of the healer. A bit of her guts spilled out from her pierced stomach.

“Eat. Eat? I’ll let you live. I’ll let you live?”

The monsters that could talk were ones that learned the emotions of the karmalings. They didn’t simply slaughter people but also knew how to step on their pride and dignity and make them tremble in fear.

“You’re not eating. You’re not?”

“Healer! Healer!”

The last remaining Kundle Tribe member of Team 8,321, Moonmoon, shouted mournfully as he rolled on the ground. The healer, who had warmly taken care of their wounds since their team was established, was being mercilessly trampled on in front of him. Moonmoon felt like he would go crazy with agony.

“Loud. You’re loud? Then you eat. Here, eat?”

The monster ripped open the healer’s stomach with its hands. It then pushed the steaming stomach in front of Moonmoon.

“Open your mouth. Open?”

Moonmoon shook his head. The monster forcefully opened his mouth and shoved the healer’s flesh and organs into it. As Kundle Tribe members lived on sunlight and dust from the ground, they didn’t have a digestive tract, only a respiratory one. The monster filled Moonmoon’s windpipe by shoving the healer’s flesh and organs into it. Moonmoon wretched, but he couldn’t match the power of the monster that was forcefully shoving them down his windpipe. Even now, the healer hadn’t died and was shaking his head in agony. “Please, please... Stop...” His pitiful moans dispersed in vain. Beside him was a Berserker who had resisted until the very end. His face had been completely ripped apart and his corpse was sprawled like trash.

Moonmoon shed tears.

He was powerless. He hated himself for having felt proud, thinking he had gotten a

little stronger. The moment he encountered a powerful monster... his growth until now was completely inadequate.

'Growth? What's the point of that? Growth isn't important. Not losing is! Just what have I been doing all this time?!

He inwardly despaired as his windpipe was blocked and he couldn't breathe properly. As he cried, his regrets had nowhere to go.

"...You fucking asshole...!"

Just then, accompanied by a curse filled with bloodthirst, something flashed in front of his eyes. A small figure. He was a young Berserker. He was Lee Jinhee's eternal follower, Alexei.

"Kiyack?!"

The monster, who had been full of confidence, was flustered by Alexei's sudden attack and retreated. Alexei nimbly stepped on mid-air and swung his sword at the monster's face.

Clang!

However, the monster was at the 4-star level. It blocked Alexei's sword with its transparent arm at the last moment.

"Kihi! You eat too. Huh? Feed you?"

It seemed it was slightly relieved after blocking his attack as the monster mocked him. However, Alexei didn't reply and lowered his head as he pressed his sword down. His head rushed in like lightning and bit down on the monster's neck.

"Kik?"

Pwaaaah!

Alexei ripped its throat out with his teeth. A lot of black blood spewed out into the air. Alexei stabbed his sword into the monster's head, which had lost its balance, embedding it into the ground.

Thud.

The 4-star monster that had been a nightmare for Moonmoon and Team 8,321 had instantly died and was slammed to the ground. This was the skill of Alexei, a top elite of the Berserkers, who was known to have the highest seniority amongst those on the level of team leaders

Alexei chewed on the monster's throat he had ripped out before spitting it out.

"Fuck. Tastes like shit..."

His eyes were different from the ones of a love-struck youth when he was in front of Lee Jinhee. With eyes shining with madness, he glanced at the monster before looking around the battlefield for another elite monster.

Moonmoon hastily got up.

"Reeetch! Reetch!"

While vomiting the healer's flesh, which filled his windpipe, he clung onto Alexei's leg.

"What the hell?"

Alexei stared menacingly down at Moonmoon.

Moonmoon clung onto Alexei's pant leg and shouted,

"I want to become stronger... I want to become stronger! Please teach me! Please, I beg of you!"

Moonmoon's eyes shed tears mixed with blood.

Alexei heartlessly broke free from Moonmoon's grasp.

"What are you saying? You're looking for a way to get stronger in the middle of war? Look for that as a hobby. For now, just fight. Is your opponent stronger than you? Then what can you do besides getting devoured? But, while you're being devoured, bite and rip open its esophagus or stomach. Just think about how you will wound it. Stop

crying. If you survive by luck, then at some point, you won't die easily."

Alexei clicked his tongue.

After he left, Moonmoon, who rolled on the ground like trash, screamed.

He cursed at how weak he was, he even cursed his sadness.

He wanted to become like the Berserkers.

He wanted to be like them, who only thought about stabbing monsters' bodies with their swords even while their faces were being ripped apart. He felt that, if he became a Berserker, this pain that made him want to go crazy would disappear.

"Euaah! Euuuuuuaahhh!"

Moonmoon screamed. At the same time, a change occurred in his body.

Under this extreme stress, his genes quickly caused a mutation. It was the genetic mutation they had originally used for entertainment. Moonmoon's body bent in strange ways before returning to normal. It then sprouted wings before returning to normal. His arms and legs thickened before thinning, and his skin became hard before melting... However, in the end, he returned to his normal appearance.

As if he was dead, he was silent for a moment before getting up. He didn't tremble anymore. He looked calm. Only, his eyes were dyed red. His eyes emitted a terrifying killing intent.

"Grrr..."

This was the moment the gene known as the 'Berserker Gene' amongst the Kundle Tribe members was first created.

As a characteristic of their genetic mutation, it wasn't a trait that would last forever,

but at least, for a moment, these mild Kundle Tribe members could become bloodthirsty demons.

It wasn't a will created by Camilla or Bae Jinman, but one they created themselves.



“Their movements have become better these days?”

At Baek Seoin's question, Leah replied,

“Yes. They are changing their personality on their own by using their ‘genetic mutation’. It's not permanent as it seems they turn it on like a switch during battle or training... Either way, even without the Camilla Clan forcefully boosting their will, there's no doubt they can function on their own. It seems that the Valkyrie's burden lessened because of this as well.”

Baek Seoin's lips curled into a smile.

“It's the fourth stage.”

The last stage of the warrior training he had created. It was precisely the stage where the Kundle Tribe motivated themselves without any external interference. It was something he had thought of when he first saw their genetic mutation in the market, but it worked out as expected.

However, his smile soon turned bitter.

“But there are too many monsters.”

Drawing in powerful monsters was incredibly risky. The monsters that appeared on Earth were only of the 1-2-star level. On top of that, there hadn't been a lot of them. The troops in charge of recruit training were more than enough to deal with them. However, the monsters currently sweeping through the Kundle Planet were at a level that could utterly destroy an entire planet. The Berserkers, the Valkyries, and the Extremers couldn't avoid suffering losses.

On top of that, they received a final notice from the alliance.

{Intentionally letting monsters invade a new planet is a grave crime. We will no longer stand the plundering of resources. In the case you do not seize complete victory against the monsters and obtain results beyond the resources that have been lost, the alliance will immediately dispatch a punitive force to suppress the monsters. We will disqualify the Berserkers from the recruit training mission and take disciplinary measures.}

It was a notice of unmatched strictness. This was the result of Manta and Hashishi, who were furious with the Berserkers' actions, resolutely sending an appeal to the alliance.

There were only 20 days left before the first evaluation.

The monsters' force was still powerful. Yet, Choi Hyuk, who had to take down the monsters' vigorous attack, acted leisurely. Even now, he didn't go out onto the battlefield and spent his time sitting in the command room of Naro's spaceship in contemplation.

Baek Seoin sighed.

"Leader. Can't we act a little safer? I think this much is enough... If we keep dragging it on, the gap between us and the Sur and Jangkok troops will only get wider."

Baek Seoin had a plan. However, the master of the Berserkers wasn't Baek Seoin but Choi Hyuk. Choi Hyuk had long since been carrying out a new plan with Baek Seoin's plan as its base. It was under his command that Lee Jinhee brought over an unbelievable monster army that shattered everyone's expectations.

However, Choi Hyuk wasn't satisfied. He hadn't personally made a move since the first battle. Because of this, the frontlines were frozen, repeatedly advancing and retreating. There was no progress. Although they were all constantly growing because of this, their losses were gradually accumulating as well. Even now, the monsters continued to pour in from the gate. On the other hand, the Sur and Jangkok Troops were expending all their energy on mining the planet to completely leave Choi Hyuk's troops behind.

"Just how far are you thinking?"

Baek Seoin felt frustrated at Choi Hyuk's lack of reply as he looked at Lee Jinhee. 'Just what is the leader waiting for?' He asked with his eyes. Lee Jinhee avoided his gaze.

Choi Hyuk was waiting for the monsters' force to grow larger. However, he didn't state exactly how big he wanted their force to be. Every time Baek Seoin asked, 'Isn't this enough?' Choi Hyuk would shake his head.

Baek Seoin, who sighed once again today, suddenly became surprised.

The tips of his fingers trembled.

"...Huh? Huh?"

Baek Seoin's innate skill, Intuition, had activated. His Intuition only activated when a situation where his life was at risk approached. It had been a long time since it last activated.

"What's wrong?"

Leah asked in surprise. However, Baek Seoin didn't answer and looked at Choi Hyuk.

"Leader... Don't tell me...?"

Just then, what Baek Seoin felt through his Intuition, Choi Hyuk had discovered with his keen senses. He opened his eyes, which had remained closed. On his face hung a satisfied smile.

"Baek hyung. Your plan this time was very good, but there was something that bothered me."

Choi Hyuk held his Sword of Vow and got up.

"I don't like tricking people and performing. Being conscious of the alliance is enough. There's no need to perform in front of a species weaker than us, right?"

His gaze was fixed on the gate Lee Jinhee had opened on the Kundle Planet. A hand was coming out from beyond the gate. It exuded an ominous feeling.

"If we decided to bring the Kundle Tribe onto our side... It's only right we enter hell together, right? Aren't comrades people you overcome hardships with? Including me, of course."

{Karma reaction! It's a monster at the peak of the high rank! It's stro... strong to a

bizarre degree! It's stronger than Commander Mack!}

Naro shouted.

"Uh... Uh... Something's weird...?"

Lee Jinhee, who had been tasked with the duty of drawing monsters in, spat as she turned pale. Only Choi Hyuk looked like he found this fun.

A monster that possessed a gigantic horn and hands came out from the gate. However, the real threat was elsewhere.

No matter how one looked at it, a figure that looked like a human stood arrogantly on top of the enormous monster. If it wasn't for its eyes, which were black with white pupils, it would certainly look like an earthling.

It was a never before seen monster that looked entirely human.

When it hit the enormous monster's head with a thud,

{Kuaaaah!}

The enormous monster let out a roar like a loyal dog. Its roar rang throughout the planet. Surprised by its vigor, everyone stopped fighting. Even the Sur and Jangkok Troops stopped mining.

Everyone shuddered at the appearance of the new monsters.

Choi Hyuk's smile deepened.

"I can't let the Sur and Jangkok Troops just watch. Now... Let's test who will survive this hell."



{Choi Hyuk this bastard... He's strangely passive in pushing the monsters back, isn't he? Since he's a high-ranked warrior, he should be able to push them back with his strength, but he's just watching. Is he seriously trying to screw us over since he can't win? Shouldn't we at least go out and chase the monsters out? The amount of resources the monsters ate is quite significant.}

Hashishi was, yet again, not in a good mood today because of Choi Hyuk.

{No. Just wait until the first evaluation. Since this loss will entirely be Choi Hyuk's responsibility. If we make a move, it might become a pain later if he says something like we obstructed his training or whatever. He still has authority in this training. It won't look good if we interfere.}

{That's true, but how regretful... }

Hashishi licked his lips. The parts of the planet and Kundle Tribe members the monsters had devoured would have been the karma they would possess under normal circumstances.

However, Manta was at ease.

{It's okay. Because of this, we got to know about the species known as earthlings. They were a species I had underestimated because only Choi Hyuk was famous, but they are better at working than I thought. Our labor costs are only a quarter of what they should be, but our mining speed doubled. They are aggressive and enthusiastic. If Choi Hyuk receives disciplinary measures this time, we should bring more earthlings to our side. I think they'll be decent hunting dogs.}

Manta revealed a satisfied smile.

The earthlings were in a quite isolated position within the alliance. If even Choi Hyuk, who was liked by Leviathan and Commander Mack, was overthrown, then there was no doubt they would become more isolated.

The earthlings had the skills and ambition but didn't have information or resources... And if, on top of that, they didn't have a master to watch their backs either... Then they were up for grabs. Wasn't it the fate of new recruits to say thank you even if they worked for free?

Manta chuckled.

Though, it only took a moment for his face to stiffen.

"...What?"

Hashishi was the same. As if in shock, he jolted up.

“...A high-ranked monster? Is it really a high-ranked monster? But... Why? Why is it so strong?”

“Choi Hyuk that crazy bastard... Just what kind of monster did he bring...?!”

Manta’s leisurely smile disappeared from his face. That wasn’t all. His face quickly turned pale.

“Huh... Huh?!”

The high-ranked monster didn’t head towards the Berserkers. It prioritized the Sur and Jangkok Troops mining inside the planet.

“Immediately! Escape immediately!!”

Manta shouted, but the monster was a step faster.

{Kuaaaah!}

When the enormous monster it was riding roared, the military gate system went down. They couldn’t even communicate, let alone teleport.

{You rats dare plunder my planet?}

Rolling its black eyes, the monster gazed in the precise direction Hashishi and Manta were located. On a planet with three high-ranked warriors, it was exceedingly at ease.

{It’ll be fun if you all came at me at once... Well, should I go after the two gathered together? Then the last one will probably come on its own.}

The recruit training was no longer the problem. The playing field had been completely flipped on its head. All calculations became meaningless.

A real war, where only the strong would survive, began.

CHAPTER 139

SPECIES BLOOM AND WILT (5)

The leader of the Jangkok Troops, Hashishi, held a sword in each hand and a spear with his tail.

“Monster bastard, doesn’t even know its place...”

His pride scratched, his eyes trembled. He acknowledged that the newly appeared monster was strong.

‘But you attack not the Berserkers, but us first?’

When facing multiple enemies, it was the basics of fighting to hit the weakest one first. Whether they looked at it in terms of seniority, average troop level, exhaustion from fighting, or numbers, the weakest in this situation was clearly the Berserkers. However, the newly appeared monster targeted the Jangkok and Sur Troops first solely because it found them an eyesore. Precisely speaking, it targeted Hashishi and Manta first. It was evident that it was looking down on them.

“Fine. I’ll rip your face to shreds.”

Hashishi’s eyes narrowed. As the whiskers on the bridge of his fox-like nose trembled, he shouted.

{Choi Hyuk, you bastard! Don’t even think about joining in! You just stay there and be prepared to be arrested!}

Since their proper communication channels were blocked, he announced this to the entire planet. Next to him, Manta shook his head with an expression that read, ‘Did you really have to go that far?’ but he didn’t go out of his way to restrain or correct him.

Instead, he ordered his subordinates through a planet-wide announcement.

{The Jangkok and Sur Troops will leave their current positions and form a field formation. Those below the middle rank are requested to not join in the fight. The

elites are requested to keep the enormous monster it's riding in check.}

Afterwards, Manta stretched his large shoulders by swinging his arms in a circular motion as he gathered his fighting spirit. Although his rage was surging because of Choi Hyuk's outrageous behavior, he wasn't the type to become agitated before a fight. He calmed his rage as he prepared to fight.

Thuuud!

A gigantic hemispherical shield appeared around him as it filled the space around it. The shield could move freely without him touching it.

"Although it would have been good if we could give Choi Hyuk a beating first... This isn't bad. Let's first take down the monster before reporting Choi Hyuk to the alliance."

Manta calmly composed a plan. The monster was displaying waves of power that well exceeded that of a high-ranked monster, which was why he was nervous. However, he didn't think he would lose.

'Fortunately, my compatibility with Hashishi is pretty good.'

Hashishi was extremely powerful when attacking and Manta's defense was outstanding. He believed that this would be enough to take down the monster. Ofcourse, while there would be unexpected losses, they could simply seize compensation from the Berserkers.

"Come."

Manta quietly chanted after erasing all traces of being flustered and finishing his preparations for battle. No matter what, they were still high-ranked warriors of the alliance. They were great, experienced warriors.

Thud!

It was at this time when the monster appeared in front of them. Compared to the vigor it emitted, it was exceedingly calm and at ease.

"Ah? Were you planning on fighting my friend as well? Ehh? It's too boring if we start

off like that. Friend, you go over there and play.”

It patted the enormous monster like a dog before sending it off towards the Sur and Jangkok Troops who had started their retreat. Then it turned towards Manta and Hashishi and said,

“I hope you will entertain me.”

The monster gave a bright yet brutal smile.



{Choi Hyuk, you bastard! Don't even think about joining in! You just stay there and be prepared to be arrested!}

Hashishi's warning rang loud and clear. Choi Hyuk, who had unsheathed his sword and was preparing for battle, scratched his chin. He looked like he was in a bit of a predicament.

“Don't tell me... that's all?”

He looked at Lee Jinhee with a questioning gaze.

Naro replied in her stead.

{Yes. The Kahur Kabkun that is connected to the gate doesn't have the energy to send more high-ranked monsters than this.}

At its words, Lee Jinhee was flustered.

“Uhhh... That's strange.”

The current situation was unbearable for her. It was because Choi Hyuk was questioning her from the front while Baek Seoin was glaring at her from behind.

“Are you hoping that that isn't all?”

Baek Seoin asked with a dumbfounded voice. Choi Hyuk nodded.

“I told her to gather three or four high-ranked monsters if possible.”

At Choi Hyuk's absurd remark, Baek Seoin's mouth opened agape.

However, this was within Choi Hyuk's calculations. Since there were three high-ranked warriors here, to make it a real mess, they needed at least three high-ranked monsters as well. It would have been perfect if there were four.

But only one high-ranked monster appeared after they opened the gate.

"No, is it two if we consider the monster it's riding...?"

The rider seemed strangely strong for a high-ranked monster and the monster that appeared to be its steed seemed strangely weak for a high-ranked monster.

"Eh...? I definitely stuck four Kahur Kabkuns that could summon high-ranked monsters together. I almost died because of it...!"

Lee Jinhee's expression showed that she felt falsely accused. After going through all that hardship, only one appeared. Even if they considered the one being ridden on, there were only two.

Listening to their conversation, Baek Seoin shouted, almost screaming,

"It's already a huge mess! What more are you hoping for? We've already reached a level where we can't avoid being charged by the alliance!"

Yet, Choi Hyuk's expression showed that he still found this troublesome. The one who came to his defense was Richard's former aide, Leah.

"No. We're already on the tiger's back.^{1} In our current situation, it is better if the monsters are stronger."

Listening to her, Baek Seoin was about to throw a fit, but he suppressed it. When he thought about it, her words weren't wrong.

"Since the situation has already come to this... You're saying that the Kundle Tribe and the Berserkers should achieve a brilliant merit while Manta and Hashishi's troops get trampled on, right...?"

Baek Seoin calmed his agitation while Leah nodded at his words. It seemed she felt that the current situation wasn't good as well since she was biting her lip.

“Yes. If Manta and Hashishi suppress the monsters first because the level of the monsters is poor, then only us Berserkers will be to blame.”

Choi Hyuk had overturned the playing field. This meant that the protagonists of this overturned field had to be Choi Hyuk and the Berserkers. This was the only way they could recover from this situation that had gone too far. This was Choi Hyuk’s original plan as well. If there were three or four monsters, then Manta and Hashishi would take care of one each and Choi Hyuk would take care of the rest. Then he would suppress the monsters before anyone else. His Sword of Vow, the power of dragons he received from Commander Mack, and the absolute confidence he had in himself... this plan was created for the sake of this confidence.

However, his plans went awry from the start. When they opened the gate, only one high-ranked monster appeared. If Manta and Hashishi took it down before him, then Choi Hyuk wouldn’t have any opportunity to gain contributions and would be labeled as a traitor.

As if troubled, he fiddled with his Sword of Vow.

“Then I guess I need to hope that it’s strong enough...”

-Bzzt

Due to the monster’s obstruction, they couldn’t see the battle situation. Choi Hyuk crossed his arms as he looked at the static-filled screen.

Then.

Thuud!

The Kundle Planet shook.

Baaang!!

Like an eruption, the surface of the planet exploded, and from it shot out two warriors and a monster tangled together.

The high-ranked monster and the high-ranked warriors’ fight was great enough to

have an effect on the entire planet. In the end, it was a fight that couldn't be hidden even if they tried.

“We'll know by watching.”

Choi Hyuk's voice lowered.



The monster called itself the 'Punisher'.

It introduced itself as so while saying that it came to 'punish' the warriors of the Flame Wing Alliance who didn't know their place.

Also, it was as strong as its name suggested.

“Kuaaah!!!”

Hashishi shouted while vomiting blood.

Every time he swung the swords in his hands, the Kundle Planet was sliced like tofu. However, the small monster leisurely avoided his attacks.

“Is that all?”

Although they were all high-ranked, the 'Punisher' was on a different level than Manta and Hashishi. Their attacks couldn't touch it, and they also had difficulty dealing with the counterattacks it skillfully launched.

Even still, Manta and Hashishi didn't think they would lose.

'Looking at how it talks, it's a newly born monster. It lacks experience. Also, above all, we have karma weapons.'

From an outside perspective, it looked like Manta and Hashishi were in a one-sided predicament, but in reality, the fight until now was simply them testing each other. Manta and Hashishi had yet to use their karma weapons properly. Against the inexperienced 'Punisher' who looked down on them, they planned on making use of a moment's opportunity to deal it a fatal blow.

“Like this, I’m disappointed... Go and bring the other one too.”

Hashishi gritted his teeth at the ‘Punisher’s provocation.

He thought that this was the time to use his karma weapon. The swords in each of his hands were supplementary weapons anyways. The real weapon he possessed was the Spear of Sentiment ‘Hashishi’s Cruelty’. It was a Weapon of Sentiment that was considered a masterpiece amongst karma weapons.

Hashishi aimed for the leisure the Punisher displayed.

“Euaaah!!”

Hashishi screamed as if he had abandoned himself to despair. This was a calculated move. While the swords in his hands swung exaggeratedly to express rage, his tail holding the spear trembled.

Piing!

His trembling spear, which had been hiding behind Hashishi’s back and waiting for an opportunity like a venomous snake, stopped moving suddenly. Although Hashishi’s body moved forward, his tail, holding the spear, didn’t move as though it was nailed in place. Looking at it from afar, it was a strange scene that reminded one of a mime.

Hashishi’s reckless attacks were all blocked by the Punisher as expected. Hashishi’s momentum naturally came to a halt. The Punisher looked like it was still bored.

“Done?”

It looked disappointed as its hand swung towards Hashishi. The timing was precise. It subtly avoided Hashishi’s final attack, and at the same time, it launched its counter-attack.

However, its attack was blocked by Manta’s shield.

Goong!

Manta drove himself between Hashishi and the Punisher and reflected the monster’s attack with his hemispherical shield. Even though he blocked it with his shield, his body trembled from the monster’s lingering power.

The Punisher's eyes were filled with irritation.

"This pattern is boring."

This pattern of Manta blocking and Hashishi attacking had repeated constantly within this short period of time. The monster was already sick of it. While yawning widely, it gathered its strength in its fist. Although its fist was small compared to Manta's fist, when it clenched its fist, Manta felt like he was being drawn in along with it. This was simply the degree of power gathered in its fist.

'Hashishi, now!'

Manta, who didn't want to take its attack head-on, shouted inwardly.

Fortunately, Hashishi's thoughts aligned with Manta's.

Hashishi's tail, which had been taught like a bow, moved. His spear, which seemed to have been nailed in midair, shot forward. It was the instantaneous attack he had been preparing for!

Hashishi's tail drew a strange line as it went over Manta's shield. It was a completely astonishing attack. The Spear of Sentiment pierced through its mouth, which had been yawning.

"Yeah, it's the end. You asshole."

Drrk!

Hashishi felt the tip of his spear pierce through something.

At the same time, Manta resolutely launched a physical attack at the monster.

Kwiiing!

His hemispherical shield, which had been focused on defending until now, rotated like lightning. It was the karma weapon Manta possessed, the Shield of Sentiment 'Manta's Selfishness'.

Jjoong!

The rotating shield hit the top of the monster's head.

Crack!

Manta's kettle-lid-sized knuckle slammed into its chin.

'We did it!'

Manta cheered. It received two proper blows. They weren't normal blows either but attacks launched with karma weapons.

Karma weapons. While their appearances were that of 'weapons', they were, in fact, similar to lifeforms, existences that were like companions to one's soul. Although they were merely weapons, they were existences that possessed karma like living beings. Objects that confidently displayed their names within the fate of the universe. Because of this, warriors who possessed karma weapons were able to display abilities beyond their capacity. As long as one had a karma weapon, it was no different from fighting as two instead of one.

Even if it was a monster that had reached the peak of high rank, there was no way it was fine after taking two blows from karma weapons. This was because it was not a highest-ranked monster but only a high-ranked one.

'We were able to easily finish the battle due to its carelessness.'

Manta became happy. Since the fight ended quickly, the losses to their troops would be small without a doubt. When he thought about the contributions he obtained from dealing with the high-ranked monster that invaded and the compensation he would rip off from the Berserkers... Choi Hyuk bringing over the monsters was actually beneficial to him.

However, Manta's expression quickly stiffened.

"Uh... Hey. Something's off."

Hashishi's voice was bitter as well.

Ssaaaaa...

The monster's pierced throat and cracked head became hazy like smoke before they

began returning to their original state.

Manta was shocked.

“It immediately recovered wounds inflicted by karma weapons?”

This was impossible unless it was a highest-ranked monster. However, the monster, which had turned to smoke, healed its wound as though they were nothing.

“Look over there.”

While Hashishi had fallen into a state of confusion, Manta quickly comprehended the situation.

“Uh? That... That monster is disappearing?”

What Manta was pointing at was the enormous monster that had accompanied the ‘Punisher’ here. That monster, which had been facing the elites of the Sur and Jangkok Troops, was currently scattering like a fog and gathering towards the ‘Punisher’.

The monster, which had scattered like a fog, mixed with the ‘Punisher’ and healed its wounds. It was a scene they had never seen or heard about. However, the change didn’t end there. Even after all its wounds were treated, the monster and the Punisher’s body continued to mix together before combining into a single entity.

An exoskeleton comprised of bone and leather covered the Punisher’s body, which had originally looked like it was on a stroll, and it now possessed large hands that had sharp blades around them like teeth. An enormous horn sprouted from its head.

It looked like it was wearing the enormous monster... It was an armament that reminded them of karma weapons.

After concluding the change, the Punisher shook its body.

“Woohaa... That hurt a little. Yeah. So were they the karma weapons you guys brag about?”

It aimed its now more brutal looking fists at Manta and Hashishi.

“So that’s why we made something similar to them.”

Shiver.

An unknown chill swept across Manta and Hashishi's skin.

“Protect the leader!!”

The Sur and Jangkok Troops, who felt an ominous feeling, rushed towards the monster like a swarm. Manta and Hashishi didn't stop them. Although there was no way middle-ranked warriors could be a match against the Punisher, if they could create even a slight opening, they could use it to try and land an effective blow.

However-

Bang!

The elites who ran towards it exploded before they could touch it. Their blood formed into a fog, and their shattered bones fell down in every direction like hail.

“Kekek, they just smash apart?”

It seemed the Punisher was happy as it began laughing. Manta was shocked.

“Unbelievable. That isn't a power a high-ranked monster can use...”

As if it heard Manta's astonishment, the monster's eyes curved into a mocking smile.

“That's why I told you. It's similar to the karma weapons you guys have.”

Karma weapons allowed them to overcome their own limits. This was the same.

“After combining with my friend, should I say I've now become destruction itself? I came here to smash your worthless weapons.”

The Punisher's eyes were filled with a hatred mixed with ridicule.

Clench!

As soon as it clenched its fist, Hashishi and Manta felt a pain that felt like their arms and legs were being ripped off.

‘Its fist hasn’t even connected yet!’

This suppression occurred even before their karma could clash. It was similar to the pressure Choi Hyuk felt when facing the highest-ranked monster Narci. At the very least, it was a sensation that Manta and Hashishi shouldn’t feel from a monster that was the same rank as them.

Still, Manta and Hashishi didn’t lose their will to fight.

“Keah!”

Shouting, Manta raised his shield. Behind him, Hashishi coiled his tail around his spear again, tightly holding it.

Looking at them, a smile hung on the monster’s lips.

“Try to block it.”

At the same, its brutal fist swung towards them.

Thuud!!

The Shield of Sentiment ‘Manta’s Selfishness’ was powerlessly pushed back. It was no use even though Manta supported it with his body.

“Do you think we’ll lose?!”

Hashishi, who had been waiting for an opportunity behind Manta, launched a lethal attack. ‘Hashishi’s Cruelty’ revealed its strength as it shot forward like lightning.

Thump.

However, the Punisher easily grabbed the spear with its left hand. The muscles in its arm bulged as ‘Hashishi’s Cruelty’ creaked as though it would snap at any moment.

“W-what?”

Hashishi's face was distorted in confusion. However, that wasn't all.

Bang! Baang!!

It wielded its enormous left hand to grip both Hashishi's spear and Manta's shield before beginning to smash the shield with its right fist.

"Euaaah!"

Manta and Hashishi struggled, but the situation continued one-sidedly. With their spear and shield in its clutches, they were beaten one-sidedly. Manta was busy enduring its attacks, and Hashishi, whose spear was held by it, crazily swung his swords at it but was unable to deal an effective strike.

Gong! Gong!

Manta's shield gradually began to dent after receiving the Punisher's continuous punches.

Ggooong!

With a spine-chilling sound, a fine crack appeared on his shield.

Manta's eyes shook.

"You can break Weapons of Sentiment?"

At the very least, this didn't happen in fights between warriors and monsters of the same rank. This rule was wavering in this moment.

Creeeeak!

Even Hashishi's spear, held in its left hand, was emitting an ominous sound. As soon as they heard this sound, Hashishi and Manta realized.

'We can't win!'

Grinding his teeth, Hashishi shouted. It was an announcement that rang throughout

the entire planet this time as well.

{God damn it! Damn! Damn!! Choi Hyuk, you dumb bastard! Retreat immediately! Retreat then report the situation and call for support!!}

Hashishi wanted to devour Choi Hyuk right now for making the situation like this. However, he judged that it was better if Choi Hyuk brought support rather than dying here. It was a completely new type of monster. If information about it didn't get relayed to the alliance, then the alliance would undoubtedly suffer heavy losses. No matter how much he hated Choi Hyuk, his resentment towards the monsters was obviously deeper than towards Choi Hyuk, who he had only recently met. This was the obvious action a warrior of the alliance should take.

Hashishi and Manta gave up on living. They only thought to keep the Punisher here somehow until support arrived.

Bang! Bang! Clang!

Just then, Manta's shield let out a terrifying sound as it shattered.

Manta's hopeless expression which had been covered by his shield was clearly revealed.

"Toys like this should..."

The Punisher smiled teasingly as it grabbed Hashishi's spear with its now free hand and instantly broke it with a crack.

Its expression showed it was quite refreshed.

"It's now been confirmed. Ours are stronger than your toys."

After brushing its hands, it clenched them into fists.

"Keu..."

"Euk..."

Manta and Hashishi felt pain as if they were being clenched by its fists.

“It’s now time for you to die.”

Its fist swung towards Manta. Manta rotated his body like a windmill so that he wouldn’t be hit by the attack head-on. Although he would die anyways, he needed to somehow endure until support from the alliance arrived.

“Huh?”

However, the face of the Punisher, who had been vigorously swinging its fist at Manta, suddenly changed. It hastily retracted his fist and pulled its body back.

It was a close call. A chilling sword slashed down at the place its arm had been.

Swish.

While devouring the space around it, the blade rang like a living creature. Manta and Hashishi felt goosebumps run across their skin once more.

“I’m in trouble if those two die.”

Choi Hyuk was standing in front of the Punisher. The Sword of Vow ‘Choi Hyuk’s Imprint’ in his hand gave off a chilling light.

“You didn’t flee?”

As if entertained, the Punisher examined Choi Hyuk.

Choi Hyuk didn’t reply as he raised his left hand.

In response to his signal, they heard Camilla’s shout from afar.

“All forces! Advance!!!”

Choi Hyuk turned around to look at Hashishi and Manta, who were completely dazed.

“I’ll handle things here, so you two go down and assist in the war or return to the alliance. Do whatever you want.”

Then, looking at the Punisher, he gave his thanks.

“Thanks for being stronger than I thought.”

Thanks to that, Choi Hyuk was able to conduct his real plan. There was only one thing remaining, killing all the monsters in a desperate battle. During this, the Kundle Tribe would learn what a real war was like right down to their bones.

Gazing at the Punisher, a ferocious smile hung on Choi Hyuk’s lips.

‘Are you stronger than me?’

His smile asked.

{1} A desperate situation where you can’t get off a tiger’s back in the middle in fear of getting eaten by it.

CHAPTER 140

SPECIES BLOOM AND WILT (6)

'I will win.'

Choi Hyuk resolved himself just once.

He could sense the Punisher's movements. He could sense its large two hands swaying in the air, its pupils examining him, its horns and its body odor.

Choi Hyuk could sense all of it.

"Now really..."

As if it found this entertaining, the monster, who was observing Choi Hyuk, rolled its black eyes.

Their surroundings became silent.

The silence between Choi Hyuk and the Punisher was so thick that they could almost hear the stifled judgments of the warriors watching.

'It's a monster whose level is between the high and highest rank. There's no way Choi Hyuk, who has only recently become a high-ranked warrior, can win!'

'If it's our leader, he'll win. We only need to focus on our own fight.'

'Will the monster attack first? Or Leader Choi Hyuk?'

The moment right before a fight, when all possibilities were up in the air.

Choi Hyuk deeply liked this moment. It was the starting point where the unknown would turn into a victory.

In this moment, which was like taking his final breath before diving deep into the water, the Punisher suddenly said,

"That sword looks quite tough?"

It clenched its fist.

Whoosh.

Choi Hyuk felt as though a mountain was pressing down on his body.

The monster's eyes rolled.

As expected, it wanted to break 'Choi Hyuk's Imprint'. Choi Hyuk watched its eyes roll around.

Baang!!

He couldn't see it. Its attack was too fast. However, Choi Hyuk, in that moment, noticed its motive through its eyes and blocked it with his sword. Receiving its attack, Choi Hyuk's shoulder groaned. An electrifying pain ran through his body.

"Doesn't even bend?"

Unlike Manta and Hashishi's weapons, Choi Hyuk's sword didn't bend nor did it make a cracking sound. Displeasure was evident in the monster's voice.

{Imprinted with his will, it will not break or dull.}

That was precisely what was said in the description of the Sword of Vow. It was born as a Sword of Vow the moment the 'Vow' inside it was acknowledged by the great universe. This was the reason why the Sword of Vow could be so special. Even if it was the Punisher, who was armed with a new weapon, it couldn't break the Sword of Vow.

However, it seemed the monster didn't want to admit it.

The monster attempted to grab 'Choi Hyuk's Imprint' with its outstretched hand. Under extreme concentration, Choi Hyuk noticed its motive, turned his blade upwards and pulled it back. He even added the principles of 'Instant Void Annihilation', which could even cut the air, into this move. The monster's hand, which attempted to grab 'Choi Hyuk's Imprint', was struck by his blade.

Slice!

A sharp metallic sound rang out. This time, it was Choi Hyuk's turn to be surprised.

“Not even a scratch?”

The monster rolled its black eyes. It giggled.

“Why would it scratch?”

It mercilessly swung its fist down.

Every time its fist swung down, thunder rang throughout the sky. The heavy ground of the Kundle Planet shook as though it was met with a storm.

“Euaaah... We’re all going to die...”

“What if we went to sleep now? Then we might wake up on a cool day?”

The appearance of the Punisher greatly shook the mentality of the Kundle Tribe members, who had been fighting diligently. ‘We are gradually getting stronger. We can beat those monsters which we originally felt despair towards.’ The hope they maintained was wiped out the moment the Punisher appeared. The Punisher felt like a monster on a completely different level, something they couldn’t beat even if they trained for all of eternity.

Wasn’t even the leader of the Berserkers, Choi Hyuk, being powerlessly pushed back?

Their hearts were wavering. However, the seeds of resolve the Berserkers had worked hard to implant weren’t weak.

“Did you already forget?! If we need saving, I will become salvation itself! If we die, I will be the first to die!”

A Kundle Tribe member shouted as if struggling. He dug out his flesh and spread it everywhere. It was the ‘Berserker Gene’. Spreading his flesh, the Kundle Tribe member’s eyes reddened. All the distracting thoughts that complicated his heart began to burn away.

Only resolve remained in his heart.

‘Advance, advance, kill, kill!’

The hearts of the Kundle Tribe members around him, who were covered in the Berserker Gene, were influenced as well.

“What’s the point of sleeping? Will the monsters retreat on their own? Instead, use the Berserker Gene! Isn’t that losing our minds anyways?!”^{1} Let’s fight as though we’re going to die! When we come to our senses... A refreshing sky might be waiting for us!”

Grrrk!

Grrrr...

The surrounding Kundle Tribe members erupted in heavy breathing.

The Kundle Tribe members, after manifesting the Berserker Gene, rushed towards the monsters without the slightest hesitation.

“We’re screwed... Fuck... That fucking Choi Hyuk bastard... He went completely insane on Earth and now here... Bastard...”

Around the time the Kundle Tribe members had pulled themselves together and began fighting again, there were existences who had fallen into a deeper state of despair.

They were the earthlings. The earthlings who were employed by Manta to mine. Their current situation was actually impending.

“Take us with you! Take us! You fucking bastards!”

While the military gate system was down, the only way they could escape the Kundle Planet was on the Sur and Jangkok Troops’ spaceships.

However, they were left behind.

After narrowly escaping death, Manta and Hashishi hurriedly boarded their spaceships and attempted to evacuate.

‘We don’t know when Choi Hyuk will lose!’

The moment their karma weapons were broken, their resolve to fight was completely crushed as well. Suppressing the curses and screams that attempted to surge out their mouths, they urgently evacuated.

“Let’s leave immediately!”

“But leader! There are still a lot of members who haven’t boarded!”

“Why aren’t you quickly teleporting them in?!”

“Due to the waves emitted by the monsters, it is taking time to track all our members’ signals!”

“Ah, damn... Ack! Damn it! I don’t know anymore! Evacuate first! Let’s search for survivors when support from the alliance arrives!”

Shouted Hashishi eventually.

“...! But...!”

Hashishi completely lost his temper at his adjutant, who kept questioning him.

Bang!

He grabbed the adjutant’s throat and shoved his face forward.

“You amoeba-looking motherfucker! Do you want to die? Shouldn’t those, who can live, live? Or, if you’re still caught up about them, do you want me to throw you on that planet as well?”

The Sur Troops’ situation wasn’t much different either. After surviving, Manta first objectively calculated his gains and losses.

‘I was able to survive thanks to Choi Hyuk somehow. Hashishi and I, rather than the two of us dying, it’s better for the alliance if Choi Hyuk alone dies. For Choi Hyuk’s death to not go to waste, we need to preserve our key forces and let the alliance know as soon as possible. We don’t have time. Throw away what we can... Also, I should reduce the compensation I was going to charge the Berserkers. Even though Choi Hyuk was the one who brought this shit along, a debt’s a debt.’

{The Sur and Jangkok Troops are urgently evacuating. Troop members left behind are to wait for support.}

“Left behind?! What ‘left behind’?! You didn’t have any plans on taking us with you from the beginning!!!”

The earthlings shouted.

The warriors who were left behind despite being official members of the Sur and Jangkok Troops stood beside them with bitter expressions.

Just how did things come to this...

Leader Luy of the ‘Luy Troops’, an independent troop from Dragonic, felt like he would die from rage.

Was it wrong to have been charmed by the Sur Troops’ mission, which paid more than the regional troops’ missions? It was true that the missions which the independent troops took on were riskier than the alliance’s official missions, which had a solid backing...

‘No, this is all that bastard Choi Hyuk’s fault.’

No matter how much he thought about it, Luy wasn’t at fault. He had looked into it the best he could. As he had established independent troops later than other large clans, he had fiercely looked for work that they could do to catch up, and during this time, Manta approached him. Although he felt pressure in having to walk a different path from Choi Hyuk’s Berserkers and the labor price had, without a doubt, been slashed to much lower than the market price, but as independent troops without any experience, they even had to be thankful for that. On top of that, this mission regarding recruit training was rumored to be safe.

However, what was their state now?

He was about to collapse due to his hatred for Choi Hyuk.

“Leader! If it’s like this, will we have to fight alongside the Berserkers as well?”

A member of the Luy Troops shouted.

Clan Leader Luy frowned.

“What do you mean fight?! Don’t you see Choi Hyuk being pushed back powerlessly over there? We retreat as far back as we can and hide! We’ll somehow survive until support from the alliance arrives!”

It was as he said. Choi Hyuk, who was fighting against the Punisher in the sky, looked shaky as though he would fall at any moment.

The Punisher’s attacks were heavy and tenacious.

Bang! Baang!

Choi Hyuk didn’t want to clash his sword against its fists if possible, but the monster stubbornly smashed down onto ‘Choi Hyuk’s Imprint’. It was to the point where Choi Hyuk wondered if it was more focused on breaking ‘Choi Hyuk’s Imprint’ than striking him.

Thanks to this, the burden of his injuries lessened. Even in the worst of situations, the only thing he could do was raise his sword and block. He didn’t allow a single strike to land on him.

He didn’t even have to worry about his weapon breaking like Manta and Hashishi did. ‘Choi Hyuk’s Imprint’ had no problems enduring its punches.

However...

‘My sword isn’t the problem, my body is...’

Ironically, while ‘Choi Hyuk’s Imprint’ could easily endure its terrifying attacks, he couldn’t.

Every time his sword and its fist clashed, the karma in his entire body jolted as though it was convulsing. His back, shoulders, and calves, there wasn’t a single place on his

body not affected by it.

'Instant Void Annihilation', which could cut through the air, didn't work, and even 'Flaming Wing Dance', which burned everything and rapidly improved his physical abilities, was useless.

Whoosh!

Every time it clenched its fists, Choi Hyuk's flames shook dangerously.

Bang!

When it punched out, it became difficult to move, almost as if he had fallen into a swamp. Space itself was crumbling and shattering towards the monster at the center. Like a star caught in a black hole, Choi Hyuk couldn't get away from it. All he could do was raise his sword and endure.

Thump! Bang!

"Endure a bit longer. It'll be hilarious if you broke faster than your sword, won't it?"

The monster mocked.

Every time he heard those words, Choi Hyuk's heart growled fiercely.

'Am I simply going to listen to those words?'

'Will it be able to take *that*? Will it be able to mock me after taking *that*?'

Flames surged in his belly. Choi Hyuk had never lost in his entire life and possessed a particular destructiveness since birth.

Choi Hyuk swallowed it back. The flames in his heart died down and returned to a cool calm.

Bang!

When its fist and his sword clashed once more, blood spurted inside him. Unable to endure the pressure, blood dripped from his eyes and ears.

“Yeah, keep enduring like that. Won’t those insects below be able to live for a second more if you do?”

The Punisher continued to ramble on like a madman. His eyes contained an obsession. An obsession that he would shatter his Sword of Vow no matter what.

Rage surged inside Choi Hyuk. The will created by a single lifeform. Karma weapons were the crystallization of these wills. The monsters wanted to utterly shatter them. The monsters were always like this.

‘The strong will trample on the weak.’

This was always the case in nature. However, the principles behind the monsters’ actions weren’t so. They just wanted to make lifeforms despair. Shattering what lifeforms desperately accumulated was their happiness.

Perhaps... this was why the alliance’s recruit training was like this as well.

The method of training warriors who could polish their swords despite having everything they considered precious and representative of ‘themselves’ smashed apart. Did they, perhaps, think that they couldn’t face the monsters, which pressed down on them with their power, without such determination?

And, ironically, one of the greatest warriors created from this brutal method was Choi Hyuk.

Weak ones. Poor humans.

Although Choi Hyuk looked like he was indifferent to everything besides revenge, he was also someone who knew what they had lost better than anyone else. Choi Hyuk’s mother had wanted to create a peaceful, healthy family despite being a single mother, and Choi Hyuk, influenced by her, also wanted to create his own peaceful family one day. The rule he upheld even if he was beaten up like an idiot. ‘Do not kill other people.’ Why? Because people were precious. Humans were existences who dreamed.

This was why those who lived their shitty school lives and those who lived their shitty work lives endured and endured. It was for the small peace and sanctuary they might someday grasp in their hands, hoping to step forth on the shadow of paradise called a ‘dream’.

However, where did that all go?

Where did those children who shut themselves in study rooms and cram schools to get good results on their midterms, those examinees who intended to pass their exams this time, and those business owners who opened their stores with fluttering hearts go? Where did they all go? They all died. Their dreams? Became trash. Their dreams, which they had dedicated their entire lives to, had turned into nothing.

Because they were abominably weak.

Because those abominably strong monsters wanted to end them.

When he recalled his wonderful past, Choi Hyuk's happiness turned into rage and this rage turned into sorrow, and this sorrow then turned into hopelessness, and if he drew his karma out like this, a brilliant flame exploded from Choi Hyuk's body. A true flame that even Flame-Rain would admire. A flame belonging only to Choi Hyuk.

Blaze.

On top of this flame, the flame of dragons, which Commander Mack had passed down to him, blazed. The dragons who had raised their heads up high even when facing the Flame Wing Alliance. Their pride burned alongside their flames.

Choi Hyuk's ferocious heart whispered,

'How is it? Don't you think it'll be possible with this new flame? If it's a flame that combines yours and the dragons', won't it be taken aback? Don't you want to see its face?'

However-

Gulp.

Choi Hyuk swallowed his flame down this time as well.

Choi Hyuk didn't explode forth with anything. He scrunched his body up and endured the downpour of attacks.

Endurance. This was the inheritance his mother had passed down to him.

Also, Choi Hyuk's innate talent was 'achieving victory in fights'.

The moment Choi Hyuk blocked its fist, he instinctively knew.

'I can't beat it with a normal capacity for victory.'

Looking at stats, the monster was above him in all aspects. Skills could only be used once one had a basic foundation. If Choi Hyuk fought while hastily revealing his power in this current situation, then he would be the first to fall. The new flame would undoubtedly be able to surprise it. However, he wasn't confident that he could take its life.

In the end, Choi Hyuk only had one method. It was the single strike he had used to deal a fatal blow to the highest-ranked monster Narci. The transcendent strike where he poured all his strength into his Sword of Vow. That was why he had to wait and wait. For the moment it revealed an opening. For the moment he could hold its life in his hands.

Choi Hyuk calmly waited.

There was a time limit to the Kundle Tribe's 'Berserker Gene'.

Even if they fought crazily, once time was up, they would return to their senses. When they regained their senses, they looked up at the sky. They looked at Choi Hyuk who was still being beaten up in the sky.

At first, the Kundle Tribe members were depressed.

'When I regain my senses next time... Will I be able to see the world?'

To forget this depressing premonition, they quickly fell back into the Berserker state.

However, they were still alive the next time they reached the time limit. When they looked up at the sky, Choi Hyuk was still being beaten up.

It was the same the next and the next.

'He's still taking hits?'

They returned to the Berserker state, thinking that it would be the last time, but they always opened their eyes again under the sky. Their advances were slowly but steadily progressing, and Choi Hyuk, even though he looked like he would die at any moment, was always there in the sky.

In front of them, the Berserkers, Valkyries, and Extremers were foaming at their mouths as they slashed at the monsters.

Thump.

Something surged within their hearts.

Even if we aren't victorious,

We won't break.

We won't lose so easily.

This unyielding will wrapped around their hearts.

Although the monsters' vigor felt like a storm, they endured and endured like deep-rooted trees.

Also.

Gulp.

Choi Hyuk swallowed down the flames surging in his heart once more. He swallowed down the audacity of wanting to explode forth with his entire strength and wipe the sky and the earth away.

The flames he swallowed again and again condensed deep within his Karma Heart.

Like the singularity before the Big Bang, although it was nothing but a single dot right now, he was waiting for it to become the light that would establish a new universe when the time came.

He was waiting to open his eyes.

{1} Double meaning: You 'lose consciousness' when you sleep. They also lose their minds when they use the Berserker Gene.

CHAPTER 141

THE FUTURE STARTS NOW

The once leisurely Punisher gradually became more and more irritated.

“Not smashing? Not smashing even now?”

It had punched out so many times that even a planet would have been destroyed. Yet, despite this, Choi Hyuk’s Sword of Vow was fine.

The Punisher’s annoyance grew more severe as time went on, and the ones who were trembling due to this were the warriors of Dragonic and the Kundle Tribe members.

The more the Punisher threw a fit, the dizzier the warriors became. They felt as though everything in front of them was shaking. Although they wanted to focus on their fight, it was difficult. They saw the Punisher even when they looked away and heard it when they tried not to.

It was an existence on another level.

In their eyes, Choi Hyuk looked like a resolute second-year middle schooler acting up against a large-bodied teacher in charge of his grade. Not a modern school, but a school from the past. It reminded them of the times when teachers didn’t hesitate to slap their students’ cheeks or grab them by the hair and smash them on the blackboard.

Like a middle schooler who didn’t say he was sorry and kept glaring at the teacher, Choi Hyuk endured, and the Punisher’s violent attacks became stronger as though it was saying it would break him no matter what.

The Punisher no longer cared about his Sword of Vow.

“Those eyes! Those eyes!”

The Punisher didn’t like the way Choi Hyuk looked at him. The more it saw it, the more its anger surged. Someone who wasn’t even as powerful as its toes dared appraise it. His eyes seemed to say, ‘Someone like you?’ when he was the one who would be

squashed like a bug if it attacked seriously!

The Punisher's killing intent exploded. It resolved itself to destroy all of Choi Hyuk, who was as slippery as an eel.

Its simple attacks became more complicated. When it seemed like it was targeting his sword, it aimed for his finger, and when it seemed like it was aiming for his head, it kicked at his leg. When it stretched out its arm out to break his arm, the impact of the blow would actually explode inside him.

Bang! Punch!

Choi Hyuk's flesh exploded, his blood gushed out, and his bones broke. Choi Hyuk was gradually becoming a wreck. However, the light in his eyes didn't dim at all.

Gulp.

Choi Hyuk gulped something down again.

'Please... Please stop...'

One of the Valkyries thought. Choi Hyuk fiercely held the Punisher back. Although he did admire Choi Hyuk's fierce fighting spirit, he began feeling fear and terror. Seeing Choi Hyuk, who was the strongest on Dragonic, becoming a wreck was saddening.

'This operation is a failure... Shouldn't we retreat?'

Someone from the Extremers thought. His belief in their victory became hazier as time went by. He looked at Overseer Jessie. He saw a nervous light in Jessie's eyes as well. He was glancing at Choi Hyuk. However, he saw Jessie grit his teeth and charge into the enemy lines in the end.

"Don't be scared! If you can't even endure this much thrill, how can you call yourselves Extremers?!"

Shouted Overseer Jessie.

Many Extremers sighed inwardly. However, they didn't make any unnecessary

remarks and instead followed Jessie. As their leader charged forward, they naturally charged in as well. Even if this was akin to skydiving without a parachute, they were Extremers.

“We don’t back down. Believe in yourselves.”

Instead, it was the Sovereign of Paradise Camilla who was rather calm. She didn’t waver at all. As this was a fight they promised to fight until the end, she wouldn’t back down. That was all.

A decision that didn’t consider the end result. This was the trait of those with beliefs.

Valkyries followed her, swallowing their fear. Dying or living wasn’t important. Even winning or losing wasn’t important. Only one thing remained – their determination to fight.

The Berserkers rushed past them.

“Kill! Kill! Ack! Wahaha! Is that all?”

“Come at me! Come at me! Keuak!”

“That’s it! I dodged it! Now die!”

They simply resembled Choi Hyuk’s resolve. They didn’t even look at Choi Hyuk, who was being beaten up. They didn’t gaze at his wounds. Even if their enemies were stronger than them, they wouldn’t acknowledge this fact.

Each of them fought on with their own method.

Looking at them, the Kundle Tribe members were comprehending what kind of existences ‘warriors’ were and what ‘war’ was.

Every time they regained their senses, their hearts became more resolute.

‘Even if the enemy is stronger than me... ’

‘Why does that matter? When we have people fighting alongside us.’

It was similar to the time earthlings first learned of friendship. Whether they were up against scary older men, teachers, schools, or even the entire world, the feeling they felt when they were teens, of not being afraid as long as they were with their friends, was an feeling that the Kundle Tribe members were currently experiencing.

Comradery was budding.

They looked at Choi Hyuk, who looked like he would fall at any moment.

‘Sorry we aren’t of much help in this fight.’

‘We’ll die with you.’

The fight between Choi Hyuk and the Punisher was reaching its end.

The Punisher couldn’t contain its irritation any longer. It despised Choi Hyuk, who had endured while avoiding fatal attacks no matter how it attacked him, so much that it could die. In the end, the Punisher prepared a powerful attack. ‘Yeah, try avoiding this,’ it thought while resolving itself.

The Punisher gathered more power than it could control into its fist.

‘Aah.’

The warriors groaned. Their vision went dark. This wasn’t a figure of speech. Like how one’s surroundings would fade when they saw a bright light at night, everything besides Choi Hyuk and the Punisher disappeared from their senses. This was the same for the monsters. The fight going on throughout the planet suddenly came to a halt. They couldn’t do anything. All they could do was watch the Punisher’s fist slowly smash down towards Choi Hyuk.

‘Can’t avoid.’

This wasn’t only true for Choi Hyuk.

Including the monsters, everyone on the Kundle Planet felt this. They felt like they were in front of its fist. Their bodies stiffened like the main character of a drama blankly staring at the light of an oncoming truck.

Within this period of time, where things seemed to move at an endlessly slow pace, the Punisher's fist swung out and Choi Hyuk pulled his sword back with a swish.

'He's smiling?'

Choi Hyuk was smiling.

Slice.

A sudden strike from Choi Hyuk's sword.

This strike cut the memories of everyone on the planet.

Only middle-ranked warriors, who reached the 5-star level, remembered a fragment of this moment.

Lee Jinhee said she saw a light emitting from Choi Hyuk's sword.

Jessie said he saw a shooting galaxy.

Camilla said she saw the creation of the world through what seemed to be a kaleidoscope. Then they tilted their heads.

Those below the middle-ranked warriors didn't remember anything.

When they opened their eyes, they were in the middle of the battlefield once again. For some reason, the monsters were scared, circling in place like ants that had their antennae cut off, and the Punisher, who had been overflowing with confidence, was screaming in the sky.

"Euaaaah! Ahhh! What! What!!"

The armor and fists it had on had been cleanly cut off. The horn on its head had been smashed, leaving only a pitiful remnant. Having lost all the armaments that covered its body, it was left bare, trembling as it attempted to stop the blood gushing out from its wound, which ran diagonally from its shoulder to its side.

As if exhausted, Choi Hyuk's shoulders slumped. He grabbed the Punisher's shoulder and-

Pscht!

He stabbed his sword into it multiple times.

"Aaack!"

Pscht!

"Aah..."

Every time his sword stabbed its body, the Punisher's screams gradually died down. The remnant of the horn remaining on its head turned into powder and scattered, and the terrifying vigor it had displayed was gone without a trace. Excluding its black eyes, it undoubtedly resembled a weak human.

It even rubbed its hands together as it pled,

"Please..."

"I'm sorry..."

"Stop, stop... I'm sorry... Keuu... Heuk... I'm sorry..."

It cried while drooling.

Choi Hyuk was taken aback. A monster that begged for its life? It was rare for monsters to be stricken with fear, but he had never heard of a monster begging for its life.

Choi Hyuk wrapped his hand around its neck and raised it up.

"Kaah... Kaheuk."

The Punisher squirmed as its body trembled in pain and fear. It was so scared that its teeth were chattering. It seemed to have lost its strength to stay in the air as it desperately hung onto Choi Hyuk's hand, which was wrapped around its neck. It looked like it was scared of falling.

Choi Hyuk threw it as if he was tossing it away.

“Guardian. Don’t let it die. We can obtain a lot from it.”

“Euaaah!”

It screamed as it fell. Powerless. If it smashed against the ground, it would turn to sludge without a doubt.

Thud.

Fortunately for it, Guardian Bae Jinman jumped up and lightly grabbed its neck.

“Eeerrwaak!”

It seemed that the Punisher still felt the aftereffects of the fall as its limbs distorted and its bones broke. If it wasn’t for Bae Jinman’s apt treatment, it wouldn’t have been able to endure the pressure when it was grabbed and might have died from shock.

After catching it, Bae Jinman examined it before mumbling,

“For it to not even be at the no-star level...”

How could this be? The terrifying high-ranked monster was now all too pitiful.

“Hrrk... Hrrkk... So that’s what happened... The one who killed Narci was...”

As if it had realized something, the Punisher wept as it writhed in Bae Jinman’s grasp.

“Am I... a fail... ure...? Am... I...”

Suddenly, the Punisher lost consciousness while crying.

It became quiet.

The monsters were like drugged rats, still unable to come to their senses, and the warriors weren’t able to come to their senses due to the sudden reversal.

Looking at them, Choi Hyuk, while staggering, said,

“What are you doing? Kill them all.”

Although his voice was quiet, it clearly rang in everyone’s ear.

Tremble.

It felt like a ton of carbonation rushed up from their bellies and escaped through their noses and ears. The warriors expressed this electrifying feeling coming from their bellies with a shout.

“Woaaaaahhh!!!”

They became a crushing force.

A massacre began.

Just then, a message appeared.

{The warrior training system has been opened for the Kundle Tribe. From now on, they will receive a portion of the karma obtained from mining the planet every time they kill a monster.}

‘Who?’

‘How?’

They had already used up all their mission points. The 3 independent troops from Dragonic, with the Berserkers at their core, didn’t have the mission points or the contributions to open the warrior training system. It wasn’t like they had an investor either.

The warrior training system, which they had pushed back because of these reasons, had suddenly been opened.

Although they weren’t without their questions... It was something they had to think about later.

This was the best opportunity.

“Berserkers! Give all the trivial monsters to the Kundle Tribe members!”

Baek Seoin commanded. Even the Valkyries and Extremers, who were currently under the guise as Berserkers, slowly retreated from the battlefield.

They didn't know what Choi Hyuk did, but the monsters couldn't pull themselves together. The warriors dealt with the stronger ones amongst them and left the rest to the Kundle Tribe members.

As they killed off an entire planet's worth of monsters, the Kundle Tribe members grew at an incredible pace.



The corpses of monsters were lined up. The Kahur Kabkuns, which were connected to the planet through the gate, were being destroyed one after another.

In the middle of the battlefield, which was settling down, Choi Hyuk clenched and opened his fist.

He recalled the strike he had dealt to the Punisher at the last moment.

'It was different.'

At first, he had planned on activating as much of the Sword of Vow's power as he could before dealing a blow like he did when facing Narci. However, the strike he dealt exceeded his expectations.

It wasn't an 'Instant Void Annihilation' that cut air nor was it a 'Flaming Wing Dance' that burned everything.

The flames Choi Hyuk had swallowed and compressed deep in his Karma Heart during the fight had exploded out all at once. He couldn't simply call it cutting air. Like the Big Bang, something completely new began from his hand.

'... Was it... the creation of a world?'

However, Choi Hyuk shook his head. No, his power wasn't so stable or abundant. It was rather-

“Reset.”

His sword clearly possessed enough energy to push the universe back and open a new, small one. However, considering Choi Hyuk’s nature, this power wouldn’t flow in such a constructive direction. It wasn’t a new beginning, like creating a new world, but contained traces of a ‘reset’, wanting to completely erase the order and laws that the existing universe had created.

The Punisher had lost all its power as a result of this. Choi Hyuk couldn’t kill it, but he did something which exceeded that. It had lost all its power and even lost its traits as a monster. Because of this, he was able to make an unprecedented contribution of capturing a high-ranked monster as a prisoner. ‘Monsters don’t submit.’ This theory was widely accepted. This was why they could only use them as test subjects or training tools when captured. However, it was completely different this time. The captured monster had already thoroughly submitted. It was a prisoner that could cough up all it knew after scaring it a little. This was unprecedented in the history of the alliance.

Although there were many existences stronger than Choi Hyuk, the only one who could do this was Choi Hyuk.

Choi Hyuk backtracked to figure out what the power, which had extended from his hand, was. Since the sensation of his strike was still vivid, it didn’t take long for him to find an answer.

‘The fate I established when I became a high-ranked warrior – to never lose and slash without fail.’

This splendid feat was the result of his fate, which declared he would never lose and would slash anything. Following his fate, if the universe itself was his enemy, he would obtain the power to push it back and cleanly erase it.

Of course, it was still weak. Right now, all he could do was barely finish off a monster that was between the high and highest rank.

However, if Choi Hyuk accumulated enough retribution that suited his fate, then even if the entire universe was his enemy, he would have the power to ‘never lose’ and ‘slash without fail’ one day.

Thump!

Choi Hyuk felt like a steel pillar was erected deep in his soul. This was his newly accumulated retribution, his karma.

Retribution was something that was accumulated. One could only exercise their fate relative to the amount of 'suitable retribution' one accumulated.

Just now, Choi Hyuk established retribution that suited his fate, which was 'never losing' and 'slashing without fail'. He had slashed and beaten the Punisher, who was objectively much stronger than him. Choi Hyuk detected his growth even without any notice. He probably overcame the proficiency stage of a high-ranked warrior in one go. He now knew everything without needing the system's help.

Choi Hyuk now knew what karma, which was the foundation of a warrior's strength, truly was.

'Retribution and karma... Baek hyung originally said that they meant the same thing and that he didn't know why the system classified them as two separate things...'

Yeah, he was right. They were, in fact, the same thing.

Only, the warrior training system's function was providing additional karma that was separate to the retribution a warrior established. It had no choice but to classify them as two different things. Normally, one would only have as much karma as the retribution they established, but due to the system's intervention, there was a gap between the two. Even still, since retribution was the true level of one's soul, when advancing to a higher ranked warrior it was required that one had to elevate their Retribution rank.

Choi Hyuk also realized why a high-ranked warrior could no longer receive the system's assistance.

'Since you can only become a high-ranked warrior after establishing your own fate.'

Before this, the fates of lifeforms were vague, simply 'survival or death'. Because of this, they could accept the retribution that they hadn't personally establish. Up until the 5-star level, they would be acknowledged for building a house, it didn't matter

whether it was built with wood or mud. However, starting from the 6-star level, they could only establish retribution that suited their fates. A retribution like the steel pillar erected in Choi Hyuk's soul. A retribution of never losing and slashing without fail that he had personally established.

Because of this, there was no room for the system to intervene. High-ranked warriors were warriors who stood solely on their own.

“Hoo.”

Choi Hyuk exhaled. It was difficult to tell if it was a sigh or a laugh.

He looked very refreshed.

Highest-ranked warriors and transcendental beings... although there were still many stages and obstacles ahead of him, they no longer felt stifling.

It was because he knew there was only one path for him.

‘I will not lose. I will slash without fail.’

If he could push forward with the fate he established until the end, whether it was becoming a highest-ranked warrior or a transcendental being, he would inevitably achieve it.

“I see... it now.”

The survival game that began in school one day.

Choi Hyuk's world had collapsed that day.

‘Kill. Kill. Only then can you kill.’

The single proposition that had been contained in his heart.

While only holding onto this proposition, he had wandered like a blind man. His enemy was so enormous that he couldn't even see its edge.

However... He now saw the end to this journey. He saw the path towards it.

“Hu, hu.”

The breaths Choi Hyuk exhaled were definitely closer to a laugh this time.

The future he had been waiting for while lying flat on the ground and holding his breath.

His determination that he would find the core of the alliance, stand confidently in front of them, and take revenge on everything that brought him pain.

Choi Hyuk realized that the start of such a sweet yet once imperceptible future was ‘now’.

“Haha, hahahahaha!”

The war was concluding on the Kundle Planet.

Choi Hyuk laughed like a child who couldn’t contain his happiness.



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