

# The Legendary Moonlight Sculptor

## (달빛 조각사)

Volume 06

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### Story Description:

The man forsaken by the world, the man a slave to money and the man known as the legendary God of War in the highly popular MMORPG Continent of Magic. With the coming of age, he decides to say goodbye, but the feeble attempt to earn a little something for his time and effort ripples into an effect none could ever have imagined.

Through a series of coincidences, his legendary avatar is sold for 3.1 billion won, bringing great joy to him, only to plunge him into despair at losing almost all of it to vicious loan sharks. With revelation of money through gaming, he rises from the abyss with new found resolve and steps forward into the new age of games led by the first ever Virtual Reality MMORPG, Royal Road.

This is the legend of Lee Hyun on his path to becoming Emperor with only his family loving heart, his boundless desire for money, his unexpected mind, his diligently forged body and the talent of hard work backing him.

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

# Chapter 1: Delight

Advancing to the Plains of Despair, at the request of the church of Freya!

Join the Orcs after transformation through sculpting, and have them target the Dark Elf citadel!

During the quest to eradicate the necromancer that summoned the followers of Balkan, Weed displayed a little mercy. At the last moment, he saved the necromancer.

Perhaps due to this, an A-class difficulty quest opened up to him.

The Immortal Legion.

The Lich Shire was leading a legion of undead to war.

The Orcs and Dark Elves are needed to unite to defeat the Immortal Legion.

The necromancer watched and the royal soldiers waited for Weed's answer.

Then Weed answered.

"Orcs and Dark Elves, even with their combined strength, we will not be able to break the immortal legion. So, I will have no part of this."

Once again, for confirmation.

'The Immortal Legion led by Shire', do you want to accept this quest?

This quest is associated with the emergence of the undisclosed profession Necromancer.

"I will not fight against the Immortal Legion."

Quest refused.

"Then...."

The look on their faces was of significant disappointment.

"Sir! We cannot accept this decision, Captain."

Becker and the usual lieutenants that followed Weed unquestionably had protested wildly. Also the Royal Army suddenly turned cold.

"This person doesn't know the meaning of justice! Have you ever learned about chivalry?"

"Help the weak and punish the wicked. Come to think of it, talk about the subject of a sculptor in the military company itself!"

Loyalty and intimacy with the soldiers of the armor dropped significantly at this point.

"No way to go along with this decision."

"For the pious Weed to think like this when facing the forces of evil... I do not believe it."

Even the priests dispatched from the Church of Freya began to avoid Weed. At this point, everyone hated Weed! However, looking back, the necromancer had spoken.

"You still do not realize the seriousness of the situation developing. I said that the Immortal Legion doesn't just involve us necromancer, but also the entire continent."

"I did not know that."

"Look, you're the only one that can lead us, so fight along with us."

T'tiring!

The Immortal Legion led by Shire to take over the world, a secret mission!

Balkan controls this summoning from behind the scenes; he hopes to bring about the path of darkness, with his disciple Shire. A day after a battle, the Lich Shire will rebuild the legion entirely from the remains of the losses. So once again the Immortal Legion will be born!

In order to survive, the Orcs and Dark Elves will need to cooperate with each other in this war. Gather everything in your power to prevent the march of the Immortal Legion, defeat Shire.

Difficulty: A

Compensation: The magic of Balkan.

Quest time limit: Defeat the Immortal Legion within 30 days.

"....."

For a moment Weed was astonished. He rejected it, even though the quest was offered again.

He returned the cup to the Church of Freya in Heredia and was virtually forced to delve further in association with the quest for the crown. Now even the necromancer in the Plains of Despair gives him a mission where the rejection punishes his association with those near him.

'This quest is extremely difficult!' Weed shook his head.

"No. In this case, I just can't."

Once again, for confirmation.

'The Immortal Legion led by Shire'

Do you want to accept this quest?

This quest is associated with the emergence of the undisclosed profession Necromancer.

In the situation that you do not accept, dire consequence will occur.

"Hmm, it seems you still do not understand. Even after I told you. This mission affects all of the continents. If you ignore this, then like us, humans will not be able to escape from the darkness. Then people around you will lose courage and be distraught."

The Necromancer spoke in an utmost dismal tone.

Creepy!

Weed felt a chill sweep through his body.

Absolutely trapped in a conversation he can't get out of.

Instead of just the Church of Freya, look at yourself in a corner. No hesitation to intimidate with a fall in reputation. Here, a normal person can never succeed. Pretend to accept the quest.

It is hard to refuse the quest, but one can desert the quest later. The price of this is a continued loss of reputation, fixed on the conviction that there is no way it can be done.

But Weed was weak to this threat. Working hard for all of that fame, he couldn't just blow it all away.

"It is my desire to take on the Immortal Legion with my life. To defeat the Lich and his legion of undead, and fight to prevent the defilement of this land."

You have accepted the quest

\*

Hwareureureu.

The mud and fire was swept away from the Dark Elf citadel. In order to fix the damage caused by Orc ordinances and Dark Elf magic that carved pits throughout the area.

Extremely large enough to house tens of thousands, Orcs were busy carrying luggage as they moved to the Dark Elf citadel.

"Chwichwit. Elf knows no fun, never heard of stones."

"Okay, Orc."

"I am great being first in strength. Chwiik!"

Orcs and Elves joined forces to begin the task of repairs.

The necromancer scrambled to the priests and royal knights to inform them of the undead army. Then the Dark Elves and Orcs made a dramatic reconciliation. The enemy caused a joining of races to an army.

Balkan's summoning rituals were conducted in the past, and this did not tolerate any being left alive. Dark Elves were killed and resurrected as undead hunters; Orcs were made into zombies.

Above all else, Dark Elves cherished their clans. Also the proud Orcs found it an insult to be turned into a zombie.

"Chwiik, Chwiik! We go back to the dirt. Chwichwik. We can take a break and stretch our legs after we die."

The two races allied to fight the Immortal Legion worked to repair the citadel. The priests of Freya, the royal knights also joined the task of recovery.

"It's empty in here!"

"There is stronger support underneath."

"The foundation here is too weak."

Dale and Hosram took the soldiers with them to carefully check the citadel. The strength of Orcs was good for carrying heavy boulders or objects, but the touch of human hands was better for the structure. The eccentric Dark Elves used magic to carve and made a sloppy job of it.

From the top of the citadel, Weed was hit by a cool breeze.

A heavy and serious expression!

"Sir, the trick seems to be creating a strategy that will win the battle against the Immortal Legion."

"He's also our captain after all."

Becker gave a thumb up.

But it was in the back of Weed's mind, he wasn't considering the war coming in one month.

"Let's take a look. First, the items acquired as the spoils of war...."

He was in the middle of calculating the price of spoils from his kills during the siege of the Dark Elves. Indeed, even during the most intense of the fighting, he was looking for items. All of the important items on the floor dropped by the bodies that he relentlessly searched, laughing like a crazy person as the arrows flew towards him.

A desperate struggle for money!

Scraping up weapons and equipment like he was a vacuum cleaner.

Now it was time to calculate the worth of the items obtained.

"Identify."

Orc captain's digging glaive: Durability 69/80. Damage 25-51

The glaive of a streetwise Orc captain.

Even though it is heavy and not easy to wield, the blow can be as heavy as a hammer blow.

Restrictions:

Strength 350.

Level 180.

Effects:

+20 battle cry.

+10 Strength.

-30 Agility.

Accuracy of attack decreased by 25%.

Fatal blow has twice the effect.

The first thing he checked was an almost useless item.

'This glaive will not sell well.'

Although there may be enthusiasts that look for very unique weapons, when viewed from the perspective of efficiency, tough weapons were hardly worth brimming over. When someone does not know if it can be used in the normal game, they check what stats and skills it raises. But in Royal Road, you actually move your body.

If possible, you only use those tools that feel familiar to your hand. So the Ork glaive comes out as a difficult weapon for the buyer; normally, the effects of unusual weapons made them sell generally well. Typically they are ancillary, such as freezing the enemy with a hit or a magical attack; while increase in attack is excellent, the most sought for is a lightweight sword.

Weed decided to dispose off the rough glaive, and took a look at the other stuff.

5 Orc armor, two elf headbands, and clothing with seven penalties.

Being ordinary items, but elf clothes had resistance to spirits and raised affinity, which would be popular as an item for sale.

'That's good. For once, today's costs are achieved.'

Weed found it delightful to avoid work.

Even if you specialize in construction, no matter how good you are, you would still hate lugging stone. It is laborious work to struggle with carrying bricks in a construction ground.

Ork or Elf, the soldiers worked diligently. However, he was hiding it as it was not a wise choice to announce such things. When in the thick of things, to do this would rather severe thoughts and expressions as they locked on you.

"We have to believe in the captain."

"If it's the captain, we will win the fight against that undead army."

Due to the misunderstanding of the soldiers, Weed was being revered!

Weed stood on top of the minarets in order to see further away.

With a glance, he looked down on the Yuroki Mountains. Passing like a river beneath the clouds; resulting from layers upon layers of mountains and valleys in this space.

Meanwhile the clouds flowed by. The Dark Elves placed their stronghold at the highest point where the air is extra thin and easily exhausted.

Colder and drier areas.

Places where snow covered the mountains. The sun's glow gradually diminished as the sky turned red. But even those clouds on the bottom bathed entirely in mystical colors of the sunset.

Weed quietly watched the scene as he logged out.

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The first thing Lee Hyun did as he left the capsule was to stop at the item auction site.

"There has to be someone looking for an Orc glaive, right? Digger Glaive won't be able to deliver much, I suppose. Elf headband prices rise only slightly because of their scarcity.... Should have picked up an elf bow, it would have sell at a high value."

In sadness Lee Hyun fell to the ground feeling regret.

The dark awareness of a gamer!

'I still have a long way to go!'

It was not necessary for him to bother with breaking the gate to win the siege. With all those buyers, he should have found a Dark Elf holding a bow even more so.

Thus if he would had picked up at least one Dark Elf lord's bow, he would have achieved a desirable goal.

'I was too engrossed to notice.'

Lee Hyun groaned.

Yet the information of price of each item was steadily confirmed. It is an

equity investment for people to verify the pricing of the items they acquire, as was checking the items for sale. Usually, these other items in the auction when finalized, is sold almost instantaneously. Lee Hyun scanned the recent postings meticulously.

Access to the Royal Road site can also help with references to newly identified items and you can find out what possible items drop from different monsters.

The road to become an emperor. The dream to rule over continents. Welcome to Royal Road.

Royal Road's homepage.

Lee Hyun was in the Hall of Fame; he clicked on the top to log in.

To get into his account, he entered his ID in the space provided.

Inconspicuous at the bottom of all the people, that is the best place!

Lee Hyun uploaded the whole video of his quest.

As an afterthought, he would have liked to edit the original video, cutting parts out to make himself look good. But for Lee Hyun, there was no separate program that he could use to edit the video.

The path of darkness.

The so-called illegal downloads of copyrighted programs were all blocked, so he would have had to purchase video editing software which required him to pay a minimum of tens of thousands of Won. Yet, even if he did, he would have had to purchase a computer to do work to that extent, so he left it as is.

"No luck, it simply rolled."

No surprise today that it died; it was making strange sounds and vibrating. As always, Lee Hyun put it on sleep mode with the movie uploaded.

\*

Even today, people accessed the Royal Road Hall of Fame list. The Hall

of Fame; millions of people visited the record every day; it was popular enough that it was kept at the corner of the site. Of course, most had no interest in the lower section of the Hall of Fame. It was known to the users that the ones with the high levels occupied a higher position in the Hall of Fame.

"This is what happened in the Hermes Guild today."

"Griffith, is that guy still pirating at sea?"

In the case of murder, theft and piracy, some users also have images posted. People who live vicariously, their reckless pace also makes others feel excitement.

So what, Lee Hyun had attached two videos of himself and it just burned him? For those that are first on the Hall of Fame, there is a major difference in the value of names.

And then anyone looking at Lee Hyun's current video was completely thunderstruck.

"Oh my God!"

The reason for the surprise was the duration and size of the video.

"It's a 19 hour and 49 minute movie!"

He exited out of the absurd movie and wrote the line on the Royal Road board.

There is a new person that is in the Hall of Fame. But that man....

The new player in the Hall of Fame had uploaded new game-play footage, a whopping 19 hours!

Royal Road's board had a lot of users.

They immediately laughed at Lee Hyun.

- This noob is incredible.

- Novice has no idea how to post. Looking at the Hall of Fame, he must just be glad to be on it.

- Yet he didn't edit it at all, raises his reliability to 0.

- I'd see few than one

They only just glanced at Lee Hyun's post.

Then someone could not win against curiosity and clicked the video, but the moment he saw the beginning, he forgot everything else.

"What, a mountain, where is this place... there are countless Orcs going around."

At the first glance he did not know to look properly, although there seemed to be Dark Elves and Orcs.

"What a waste of time to click this."

But he could not resist his curiosity and looked at Lee Hyun's video again.

Nothing better to do anyway, and if there is no fun I'll turn it right off.

Then after 30 minutes. He posted back on the Royal Road board.

- That 19 hour and 49 minute video.

Just look at it.

No words can describe it.

It is one of the best.

I immediately gave it a second glance and now plan to watch it through.

People became interested from seeing this post.

They sought the video and played it.

The vast majority did not look far into it and saw no significance, thinking they got tricked into viewing it.

"Even now, fishing is popular to post about?"

"Maybe the original guy posted the remark himself. The ID can be different, a friend or family member's account."

"Well this is boring, what a bad reply..."

However, in the video uploaded by Lee Hyun, an Orc emerged.

Orc Karachwi!

He was an Orc with a very sturdy and adorned muscular body. A thick, ugly scar on the face with buck teeth popping out.

- A morning in the mountains. The red sun rising with strong wind blowing. Chwichwit. The clouds look heavy with the premonition of the upcoming battle, and I stand at the forefront of the Dark Elves. Chwi! This morning I bare fresh hope. Chwichwiwit. Our courage and ardent wish toward victory. Abandon that noble spirit. Spirits. Oh I like to sing. Chuyiik! The Dark Elves will fall even more as I sing that song. A song praying for our victory. If the song is not abandoned, our victory is certain.

The absurd Orc took their attention, people laughed at the monologue.

"What the hell is this anyway?"

"What is this, satire?"

And people did not stop at this.

Around Orc Karachwi, the mountain was dense with fog. But the fog started to lift little by little, as the sun rose. Like that, at every point Orcs appeared.

"Orcs."

"I have lots of Orcs."

"Where is the alternative?"

- Chwiyiik! Chwiik!

- Kuwaahah!

Following the Orc's monologue, the Orc army roared!

The fog lifted completely.

The Yuroki Mountain revealed itself with nearly 400,000 Orcs and the siege of the Dark Elves began.

Against their high spirits, the Dark Elves were using elements and magic. The Orcs pushed with overwhelming numbers.

"This is like watching a movie."

"A battle of this scale..."

The majority of users have seen people do siege warfare. Magic can be dazzling when cast, but only that. That is only partly impressive.

But in this case, wave after wave of Orcs attacked as the Dark Elves desperately deflected them. Black fumes rose from the burning oil

splashed down from the walls on to the Orcs. Some of the Orcs that were hit by the oil itself burned to death.

Orcs climbing the walls.

Dark Elves launching arrows covering the sky.

"Awesome."

"This is the best....!"

The people who saw the video were very much content.

Like out of a fantasy film, you can be a spectator of a desperate battle between different races.

The incredible power of that glaive left others in awe!

Powerful enough to defeat many Dark Elves in combat!

The mighty Orc that wielded the glaive in his recklessness.

Based on its overwhelming power, the entire force moved together. The explosive energy can be felt; occasionally the glaive was swung in mysterious ways leading to amazing results. Ever since the creation of virtual reality, all martial arts enjoyed its greatest prosperity. Users can move about in virtual reality without being winded and garnered more interest in the use of weapons and combat.

"How could he move like that?"

"You can see that the whole battle is drawn around him."

"I guess this is where that Orc subtly changed the flow of the battle."

The calibre of the battle completely engrossed the minds of those who watched. Even if the movie ended at that point, people were very satisfied. But the video was far from the end. Priests and soldiers also joined those brutal looking Orcs.

"No way!"

"So that was a user?"

The people were astonished.

The war of Orcs and Dark Elves.

However, all of this was due to the will of a user. A single man was at the centre of this.

Murderous Orcs, soldiers, and priests were entering the temple, marching toward the necromancer. There was no way to know the background of the war, but the mood made it clear that the place was very important. Then the heinous Orc turned into the shape of a man.

The viewers did not know it, but the reason for this was the cancellation of the sculpture shapeshifting skill. The interior of the temple was very dark and the angle of the video showed the back, so they could not examine the face.

Then they viewed the conversation with the necromancer.

- I do not place my trust in the providence of a God for the sake of my live. However, if this is how it will be, I am prepared to comply. Kill me.

He looked to his knees.

Then so the necromancer knelt down.

People expected that the necromancer will finally be killed.

"Kill him!"

"I am curious about this quest. Really."

"With the rewards of a quest of this scale, what is it that you want?"

People were totally immersed as they watched the video. Unlike other videos, they really felt a different experience. Hall of Fame videos were generally monster hunts. Only those that are highly acclaimed can be qualified to enter the Hall of Fame; but they also knew that their own quests can be made public to which they were not willing.

The video Weed made was a big breather of fresh air. A movie where the main character came out, and when the conflict occurred, he didn't swing the sword.

- Say, my dear necromancer. You might think of this as divine

providence, but you hit the wrong key.

- You won't kill me, slave of Freya.

- I am not a tool. I would like you to talk. Will you tell me your side of the story?

- We... are not! You will not believe my story. Get out, you servants of Freya! Go to hell, I curse you.

- .....

The video's protagonist fell silent for a moment and then he spoke.

- I will give you the opportunity. A chance to receive faith and trust. I will also believe what you say to be truthful.

- Really? Can you promise?

- Yes. But just that I will listen to your story. Not a promise that I won't kill you.

They saw him hesitate for a moment, and then he began his long story.

- As you told me, I will speak. What the world knows of Balkan is wrong. You see, Balkan had been researching the skill of immortality, he was a true wizard. Yet.....

He said with an indignant look.

- Balkan's subordinate Shire used wicked tactics and the forces of darkness. Yet, the research was utilized in the wrong direction to create an immortal, undead army. When they die, the undead army quickly comes back to life! Balkan fell to the forces of darkness and lost his mind; the undead legion will destroy the world. Shire is in league with the forces of darkness and he leads the immortal legion. We necromancers were brought into this by Balkan, but fear being part of it, we are not free from our teacher's sin. The fact is, we went to this temple and got these old manuscripts to study blood and death as necromancers to reverse all of this. To return Balkan back to normal by removing the dark aura, and punish Shire, the source of all this evil.

Difficulty A quest has been opened.

If it has not already been unlocked, the quest is associated with the unknown profession:  
Necromancer.

"Necromancer!"

"If this person succeeds in this quest, we will be able to choose necromancer as a profession?"

"An upper profession quest for wizards has appeared!"

Finally, as the Dark Elf Citadel's repair operation is shown the video ends.

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For Lee Hyun's position, all of this took place earlier today.

Though he only slept for five hours, the world had changed considerably.

The Royal Road website had an exactly different atmosphere.

It was no longer no-one paying attention to the lower half of the Hall of Fame; the movie shook everything up.

"That Orc quest!"

"The Dark Elves, first time I've ever seen such a battle in my life."

"That Orc transformation.... might that be a quaternary poly-morph wizard spell?"

"No way, if that is it, I would probably be able to use that skill."

"At the very least, I guess it could be a unique item that allows you to change the body."

People were making speculations.

The sculpture shapeshifting was entirely unknown to them and their common sense. In addition, Lee Hyun conducted this quest itself in a place that was entirely new to them. With the stretches of mountains and valleys with no limit, and the open area with clouds underneath them.

"Where is this space land!?"

"It's not the central continent..."

"Many people live in the great cities and the surrounding terrain, and they do not look like that!"

People wanted to know where Lee Hyun conducted this quest and they couldn't wait. Royal Road was modestly mobilized here. Those that excelled in various fields among them were revealed.

- First, look at the trees in the land. The weather is very cold, not hot.
- Consider the alpine region, for the breeds of trees like that....
- The mountain peak is covered with snow.
- Certainly not in the south or the north.
- How the insects or birds move. Currently, the continent of Versailles during autumn. I can judge this by the migratory birds you see flying in the video....

The study even showed the Orcs.

- I've enjoyed many fantasy novels. Orcs from a book of fantasy! Robust and simple, the race charmed me very much. Huhuhu. Till now, I was told that the study of the Orcs was ignored by all, it was very annoying. However, I still believed. Orcs are THE flower in fantasy! Think about it. If you did not have Orcs in a fantasy world, what fun would that be!

The study of Orcs did not stop there as the topic strutted around.

- The species of Orc vary slightly depending on ethnic characteristics.  
Chwiik. Chwi-ik. Chwiyiik. Chuik. Chwiik.  
Where they get stronger in some way, stemming from the habitats they live in.

This particular Orc study received the attention from others as well.

- Then, I'll let you know. So far 87 species of Orcs are identified on the continent of Versailles; looking at the appearance of the Orcs in the video, it is evident that they are mainly native to the East.  
Orcs of the Kingdom of Brent put out a similar twang sound.

However, soon the words of the Orc studies received objections.

- Not the Orcs you see with those weapons and vitality. Orcs of the Kingdom of Brent are just about level 140. Many of the Orcs shown in the video are beyond level 200.
- I do not know too much about Orcs, however, the level is over 350. I've hunted many monsters. The Orcs that came out there, I've never seen guys that strong. To fight hordes of Orcs like that has got to be dreadful.
- This is giving me goosebumps!

An Orc researcher wrote this a while back

- I'm confident that this Orc species is not from the Kingdom of Brent. Though perhaps we can gather that the Orcs of the Kingdom of Brent are a little related. With that heinous crime of a movie coming out, I hardly have any knowledge of where that type of Orc may be found. Looking at it, my impression and interest is lost. My taste in it has also fallen sharply.

After the announcement of the assumed region of these Orcs that appeared in the video were made, things became more active.

But for Lee Hyun, it was completely different. Turning on the computer, the Hall of Fame website report left Lee Hyun disappointed.

"The total number of hits is less than 70,000."

Other videos in the Hall of Fame get millions of hits. Of the Hermes Guild, Ray Bard's movies get more than 100 million. Especially for the Champion's Tower video, Ray Bard's authorized scene boasted a whopping 1.7 billion hits.

"70,000 and nothing else."

Lee Hyun was discouraged, but if you actually know about the Hall of Fame, you would not agree with that.

The movie was posted just five hours before.

Also, it was located at the bottom of the Hall of Fame, and the length was too long to see in this amount of time; no one will see it whole for a while. The rumour started three hours before it began to climb. Since then, thousands of people had access.

The important part is that because the movie is long, to properly watch the full length of the video, the view counts will not easily increase. However, after the word spread, more and more will be coming back. As for how much the view count will increase, nobody knew the ripple effect that would come from this.

## Chapter 2: Laviyas, City in the Sky

In one of the many hidden dungeons, a person appeared. She found herself in a dark dungeon, and looked around in confusion. However, she soon regained her senses.

"Light! Work fast."

Light was called to quickly burn through the darkness; she casted the spell to be able to walk around.

She originally wanted to be a wizard, but also wanted to wield a sword. Although the weapon is of a short sword variety, it has a fierce stab attack. She carried a bow on her shoulder, and she had the look of a priestess. Where she could not use physical attacks, she used spells and buffs. Her class was well rounded.

Her identity is a shaman.

Dyne! She was seriously ill and had to leave in order to receive surgery. Now she has returned.

"This hasn't changed."

Dyne's eyes lit up.

As luck would have it, the time has come to move forward with her head held up high.

"Miss, I need to ask you something."

The one who spoke those words was a Dullahan. (a headless monster, like from v2ch16) It would have been frightening, but to Dyne, it was a familiar sight.

"Then tell me!"

"I've been looking for a head, my head. If you see it, show me where it is."

The creature of terror was holding the head he was looking for!

Dyne decided to give him an answer.

"Then close your mouth."

"What did you say?"

"I give up!"

Dyne suddenly clenched her two fists and relentlessly beat the Dullahan's head.

In the past, she hated hunting undead. After she safely returned from the surgery, the Dullahan was only a monster. Although punching with fists was not the only learned skill, her archery was also quite excellent.

She also could do different buffs, and she learned curse and attack spells.

Even her swordsmanship was at a high level!

The one thing that was difficult for Dyne, was that her class couldn't exhibit as much power as the original class, since Dyne is a Shaman. The class is well-rounded in all talents, but is unable to specialize; though, it seems highly effective in combat.

Well, the origin of her current state of mind should also be considered. The beginning of all of this was in this place, with the character named Weed. Dyne started with punching and kicking, and followed up with fencing. She was excited using it on the Dullahan.

"My head, my head! My head hurts too much."

"It was a little bit stressful being confined in a hospital... please understand. It won't last much longer. Blood curse!"

Yet the blood curse she used was of a certain family of spells.

The monster, Dullahan, was blessed with the curse of darkness!

He was beaten up and then his life was restored to an even higher amount than before.

Plagues and horrible enchantments.

Rather, it was not to kill him. Buffs to save the Dullahan and then hit the him, it was contradictory. At the end of a long time of beating up the

Dullahan, she finished him off with arrows.

Exerting her skills after such a long time!

Punching or fencing, archery, and magic, it was still the same.

The pitiful Dullahan became the target of all this.

"I'm not too rusty with my skills."

Dyne smiled joyfully.

When she played Royal Road in the past, she cared only about raising her skills rather than levels. Buff the monster, fight it, and repeat. Her level of skills increased abnormally.

"It's good to see Dullahans, and skeleton dogs!"

Dyne walked alone, strolling through the dungeon of the undead. Yet her body moved by its own accord. Coming back to Royal Road after a long time, she revelled in its ambiance, as if drunk from breathing the air.

How much she missed while she was bedridden.

Just a single breath, even wanting it as if it was a meal.

How wondrously beautiful life is, only a person who was sick could see this. Yet, whenever a monster was caught in her line of sight, she beat them right away.

Skeleton warriors, skeleton knights.

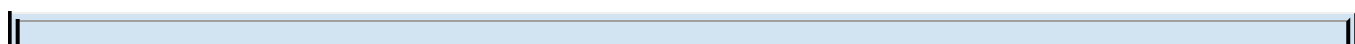
Just before the surgery, the skeletons emerged. It was a high-risk surgery. There are many cases where the patient dies in the middle of the operation. People worried that 'If there were only bone left after death, it could look like this case'.

She wandered around the undead dungeon just to look at it!

In her memory the area was simply barren, but it's not the same.

It used to be decorated with gray and black stalactites, hanging in the natural cave or shattered.

But statues had been chiseled everywhere.



You have seen the great Nameless Sculptures of Lavias. These great nameless sculptures had arisen!

These sculptures of treasured memories have become sanctuaries and guides in these dangerous dungeons. The mysterious statues were made by an anonymous sculptor.

Effect: The calm aura around these sculptures will increase a player's vitality and mana by 25%, movement speed by 10%. Monsters' attacks have a 5% penalty. The effects do not stack.

"Statue?"

Dyne was in a bad mood from the sculptures that did not fit her memory of the place.

"Why is everything like this?"

The moment she was about to turn away, the statues' appearance felt suddenly familiar.

One eyebrow slightly cocked upwards with a fierce expression on the man's face!

And the woman certainly resembled Dyne.

"It can't be..."

Dyne looked at the man. It was no doubt the man she met just before her surgery.

In Royal Road, the person who was deeply carved into her heart at the very end.

At that time, Dyne and this person made a fantastic party. The various specialties of the Shaman, combined with Weed's strength swept through the undead dungeon.

"Oh Weed."

Tears flowed uncontrollably in Dyne's eyes.

"Sob. I promised to never cry again, but..."

Before undergoing the operation, she imagined it a hundred times.

She will seek a new life, being glad to be alive.

She would never cry.

But now shedding these tears, how she felt was indescribable.

As she left to take the surgery, she thought that no one would remember her. Just to become completely forgotten from existence; she did not even know whether there was anyone who thought of her.

However, there was one person who gave her this as remembrance.

There was a man who crafted her appearance into sculptures. She could feel her heartbeat. Her heart started beating rapidly, her hands trembled slightly. Dyne's whole body was wracked with emotion, and then she noticed that graffiti was written under the statues. The handwriting was so poor; it appeared to have been written by a child.

Geomchi. Punishment to the ignorant!

Geomdulchi. Men everywhere should do hard work.

Geomsamchi has been here.

Geomsachi. I serve the master; it brings glory to my life.

Geomohchi. Must obtain a girlfriend. We're still only in our late 30s.

.....

Geombaekgusipsachi. I'm hungry. Someone lend me a little bit of barley bread.

.....

Geomsambaekyisipilchi. I starved to death yesterday.

Geomsambaekyisipyichi. These little monsters; and no food.

.....

Geomsambaeksasipohchi. Lover wanted. No conditions required. Only that you are willing to learn how to cook.

.....

Geomohbaekochi. Hello, nice to meet you. Geomohbaekohchiipnida is my name. Also known as the youngest cutie, Hajiyo. Hahaha.

Dyne went around a one large tour of the undead dungeon, and then she froze.

It had been a long time since her battle with the skeleton Dullahan and his head; she sought Weed's anonymous creations. Where Dyne and Weed ate their meal, without fail two sculptures of themselves rested there.

“Amazing. These statues...”

Dyne's eyes were moistened with tears. It may be trivial, but it was enough for her heart to be pained from the emotions. She viewed many sculptures like this. Slowly she continued to walk around the damp dungeon in enjoyment.

“Khu khu khu. Human beings are not allowed in this place.”

“In this place, you lay your body down before the lions. In this place of rest.”

“Lay down your life. I will guide you to your eternal rest.”

Three Skeletons!

Occasionally, monsters that haunted the area caught up to her and were firmly beaten.

This was absolutely not acceptable. She shattered their bones in rage for committing the crime of destroying the mood. They only did this to defend their territory, while Dyne intentionally walked around them!

These statues were intimately made with the desire to not allow them to gather near these statues, but without fail, Dyne was interrupted by the monsters. All she could do was let her skills go rampant as she hunted these monsters down. The characteristics of the Shaman appeared as she attacked and defeated these monsters.

She was out of the dungeon within two days.

\*

“So this is the city in the sky?”

“Yes. This place was recently discovered a short time ago by some adventurers. The only thing is that only people who did a meritorious service requested by Baran village could come up here.”

In Laviyas, there were quite a lot of adventurers. Dyne did not look around without Weed; in the meantime, many users did some discoveries and adventures on their own.

The sky above the city.

The scenery of the clouds passing by from the flow of the wind left the tourists with a good feeling, making the place a sight to behold. Low-level tourists came here risking their lives just for the chance to visit.

Laviyas became famous, and even the kingdoms' nobility officially

announced their interest to visit. Rosenheim Kingdom's nobles, and the nobles of the Kingdom of Brent often drop by quite often. Extremely expensive quests arose for hiring escorts for them to go there safely.

“There are a lot of people here.”

Dyne slowly walked inside the city. Then a wide variety of bird tribes greeted her.

“Caw, caw. This is the first time seeing you. Are you new in town?”

The one who spoke up was Tom Ball, the new grandfather.

Beside him were many other bird tribes. The crow flapped his wings.

“Human, are you strong? You seem to be quite famous; I would like to ask you a favor. Up here in Levias, we have been unlucky with all of the undead.”

“Do you know how to gather herbs? If you don't, I'll teach you about herbal medicine; can you give me 200 gold? There is a herb I'm looking for in the north corner of a cave. If you try to dig up its roots, you could get injured, so you have to be careful.”

They were prospects.

She met a wide variety of bird tribes, but they all couldn't remember her. Even if they had a new head of the family, they were severely forgetful. Even though Dyne helped the black crow tribe, she had been forgotten.

As she leisurely wandered around, Dyne suddenly missed Weed.

‘He must be somewhere in the middle of an adventure and all. He must be at a much higher level, why, wouldn't he?’

She wanted to get in touch with him.

She wanted to share her joy with him in being alive!

However, there was no way to contact him. Before she left for the surgery, she deliberately disabled her friends' list. If she came back, there was no way he would be aware of the fact. She was extremely regretful of rejecting his friend request.

Thousands of people with a similar name would pop up if you didn't register the friendship immediately with a direct contact. So this means that there is no way to keep in touch.

‘Well, that's okay, if we are meant to meet again, then it will happen. Though, if we did, would it be a sad meeting?’

The level difference must have grown too large, and they may not have a chance of meeting one another. However, this was not a big concern. With her high level of skill in comparison to her actual level, she can easily build it back up.

‘I'm free now to be myself. I don't have to worry about dying. I've got time.’

Dyne then stood alone watching as several women approached her.

“How do you do? I have a problem I would like your help with. Would you mind taking this risk? My name is Geurati, the wind spirit witch.”

Dyne happily nodded her head.

Adventure!

Hunting!

She wanted to venture forth and get stronger.

'The continent of Versailles, Levias, any place with monsters is good.'

\*

The levels of the Geomchis failed to rise quickly. The reason was due to the building of the pyramids.

“Kkeungcha!”

“Three hundred and four, just a little bit more. Let's show them our strength.”

“Yes, sir. To the death!”

The hard work of pushing the pyramids' stones was entrusted to them.

Selena, a pretty girl from the flower shop in the countryside nearby came

by and made a request.

“Actually, my house is falling apart right now and needs a lot of repair, can you please help me?”

T'tiring!

Selena's house. In Serraburg, there is a shabby house in disrepair. If you can rebuild Selina's home, you can be her friend.

Difficulty: D

Reward: Selena's friendship.

Quest requirement: A certain level of fame. Must have experience in construction.

Originally, this was not a common quest. The reward was simply just friendship with Selena!

When you start in Royal Road, you cannot leave the castle for the first 4 weeks. You have to master how to play, and to some extent, you have to pick and choose the quests in accordance to the rewards. Whether it be a lot of money, experience, or payment of an item!

A request to move things with your body in many ways; nevertheless architectural based quests is not that hard.

However, as the Geomchis listened to Selena, they rushed for it recklessly.

“Please, please allow me!”

“Accept me as if I was your slave!”

“A home? I'll build you a palace!”

The beauty of Selena caused them to rush and they were all clamoring to receive the quest. It was too late for Geomsamchi (3rd) and Geomdulchi (2nd). They were shouldering the various tools for building the house.

Teachers or practitioners, the desperate struggle for love was the same.

In fact, as many as 500 workers were mobilized to build the house for the girl from the flower shop. Enough people to build a house within a day or two.

The Geomchis were already familiar with the building of a pyramid!

They had worked on many things; a flower shop should be a piece of cake.

However, the building of Selena's house by the Geomchis went very slowly.

“Here, have something to drink.”

“Hahaha! Thank you.”

“What to do, this sort of thing....”

Every time Selena would say or do anything, the Geomchis were in a frantic to just to see or talk to her. In her absence, they deliberately slowed their work until she appeared again. They only pretended to work hard.

It had been about 10 days that they were building the flower shop. Even as it went closer to completion, they found more ways to avoid work.

Geomilbaekohchi sank into a deeply sad expression.

Geomsamchi (3rd) approached him.

“What's wrong?”

“Oh, master Geomsamchi! To be honest... the store is nearly complete, we won't see Selena as much, will we?”

“Well that would be bittersweet, wouldn't it?”

“Yes, I know. Selena is not really a human being.... but I like her. She is very nice and has a beautiful smile too. She doesn't ask for much. I wish this could last for at least one more week.”

Geomilbaekochi lamented saying farewell to Selena.

Then assistant master Geomsamchi broke into a laugh.

“Fool! This is what we will do.”

Geomsamchi violently brandished his sword and threw it into the flower shop's wall and demolished it.

Then they clapped as the Geomchis gathered in the disturbance.

“That's our master for you.”

“This is the best!”

“That was an excellent idea!”

They heard the echoes of the crash as the flower shop that the Geomchis worked hard to build was broken. However, in front of Selena, the nearly completed store was ultimately destroyed.

The nice little flower shop that the Geomchis built, they wept sadly.

“Boo-hoo.”

“Selena can't live in a place like this anymore.”

“In my youth, 12 people beat me up and not a single tear fell from me, but this.”

But this was not the end.

After Selena's flower shop, in the Serraburg province, since then many requests had been made for building several houses and shops.

The Geomchis' criteria for selecting these jobs were simple. The body or face of a pretty woman was all that was needed.

“No reward needed, my friend!”

“I'll work till I collapse just to see here smile.”

“Hijuk, she smiled at me!”

At the construction ground, the Geomchis worked hard in building up the bricks. Solely to see girls, they worked hard to build a house, a noble intention. In the Serraburg castle many tanned laborers with their shirts off could be seen.

From building the pyramid, it's hard to calculate the massive amounts of stone used.

T'tiring.

In regards to the repetitive actions, the architect skills bricklaying and landscaping have been acquired.

Bricklaying 1 (0%) : Bricks can be stacked neatly to build homes.

With this skill, no matter how many bricks are stacked, it can be done neatly.

Shovel 1 (0%): The ground can be dug up quickly.

Architectural skills!

It is fairly difficult class to categorize, even as a manufacturing job; as for the previous , it was not a class released so far.

Weed's exceptional dexterity brought about his skilfulness in cooking; as the Geomchis labored through construction, their extreme efforts caused them to learn architect skills. Bricklaying and spade, but another that raised was the great increase in the strength stat. In order to raise the architecture skill, the Geomchis had to complete requests by shoveling the ground and piling up bricks.

As a result, within three months the Geomchis got to know all the beauties of Rosenheim Kingdom and moved along. Since then, it was hard pressed for a Geomchi to walk the streets.

“Hello brother number 110!”

“Thank you so much for the last house you built us, brother Geomsipohchi!”

The people that visited could not believe the Geomchis.

Only a Geomchi can do such work!

After a few months, the Geomchis became very popular for eagerly building houses for beautiful residents of Rosenheim Kingdom.

From then on, each of the nobles came.

“I have heard of your fame. It is said that you are quite famous in this field. I would like a mansion built. This won't be a simple house, but something far more grand that I will pay well for if you accept.”

Build a noble's mansion for Baron AriasNear the capital of Rosenheim kingdom, Baron Arias owns a fairly big town. Because of the large influx of markets and goods, he gained a lot of money and can now have a proper residence built.

“I refuse.”

Quest has been refused.

For some time, the Geomhis refused quests without even looking.

“What are we, your servants?”

“That is just too much extra work to do!”

“No matter how much you want to offer, I'm still not interested.”

The Geomchis watched as the overweight Baron Arias glared at them with an expression of ridicule. However, when they were asked by another pretty woman from the town, without thinking they nodded.

“No problem, I accept!”

“I will do the best that I can to help build it for you.”

The Geomchis worked fervently hard. Yet, they even practiced their skills, and they spent their spare time hunting and visiting dungeons. Then all the Geomchis exceeded level 220.

“Status window!”

Character Name: Geomchi505.	Preference: None
Level: 220	Profession: Martial artist
Title: None	Fame: 1632
HP: 27060	Mana: 4402
Strength: 850	Agility: 455
Health: 230	Wisdom: 65
Intelligence: 40	Fighting Spirit: 130
Stamina: 120	Endurance: 180
Charm: 20	Charisma: 60
Leadership: 30	Luck: 5
Faith: 10	Attack: 1340
Defense: 195	
Magic Resistance:	
Fire: 20%	Water: 20%
Earth: 20%	Black magic: 20%

Then a nameless challenger came before Geomchi.

A drifter wearing light armor and with a cape!

Geomchi was intrigued. Then the wanderer said:

“Little by little you perfect your martial arts. You and your colleagues, I have heard of your reputation. You live to serve women? I have dedicated my entire life into sharpening my martial arts.”

The drifter appeared to have the exact same class as the Geomchis' characters. A martial artist.

Then the wanderer spoke again.

“Do you know what it means to be stronger? Geom, it is not enough to just hone your skills. Experience the broad world around you, come back and defeat me. Then I will guide you to true strength.”

T'tiring!

Become a warrior. The world is cluttered with monsters to hunt, you need to find them.  
Young women and ladies look for those that are chivalrous, it is attainable in this land.  
It is said that if you travel through the continent of Versailles and return, you can be reborn as a true martial artist.  
Difficulty: High tier class advancement quest.  
Reward: The possibility to attain more skills.  
Restrictions: Quest limited to the Martial artist class. Must not be infamous.

Once the wanderer left, Geomchi and the rest down to Geomchi505 came together in formation.

The time has come and Geomchi had to make a decision.

“All right everyone. So far we have stuck together in Royal Road as a united group.”

“.....”

The Geomchis' expressions were completely serious!

Without allowing any distractions, they listened to the words of their master.

“When we are united, we are fearsome. Frightening enough that we were avoided. We are strong even on our own.”

When Geomchi hunted in a dungeon, the majority of users insulted him and departed.

To monopolize the monsters, and take the glances of beautiful female users! In order to eat a meal without burning it when cooking, and eat delicious rice without fighting over it! No matter how crowded a place might be, even then he can find in a moment a secluded hunting ground!

“Now it is time for us to experience the wider world. Each of us must go our separate ways throughout the continent, defeating strong monsters. In six months time, let us meet again in Rosenheim kingdom.”

“Understood. Teacher!”

“I will see you later.”

“Please be healthy. Master!”

The Geomchis made their respective farewells and walked away.

A small backpack that contained only barley bread was all as their luggage. In fact, they did not leave anything behind.

The Geomchis scattered throughout the entire continent! Although the separation of master and disciples was bittersweet, the disciples left with their heads held high, and their faces filled with mirth.

‘Finally it's time to eat heartily.’

‘I will seriously die from hunger.’

‘Now to hunt a rabbit and roast it.’

To become true warriors, the Geomchis separated and departed from Rosenheim Kingdom.

A typical occasion at the University of South Korea!

Professional gamers typically have little expectation for an application to be accepted. But if it actually came to acceptance, their troubles only become greater.

“Older brother, honestly I have something to tell you....”

Lee Hayan was in conflict as she held the letter of acceptance. Today was

the day of the interview at the University of Korea. However, Lee Hyun had to be present at the college interview.

“I can't hold it off any longer, got to do it....”

After agonizing for a long time, Lee Hayan eventually let it all out.

How challenging!

Hayan looked at Lee Hyun as she slammed the door.

“Brother, there is something I have to say. You have to go to University of Korea for the interview.”

When Hayan spoke, Lee Hyun was in the middle of looking at the Hall of Fame page.

“Interview? What interview?”

“I mean the interview for University enrolment.”

“What? Really?”

Lee Hyun jumped in surprise.

All of a sudden, an interview at the National University of South Korea!

Lee Hayan bowed her head and sulkily said.

“The thing is... I actually turned in the application form. It is mandatory that you have to get to the college on time... There are many people trying to enter nowadays.”

Lee Hyun had heard too often of these university admissions. There are often more applicants than there are spots to be filled.

Lee Hyun nervously asked.

“So what did you do?”

“I sent in an application form rather than toss it away. You were so busy that I did it without your permission. I'm sorry, brother.”

As Hayan apologized, Lee Hyun was extremely angry, but he could still tolerate it. He could not scold her for acting on her own. Though, he did snatch it out of Lee Hayan's hand.

“For this document and the interview, it means it passed, right?”

“Yeah. These documents typically mean that it passed, but it does not mean unconditional acceptance; but, it does show that it is likely...”

“Great!”

Lee Hyun smiled brightly.

All of his hardships so far, he felt a burden lift from him. He was happy.

He misunderstood the difference in his stance in life.

Lee Hayan's words!

Of all the universities in South Korea, he couldn't imagine the thought of going to an admission interview. After dropping out of high school, he barely took the GED. He did not even think that he could ever go to college in the first place.

Of course the truth was, University of South Korea had accepted Lee Hayan with a scholarship.

“That's great. So when is the interview?”

For some reason, Lee Hayan became a little uneasy. It was different from an expected response.

“Yes, but you're probably going to be angry...”

Lee Hayan was hesitant as she spoke.

“Today.”

“Huh?”

“You need to go see the interview. There are only three hours left.”

“Are you serious?”

Lee Hyun's spirit flared.

An interview at his sister's university, right at that moment he turned off the computer and stood up.

“Then let's get ready. I'll do it.”

The virtual reality department of the University of South Korea.

Lee Hyun lavishly arrived in a taxi at the University of South Korea. It would be unthinkable on a normal day.

'Ah, Hayan, he has been very interested in virtual reality.'

This detail of his interest in advancing his education was something he never told her.

'Perhaps virtual reality can be useful, since it is so familiar to him.'

Lee Hyun was completely delighted as he waited for the interview.

"It's fine. Everything will go well."

Said his sister as she tightly held on to his hand. At this moment, Lee Hyun noticed a rough change in her.

'This is a misunderstanding'

This was no time for such a confession.

'Older brother, this issue will have to be put on hold.'

Lee Hayan was at once quiet. Already the wheel was rolling. The time has come, and at this point there is no chance to return back home. All of a sudden, cold sweat appeared on Lee Hayan's forehead. Wishing fervently that she could do this at a later time.

"Are you okay?"

"Yes brother, I'm fine."

"You are sweating a lot."

"I think it's from the tension."

"Tell me if by chance you get sick."

From this reluctant deceit about sweat due to tension, Lee Hyun was genuinely concerned. Lee Hayan's clever eyes beamed.

'Ah! This is it.'

Just 3 minutes left until the time of the interview, Lee Hayan placed both her hands on her belly.

“Older brother.”

“What, what's wrong?”

“It's a stomach ache. I need to go to the restroom. Might be what I ate this morning.”

“That's....”

This was not the time.

At such an important moment for his little sister, Lee Hyun wanted to stop her.

“Can you withstand it?”

“Aw, it would be better to not show something impolite during the interview.”

“Well, if that's the case.... then get back quickly.”

“Yes, older brother.”

“Do not be late for the interview.”

“I'll be back soon.”

Lee Hayan secretly slipped away by pretending to go to the bathroom. Oblivious, Lee Hyun waited anxiously for his sister to return. He got up from the chair and began pacing in the corridor as he looked at the clock.

1 minute. 2 minutes....

Minding the time, he wanted a way to completely stop it, even though such a thing was impossible.

‘This can hamper Hayan's future... Of all things, an upset stomach, I'm responsible. Something must have be strange with the rice I served earlier.’

His fingers were trembling slightly from the suspense. Lee Hayan did not appear from the restroom in the 3 minutes approaching the interview

with the professors. The female assistant came over and said: “The person who came for the interview? The professors are waiting.”

“I’m sorry, my sister has yet to return, is it possible that you can wait a few minutes?”

Being denied for coming late to an interview is certainly the worst.

As Lee Hyun spoke to her, face to face, the impression he made to the assistant teacher made her heart tremble.

Strong eyes!

If she did not wait, she felt that he could turn this whole place upside down.

“Oh, I see. I will convey this with the professor.”

After answering, the TA was equally puzzled.

‘Sister what are you waiting for? Except for the interview, parties would not enter-....’

After 10 minutes passed, Lee Hayan still did not appear. At that time she had covertly met with the TA.

“I have a request for you. Tell my older brother that you met me at the restroom and due to the stomach ache I will absolutely not be back in time. Can you tell him to go to the interview instead?”

“Yes?”

“Please, tell him that. Have my brother go to the interview.”

The assistant teacher thought that this pair of siblings was really strange.

Waiting for his sister before he goes to the interview, she could not understand Lee Hyun; then his sister, asking me to tell him instead is absolutely strange.

Anyways, the professors were waiting in the interview room.

“Will you tell him?”

“Yes, I accept.”

The assistant went to Lee Hyun and spoke.

“For now, go to the interview room first.”

“My sister is not back....”

“I met your sister in the bathroom, and she said that she is not likely to make it and that she wants you to meet the professors. They cannot be delayed anymore, or it will be cancelled.”

“This shouldn't have happened. I will go to the interview.”

The assistant teacher of English did not understand, but the interview was permitted.

“Follow me.”

Eventually Lee Hyun went alone to the meeting, without his sister.

\*

Five professors were looking at documents.

‘I guess that must be my little sister's application.’

The fact was that the application actually was of Lee Hyun's.

As the professor was reading this application, he asked a question before Lee Hyun could try to speak.

“What motive did you have to choose this school?”

“I thought that this renowned school would give a promising future.”

“Are you indicating that other schools are not good prospects?”

The professor questioned him obstinately. Lee Hyun paired him with a simple answer.

“Not at all; however, I have heard that surely it has the best facilities and faculty.”

“I see.”

The professors nodded their heads to the textbook answer.

'Unnecessarily loud, but not bad.'

'Emphasis on doing the basics.'

'Sincere attitude in the interview by bargaining. Though he was late in the interview...'

Lee Hyun blurted out.

“In fact, my sister is a really good kid.”

“Hrm?”

“When my sister was a child, my parents died.”

Lee Hyun began to speak at length of his family history. For the sake of Lee Hayan's interview, of course he had to give his sister's story as much as possible. The fact that this choice of Korea University was not for his sister but for Lee Hyun personally, was completely hidden from him.

'The University of Korea! I absolutely must not fail. I'm talking about the future of my sister here.'

So in order to buy time until his sister arrived to the meeting, he spoke of their story of suffering from the beginning of their youth. He told them of how his family lived and how he and his sister grew up in such a way. However, to talk about his sister, he could not do so without giving his own back story.

Unsafe from the threat of loan sharks. How he fought to somehow protect his family, earn money at the gas station and other work he was not supposed to do. The professors listened to Lee Hyun in silence. The interview was longer and more different than usual. The format is normally the professor throws out a question and the candidate answers back. But now Lee Hyun spoke of how he lived in his rambling story, as the faculty heard it.

“... And now, I went through the process of preparing for a year to the extent of laying out the ground work for Royal Road. In the case of other games that come out, it is varied in interest. But with the virtual reality of Royal Road, it is different at its core. Breathing, moving, behavior and

actions that make a lot of memories. I see that such a game would last at least 10 years. I'm not collecting enough money yet for the college tuition of my younger sister, but I will not be late for the payment date.”

At this point, the professors realized that something is wrong with Lee Hyun's understanding of the situation.

‘This is a ridiculous misunderstanding; he thinks the interview is for his younger sister and not for him. ‘

Yet, the professors did not talk about this; instead they extraordinarily asked a question.

“Then what about virtual reality? This may be a childish question, however, how can you divide virtual reality and reality?”

Lee Hyun's answer was simple.

“To try divide reality and virtual reality in itself is meaningless.”

“Oh, really? Tell us why you think so.”

To the professor, at most the world of reality and virtual are separate, or the other expected answer is that a complete virtual reality is a creation of a dream. Lee Hyun's unique answer was interesting.

“Standing here now or being in Royal Road, in both reality is the same”

“Virtual reality and reality is the same, what do you mean by that?”

“An example. Living fiercely, work and go about creating things and achieve things therein that will benefit me. As for virtual reality, is it not fact that life becomes an imitation. You can gain knowledge, can earn money. To endeavor wherever, it has not been different to me in anyway.”

“I understand perfectly. This student Hayan, it appears we now know enough of this kind of person. We will notify you soon of the result.”

“I am grateful.”

Lee Hyun left and afterwards the professors commenced into a meeting.

“Such strong vitality.”

“To think of such an uncommon family like that in this day and age, it

stands to reason that it could.”

“With the advancement of virtual reality, the meaning of family is fading, and he has a great mentality.”

“A wide range in knowledge about the side of virtual reality.”

“A variety of life experiences, it would be helpful to many.”

The professors talked at length, not one of them was looking negatively on Lee Hyun.

“Then we are all in agreement.”

The professors stamped the seal which passed the application of Lee Hyun.

“Phew, barely made it out to the ending.”

Lee Hyun barely made it through the interview. Come to think of it, he was not sure what kind of answer, if anything, surfaced.

“Well, that's all that can be done...”

Lee Hyun found his sister.

The little bird came out from the bathroom and was sitting on the bench as she breathed out a sigh of relief. His little sister was saying prayers. As Lee Hyun neared, she looked up.

“How'd it go, the interview?”

“Huh? Yeah....”

Lee Hyun did not know how to comfort his sister. Of all things, to become sick at such a time.

“In my own way, I tried to explain.... Now to get you in, I tried to speak of our situation in the interview.”

“What situation.”

“The person concerned must be in the interview. I'm not that skilled at expressing myself and I don't know the outcome.”

Lee Hayan was puzzled.

She thought he would feel angry at the fact he was deceived, but he was more regretful about the interview.

'It can't be that you still don't know? How is that possible?'

Lee Hayan decided to go with a general statement first.

“It's okay brother. Believe that it went well, and nothing more can be done for the interview anymore.”

“Yes, I could, but.... yeah. It has already passed. I was foolish of have let it.”

Back home, as they exited through the gate of the university, Lee Hayan momentarily flinched.

“What is it?”

“I left something here! Wait here just a moment, brother.”

“Okay.”

Lee Hayan got back in the school to meet the assistant teacher. She had the mailing address changed to where the grandmother was hospitalized.

# Chapter 3: First time at the Movies

Initially, Lee Hyun was going to go home with his sister. As per usual, the decision was to go home and do a few things at the house and get to Royal Road. The time for the quest was just around the corner, but the lack of time for preparation made it worse. However, this was not what came to mind.

'The University of Korea interview! An incline over an incline. It is not credible to spend such an important day in this way.'

Lee Hyun took heart and looked into his wallet. (perhaps closer to withheld breath, or preparing himself) Stiff blue bills.

If only they knew what happens to cash after the generous cash withdrawals. (might be he's contemplating the waste of overspending)  
“Hayan.”

“Huh?”

“Let's see a movie.”

Until now, there has never been a time Lee Hyun went to a movie theatre. But there is a first time for everything.

“Really?”

To Hayan, this was unfathomable.

Her brother of all people! A stingy person who would never waste money or even use it to ride a bus. A guy who wouldn't buy junk or even essential school supplies at the very least. And to go to a movie theatre.

“Yeah. Seeing a movie would be fun.”

With Lee Hyun's strong determination, the two headed to the movie theatre.

A multiplex theatre with many movies.

Associated with a large shopping mall, a place where visitors were unending.

As he entered the theatre, he was continuously amazed.

“Amazing.”

How could such a place be there that will gather so many people. This just seemed to be something from a different world.

“Look brother, this movie looks really interesting.”

“Sure. Come, let's go and take a look.”

In truth, this was the first time for Lee Hayan to see a movie as well. Even though she got a fairly considerate allowance, and would earn her own money, she would never spend it carelessly. It was a first time for her to go to a high standard theatre to see a film.

“So many films.”

“Which are the more recent in popularity?”

“There are posters all over.” (would prefer 'A good man's end'. But this is direct...) “Let's go, it sounds like fun.”

Lee Hyun and Lee Hayan bought tickets after waiting for some time in line. Initially, he only knew that you had to pay money before entering the theatre; however, he also had to purchase a ticket specifically at the box office.

“So this is how it works. I knew this would happen. This is normal.”

Lee Hyun had a sudden overwhelming smile. A confident smile. Yet he handed 10,000 Won Won grandly for these two tickets.

“Two tickets for ”

Pride from coming to a movie theatre!

Satisfaction of being a cultured man!

Having begun this moment, it was worth every bit. Though it is precious, spending the money is still worthwhile.

Smiling sweetly, the employee said.

“3:30 show for 2 Adult tickets. Correct?”

“Yes.”

“Do you have a discount card or a credit card?” (discount might mean debit) “Huh?”

Lee Hyun was baffled.

Credit card and discount card!

A quite significant sounding name, the mention of those words.

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“Oh. Yes. MK capital, or carrier card, credit cards, or choose a discount.”

“Then, if that's the case, how much of a discount...”

Lee Hyun asked hesitatingly.

The staff member laughed heartily. It was a smile bright enough to pick up your spirits.

“2,000 Won per person.”

“.....”

At that time, Lee Hyun exposed his rotten smile!

7,000 Won movie tickets for 2,000 Won; a discount that cannot be ignored.

For 2,000 Won per person, a total discount of 4,000 Won!

But there was no card for Lee Hyun.

Credit cards were mainly used for the wholesale market, and he was without one since he did not fit the requirements to be issued with a credit card.

The debt was paid off, but his record remained, and no credit means no card issued.

Not even a cell phone.

“Hayan.”

He looked to his sister for help, but her head was shaking; it was the

same for her.

A highschooler without a cell phone, or a card.

Eventually, Lee Hayan grabbed Lee Hyun's arm to get his attention.

“Brother. It's just a movie, we don't have to watch.”

At that moment, Lee Hyun was certain that he wanted to see the movie.

Looking back, he did not remember his family ever watching a movie together.

'As the older brother, I live for the sake of my younger sibling, Lee Hayan.'

Feeling remorse, he handed over 20,000 Won without hesitation to the staff.

A grand move!

“ without discount or credit, I want 2 tickets.”

“Hope you find a good spot, sir.”

The theatre staff found it interesting as the two siblings went to find good seats during the time remaining. For a 3:30 pm showing, there was still 1 hour and 20 minutes left. Lee Hyun attended his sister as they went inside the movie theatre. There is a comprehensive game room and a place where you can buy popcorn and squid.

'That squid is almost half the price of the film. Popcorn is so expensive.'

This place, there is no sense to it.

The selling price of popcorn and coke in the movie theatre is more expensive than the price of the ticket!

Lee Hyun looked around and noticing the game room, led his sister to it.

“Until it is time for the entertainment, let's wander around.”

“Yeah, yeah.”

The two went inside the game room.

Again Lee Hyun was amazed.

'It exceeds 1,000 Won per round for each game....'

Royal Road is the ideal of the mainstream world.

In virtual reality, you can achieve anything. For the simple entertainment from an old machine, a simple screen will appear with hand controls that costs 1,000 Won for each use. You pay cash and also calculate the amount taken since it gives none back. This is an environment to waste your money in just moments.

'These crooks!'

Lee Hyun gave out a sad sigh.

The world of entertainment was not able to give a peace of mind.

This over-inflation of prices!

Money earned from blood and sweat spilled by blowing on a few moments of entertainment was good for nothing.

“Older brother, which game would do?”

“Well, let's have a go at it.”

The best entertainment at this point for Lee Hyun would be the one that looks the cheapest. Some kind of tennis game for two people to compete against each other to win. At the game, Lee Hyun's hand trembled. Playing by putting money into it.

This was absolute fear.

Pain, terrible pain, as money left his pocket!

Probably at seeing the most terrifyingly thriller movie ever, he still would not have been afraid. Lee Hyun and his younger sibling paying for a game. The cheapest one was 500 Won. Will have to be strong to hang in there for 1 hour in a game that normally takes 2 minutes. If against the other sibling, two more wins, then it's all gone! Money going down the drain.

Lee Hyun went rigid in the face as he smiled.

“This is boring, let's look at a different game.”

“Yes, brother.”

Lee Hyun now found a game that was not a competition type.

'This game is preferable; as long as you can contribute something... everything is free!'

He found an airplane game.

The objective of the game is to fly a plane and shoot down enemy aircraft by firing missiles. This was popular in the 20th century, and even now people are still enjoying classic games with simple operation.

“Let's try doing this.”

Lee Hyun was delighted as he sat in front of the game.

Two people can play this game together by inserting 1,000 Won.

'Can withstand 1 hour with this!'

The first mission was to attack the enemy's aircraft character. Flying proudly and shooting down enemy planes while timely not attacking friendly bombers. Victory was not difficult. But the astronauts that came from the second mission were unknown. An extremely fast UFO ride in a ship emitting laser beams covering the full screen! Missile, surface-to-air-missile; but regardless, the inexpensive loss is behind me.

“Keoheok!”

“Haha! This is fun!”

Lee Hyun endured as his younger sibling was enjoying herself.

'Since my sister likes this.'

They played the airplane game once then went off in search of a different game.

[Find what is wrong with this picture!]

A game that could last a really long time. First of all, it is necessary to have to pay for two people. Two people can simultaneously watch and search the screen till one of them finds it. When you succeed past 10 stages, you can win a teddy bear. His eyes were getting bloodshot from seriously looking for what was wrong in the picture, yet Lee Hyun was

feeling severely betrayed. It is like finding a pearl from the ocean!

Lee Hyun took this as a very demanding challenge. For the money spent, get that doll! But then this stage was even trickier. Find the missing piece of puzzle in the sand! Find different leaves in a forest pattern! What island is not on the world map! Find an ant with 4 legs!

It appeared that the mission was only to make him completely frustrated. If you cannot find it in the time limit, then the money is lost; it was like his life was dying off bit by bit. Whenever the two failed, the amount increased. The picture searching game was set to eat money at a horrible speed.

But Lee Hyun carried on in patience.

To use up money is the poison of youth.

'I will find you no matter what.'

At this point, the money far exceeded the value of the doll. Nevertheless, one more hurdle was passed. So now to the final stage. Lee Hyun stared unblinkingly and waited. Finally, what appeared from the next scene...

Find a specific Star within the Milky Way!

'Crap!'

Lee Hyun was forced to abandon. Even with this, it's too much. At least tens of thousands of stars, how will you know if some are missing somewhere in the middle.

'What hardship!'

He felt naive, to believe that he could get a teddy bear from [finding what was wrong with the picture], he must have been a fool. There was a time when doing the work was fun in itself.

'I guess Royal Road is the only proper one to go with.'

From then on, Lee Hyun decided to just find a game that was simple enough. But there weren't many games. If 2 players determined victory, then the game wouldn't last for long.

'I can't spend more money, is there not a single game that can last a little longer?'

Then Lee Hyun saw a Tokyo dancing game and felt that was the one. You first go into a small room in order to play. You take actions according to the instructions listed and all related behaviors are shown on the centre of the screen. It was a dance competition; you compete by scores after the game.

'This will be difficult.'

Lee Hyun saw that the instructions appearing before the eyes and the flow is so fast that the movements are miraculous. Move your hands vaguely and move your feet on the ground as you ride the rhythm of the beat, the body even more superbly, the flamboyant dance moves were displayed on the screen.

A Dance showdown!

High school girls were surrounding them and middle school girls were gathering as they were all admiring it.

“Oh, you should try it, older brother.”

“Are you sure?”

Lee Hyun was a completely noob in dancing! Well, might as well push forward. The little sister was glad to see his reaction and privately wanted to see it.

'There's a line, with that many people, it will be a 15 minute wait.'

Beyond this, he would rather save time. Then Lee Hyun stood at the end of the line to dance. It seemed that most of those standing in line were men. The boys had necklaces, earring and all the latest hairstyles.

'Look at this hick.'

'What's with him?'

'Just ignore him.'

'No. He will be embarrassing.'

The boys privately glanced and mutually winked at each other. Even so, they already had their attention focused on Lee Hyun and Lee Hayan. Everyone was thrilled the moment the beautiful Lee Hayan entered the game room. An attractive and cute high school girl. Then they saw her with Lee Hyun and watched her play cheap sucker games as she smiled brightly. Everyone was in a bad mood.

'This is a good way to fully embarrass him.'

Boys who stood in line intentionally excused themselves. Thanks to that, Lee Hyun turn came quickly.

“Brother, Good luck!”

“Yeah, I'll do my best.”

Lee Hyun went into the small room and his hairs stood on end. At that place, he had no idea of where to start or even choose the kind of dance. Varieties of dances according to region and time, but he lacked the fundamental knowledge. Finally Lee Hyun just selected one.

Freestyle.

Extreme Dance.

Coincidentally, this boasts the highest level difficulty for dance. Having started, he now must press the arrows corresponding to the symbol fast and precisely to dance. The selected dance that only people of the highest level are able to do.

“Oh man, what a novice.”

“A guy with no tact chose Extreme Dance.”

“This will be totally embarrassing.”

Lee Hyun's choice was reported through the screen outside, and they openly laughed at him. They were thinking that as soon as the real game starts, Lee Hyun will panic and move around wildly. People were normally overly conscious of those in line outside of the game.

'As it is, depending on this you will not get embarrassed.'

His body went full force following the unfamiliar dance moves, but as the hand and feet instructions approached, he sometimes had trouble. Various arrows of different distance caused Lee Hyun to struggle as it went even faster. Pressing to the exact moments, it was not an easy task. He executed complicated actions as his mind registered them as they occurred. The hp of Lee Hyun's character was in a rapid decline. In the background a crowd was filling the dance floor of the club. Lee Hyun's opponent was overwhelming, showing dazzling dancing skills. Then in one moment, Lee Hyun changed slightly.

'Dancing. I don't know how to dance.'

The fact is, it is not possible to suddenly do something you don't know how to. What it feels like to ride the rhythm, feel the music, he had no idea. He thought that only a highly cultured man would be able to dance this. But if this is about moving one's own body.

'I wield a sword, though this is fine as I do not need one in my hand. As an opponent makes a step near to me, I walk a step contrary to them. Fighting the enemy with my hands. My foe jabs first as I strike with the palm of my own hand.'

All of a sudden, Lee Hyun's actions have changed.

You can state that his body was excessively tense. His hands and feet had no place to go. Of the arrows that came out, he had been forced to follow the actions of the opponent, rather than precisely direct attacks. He considered the goal of moving his hands and legs and he unleashed. He was now kicking and twisting at the waste, rotating his body. His arms moved very quickly. He used his fists and elbows at very precise timing against those arrows.

Soon, Lee Hyun's movement projected through the screen.

“What the heck is going on?”

“This is amazing.”

The actions were associated with dance. And this was related to music. He followed the instructions with his eyes, heard with his ears, and he

watched. From his previous actions, the tide had turned. Even though Lee Hyun's character had only 1 square of vitality left, he rebounded and overwhelmed the opponent. Exactly like in Royal Road, he was victorious; the patience in order to make sense of the situation and to counter it.

“What is that guy!”

The faces of the guys in the line were completely ridiculous from shock. A complete novice that had no idea just a bit ago was making such movements and quickly become proficient.

To dance similarly and press those arrows. Extreme Dance moved too quickly, because it was impossible to resonate with the dance, and that to by swaying properly. But Lee Hyun's movements showed that he can make a new dance in response. The body flowed at an astonishing speed, while making endlessly beautiful moves.

“Wow, you are amazing!”

“A real man.”

The high school and middle school girls cheered. Soon other challengers appeared. To try to end Lee Hyun's popularity! But Lee Hyun had been accustomed to such battles. He learned a little bit about how each action should be made. A lithe body must go with the flow of the music and position itself to the arrows simultaneously.

Lee Hyun had a whopping 10 game winning streak. In truth, it would have been even more than that, but it was almost time for the movie. As he left the room, the other entrant freak out on him. They spoke critically to him. What do you mean? You just entered. Invariably, he took no action. As he moved, the look in his eyes caused them to step gasp and step back. Like in moving the body to where the arrow appeared, Lee Hyun found his sister and spoke.

“Let's go to the movie.”

“Yeah.”

It was time for the movie to begin.

Lee Hyun and Lee Hayan sat down on the padded seats to watch the movie. In fact, the movie was not that entertaining. The Korean film had a simple story and followed a typical pattern. Men from the backstreets. Importance in their friendships, and their love to fight. However, the two found themselves attached to different organizations and grew apart in opposing interests. However, then a pretty heroine appeared and a love triangle created for the two. The childhood friends suffered.

Friendship and power. At the end, the hero was betrayed by the friend he trusted the most. In order to gain power and money, the woman did a final betrayal with a knife in the back. At that time, the male protagonist was an ambassador.

- I resonated with him as well. But as much as I loved him, it could not be so.

The tragic beauty spoke as the ambassador was bleeding on the floor. In the midst of all, the detective intervened and both of them fell; it was an unbearable story. Somehow it finished like that.

“What the hell is the story!”

“Don't you think this was far over hyped?”

“The author must have written it with his feet.”

“But such a simple story took 2 hours?”

“It wasn't really that good.”

The audience hurled extreme critical comments as one. Most of the rave reviews reported by movie sites caused this reaction, damping the good reputation of the movie studio that produced it. But for Lee Hyun and Lee Hayan, who wanted to see a movie with her brother, it was just simply okay. Saving money is important, but they also created memories that they never had before. Their life hard pressed every month and there was no time to play. Thus coming to the theatre to watch a movie was enjoyable in itself. It would not be advisable to resent it and lose this joy just because they were fed up with the content of the movie.

“Brother, what do you think? The movie was a little weird, right?”

As Lee Hayan looked at the seat beside her, she was startled. Lee Hyun was crying!

Friendship and betrayal. Such a manly story. As the screen was filled with battle, Lee Hyun's body shook in response. He was completely immersed in the movie for its entire 2 hours. Even as the credits started to roll at the end of the movie, Lee Hyun still hadn't recovered.

“The male protagonist of this movie was too cool. Such a story. This movie was really interesting.”

“.....”

After watching the movie, once Lee Hyun and Lee Hayan came out onto the street outside, it was almost 6pm.

“Brother, I'm starving, let's just go home.”

As Lee Hayan spoke, Lee Hyun shook his head.

“No. You're not going to eat rice.”

More than that, eating out!

Normally, they would go home and after getting hungry from swordsmanship or painting, they would eat rice rubbed with Gochujang (red pepper sauce). Today was not a busy work day, nor was there any plan to practice fencing or painting over there. In fact, at home, you can solve it with a free meal! However the stingy Lee Hyun just mentioned eating out. This was highly unusual. Lee Hayan's interview at the University of Korea was regarded so significantly.

“So, where do we eat?”

Lee Hayan was delighted. In fact, she was shocked just from being able to see a simple movie. Not just watching a movie, but to actually enjoy a meal outside, she was truly looking forward to it.

“But where do we eat?”

Lee Hyun and Lee Hayan started walking down the street. Usually they would never have eaten outside, so they did not know a place to go. As they walked around, Lee Hayan pointed at a building.

“The seasoned rice cakes there are good. All of my friends tell me that place is delicious. They say that the kimbap, tempura and even the oden are good.”

“Really?”

Lee Hayan was pointing at a small group of stores. That seemed too normal for Lee Hyun. After all, he wanted to treat her something special today. So he gathered his courage. They were in the middle of the city, and respectively, they should go to the city's centre.

“The only place to go, let's eat at a restaurant.”

Lee Hyun pointed to where the hotel was.

'A restaurant in a hotel is really different.'

Looking at the quality of the expensive looking interior, the smiling faces of the staff overflowing with kindness, the impression of hospitality and the people eating delicious looking dishes, the luxurious atmosphere in the restaurant was overwhelming.. The guest chair was comfortable as he waited to be called. In addition, all the surrounding décor seemed to be expensive.

'I wouldn't go here twice, but every once in a while, it's nice to eat in a place like this, especially on a day like today.'

Lee Hyun checked his wallet.

'Had 200,000 Won, used a taxi, went to watch a movie and play some games. Still have 130,000 Won remaining.'

At most, rice would do for a meal.

Nevertheless, Lee Hyun went about thinking hopefully. A table stood out, where a lobster course was being served. At that moment, Lee Hyun instantly thought of the cost it would end up as.

'I suppose the cost for the materials would be 40,000 Won. Though, with this hotel, considering cost of labor and profit, 70,000 Won?'

With many ways to look at it, considering 70,000 Won for one meal is a bit overboard, something that older brother would not buy or could afford.

Lee Hyun thought a little harder about Royal Road and spoke to appease his nervous sister.

“It's okay, let's eat a lot today. At least, just once in a place like this.”

“Still, it looks expensive here... Brother, let's just go out and eat kimbap.”

In truth, being at an upscale restaurant like this for the first time was so formidable, but he came here to relax and he eased the tension in his mind.

'Look at the expensive artwork, even the royalty in Rosenheim Kingdom could not afford it.'

The waitress came over a few moments later and unfolded a menu for them.

“What would you like today?” The chef's special today is Omar prawns with Oyster sauce...”

“Give me a moment to decide.”

“Yes. I understand, sir.”

Lee Hyun relaxed as he looked at the menu.

Then he checked the price!

A lobster course is 120,000 Won.

For only about 40,000 Won for the cost, when you look at the tremendous cost, they are robbing you.

'Why is it so expensive!'

The price left Lee Hyun breathless. The A course was relatively inexpensive. Beyond that, it was packed with expensive dishes. A meal was 200,000 Won, with wine it was 300,000; then if you include foreign wine it exceeds past 500,000 Won. With his money, Lee Hyun could afford neither the bottle of wine, nor the food.

The price of the hotel's restaurant is murder!

The use of various services and the finest ingredients, the chef is also of the highest level. Including the expense of the interior and atmosphere

with the price of the meal, this was bound to make it expensive. However, this far exceeded Lee Hyun's range of the expected price.

'I absolutely cannot afford to eat this.'

The precious remaining money was too little to have it work out, he was frowning increasingly. Instinctively, Lee Hyun and his sister looked at each other at the same moment. Their eyes locked. She was extremely nervous.

'No, I brought us here; even though it is expensive, leaving is not going to happen.'

No matter how little money he has, he did not want to point out that flaw and look impoverished. With an impressionable high school student with him, Lee Hyun judged that he did not want to be thrown out while in the middle of the dining room. Fortunately, the A-course meal is 120,000 Won, leaving 10,000 Won of his money remaining.

“Hayan, is lobster okay?”

“Yes but, are you sure....”

“We will take the A-course.”

“Will it be for the both of you?”

“Yes.”

“Enjoy.”

What Lee Hyun did not know.

The price not stamped on the hotel restaurant menu is the government tax and service charge of 10% respectively. The price was substantially more than 130,000. But that was a small point. Though it is expensive, they could share it; but naturally the order was for two. An A-course meal's cost was 120,000 Won per. Therefore, the price of the meal was well above 250,000 Won.

“The food will be delicious. Eat your fill.”

“Older brother. Are you sure you not overdoing it?”

“It's fine. I have enough money.”

Lee Hyun tapped his pocket.

The food soon arrived. Cooking made by a head chef of the highest caliber with fresh ingredients.

“Wow! This is really good.”

“Yeah, the taste is great.”

Lee Hyun was enjoying the flavor of the food. Like Royal Road, things can make a big difference in the taste of the cooking itself. He understood the skill required, particularly with seafood. It is easily damaged and needs to be stored. Also the cost is expensive and not eaten frequently. The effect of cooking and eating well has a huge effect when conducting a battle.

\*

In the same restaurant, 2 high school girls wearing their school uniforms were eating a meal at a nearby table.

“Woah! This meat is very delicious!”

“The sauce is not that bad either.”

“The head chef came from France; he comes out frequently in cooking magazines.”

“So that's how it is.”

“We'll come again next week.”

These girls were from a rich house, and they were also gourmets, occasionally they would raise money to eat a meal at a restaurant like the one here.

Happiness is best when you can eat delicious food!

This motto was shared by the two girls. They would come by when the school day ended early and placed this as one of their hobbies. But then her eyes looked out to a different table and noticed a joyful Lee Hayan, who was eating.

“Ah? That's Hayan, isn't it?”

“I know.”

“Oh! That would be her brother.”

Lee Hayan was the girls' closest friend.

The fact was, in school nobody disliked Lee Hayan. Strong willed, well-studied, and excellent athletic skills. With her innate leadership, the other high school girls would always coalesce with her in the centre. She's also a cheapskate, thus this was absolutely amazing, as she did not participate in shopping or eating out. She then thought.

'Bloody hell. Yet she would only spend the little quality time with her brother, that's just not fair.'

Isane had a mischievous glint in her eyes. (Yi-san-eh, would be closest pronunciation... Isane, Yisaneh, or Yisanye. Which one to use is up to debate.) Lee Hayan was always proud of this guy, yet they did not know why. These friends surely, surely didn't.

This perfect looking girl had the toxic infatuation of severely following her brother. But it was the brother on that festival. Her friends didn't see how she could be so boastful of this guy that looked so ordinary; they thought it had to be a joke.

They later learned that he dropped out of high school due to money. At the high school festival, he immediately set off for the princess and made it look like a breeze, making him a top celebrity. He walked lightly on the slippery and narrow wooden bridge, kicked at water balloons that were flying at him in mid-air. At the end, he sprang up like a kite over the wall, breaking through to the princess with the shortest time. When the brother opened the bars and saved her, how handsome he was, he looked such a man! Since that happened, the high school girls were more interested in Lee Hyun's body. Now when Lee Hayan is with her brother, not even a devil would dare to approach and interrupt her.

At this distance, Isane whispered.

“Let's join them.”

“Knowing Hayan's temper.... is it still gonna be okay?”

“It's okay. With her brother in front of her, she will act ideally.”

Isane arose and walked with confidence to Lee Hayan's spot and suddenly hugged her.

“To think we would meet in a place like this! Can we sit?”

“.....”

Suddenly, friends of Lee Hayan emerged and left her with surprise.

“You guys!”

Not even in the slightest did Lee Hayan expect this unpleasantly fierce appearance.

Isane hurried to greet Lee Hyun.

“Hi, we are Hayan's classmates. Would you mind if we join you?”

“Welcome. Feel free to do so.”

Having his sister's friends sit at the same table, it wouldn't matter much. Rather, in many ways it might be a good thing.

“The genuine me!”

Lee Hayan was frowning as she glared across the table at Isane, who was laughing.

“Now I can't keep a straight face. Hayan. Still, are you okay?”

“Sheesh!”

It was inevitable; Lee Hayan could do nothing to stop this. She did not like uninvited guests barging into midst of her happiest moments with family. However, she had to quickly correct her expression. She did not notice that she was still sitting in front of her brother. Getting angry can be saved for later.

'I'll see you at school! You guys are so dead!'

Whatever the circumstances, Lee Hyun was delighted seeing his sister's friends. With a variety of courses coming for dinner, the four people enjoyed a relaxing meal.

'Nevertheless, still doing well at school.'

It appeared to Lee Hyun that his sister's smooth school life was not that bad. Daily, he had been busy hunting in Royal Road, and now he was giving his weary soul a rest.

“Oh! That's pretty.”

During the meal, they saw from the side of the table, ice sculptures being transported near the window.

“Now take a look at this.”

Lee Hyun turned his head and glanced at the statue. It was of a Korean woman who wore elegant clothes with a pigtail ribbon finely braided into her hair. (A pigtail ribbon is a wedding ornament) 'That's not bad.'

As Lee Hyun had a little bit of experience with ice sculptures, he could see that the statue was made with very excellent workmanship.

'It gives a vibrant feel, yet also quite gentle. From the hand of a master.'

As Lee Hyun and his younger sibling thought about the statue, the waitress came over.

“Guests, I'm sorry but it will become slightly noisy since we are in the middle of preparing a wedding anniversary for an esteemed elder. I hope you will understand.”

“We are fine.”

In the background was a little bit of mending and repairs, but soon Lee Hyun and his sister finished eating. At last, the last dessert of fruit and ice cream came and the four ate it in a flash.

“Ah, I'm full.”

“That was really yummy.”

The four went to the counter to pay. First went Isane and Song Miyong. Then Lee Hyun went to pull out his wallet to pay.

RUMBLE!CRASH!

# Chapter 4: The Restaurant of Hotel V.

From the early day, the restaurant was always bustling as the managers and employees prepared to fit in VIP customer. The wealthiest person in the Republic of Korea. An accomplished man who made his own fortune from starting with nothing; he was Chairman Kang who had made this dinner reservation. There is always some dish that you will criticize, but the head chefs and the managers knew that this one was in fact special.

It is said that Chairman Kang, a devoted husband, was rumored to be having his 40th marriage anniversary commemoration meal with his wife. The hotel was making preparation for this.

According to the interests of Chairman Kang's wife, objects of art must first be hung on every wall, and new carpet must be spread on the floor. A band famous in the country, and even worldwide, must hold a concert; then a commemoration cake is to be made, and decorated with the light of 1,000 candles.

In regards to cooking, the preparation must promise perfection. Each ingredient, in order to maintain a level of freshness, must be transported by air from the mountainous region of a foreign nation. They go out from the kitchen and catch the airplane's flight. But the most important thing was the event that commemorates the marriage.

In order to mark the beautiful features of when Chairman Khan's wife was young, a foreign sculptor that was famous worldwide created an ice sculpture especially for this.

It was a beautiful woman in ice!

At the North Pole, this ice statue was made from arctic ice. The surface shone like a white gem. It took far longer than 20 days to mold the face into the ice. Not even a single rough spot on the ice surface could be found. Under the ornate chandeliers, the light reflected and refracted in sweet rolling waves.

“So pretty.”

“It was rumored that a guy like Chairman Kang would prepare such an event for his beloved wife.”

The hotel employees were quite envious as they prepared for the event. Chairman Kang was to have his meal on the table in front of the beautiful ice woman. However, as they were loading it and placing it near the table, the glass of the window broke and it fell on to the floor. As it fell, it shattered.

The manager was in disbelief.

“How did you let this happen!”

“I'm sorry.”

“Sorry, is that all you got to say?”

The incident of the ice statue breaking called for even the General Manager of the hotel. The Manager of the hotel, who could be held responsible for the restaurant, appeared in front of the people in order to directly hear of this matter. The General Manager collapsed to the ground as she saw the broken lumps of ice on the ground; it was hopeless.

The neck of the statue was broken. The damage to the nose, mouth and eyes was so severe that it was impossible to repair. In addition, several parts of it were broken; it was barely possible to recognize the shape of the beautiful ice woman.

“How are we going to afford the wrath of Chairman Kang... Chairman Kang is an express VIP. He won't be satisfied with our services. Based on rumors alone, the hotel's revenue will decrease dramatically and it will be the end of us.”

“Even now, no matter how we try to repair it...”

“Repairs? What good will this ice do? The event is canceled. Have all the chefs prepare the best dishes they can. Hopefully, we can satisfy Chairman Kang through our quality of service and try to be victorious over this setback.”

The General Manager somehow did everything she could to sort out the

situation. But the staff could do nothing but be nervous.

“We are preparing this event for Chairman Kang. We have decorated our hotel as he requested, be calm.”

“How did we do that, even in the least?”

“Really, You have no right to cancel the event yourself. Chairman Kang must acknowledge that beforehand, General Manager.”

“Ugh.”

The General Manager breathed in a deep sigh. The manager provided courteous services to hoteliers and impressed clients; now she's currently in her late 30s. She's gone through many challenges for the sake of the hotel, but this was a first time for a setback like this. And that too with Chairman Kang, no less.

To someone who was called a representative of Aechoga, if he knew that his 40th wedding anniversary event was ruined, he will not stand for it silently, more like a scorching fire. The general manager considered, ‘There must be a way to rectify this. Can't possibly get much worse than this, the only thing you can do is try.’

“Get a sculptor! Fix the ice as much as possible somehow before Chairman Kang arrives within the hour. Anyway, these broken parts. Polish and attach it back to the ice.”

“But we only have 30 minutes left.”

Lee Hyun and Lee Hayan were watching the turmoil. At first, when the ice came he thought it was a very pretty sculpture. Then that sculpture cracked and the series of events that occurred due to it turned the restaurant into a frantic mess. Walking around the manager, they jumped back and forth as all the pieces of ice on the floor were rolling around.

The employee that caused the problem did not know what to do; his face was pale. Tears started dripping down.

Then as she watched them and felt pity, she carelessly commented.

“Ah brother, brother's profession is a sculptor. Would you not help these

people?”

The Legend of the Moonlight Sculptor.

That was in Royal Road, and Lee Hyun had barely mentioned it to her. Lee Hayan never forgets. The employees at the front counter did not miss the chance to hear it.

“Guests. Huh, our guest is a sculptor? Then please help us, even if only a little.”

“.....”

Lee Hyun did not say anything. But, the staff heard the comment and the General Manager came running up. As she first saw Lee Hyun, she was suspicious as he was too young. Yet, in a situation like this, you can afford to take liberties. A sculptor is not a job that can be easily found in real life. It was not possible to obtain one in 30 minutes, but with one readily brought to you?

The general manager begged.

“Please help us. Please.”

“I ask that you repair the ice carving.”

The employees.

It was inevitably; Lee Hyun couldn't possibly deny this request from these men and women. An accident that someone else caused, how could he become responsible? But now his sister was watching. At the very least, he did not want to be inhumane in front of his sister.

\*

Mr. and Mrs. Kang arrived exactly 30 minutes later, along with their secretary and attendants. You could feel that Chairman Kang was a stubborn, old man. He and his wife came finely dressed in traditional Korean clothing. The food was set out according to the reservation, and the manager greeted them with a smiling face.

“Have a good time.”

Over 100 candles were lit in the place.

“I'm grateful. Hmm, are you set as per the order?”

“Yes. They will arrive shortly.”

Today of all days, Chairman Kang was in an unusually good mood. This was because his wife was pleased. During their 40 years of married life, there had been a lot of twists and turns. This place today was where they wished to commemorate all the time they've been together.

Chairman Kang sat in his place and commented.

“Quickly give out as I planned. We will take our meal now; I want to surprise my wife.”

“Yes. We will do so.”

As they ate and drink, the manager did not lose her friendly smile, even though she was sweating. The food itself, the staff was bright and cheerful, and the band was playing. About the time the meal started, Chairman Kang had a slightly ambiguous smile as he asked his wife.

“Is this not fun?”

“Yes. I'm glad. This restaurant has quite a good atmosphere.”

The Chairman unseemly scratched his head at his wife's answer. No matter how big his business got, he was still no different to his wife since the time of their youth. For 40 years, believing in his happy marriage, he was able to spend all of his driving force and concentration on his business. The pale face of Chairman Kang's wife was slightly blushing. A smile surfaced on his face full of wrinkles.

“However, it is a bit awkward coming to a place like this at our age.”

“You're still young. Let's go out more frequently.”

Gradually, the mood was ripening.

'But that event I prepared, when will it start? I wanted that to surprise my wife...'

Chairman Kang signaled to the secretary with a quick glance. He had

already instructed them to leave the statue in front of the table before mealtime. However, no statue was there.

'What is taking them so long?'

Gradually, time had passed. The hors d'oeuvres included a simple soup and authentic food.

Only at that time did the statue come out. But, it was just a big fat lump of ice as tall as a person!

They had to angle the sculpture on its side to get it past the door. The staff carried the ice and positioned it directly in front of the table Chairman Kang was eating at.

'What is this!!'

Chairman Kang was displeased as a frown covered his face. He had ordered the work of a world-renowned sculptor. Something about this felt wrong.

'Such a mistake would not happen now.'

His eye then noticed the carpet below the table. What was quickly cleaned, the carpet was wet.

'It's not possible... the ice broke?'

In his anger, Chairman Kang was about to get up.

Then there came Lee Hyun. Carrying carving tools, including a hammer and a chisel, he at first tried to repair the ice sculpture. Yet, the shock made cracks which traversed throughout its entirety. The statue was not able to stand upright. With the damage to the neck and face from the fall, it was already impossible to regain the original appearance through repairs. Eventually, the restaurant spent their effort in preparing more ice within the 30 minutes, and it worked.

This is not a sculpture, but a complete mass of ice.

Lee Hyun was holding the carving tools in front of the ice. A cold chill puffed out from the lump of ice. For a sculptor to make a more than precious work, what is fundamental is the materials used.

Lee Hyun touched the ice with a glove-less hand. It was said it would be cold. A proud and unbroken rough chunk of it!

'It's not that much different.'

It was not that different from the natural ice he used from the Mora province.

'Then I can do it.'

It was his first time making a statue in real life.

It was a tense moment. He initiated work that he had never done, but at least he will try his best.

Caen! Caen! Caen!\*

Lee Hyun carefully defined it as he carved the block of ice. He could not know how beautiful Chairman Kang's wife was in the past. He had no photo of that time to go by, nor was he able to remember the delicate face of the original statue.

According to the height, the eyes and the shape of the nose, the impression was rapidly being changed; it had now the face of a woman. As he had nothing to go by through memory, he started to delicately carve the features of Chairman Kang's wife, as she appeared currently. A sculptor must have some understanding of the target. Would Chairman Kang's wife be embarrassed about her wrinkled face? Time will pass, and the features age; some would cry out or become shy about it. When you are young, being beautiful, everyone wants it to be eternal, but that cannot be and the result is sadness. She lived with her husband, who loved her so for 40 years. She was far past fitting such a description of crying about such a thing as lost youth.

She would not be ashamed of a wrinkled face that was gained, through the flow of time. She spent 40 years living together with her husband, in faith and affection. Things were not always good. Having suffered hardships. Raising children and preparing them for the future is difficult, she had a tough life.

Though she had her troubles, it was also rewarding. These last 40 years

were the happiest of her life, not the days before it. Their meal together, at this time and place, you can see the gentle smile of this grandmother, so he carved it safely, little by little to perfection.

Lee Hyun's delicate touch at carving the ice sculpture attracted the attention of many people. The hotel and restaurant staff watched nervously. In their minds, they urged and entrusted the sculptor. However, they were still not relieved. Around the table he could see that Lee Hayan and her friends were watching.

\*

Initially, Chairman Kang was furious and was about to get up from his seat. To criticize the inadequate preparation made by the hotel; however, the instant Lee Hyun began to cut away at the statue, he endured instead. Though his anger was not reduced, his wife was watching curiously. Already his 40th wedding anniversary was ruined; along with what he wanted his wife to see. He just wanted to leave.

'Well, let's see how you do. However, you better be prepared when it turns out horrible.'

Chairman Kang was very uncomfortable, but as the statue was gradually being made, this unpleasant feeling was gently being relieved.

The statue was of his wife, as she's currently.

It showed the happiness of her heart.

Admiring such work was unavoidable.

"Sweetheart."

Chairman Kang took hold of his wife's hand. Although wrinkled in age, these old hands were familiar, ones he has always held.

'If it was not for these hands I hold, my life would be meaningless.'

Chairman Kang shook his head. I would not be as happy as I am now, with any other woman.

Her hair was lighter colored in age, and it all paled in comparison to her former beauty. Such a long time had passed, and looking at her, it shows;

but, that meant nothing now.

Rather, he felt that she was more lovely now than ever before.

\*

Kang and his wife persistently waited for the completion of the statue.

Even after their own dinner, some guests returned to see the finishing of the statue.

“Here is some lemon juice.”

“I brought you some fruit, hope you are comfortable.”

The staff handed out snacks to the guests. In their spare time, they threw their gazes on the statue.

“Oh, that is some sculpture.”

“It just seems so beautifully carved, and can't believe it is just some decoration...”

They could see from the sculpture that he was no amateur. Sweat soaked Lee Hyun's forehead as he sculpted. The cold ice he carved was also perspiring. He was sweating even though they lowered the temperature in order to stop the dry ice from melting. The fascination of making such a sculpture. When he carried a sword, he was entirely immersed. In order to create a piece of art, he had to be entirely devoted to his work.

According to the mood he felt, he moved his hands across the sculpture. The time to utilize the techniques and conceptions in his head had already passed. He shaved the statue as the flow of emotions moved his heart.

“It's amazing.”

“I think I entrusted this job to a better sculptor.”

The hotel staff noted that the broken statue from before was of a much higher level than the one Lee Hyun was making. Lee Hyun was certainly insufficient in the delicate hand sculpting techniques. However, the differences in level were only a few steps away. It could not compare with the previous sculpture. In fact, the sculpture was a little rougher and did

not feel as complete. However, Lee Hyun poured his heart into it and it began to emerge.

It is said that a good sculpture gives out its own feeling. This reminds you of a young sculptor smiling brightly just as he made his best work. Of course, he did his best to live up to it. Creating a statue that embodied her charm. However, the statue he made did not hold these special feelings. He did not know how to properly create a sculpture of a person; it was still too far away, his skill was lacking.

On the other hand, with their long time love of 40 years with his wife, Chairman Kang looked into the grandmotherly eyes of the sculpture that Lee Hyun was making. He had taken these emotions and the sculpture was possessed with them. Pouring their hearts to the sculpture.

The artistic profession of a sculptor. Even if this was not a top-level piece of art from the best sculptor.

And finally, the moment the sculpture was complete, thunderous applause rang out within the restaurant. The admiration from the guests, the staff, and even the singers were clapping in unison.

For the stubborn Chairman Kang, tears flowed freely from his eyes. The woman, who fell in love with him for a lifetime, living together for 40 years, was watching him.

In front of this sculpture of ice, she was currently at her happiest.

\*

Lee Hyun was soaking wet from sweating all over, he was exhausted.

Chairman Kang suddenly caught Lee Hyun's hand.

“Thank you, this is really wonderful, the most beautiful sculpture I've seen in my life. And more so in the future, I will not be able to see a more grand sculpture.”

Chairman Kang was smiling widely. He was truly sincere in what he said. However Lee Hyun shook his head.

“Isn't the person at your side far more beautiful than the sculpture I

made?”

Suitable flattery!

Lee Hyun's instinct started back up.

The moment he completed the statue, his mind returned.

'What else can I do right now?'

He suffered for a few hours by making a sculpture. His hand almost felt numb after handling cold ice. At least in Royal Road, the work you make might become a masterpiece.

Stats and fame!

This was his first time in making a sculpture in real life and he missed that opportunity of earning skill points.

'No, this is not yet the end.'

It was then that Lee Hyun took notice.

If you take a look, Chairman Kang was in every aspect, a business tycoon. He is accompanied by his secretary and if you take notice, it is evident that the manager of this large hotel is catering to him. Might I be on Chairman Kang's good side due to his mood from the sculpture? There is absolutely no chance Lee Hyun would ever let chance escape!

Chairman Kang's comments to Lee Hyun, and even his wife's mirth. If you would ever speak of a truly good-humored couple, they would indeed be it. A touch of flattery in this mood after Lee Hyun's hard work in making a sculpture, everything sounded good.

Chairman Kang was in good mood. To compliment his wife more than his own compliment made him even more exhilarated. Lee Hyun firmly clasped Chairman Kang's hand.

“Thank you very much. All the work you did for my wedding anniversary is a big deal for me.”

Chairman Kang was very grateful for what Lee Hyun did. In times like this, it is imperative that Lee Hyun say something with humility.

“No, I would have to deny that I'm just a sculptor who sculpted for such an esteemed elder's wife. I did nothing special. Rather, for the hotel giving me an opportunity such as this, and for you Mister Chairman, I give you my appreciation.”

Humility is the highest virtue that can be expressed. Not being modest would even stir up problems, the key is true humility! As the remarks were exchanged, he led the counterpart into a suitably amicable atmosphere.

It was then that the General Manager of the hotel came forward.

“Chairman, this work was not originally planned and he had no relation to this incident. The truth is that this man is one our restaurant's guests.”

“General Manager, what do you mean? I thought this man came to celebrate our wedding anniversary.”

“Well... the thing is, there was a little accident as we were preparing the sculpture.”

The General Manager frankly gave the story of how the ice sculpture shattered on the floor during the preparation of the event.

“I'm ever so grateful.....”

Chairman Kang was speechless.

The wedding anniversary that was almost ruined left him with very important memories. Then Lee Hyun opened his mouth. The timing was exquisite.

“If you have finished your mean, could you take the sculpture, sir?”

“What do you mean?”

“It may be just a statue for you, but for me it is a powerful work of art that I finished. This is also a piece that I am very satisfied in. If the hidden intention is to throw the artwork away into the garbage, then it would be meaningless. I could not possibly endure the fact that it will disappear, I would like you to take it.”

“That's....”

It is highly unknown how people ascertain the aesthetic value of a sculpture and their way of thinking. Their decision is not necessarily clear. However, after this priceless remark, it became apparent to the Kang couple that this also became a treasure that could not be discarded.

Chairman Kang's wife sharply jabbed him in the side. Usually she had a quiet nature; but it was not the case this time. The wife of chairman Kang was unfathomable.

'If I asked this improperly, I will incur a very harsh punishment.'

If he left the statue and did not bring it home, it would be tactless.

Chairman Kang shook his head.

“It would be a mistake. This sculpture is now very valuable to us, and it would be so for a long time, I would like to keep it. It seems, I'll buy this carved ice sculpture.”

The president took out his wallet and pulled out a bill.

Certainly, Lee Hyun declined.

“I did not do this for the money; it is fine as it is, just seeing that it caused you two to be so happy. Just to see you look so affectionately towards each other. To be honest, I am envious of you, honored elders. For it to decorate elder's home, it is truly a dream come true.”

Proper humility straight from the mouth.

All the way till the end, such marvelous ability of flattery!

The mood created from flattery is what the most important to getting what you want. (literal trans. was scam/fraud, lol).

Building up such dignity in front of his wife was highly impressive.

Chairman Kang pulled out another bill.

“At very least, take this as my gift of sincerity.”

“I am still very reluctant.... I insist, the statue is a gift, but I'm happy for these last two minutes I've had with you both. To consider such a piece as valuable in your time of celebration.”

A second refusal.

This is beyond being civilized to save face.

“I can not be so shameless. In exchange for money, make sure you are well paid. If this is not acceptable, how will this old man express his gratitude? I cannot accept a debt not being cleared.”

Chairman Kang repeatedly handed out the bills to Lee Hyun, in such a way that he could not help but take it from the man. He instantly determined the number of circles written on each bill. Verifying the amount and managing money at the same time.

Two cheques worth 5,000,000 Won each.

'As usual, the smell of money is gentle on my mind....'

The Chairman casually pulled out large sums of cash, as much as ₩ 10 million.

Then Chairman Kang left with his wife. It seemed that the couple probably had a wonderful time at their wedding anniversary dinner.

Having finished his work, Lee Hyun headed to his sister, who had been waiting for a long time.

“I'm sorry. Did I take too long?”

“No, brother. What I saw was really good.”

Both of Lee Hayan's friends had sparkling eyes beaming at him. It was a mixture of admiration and amazement, eyes of respect.

Lee Hyun turned to take his sister back to the house. The managers gathered at the entrance. Just as Lee Hyun was about to take out his money, the General Manager waved his hand.

“That won't be needed. Why would we take money from a benefactor to our hotel? Your sculpting was great, and sincerely it was a very big deal for us. Although, if you would like to come back and look in at any time, you can use the hotel or restaurant at no charge. Also it is complimentary for the person who accompanies you as well.”

“But....”

“This is from our sincerity. Please just accept.”

With the mogul, Chairman Kang, he did not miss out on even the smallest reward; it was worth every penny. If Chairman Kang had gone out of the hotel angrily, all the people in his business would no longer visit the hotel. The fact is that the damage to the hotel would not have been tolerable.

\*

“One, two.”

“The sword is weak in force. Conduct 100 lower body workouts!”

Chung II Hoon was at work, teaching swordsmanship in the dojo.

'This outcome of Royal Road, not bad.'

In modern times, the opportunity to fight with a sword is rare. Particularly, it is even more difficult for practitioners in a dojo. Certainly, ordinary people would not even brandish a wooden sword in any kind of incident.

Such an unfair position, where inferior occupations are more proper.

Just to have the power to endure is very difficult.

For trainees of the sword that was stuck in the middle of this, those that normally thought in such a way are the ones that join such an organization as theirs.

'Royal Road is our very own outlet.'

Fighting monsters and growing stronger, this was what was enjoyable most of all to a simple practitioner. Satisfaction on a daily bases, but not only that is evident, there is a noticeable change that shows in their swordsmanship. The shift in becoming accustomed to sparring against people and battling various monsters with the sword. The opportunity to thoroughly become good in the basics, I would never have expected that such a break for us would have ever existed.

For a long time, sparring in a fight between people did not occur do the risk involved. Yet in Royal Road, a group of practitioners could fight to their heart's content and in the best conditions without worry.

RING!

Then the phone rang.

Chung II Hoon quietly picked up the receiver, and spoke in a low voice.

“This is instructor Chung II Hoon.”

Chung II Hoon's dream was to go and meet a beautiful but good woman to marry. The instructor's favorite thought was to demonstrate his strength and dependability in front of a lot of girls.

The voice he heard that came from the other end of the speaker was the one he knew well.

“Brother, this is Lee Hyun.”

“Oh hey! How are things?”

“I was thinking of going out for food.”

Chung II Hoon was surprised.

The miserly Lee Hyun buying a meal outside, he couldn't even imagine such a thought.

“You're asking about us at the dojo? Getting some take out from a Chinese restaurant? A fried dumpling would be nice, even if only one I would be grateful.”

“No, we're going out to eat.”

“Really? Where shall it be.”

“Do you know the location of Hotel V?”

“H--hotel?”

Chung II Hoon was stuttering.

“I know the location, but why do want to go there?”

“Come to Hotel V, I'll take you out to eat.”

“Y, Yes. I understand!”

Before Lee Hyun could possibly change his mind, Chung II Hoon prepared to go in haste.

Nevertheless, he had trust in Lee Hyun's words.

“Also take the whole dojo family. For this is truly a rare opportunity. Huhuhu.”

Chung II Hoon called all of the practitioners and instructors and ordered them to head for the hotel. As he silently played Baduk, Director An Hyun-do decided to join them. Since it seemed they were doing something unusual, like going out to eat, An Hyun-do decided to cut in like a ghost and join them.

“So its a hotel....”

“Yes to go to a hotel.”

“I Wonder, will it be delicious? If it is a place very frequented, it must be very good.”

“Oh, Master is also here with us.”

“.....”

An Hyun-do, the instructors and the practitioners walked to the grand hotel. Of course, this was not a leisurely walking pace that was graceful and relaxing.

It was quick and lively!

The practitioners practically ran the entire way.

They reached the hotel without a single straggler.

“This, this is....”

The guards tried to restrain them, but they ran like the wind. Before long, they arrived in front of the elevator. But the elevator was filled with people.

The eyes of the practitioners were severe. An Hyun-do spoke effortlessly.

“Guys, on a day like this, there is still the stairs, moreover let's use them.”

“Such a reasonable point.”

An Hyun-do led his disciples on foot and arrived at the restaurant, which was on the 20th floor.

Lee Hyun was waiting for them.

“Welcome, Master.”

“Yeah, I'm hungry. Where is the food?”

“Go, it is served within.”

“We can eat freely?”

“Yes, it is all free.”

“You truly are my favorite.”

The Manager of the restaurant already told the staff that he readily consented to Lee Hyun and a large group of acquaintances. Commit the best service for them, the chef should be ready to cook the best they can, and the employees were to be ready waiting.

However, once the door was open and they helped An Hyun-do, the instructors and saw the practitioners come inside, the faces of the staff went grey.

There were more than 500 people!

They gladly occupied all of the tables and made their orders.

“H--here is your wine. Burgandy, Vintage '99.”

CLINKCLINK!

As they drunk all the rice wine, the horrified staff had to comply with refilling of all the glasses.

“This is delicious, another cup!”

“....”

“Stir-fried meat, 50 more servings here!”

“The food is delicious, but it's taking too long!”

“Let's try to get so full that we almost faint. Everything is on the house. It's all free!”

The practitioners and instructors were at their peak in hunger after swordsmanship training; they released their waistbands and ate and drank without hesitation.

Then An Hyun-do rose up from his seat.

“Everybody listen. For a person training in martial arts like us, it is not a good thing to overeat.”

The Manager and his staff watched An Hyun-do with hope in their young eyes. Near the end however, they could not help but be more frustrated.

“Per person, eat 10 servings each.”

“Old Master!”

## 500 people, 10 servings each!

For each person, a single serving came out to 7,000 Won. They ate to their heart's content. The food was like a meat buffet, thanks to all of this, the restaurant ran out of ingredients.

“BURP! Now, I'm full.”

“Tasty, I ate well.”

The employees completed serving the dishes and were to the point of collapsing. Their only wish was for the them to quickly leave.

However, they were all still sitting, every single person.

'What the hell?'

Choi Jong-bum asked with embarrassment on his face.

“When does desert come out?”

Alongside him, Masang Bum-do spoke.

“If I could eat it every day, it would be nice.”

“.....”

\*

Lee Hyun and Lee Hayan came home after watching a movie and having a meal at a restaurant; it was nearly the first outing they ever had outside.

Both were practically exhausted.

'Rather have been wielding a sword for 5 hours straight.'

Lee Hyun shook his head from side to side.

Well, other people do hang out and walk around yet it was so difficult for me.

He found watching a movie to be a difficult thing, and just from wandering around town he was quickly fatigued. In addition, carving at the restaurant. It was really a difficult thing to create a statue carved from ice. Also for the moment, just from a glance his work was unsalable.

However, the day's work was complete and now he had returned home.

“Goodnight, brother.”

“Yeah, you too. Have a good rest.”

His younger sister went to bed and Lee Hyun changed again into his outside clothing. Normally, after washing up he would access Royal Road. But today he had another place to be.

Lee Hyun went toward the night-time bus to take it to the hospital, sought the nurse in charge of night shift and asked.

“How is grandmother?”

“She is asleep. Because of the cancer cells, she is taking medicine to relieve pain. You can go in now, but it will be difficult as it will take some time for her to wake up.”

“Regardless, I will go.”

Lee Hyun opened the door to the room and went inside.

The hospital room was small. Grandmother was lying down on the bed, soundly asleep. Various medical equipment were attached to her body. Lee Hyun sat down on the chair next to her and took her hand.

“I came with good news.”

“.....”

From grandmother, only pale breathing came out, she was asleep.

The devices checked her heart rate, and it stayed in a consistent pattern. She will probably not wake up for 7 hours due to the effects of the drug.

“Hayan had her interview for the University of Korea today. To be honest, there was a bit of an accident so I don't know if it is a pass, but it's still a good thing, right?”

“.....”

“She is already 19 years old now. It has been 14 years since that day. The girl who kept asking where our parents were, while riding piggy back, she's now a real lady.”

Lee Hyun continued speaking to his grandmother as she slept.

“Indeed, a lot of things have happened since that time, and my only wish is that she live her life in happiness. A lot of it was tough back then. At a time there was no food to eat, grandma, you once said that to reduce the mouth of person, you had to give up Hayan. You tried to send her to an orphanage.”

It had been a long time ago, but his sister was about to be sent to the orphanage. In protest, Lee Hyun went three days without eating in order to oppose his sister going to an orphanage.

“Grandma, you told me that I was going to regret it. We actually had to go through difficult meals, and there were indeed many times where I skipped meals. Grandmother, only during that time, I concede that I hated Hayan. Because of Hayan, we hardly could even afford my schooling. I had said abusive things to her, like I would have been happier without her.”

Grandmother had hated the younger sister. Because of the younger

sister, Lee Hyun suffered and was often scolded. They severely complained about trivial things. This was another reason why his little sister once went astray.

“I have no regrets. If we return to that time, my choice would have been the same. Because, we are family.”

As she slept, there was no answer, but it eased Lee Hyun's heart. He had kept it all inside for more than 10 years, and now it had ended.

Lee Hyun returned home and went inside the capsule. And he accessed Royal Road.

\*

The Yurokey Mountains and the Castle of the Dark Elves!

(note: the choice of name is Yulokina, Eurokey, Eurokina; it is not possible for it to be Europa) The ruined walls were repaired and the Orcs' supplies had been moved. They were preparing for war with the Undead Legion led by the Liche Shire. Weed was just like he was when he terminated the connection; he appeared in human form in the Dark Elf city. Construction was going on everywhere.

“Chwiit profits!”

“Chwichwit. We Orcs worked hard, we good Orcs.”

“Stack that stone even higher!”

“How high you want it stacked? Chwi!”

“Higher, higher! Chwichichichit have it reach the sky!”

An Orc was carrying an overly large rock. Many rocks were gathered together and stacked in a bunch to make a tower.

CRASH!

“Chwieeg!”

“Kkwaeeg. Orcs save me!”

This over accumulation of rocks for the tower groaned and crumbled at a touch, crushing the Orcs beneath it. The Dark Elves were a little bit

different from the Orcs. With them owning more intellect, all they did was roll their eyes.

“Those Orcs are hard at work.”

“More like having too much fun.”

“We are elves. No equal in power.”

“Naturally, that is so.”

The Dark Elves were eagerly goofing off and smoking.

Weed was away just temporarily, and in just 5 minutes of his absence everything became a mess and now he had the task of repairing it all once again.

Piles of rocks were scattered without order all over the place and it was a battle to collect all the neglected materials that accumulated throughout the area. Part of the castle was destroyed from Orcs smashing and burning. The Dark Elves were sprinkling salt on the grilled dishes. Generally, elves detest killing life and do not eat meat; however, Dark Elves did not have such qualms. Given that Dark Elves are initially fallen elves with blackened skin, other elves consider them as quite a savage race.

“This is the power of salt. You savage Orcs.”

“Indeed.... We also found that out. Eating with a sprinkle of salt, it's delicious.”

In the name of fighting against the undead, Orcs and Dark Elves made a dramatic reconciliation. They drank alcohol and ate roasted meat together. So, many Orcs and Dark Elves were gathered in the castle's marketplace, indifferent to the plan.

To take these ignorant and lazy people and fight the legion of undead with them....

With his head constantly throbbing, Weed felt seriously ill.

“Captain! We have accomplished our tasks.”

At that time Buren appeared, Becker, Hosram and Dale as well! The Royal Knights and priest.

'But these guys are so few, is there any hope? Even if the quest fails, if I could only send these guys safely back to Rosenheim Kingdom, the contribution from the royal family can be obtained. Items obtained from such a contribution!'

Contribution of money and connections.

To Weed, these soldiers were more important than anything.

But the lieutenant spoke.

“As you asked, all of our supplies near the town were moved here.”

“Well done.”

When he looks at Buren, he sees reliability.

The first time he met with Becker and the rest was in the hellish lair of Litvart, where they undertook a dangerous mission together.

Faith and trust in Buren!

But the point that Buren made of where the supplies were was negligible. No, they are there nonetheless. The weapons of war: arrows, daggers, the mace that soldiers wear and other kind of weapons. That was already a loss, but what was important was the wine bottles he had for wholesale.

Ever since Weed arrived at the Yurokey Mountains on the Plains of Despair, he wandered to his heart's content. He collected various acidic berries! Serpents and precious medicinal herbs!

High-quality materials utilized only when immersed in a solution of alcohol; if you were to consume even more than one you would only notice the sweet taste before you die. No, perhaps consuming more might not kill a person.

He collected clear dew at dawn to distill various liquors. Weed had then made bottles of wine which now was all gone.

“My wine bottles, where did they go? Maybe they haven't been transferred yet. Maybe that's it, right?”

“Well...”

Buren hesitantly pointed at the orcs.

“They are drinking all of it; I tried to stop them but....”

Weed then had a thought pass through his mind.

There could not have been alcohol on the Plains of Despair. For Orcs to be able to brew liquor, it would be impossible. Therefore those damned Orcs must have been drinking Weed's liquor.

“Delicious. Chwiik!”

“SNIFF! What's that smell?”

Lucid and crystal clear wine was flowing into the scratchy snouts of the Orcs.

“Keoheok!”

Weed wanted to puke blood, intense suffering as if his flesh was being torn.

The alcohol that he brewed.

Every time he made a bottle, weed had hoped.

'Please, give me success in earning a lot of money.'

Through fermenting, you can earn a considerable amount of money selling alcohol.

It took several months for it to fully mature in taste and effects; without even a second thought he had done it all. (originally it was a Korean idiom, kind of like saying 'Absolutely, yes' or 'you bet your life on it') In his spur of moments of making it, it reached hundreds of bottles of liquor. Precious items obtained and he had to put the alcohol aside as he hunted, but he had no place to hold them so he instructed its management to the soldiers.

This was the result.

“I don't believe this...”

Weed was devastated.

In the meantime, the Orcs were drinking quickly. The dark blue wine sloshed at the bottom of the bottle. Empty wine bottles were rolling haphazardly around. His wholesale liquor disappeared. The money flew out.

“Ahhh!”

Weed groaned in sadness!

Even the beef jerky, the Orcs and Dark Elves were chewing on it.

Weed had made that jerky.

Almost no wine bottles remained, and already the drying baskets that were full of jerky was empty.

'To make again the liquor or food.'

Still, Weed had his hopes.

After all, these were his soldiers.

Though the liquor or the supplies for battle may be lost, he did not lose his loyal soldiers.

“I'm at fault, I'm sorry. The Orcs were so forceful... hic!”

As Buren explained the situation, he had a case of severe hiccups. That was when Weed properly examined the soldiers. Being held up on staggering legs, red in the face. A phenomenon caused by excessive drinking.

“This....!”

Then, all of it became apparent to him.

Buren and Becker, while following his command to carry his supplies, found the liquor bottles.

“It's alcohol.”

“What are we going to do?”

“To do what, I'm the captain right now.”

“GULP! This looks tasty.”

“You think a sip will be fine?”

“You lot, how could you....”

“Come on, let's do it.”

Like trying to entrust a fresh fish to a cat, it would be similar to saying to trust a soldier not to have a bit alcohol before a fight.

At first, the soldiers really only took a sip, but then they got to drinking.

“It goes down so smoothly.”

“Wow! It's so delicious.”

That single sip of the bottle was like an addiction.

Weed's soldiers then committed themselves to their work but couldn't keep it out of their minds, but even then, their fear of him remained.

“This will do, have the Orcs drink it.”

“Let's give it to the Orcs.” (Pretty much they wanted to hide their guilt by blaming it on the Orcs) So they revealed his little nest egg, his prized position the fermented wine!

“And have to fight against the Undead Legions with things going like this...”

Weed sighed.

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There was uproar on the internet.

People were driven to connect to the Royal Road website during the morning and daytime.

They always liked to access the reports from Hall of Fame, they were always fascinated.

- Let's reveal that Orc's true identity.

- An alternative magic item that allows you to polymorph or something?
- A type of wizard perhaps. One that can change to a necromancer later on?
- Does this mean people who already switched jobs can become a necromancer?

Wizards were desperate about this.

When a new profession opens up, it means that you can learn new magic soon.

Magic was very precious for wizards, so they wished for more by any means.

Wizards were making a myriad of inquiries to Unicorn, who operated Royal Road.

- Please, can't you tell us about the quest's progress? How can we receive the commission for this profession in any way?

- Disclose the characteristics of the Necromancer profession.

Unicorn's answer was simple.

- This is from headquarters; the quest is still on-going and it would be careless to the user. We are unable to disclose more. You will know of the characteristics of a necromancer when the profession is opened. If the quest fails, the profession will not be shown to the public.

On the pretext of privacy, Unicorn did not reveal any of the current progress.

Then the more anxious users stormed various game sites.

KMC Media, CTS Media, Onstations, Digital Media, LK game.

The viewer feedback form on such broadcasting companies of games was deteriorating, both domestic and international.

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The producers of KMC media held a meeting.

Usually this was for the young facilitators on the front line or PD, to participate and express their opinions freely, or to recant about the stories or broadcasts, or for the sake of planning.

However, today something unique occurred.

The heads of other broadcasting stations participated in the meeting.

“The forums are in an uproar. Director Kang, what is happening?”

The Director of KMC Media accessed the website to oversee the reaction of the viewers. What he saw was tens of thousands of posts. The feedback was all about a request to broadcast one quest.

“There is a new movie in the Hall of Fame.”

“Well? What the hell is on that one video to cause this chaos?”

At this period of time, his broadcasting station was first in audience ratings; in his division, this was never the case.

Director Kang embarrassingly rubbed at his bald head as he replied.

“A quest, it seems.”

“What quest? So many people becoming so excited only for a quest is outrageous.”

The Director tilted his head to the side when a young producer stood up from his seat.

“Right now we will begin our attempt to cover the contents. Show the prepared video for the Director.”

“Why not?”

In the conference room, state-of-the-art equipment to view various videos was installed. With omni-directional surround sound system the entire video appears on the front wall. Granted, this conference room's facilities were natural for a broadcasting station.

During the movie stream, the director, the young producers, nor the organizers could not open their mouths. After a long while, the director spoke.

“This, we will be sure to catch it.”

“Of course, Director.”

Director Kang and all the organizers agreed.

Not only considering the battle of Orcs in front of them. A mystical quest where someone transformed into an Orc. An adventure in uncharted regions. Considering all these things, it is just not enough broadcasting it. Director Kang then spoke cautiously.

“Yet the other stations will not likely let us stay in this. Perhaps various other stations will contract their offers out.”

“You mean it would be difficult?”

“Not entirely. It is just that when other stations compete, the contracting terms will also increase further.”

The problem was always money.

“It is not so possible to spend a large amount of money.”

From the words of the Director, the group was left in a heavy silence.

From the beginning, the company KMC Media did not have a substantial amount of capital.

They had high viewership, but as a fledgling station, they did not have surplus funds as they actively invested their income when many did not. Director Kang carefully let fly their fortune.

“Gentlemen, our financial situation this year from broadcasting so far is not that bad, I know.... but I thought of making a steady surplus.”

“Even so, we don't have enough money to overwhelm the contract offers of other broadcasters, and this brings me to building up an unconventional deposit.”

At the end of the Director's words, the organizers soon became depressed.

Even if you endeavour to work hard, you will see that reality will catch you by the ankle. As there are many other places here and there for money

entering into a small broadcasting company, they are always tied to their budget.

KMC Media's motto.

It is only fun if you spend less money!

They were desperate for survival.

The organizers sighed.

'But in order to grow further, you need to invest more....'

'This was always a big issue, like with the downfall of CTS Media who deceived themselves.'

However, the Director was smiling.

“Regardless of the agreement, we will do it.”

“Really?”

“A contract with an incentive. Even if the deposit is exceptional, we will not fail; a smash success due to the performance and advertising can and will distribute proceeds.”

Currently, the rating from Royal Road is continuously at its peak on a daily basis. In increments, the viewership of broadcasting stations for Royal Road rose in succession. The price in advertising sales is also in the midst of growth.

“The audience ratings will rise more than 5%, to share in the proceeds a certain percentage of an advertisement will be given to the broadcasting station in accordance to the contract, and who can say how much money will be given when people download the quest video from the home page?”

KMC was still a small station, but this was a possible method.

Department Director Kang wiped the sweat from his brow.

“Let us form a contract, Gentlemen.”

When a video in the Hall of Fame gets an increased number of views by many people, the company Unicorn provides a nominal payment to the original poster. Such a way to earn money was unfamiliar as until now he was used to selling items.

“I will be given money for people to watch it, but there won’t be a difference if I do nothing to make it... If I can edit it a bit, I can raise the amount I get.”

It was a bit late but Lee Hyun hesitated about purchasing an editing program, even now when the Public Relations Department of Unicorn headquarters was in an uproar.

“Surely he would let other users onto the quest.”

“Oh, that would be great.”

Chang Yun-Su, chief figure in the Public Relations Department was in the operating room and was coming up with strategies with other people who saw the movie. It was essential to familiarize yourself with the game in order to seamlessly promote Royal Road.

Strategies are not a straightforward task when in the operating room. Studying and understanding the whole background story for each quest. Histories of each of the Kingdoms! Helping in the development of cities as well as background of important figures, the growth of users. These types of things forecast the future direction of the continent of Versailles and this is how strategy in the operation room flows.

“The progress of the quest is already so far, the speed is faster than we believed.”

“What is the problem then?”

“The emergence of the Bar Khan quest is fine if it barely hit to the second quest chain. If you look at the overall picture, yet because of him, this is just not....”

“Yet?”

“The situation seems to have made little difference to the game for now,

but if the forces of undead run rampant, the axis of power with the existing forces in the kingdom will gradually effect the users in time.”

The NPC occupation and the rights of ownership for famous castles and fortresses, as well mines, villages and places of business will be changed. Users in guilds join forces to contribute for a siege, and to take ownership from increasing their occupation. A city may or may not be near the capital of a Kingdom, but they still fall into the hands of users; in fact much of the central continent is already operating with users.

“But what does the Bar Khan quest has got to do with all that?”

A team leader who was very curious asked Chang Yun-Su because he was very familiar about the game's backstory. He clasped his hands as if he was at home and gave a wide smile to the rest of the operators in the room as he listed the possibilities.

“It will be interesting. Bar Khan's complete resurrection with his undead forces and power, in this aspect it will be very different with the hatred of the undead.”

“Well, yeah.”

“Villages and castles under attack from the undead. The undead can even wage a siege with all of the corpses. Their hatred can work both in attack and defense and find more participants. Not only that, keep in mind that in that case the undead can completely dominate an enemy counterattack.”

“On the other hand, the undead can occupy a town or castle?”

“Enough talk on the possibilities. The undead are just one of many types of monster on the Versailles continent. The kingdoms that become occupied by the infestation of undead will fade away. If the users can purify them, it would become a very big opportunity for such contributions.”

“So this will bring about crisis and opportunity at the same time.”

“Yes, the rewards of this storyline is unexploited, the kingdom in the northern part of the continent lies in the hands of the undead, but....

Regardless, the overall difficulty will rise in the future and we might frequently see the undead.”

# Chapter 5: Karichwi Running!

A pub at the capital of Haven Kingdom, Aren province.

Volk stood inside with an impression of filthiness. The employees were at the entrance to take coin and asked questions.

“Business?”

“Rest.”

“5 coppers. For a comfortable rest.”

The atmosphere was different than in a regular pub. Employees elsewhere made it a priority to be polite and treat their customers. Volk looked inside the rough and empty tavern, then sat down. The standard drink was a fruit juice. Other people may think that those who drink a 5 cooper drink would be a beginner. Volk was as high as 367 in level, an ultra-high level user.

Volk was not the only one.

The level of users in this pub was on average, higher than 300. Of the listed guilds, there are few with forces with so many that are level 300 or higher, it is a really unique kind of place.

Dark Gamers specified this pub in the United Nations. A place for Dark Gamers to take a break.

Jjook. (don't ask me, it seems to be a name.)

Volk drank his prized fruit drink sparingly.

A sweet taste. It is often said that a taste can wash fatigue from your entire body. If food and drink were placed before you, you should eat and sip sparingly. Dark Gamers were characters whose focus was to own money, therefore they would not carelessly waste even a dime.

The Dark Gamers increased their levels since they don't squander. However, it is said that they are not consistently in good condition.

“The Barang cavalry has joined the rebel army.”

“Roam village is seeking mercenaries for a monster attack.”

Within the pub, Dark Gamers would often exchange the latest information.

“There's a contract. A quest to guide someone to the 109th altar of spilled blood, payment 3000 gold. Would you like to give it a try.”

“And the number is?”

“These five recently reached level 190.”

“I'll give you more than 5,000 gold, just consider it.”

The pub took on the role of giving and receiving contracts.

A special way for users to contract Dark Gamers. Depending on your requirements, Dark Gamers would accept or refuse these contracts.

This is the underground economy moving through the Versailles continent!

This is the heat of the moment; Royal Road has become a game that the whole world enjoyed. The number of Dark Gamers even reached a minimum of 20 Million. Scattered like grains of sand, Dark Gamers only appear where there is money and items. Separate but dispersed in behavior, just as much as anywhere comparable in strength.

'This place, it still remains unchanged.'

Volk was resting comfortably.

At once he was recalling the beautiful past. It was of the woman he loves. He started the game for her sake. Played in numerous battles with her. He was unable to live his life without her hearing his affection for her.

Then finally, on that day he confessed to her!

He had asked that sculptor he met in Rosenheim Kingdom to make a bouquet of flowers for her. The vibrant wooden bouquet had the highest effect; Volk and she were soon married.

Life has been good up to this point.

He was mesmerized by her for over 1 year in Royal Road. Actually, he almost went for it in real life but it did not happen due to being busy. With work and his new job, it was unbearable!

The fact was that they were only able to become a couple due to Royal Road.

“Honey, I earned a lot of money.”

“I picked up a lot of items, come in!”

“You too!”

A complete Dark Gamer couple was born.

His wife was too busy accomplishing quests from the clergy and Volk hunted and roamed alone.

“Excuse me, what is your profession and level?”

Volk, as a Dark Gamer, was sitting alone and a few people came.

These people pay for being colleagues!

It can be difficult to hunt alone, so this is a place where you can find a colleague. Of course, for the division of roles and sharing of the revenue, you must be thorough. As one of the Dark, if you cannot fulfil your part in the bargain, or if you are unreasonably greedy, you will be intercepted and get a record on the United Kingdoms. In severe cases you can find yourself kicked out and executed as the Dark Gamers turn against you.

Volk spoke to them with a soft smile.

“I just came back from afar; I would like to be left alone for now.”

“Oh, alright.”

A few of them offered their apologies as they turned away.

To the Dark Gamers, this pub is their only refuge. One place where you can rest in peace. There were rules, such as not interfering with the rest of another.

RATTLE.

Volk was resting there for some time, then the tavern's door was wide open. It was one person. He was a Dark Gamer. As if it was a proven rule, it was fairly simple to distinguish between them by what they wear. In most cases, Dark Gamers found efficiency as most important, and at the same time they didn't want to bring attention to themselves by wearing fancy equipment.

“Your business?”

“Secret.”

“.....”

Sometimes they are like this.

What is the secret if your behavior alone makes it out to be a secret of the world? It became a new pub as Dark Gamers shared whispers back and forth between multiple tables.

Some Dark Gamers immediately shook their heads. Different people gave a nod of their heads to indicate consent, but after a few additional words of the man, they shook their heads.

There was no appearance of even a little dissatisfaction from the rejections. In fact, the five people had a hint of respect in their eyes toward the young man.

'What are you doing here?'

The man calmly came up to the seated Volk.

“A prospective Grade ‘A’ difficulty quest, you mind?”

“.....”

Volk had a moment of silence.

The appearance of a difficulty A quest was not the best thing. He began to understand why the Dark Gamers rejected him.

“Not tolerable, it would be hard.”

“I have prepared personnel from my own guild. Just obtaining some people I lack with mercenaries.”

“The guild?”

“Crimson Wings.”

The guild is in 10th place among the Versailles continent in holdings. This same guild owns as many as seven fortresses in the central continent.

'If that's so, then if the odds are right.'

It pulled on Volk's appetite.

It was true that he had grown tired of hunting alone.

“Level restriction?”

“About 350 or so.”

“.....”

“Qualified, but stressing over the terms beforehand?”

“Sufficiently so.”

“Well, that's a relief. The base salary is 20,000 gold. In the case that you die in the mission, reparations would be 50,000 gold. For exploration of the ruins, if the progress takes longer than 20 days, 2,000 gold will be given per day.”

“Those conditions are very good....”

“Instead, any items excavated from the ruins are under ownership on my side. As you see, all the quest progression and materials needed are covered by us, so what we ask shouldn't be unreasonable. Also we will take care of the lives in the group.”

So, in a nutshell, it sounds like they don't mind living or dying, or how much they spend.

“The ruins of the Scorpion King...”

Adventure or reward, Volk was pulled in by his appetite and he decided to participate.

\*

Pale and Maylon!

The couple had become indispensable.

“Shoot the vital spot!” (or vital spot shot)

Aiming arrows to attack the monster's philtrum and heart at the same time!

After the archers' joint attack Irene followed suit with divine magic.

“Divine light, correct the multitude of evil in this world. Saint blind!”

Radiant white light showed from Irene's hands and they were reflected in the monster's eyes. In fact, the divine magic was a brutal addition. Blocking the monster's eyesight with bright light. And naturally being blinded, it could not act properly.

“Kueek!”

A monster that walked on two legs was suffering as if it was a tadpole.

Saint Blind also gives a bit of damage. The damage is small as it is made to constrict, but the mana consumption is low and against a monster with evil attributes, it makes the magic easier.

When she passed level 200 and switched jobs to Priestess, she gained the skill.

“Without hesitation, burn like a blazing fire and leave behind nothing but ashes. Fire Field!”

Romune was too formidable. Area effect fire-based magic! At the underground lake, there were monsters with a slight association with the water element. All of a sudden, they were hit with fire magic that was antagonistic to them. Drying up all the water in their body did large damage to them. For a specialist in fire magic, the lake of water elementals was the best hunting grounds for Romune.

“Experience the taste of my steel fists!”

Finally Surka learned a skill she dreamed of as a deaconess.

Gather mana and punch apart the enemies with the skill!

Although they don't consume much mana, archers cannot do damage

without being from afar. Being farther than 10 paces, the damage will be intact.

Zephyr, Hwaryeong and Mapan!

Of them, Hwaryeong was particularly welcome to the party.

Irene, Romune, Surka and Maylon, all of them were girls that had looks that can kill.

When on a hunt and there is nothing to do while waiting for monsters, there is nothing to do but relax!

Talking to women.

“The story I broadcasted about yesterday?”

Recent changes.

Maylon's broadcast of the story took her 3 hours. The actual broadcast time was just 1 hour, but there was the process for preparation, arrangement and to meet and speak with the entertainers.

Yet this was not the end of it. We have not even begun.

“I volunteer part of my time outside of that.”

“At our school...”

Romune and Irene were both female college students and each talked about their own stories, clubs and other subjects. They have only been there for barely a year before their leave of absence, but there was no end to their discussions. Surka was a high school student and had interests in various hobbies, reading, collecting plastic models, fashion and so on. As usual, even Hwaryeong adapted immediately to the formidable chatter. She instantly attended the discussion by leading the group with her experience of traveling around the world, such as Milan, Venice, Rome, London, and New York.

These five women achieved complete harmony through intense chatting.

Dancing around enemies, Hwaryeong would attack. Then Zephyr would stand on the forefront of the fight with the monsters. They found that the

powerful vitality of an angler can defend enemy attacks. A position dedicated to defend the party like a warrior, because he was an angler, Zephyr took on that role.

Zephyr assumed the most difficult thing!

He and his outrageous vitality had to hold on to the full wrath of the enemies' attacks.

“Zephyr is truly reassuring.”

“I never suspected that anglers could fight.”

“I admit, initially I thought fishing would be very weak, but this is absurd!”

Calming colleagues with flattery!

At first they did not do things like this, as they were once pure. Since meeting Weed they had changed. Praise and flattery! The technique they learned from Weed that will work once again, even today. You can say, they learned to how live in the world.

Even in the midst of things, Mapan's presence was always weak. To the extent that when in battle it is hard to distinguish whether he is there. However, at the end of a battle, right away he pops out and calculates the japtem. After processing the japtem of Geomchi and companions, Mapan became reborn as a large merchant.

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Citadel of the Dark Elves

Weed re-established his influence with the Dark Elves and Orcs.

His Leadership!

When left unattended, the law and order in an army will gradually decrease over time. Although it was temporary, Weed had to command the Orcs and Dark Elves in order to combat the Undead Legions. Also, Weed's leadership was so high that it was almost too hard to find an equal.

“DO! NOT! PLAY! INSTEAD OF! WORKING! ALL OF YOU!”

Skill: You have used Yell. The morale of your units within range have been increased by 200%  
Any state of confusion has been cleared.  
In addition, for the next five minutes, 205% more leadership is applied.

“Chwiik! Let's do it”

“Needs to be done. Chwichwit.”

Some of them went back to insufficiently playing, though more than 100,000 of the Orcs remained. In unison, they rose up from their seats to build walls and once again hauled supplies.

Besides the leadership stat, incidentally how well they listen is in preference to the abilities that the General reflects. In the case of the Orcs, they liked his outstanding determination. Innate belligerence, they followed him because he will not back down from a fight. In the case of Weed's fighting spirit, it did not need to be so high for the Orcs because it was reasonable. The Dark Elves were tougher, they wanted a little more knowledge, wisdom and had an affinity with nature, glamor and art which was reflected evenly.

“He rules over us, although he is not clever enough to know or understand the earth in a significant way. He is just a human.”

“Are you familiar with the story of the falling leaves? I see your artistry, so I'll follow your orders.”

Becoming proficient in the skills he acquired such as cooking, herbalism and others related to the nature. Thanks to his high art stats, this affinity allowed him to lead Dark Elves. The Dark Elves created magical traps and by magic they instantly made trees grow and enlarge around the castle. Magnificent branches spreading all over the area as the tree trunks grew huge in size. Lying within the trees were thorns. The characteristics of the trees made natural rampart. Bushy fruit trees were clustered together. With the absurd number of Orcs, this will play a good role for food for the Orcs.

Vampire Tori actively helped Death Knight Van Hawk pick up large

beams. These so-called boss monsters. His subordinates can preside over their own kind. Tori resurrected his own Vampire family that had vanished after the defeat. Death Knight Van Hawk, once again he collected more men to create his own Death Knight unit.

A tooth for a tooth!

He was ruling his own powerful undead legion here.

Hard at work for the war with the Immortal Legion, Weed headed to the rock tower that the Orcs stacked. And he carved the rock.

A Dark Elf!

He sculpted the spirit of the Dark Elves on the fly as the shape started to unfold. All of a sudden, it came to his mind, the imposing appearance of a Dark Elf covered by the fire element that the Orcs immolate themselves with.

An audacious and rough touch by Weed.

The sculpture was finished and one by one the Dark Elves gathered around it.

“The human gave was a sculpture.”

“I thought his people disliked us, yet through affection he created a sculpture for us.”

T'tiring!

A masterpiece! An award for finishing the race of Dark Elves! To call this the work of a master sculptor is not enough!

The savage battle loving Dark Elves that sometimes reveal their presence to the outside world. Compare the soul of these aggressive rogues to the plain elves.

Artistic value: 120

Special Attributes:

Dark Elf health and Mana regeneration is increased by 3% during the day.

Movement speed increased by 25%

In addition, they are 5% faster when running.

Strength decreased by 10%. Agility increased by 20%.

Intelligence increased by 10%. Wisdom increased by 10%

Elf scouts have 1.5 times the view of the field and their skills are increased by one level higher.

Cannot stack with other sculptures.

Up to this moment, the number of masterpieces you have completed: 7

- - Your proficiency in the sculpting skill has improved.
- - Fame has risen by 41.
- - Endurance has increased by 1.
- - Intellect has increased by 1.
- - Patience has increased by 3.

Now he can easily create masterpieces, but his fame and stats no longer rose so well. Now the raising of the stats depended first and foremost on the quality of the statue. The fame gained was low for the creation of a classic masterpiece and any significant increase is gone. When you make a statue with insufficient skill, the affection and care in making it can expand your stats. The patience and endurance stat when creating a giant statue that takes days and nights still grows. However, suffering to make a sculpture on a daily basis does not otherwise increase stats. Even so, as a sculptor, increasing endurance or patience could be seen as a privilege.

“Skill check: Sculpting!”

Intermediate sculpting 9 (28%): you are able to carve.  
Beautiful sculptures can be sold at a higher price.  
Good to buy a woman's favor.

A long time had passed since his sculpting reached Intermediate level 9. He was busy concentrating on combat and quests. As he was conducting a battle with the Orcs, he was unable to carve pieces occasionally to improve his proficiency.

“Okay. I guess I need to make a few more sculptures.”

In addition, he made the Orc sculpture. Looking wild while wielding a glaive. The Orc masterpiece sculpture increased his valor and determination. This came at a cost as his sculpting was a failure and barely tolerable.

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KMC Media’s Director Kang was un-comparably frustrated.

It had been three days since the Hall of Fame video was released!

“We must have that contract, we need it to....”

Just today the Director had already sent five contract offers to the email

that uploaded the video.

Obviously he sent it as the representative of KMC media. Exclusive rights to reveal the quest and footage of the combat. But there still has been no answer.

“Were you unable to get the e-mails? If you don't want it, then at least send me a reply saying no. Damn it!”

Director Kang broke down in a rage.

Unicorn's privacy is very strict, requests for contact or address will never be informed to the station. So somehow, the only option available for contact is an e-mail that we cannot even see.

“Given the time in Royal Road and when the quest started, in four days' time it will have ended....”

Because of the imminent time frame, without a doubt Director Kang was restless.

On the KMC Media site the requests from viewers already reached more than 10 Million comments.

On the fifth day of the quest, the quest will get even bigger in South Korea. Although they had no live broadcast, if there is no contact they might have to cheat to get by.

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His sister returned to school early in the morning and had a moment of free time remaining. Lee Hyun turned on the computer and connected to the internet. He first looked at the item transaction site.

The Dark Gamers invite you to the United Kingdoms.

The Dark Gamers were relentless, still sending him invitations when they already knew he joined. Lee Hyun immediately discarded the invitation and turned his attention to the prices of the items.

“Where.... did the price rise up?”

Bit by bit he collected items while he was on the Plains of Despair into

an enchanted backpack that can reduce the weight and hold by 7 or 8 times. The majority of the equipment failed to sell. The transactions for the items from the village of Exiles did not gain a good price, to the point that no buyers appeared to even bid. He raised auctions to sell items in order to earn cash; the bids had to be successful. However, what is more important is the argument that no one can come to Plains of Despair to buy the items. Therefore it is common for some Dark Gamers to hunt near the larger castles. If they get items from hunting, they are always able to sell it to customers in the vicinity. However, doing it in that way, it is difficult to find good items.

'As a Dark Gamer, I guess it is inevitable that you must go.'

Dungeons near large castles were already crowded with users and the monsters were lacking due to it. You may need to go a little farther in order to hunt. So near a city with a lot of people, there is a low chance for a Dark Gamer to find things. So they could be proud just finding something to sell!

Items can become commonplace and is thus useless to sell, as many among the general public have it. When such items are actively sold, there are almost no trades for expensive items. Mainly beginner or intermediate level equipment was commonly sold, as more expensive equipment were usually bad deals. Strictly speaking, this is the difficulty that Dark Gamers see.

For a true Dark Gamer, it would be rare to see them deliberately be in the open with many people.

In Royal Road you can break a quest for the first time or be the first to enter hunting grounds and can gain experience and rewards.

Undiscovered areas and quests. Risking their own lives to enter for enemies and items. Dark Gamers were those that truly chased after money and adventure. For such a reason as to gather decent items, then the proceeds from the sale, but it really is lucrative. Lee Hyun spent several months of game time in the Plains of Despair and he was able to collect quite a lot of items. However, with the quest close at hand he is still too

busy to be able to dispose of it.

“It would more costly to sell at a later time....”

The posted auction needed no reply as the item pricing was roughly fixed.

Glaive: 150,000 Won

Orc's armor: 50,000 to 100,000 Won.

Elf clothing was more than 400,000 Won.

A lot of the other stuff to sell, it is not an exaggeration to say that the price is almost fixed as well. For items he put up with a reputation, he bounced the price higher. Last time the transaction was about 3 Million Won, so Agatha's sword should be sold for 3.5 Million Won.

"500 Won, 501 Won, 502 Won...."

The auction post ascended only 1 Won at a time, it did not go easily but it passed over 3 Million Won, which was the current price. The price ascended continuously and has become close to 3.5 Million Won. But we cannot always expect such luck.

“So the normal price for the total would be 6.5 Million Won.”

Lee Hyun had a bitter expression.

After 3 months of hunting in the Plains of Despair. Until the quest is finished, he could not use the teleportation gate and it would be haphazard to drop his collection of equipment. If the combined price of the items was 6.5 Million Won, it was not satisfactory.

“An income of just a bit over 2 Million Won per month. This is insufficient. Next year, Hayan will be going to college...”

When entering a college, you have tuition, textbooks, clothes; you don't know how much money goes into this.

“Also it's not easy; money is not so spread out in the Yuroki Mountains.”

Although he raised his levels and increased his fame a lot in its own way, it was especially about item acquisition. In regards to making money,

selling a lot of his acquired items for a suitable price, though the fact was that most of the Orc and Dark Elf equipment he picked up did not have a high price currently.

“This quest has to be finished as soon as possible; I got to get out of the Plains of Despair.”

Lee Hyun glanced momentarily at the auction. As it turned out, the fact that it was from Weed of the Continent of Magic, thousands of comments were being added to each of his auction posts.

- This is disappointing. Where did you plunge yourself into? Update us sometime, please let us know.

- Did you join with Freya's knights on an expedition, or are you on your own? I've heard that there are many new quests originating in the northern parts.

- Tell us about the knights. How do we join?

Ever since he last sold Agatha's sword, people mistook his affiliation with the Church of Freya.

“I regained the crown and Helaine's cup; it won't matter after I register the quest into the Hall of Fame.”

Lee Hyun was muttering as he viewed the comments on the auction posts.

It seems that not enough people knew of the quests to return the sacred items of Freya that became famous to the NPC's by word of mouth. Since that's the case, this quest will leave an impression and take a considerable number of views in the Hall of Fame.

“Money, money is the best. Huhuhu.”

Lee Hyun had a dismal smile.

While posing as Orc Karichwi, he was drunk with despicable laughter and he was very familiar with the selfishness, yet it did not dwindle.

“Kuhuhuhu.”

The greed for money could not be hidden in him, he smiled as he watched what the monitors uncovered. After a while, Lee Hyun accessed the Royal Road website and went to the Hall of Fame.

Over 15,000,000 views already. The comments reached in the hundreds of thousands. Comments ranging from questions on the quest to asking the character's profession and level.

This hot response was more than he expected. Lee Hyun was just moonlighting, even getting just a few hits, not even obtaining income, he would have left satisfied. But for him to see the number of views being like this is unusual.

“That's all right.”

Still he did not have big expectations. The length of the movie is long enough to exceed 19 hours, and it can't be seen all at once, the number of views could be due to this.

“Anyways, I don't know how much I will get from this. Later we will see the amount.”

Lee Hyun closed the window after a moment of looking at the comments. He should open his mail but he also resigned. His mail had accumulated more than ten thousand. Mail asking questions about the quest or for him to inform them more of the facts. Once he had requests to join guilds, hunts and even to the point of cell numbers. Opening the box, it will get clogged with dozens of accumulated mail and without a doubt it would be a mess to read.

Lee Hyun did not even try to open his e-mail and rose from the spot.

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CRACK! BOOM, BANG!

The battle preparation was in full swing at the Dark Elf castle. Day by day, renovations and additional expansions for the castle were made. The Orcs were building five walls and struck 4 layers of barriers from the bottom of the mountain. It was the task of creating a battlefield on an entire mountain by dawn. Some of the Orcs who left had returned

bringing back their tribes. It was a field of Orcs.

Fertility is frightening!

Although near 400,000 Orcs died in battle, around 60,000 leave and when they return, the number they bring swells to 500,000. On the road, the Orc elders spoke to Weed.

“Chwiik. Chwiik! Among Orcs it is said. Hit us and we shall not die. Chwichwit! In order to fight we bring more of us. We are Orcs!”

According to what the Orcs conveyed, nearly 1 Million Orcs assembled on the day of the decisive battle. The Dark Elves also summoned their tribes. A race that lived in dispersed groups in the Yuroki Mountains. The Dark Elves were secretive because a lot of them were excellent assassins. Assassins with possibility to ambush those with low stamina will be helpful.

Aside from the soldiers of Rosenheim Kingdom, the necromancers and the vampires under Tori, the power on this side was formidable. Nevertheless, Weed was not so sure.

The strength of the legions of undead!

Killing, there is no end by just killing them. Purification or destroying them completely through divine magic so that they could not be resurrected even from ashes and must be discarded. If that's not the case, at such a time our army's dead would instead be revived and become our enemy. If the Dark Elves and a Million Orcs all become undead, the quest will be a complete failure.

Actually, if the situation deteriorates rapidly, it may be difficult to keep the undead legion from growing. Seeing nature of the undead, the numbers will be very difficult to kill beyond a certain limit.

“Priests, follow me.”

Weed descended the mountain with the priests. As he left the citadel, the necromancer ran out.

“Dearie, have you forgotten your promise? To slay the legions of undead,

we would like to believe those words you gave.”

They were worried that he was trying to escape.

How much trust can there be when they are that anxious, though in fact Weed wanted to give up. However, it was only due to his desire of not having regrets.

“For us to be ready for battle, a lot has to be done.”

“I understand. Yet I will most certainly return.”

“I know you will come back.”

Barely listening to the necromancer, Weed parted with the group and headed into the cave in the Plains of Despair. The teleportation gate inside the cave!

“Priests, operate the teleportation gate.”

“Yes.”

Thick in their faith, the priests gathered mana and operated the teleportation gate. Weed soon disappeared with the light.

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“Level 170 Bard wanting a party.”

“Let's go together into the forest to hunt monkeys!

“Selling inexpensive set of ice crystal armor. Bring it out when its hot, you'll stay cool.”

“Sculptor wanting a part. Let me join the party, please, please, please show me some mercy. I will never forget.”

Paat! (Grasping sound)

Someren Liberty City.

The place where Weed appeared was in the middle where people were doing business.

'Still swarming with people.'

However, it was different from before; on various occasions he noticed

sculptors, painters, potters and other blue-collar characters. The pyramid that Weed made was being gossiped about. Seeing someone make something so grandiose made people thrilled. Artist professions rose en masse. However, with the scorns they received, the majority gave up early.

Sculptors were no better. Early on, it is too hard to hunt. For Weed, it was somewhat easier thanks to his harsh training that resulted in stats and skills to hunt with, but other craftsmen were weak. Also, unlike his initial thoughts, the Moonlight Sculptor profession itself was apparently very strong.

Just as he lamented that his stats had no direct relation to combat, little by little his high endurance and stamina stats increasingly shined. Yet dexterity skill greatly nurtured and raised is other production profession skills for the mercantile system. Cooking skill was now at Intermediate level 5, fishing at Intermediate level 1, smithing and sewing were at Intermediate level 2.

One cannot have a sculptor profession without the level of being a vicious laborer, and this was not counting another job. Even if you wanted to create something specific, you wouldn't know the result as it is based on luck. For such reasons, guilds only raise them strategically; but for the majority of sculptors it is still walking a road of suffering. As a sculptor like Weed, it is hard to get into a party.

He was still a young boy.

Desperation building, with a long face he was seeking a party. At the moment Weed saw the boy, tears shed as his memories of struggles in the past emerged all at once.

“It is hard work.”

From those words, the young boy looked up.

“A fellow sculptor?”

Weed nodded.

“Making sculptures is a hard thing, but there will be a day when you see the light.”

“During a period of ten days I already made ten thousand sculptures. I'm tired of even looking at a tree branch or a sculpture. Foxes and rabbits, even thousands, how much more must a make a labor?”

As with Weed, there was not a lot of information about sculpting; the young boy was going through a period of trial and error. Even if you don't come to like the boy, as a sculptor he worked uncommonly hard. As an enlightened sculptor, Weed generously gave out his knowledge of how to grow.

“Once you make something, if possible do not make it frequently. Those ten days were not enough for the stats. You made no mistake. Work on art. When the laborer has decent art, they will be able to grow. Cheer up.”

“Boohoo!”

At the end, the boy wept sadly.

“I really don't want to be a sculptor.”

“I understand how you feel.”

Weed had different kind of dealings here in the past and didn't know who might recognize him; he covered his face and quietly headed to the denomination of Freya.

In front of the church, there was a line for offerings and to receive blessings.

“Do not cut in line!”

“Stand straight in the queue.”

Users flocked to the temple due to the great crowd. Weed quietly followed the line to get in. However, the two guards with spears that guarded the church approached him.

“Huh?”

“Has he fallen deeply into sin?”

This was an unusual case, the tolerable guards that would never budge. The guards approached Weed in a hurry and spoke.

“You came. Please step this way.”

Because he piled up a lot of contribution to the Denomination of Freya, his reputation rose and reached a point that even the guards recognized him. With the guards, Weed went to see the High Priest.

# Chapter 6: Tallock's Armor

The paladins and senior priests gathered around the High Priest's altar as Weed went down on one knee in front of them.

“I have come to report on the mission.”

“Is it possible that the precious duty we gave you about the Exiled people on the Plains of Despair, have you ended that thorn in our side?”

The High Priest asked him a few questions.

Weed gave them the story about the necromancers in the city of the Dark Elves.

“Oh! So that was what happened. The actions that you have taken are proper; I would have chosen the same.”

The High Priest though did not understand why Weed did nothing to Necromancers.

“You have taken our request and to such a distant place and suffered for our sake, I'm unable so express all the gratitude we owe you. May the grace of the Goddess Freya be bestowed upon you.”

The High Priest touched Weed lightly on the head.

You have completed:

The Exile living in the Plains of Despair.

The Necromancers did not discard their pride and self-esteem. More pressure is added to the power of darkness due to this loss, Bar Khan and the Liche Shire are no longer subject to his romantic admiration. He will fight with the Immortal Legion and do so with the courage to straighten up the wrongdoings, even the priests of the church are in wonder.

- - Fame has been raised by 1,800.
- - Friendship with the Church of Freya increased by 42.
- - The public value of the Church of Freya has increased by 1900. You can see the public value of the church in the next window.

- The Church of Freya's public value: 7,202.
- The religious organization that eradicates the forces of evil, their public value has been raised from the fulfilment of the related quest.

- Faith has risen by 60.

- You have gained a level.
- You have gained a level.
- You have gained a level.

Three levels and a significant amount of public value!

Weed had nearly reached level 300, even when he obtained a considerable amount of experience, there is nothing like rising in level all at once.

Weed bowed his head deeply. Experience is one thing anyway, but of course, the most important thing was the items obtained. The High Priest then spoke.

“It is painful to say, but the wealth of our entire church is lacking, in truth, our coffers are empty.”

Truly he endured, he could barely draw a smile on his lips, but that was the most he could manage.

'Yet I immediately went out of my way just to get to the Plains of Despair for you!'

The High Priest had not yet finished speaking.

“It's just that our church is poor and does not have many treasures. Therefore, I express this so that you may not have to expect something extremely good.”

The wealth of the Church of Freya, this was beyond his imagination.

There are many extensions of the church all over the Versailles continent. Each temple also has spacious farmlands, mines and believers that donate money. They sell potions and receive a formidable amount of donations from their blessings. A certain amount of gold is acquired from Paladins and Priests each time they hunt.

For the Church of Freya to be sitting on top of so much money, yet not having any treasure, it just doesn't make any sense.

'There must be something I can have, even just one!'

Weed currently had moment of distress.

In order to hunt, the most important thing is a sword with exceptional damage. Rosenheim Kingdom gives out a lot of swords. In addition, the weaponry from the church usually has poor damage. The Sword of Agatha, that he previously received from the church, even had an ability to exert a special Divine ability, but the sword itself still had a weak attack.

'Also will need to pick body armor with a good defense.'

Armor of the Church.

Various kinds of sanctification have been imbued through magic into the armor; you can boast of it being exceptional. Weed raised his patience and endurance to a great degree by beating superior monsters, but for other people ignorant of this, it is not like that. They are unwilling to fight stronger monsters with high attack and increasingly searched to obtain good armor.

Swords and armor have always been higher priced items.

After Weed organized his thoughts, he spoke.

“To defend my body from enemies, I would like some armor.”

“In return, you will get what you wish.”

The High Priest instructed a paladin to bring Tallock's armor.

'Tallock's armor?'

Weed was hard at work racking his brain.

His head did indeed contain the information on numerous items. Almost all the various kinds of items worth money, he also memorized the names of items that were tolerably worth something.

Something like Tallock's armor was unfamiliar to Weed.

A moment later, the paladin returned carrying armor over a red cloth.

A white armor with a subtle radiance that made it like new. In addition, the red pattern that was needle stitched was indeed of Freya. At the moment Weed saw the armor, his eyes were sparkling! He was very intrigued.

'It looks expensive!'

He had not checked the information of the item yet; however, the glossy appearance is not ordinary. Wearing that around the plaza will certainly receive peoples' attention right away. Traditionally, the appearance and rarity of an item greatly affects the price. If a luxury goods market exists, such an item would fit in that class. So the value could be higher. One passing point was the perfect appearance in itself.

“Your contributions have been meaningful to us I pass on to you Tallock's armor. I hope that you will cherish this gift. “

“This is what I needed to fight monsters. This armor passed on to me from the Church of Freya, I will never forget this grace and will conserve it as I would my own body.”

Just to say there was need for suitable flattery, he was trembling!

Weed promptly took the armor into his own hands. He felt conscious of the heavy weight.

“Identify!”

#### The Armor of Tallock's faith

- Durability 150/150.
- Defense 85.

Armor made from the mithril of the Rahoman Mine. The dwarven blacksmith Tallock, who was renowned throughout the continent, made this armor to repay a favor to the church of Freya. It boasts amazing defensive capabilities and is light in weight. It gives the wearer a fighting spirit that will not waver and a noble tenacity.

The gift of the High Priest.

This is the only one of its kind.

#### Restrictions:

- Level 350.
- Strength 600.

#### Attributes:

- Faith +100.
- Fame +300.
- Strength +40.
- Agility +30.

- Charm +25.
- Fighting spirit +40.
- Maximum mana will be increased by 15%
- Magical damage reduced by 10%
- You are immune to confusion and fear magic.
- Acquired the Dwarves favor.

Due to the properties of the mithril that came from Rahoman Mine, it turns to a black sheen when underground.

Immediately, Weed's jaw dropped the moment he viewed the information of the item. For some time his mouth stayed in that state.

A unique class of item!

With a variety of attributes, the defense was almost of the highest class.

If using the blacksmith skill to polish armor, with a 20% additional effect to defense, it would be more than 100.

'Jackpot!'

The item was very good, except that his level was still too low to wear it. Weed rapidly packed away Tallock's armor and spoke. His business at the Church of Freya's altar was not complete.

“High Priest! The Liche Shire and his Immortal Legion, they are powerful and my force and Dark Elves are still lacking despite my efforts to strengthen them. So, for that reason I formally request that you send a contingent of the order's knights and priests.”

A request for reinforcements!

Even the Church of Freya would not have any expectations that those that were borrowed would necessarily return to Rosenheim Kingdom. Looking at the necromancer Shire's forces, it is indeed powerful. Even if weakened, Bar Khan can still draw the power of over 5000 Doom Knights over level 300. Doom Scouts, Doom Servants, Doom Wizards!

Archers of the living dead, ghouls, zombies, remnants, and all kinds of undead skeletons, grouped together and lead by various stronger monsters.

The priest spoke with a sad face.

“For something like that you will require a lot of strength. However, in our Church's order, we have no such force. We devoted all of our strength to the province of Mora in order to stabilize the region. No matter how critical it is to go against the Immortal Legion at this moment, we will not be able to discard the choice we already made.”

In this matter, the request of reinforcements he made has been refused. It was inevitable, paladins and priest would not have been enough. But the High Priest did not send Weed away just yet.

“At all costs, can you stop the Immortal Legions on the Plains of Despair?”

“I will do my best.”

“In order to help, the church will lend you our sacred item, Helaine's cup.”

The cup of Helaine.

The treasure that Weed gave at the beginning which created; this bond with the Church of Freya. When water is placed into the cup, the relic will change it into holy water.

“Originally, it is only reserved for the clergy as only they are able to handle Helaine's cup. By the grace of the Goddess Freya, our benefactor may make use of it. With this you should go on to do very great things. As you are currently busy with the mission, at any time you are finished, you know where you can find us.”

Weed accepted the cup of Helaine and headed to the teleportation gate into the Plains of Despair.

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Someuren Liberty city, people were still lining up to receive the blessings of the Church of Freya.

“Just a little while back, just who was that person that the guards took with them?”

“For the lowly guards at the entrance to escort him, must be some kind

of big figure with influence or made a great contribution.”

“Donate big bucks to the church and you might be one.”

“Ah, that can't be the case. When I looked, he was wearing some shabby clothes, close to a beggar.”

“Yeah.”

The bored people that were standing in the line stood and chatted. Suddenly the guards stepped up to them and the people were tense. It was very rare for the guards to come out like this, especially so frequently. Not just that, the guards also spoke to them.

- You people, do you know of the adventurer called Weed? Now, this is probably something you should know. This time he departed for the Nercomancers on Plains of Despair, with no guide to tell him the proper path.

- Passing through the greedy and dirty Orcs and the selfish Dark Elves, he met with the Necromancers.

- He did something that no one else would do, with his benevolent heart, he listened to the Necromancers and spared their lives, and thus he learned of a more important affair.

- Now, Weed is the great benefactor of our Church.

The people were surprised as they quietly listened to the dialogue of the guards. As they heard the guards speak, something emerged for them.

“The Hall of Fame. The quest seen in the Hall of Fame has just been reported of, right now!”

“It was a quest from the Church of Freya.”

“Then, that man who was just in front of us all, the one who went through.....”

“It was him, the man who progressed through the quest.”

“But his name was Weed.”

“No way, is it just a similar name?”

“Surely no. War with the Immortal Legion. Following the defeat of the True Blood Vampire clan, it must be a serial quest!”

“Weed! From The Continent of Magic, it is that Weed!”

The people started a fuss.

Others knew the name of Weed; even in this game he was legendary. People remembered the incident of Weed combating the True Blood Vampires for the Church of Freya.

“But did anyone memorize the face of that person?”

“I don't know.”

“Did no one see that guy's face?”

“He was gone so fast....”

“It was because his attire was so mediocre.”

“Wait. We will camp out here and wait until he comes out!”

In Someuren Liberty city, all the residents, the soldiers and the priests, the word went out of Weed's story. As the rumors spread, an immense crowd stood in the line in front of the Church of Freya.

However, Weed had already taken the teleportation gate and was away into the Plains of Despair.

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Holy water seems to have a lethal effect to the undead.

Helaine's cup can produce an infinite amount of holy water; it had been lent to him, but he was unsure if this alone could stop the legions of undead.

“It can weaken the enemy, but this won't win it for us.”

Weed concluded that in sober judgment.

The best class to kill an undead would be a Paladin. He was short on priests too, just barely having 100 of them. They lacked the mana to give blessings to all of the Orcs; it would be difficult to just walk to them.

When they get close, it will be almost impossible to defeat the undead without priests or paladins.

“I need weapons. The Orcs and Dark Elves will need to be armed with weapons.”

A quest of ‘A’ class difficulty would not be so easy.

Orcs holding their glaives, and Dark Elves and their arrows would not be very effective with the undead.

Nevertheless, what he could do is prohibited and is no different than a mistake. He knew that this job was too difficult to continue if he didn't use an absurd amount of money in answer.

“Silver! Nonetheless, we need weapons made of silver!”

Silver defeats evil!

If the Orcs and Dark Elves were armed with weapons made of silver, their allied power will practically increase more than two times. But if he bought the weapons and still fail the quest, Weed will end up broke.

“This is why I wanted to abandon the quest.....”

Weed decided with tears in his eyes.

“An investment. Must take a risk or I won't obtain a greater return.”

Weed sent a whisper to Mapan.

- Mapan. Are you currently available?

A merchant has access at any time!

As soon as he sent a whisper to Mapan, an answer is returned.

- Yes. Choose! Choose! Buy goods cheaply. If you want affordable items, we can purchase on your behalf. We also buy japtem! Could you please leave your contact information? Thank you for visiting Mapan's firm. We will serve you kindly.

- .....

The tearfully ascetic road of a merchant!

He still purchased japtem, and Mapan was intent on selling goods. In fact, until a certain point when you reach the top of the scale you still crave for money. Most traders would fall off such a path. But Mapan was persistently dedicated to his merchant skills. He followed Weed and the Geomchis while using flattery as he walked the merchant's path.

'Even though my funds may leave me, my skills will never betray me!'

Mastering his skills, Mapan had the belief that the effort of improving the merchant skill will let him live a comfortable life. Yet in the meantime, it seemed that there was a lot Mapan had to develop. To the extent of his intonation while he speaks to, even his way of humming.

- Oh! Is that you Weed?

Mapan sent a whisper straight back.

The guy knew Weed was the sender but he was surprised as he belatedly spoke back.

- Yes. It's me, Weed.

- You're still alive. \*sob\*

- .....

Tears poured out from Mapan unexpectedly.

This time Weed's colleague assumed that he was dead.

So far no one had ever known of a person return from the Plains of Despair alive. In addition, the quest was of B-class difficulty and leaving for that alone should have left him to his death.

Mapan had bet 200 gold that Weed would die. Pale and his other companions had all bet money that he would survive. They had a solid belief that with Weed's vitality he would somehow live. Mapan thus lost money but he quickly smiled and whispered back.

- Anyways, I'm glad that you're alive. Pale was also very worried. Zephyr, Hwaryeong, Irene, Surka and Romune have all been talking about you,

Weed.

- Where is everyone gathering at right now?

- Ah yeah. Besides myself, they are hunting at the Lake of Elementals which is conveniently lucrative and gives quite a bit of experience.

Weed's party was hunting without him.

- How are the Geomchis doing?

- Oh! Each of them left Rosenheim Kingdom talking about training as warriors. For the sake of becoming great adventurers in the end they were instructed to break up individually.

- Training as a warrior... that would be fun.

Traveling troublemakers!

The Geomchis traveling all over, you can't imagine what they will do, for Weed it was not difficult to make a guess.

Mapan could not help but laugh as he told him.

- You seem to be getting along well on the Plains of Despair, anyway I'm glad. The quest, are you still doing it, have you resolved it yet?

- As you can expect, I'm managing. By the way, I'd like to make a little purchase of weapons for the progression of the quest. Sterling silver, I will need a lot of it smelted.

- Oh, if I go to the blacksmith's shop, I should be able to buy silver and other materials. Silver by itself will not be that difficult.

A large kingdom being in the frontier, like Rosenheim, would normally stockpile weapons and materials.

- Then find and purchase some please.

- Sure. Although you need all that silver for those zombies, will you pay me through Pale-nim or directly, will it be during the shape of the battle with those undead monsters? How many would you like? Weed, as with the original preparations for a hunt, will you need 5,000 maybe even to the extent of 10,000?

It depended on the quality of materials, but that made little difference, one arrow would usually use 2 silver coins.

It was hard to imagine Weed needing a large amount, so the ignorant Mapan heavily assumed that it was for hunting. From his calculations he considered that the total would be a generous 200 gold. However, what Weed told him next was beyond anything he imagined.

- Two Million arrows. First purchase as much of the ingredients for smelting as cheap as you can. So that at least 50,000 weapons could be cast.

- .....

For a moment, there was no answer from Mapan.

He was eagerly hard at work on the calculations.

Gather 100 silver for 1 gold. If it is 2 silver per arrow and he bought 2 Million, that's 40,000 gold!

No matter how cheap he bought the materials, to cast one weapon would cost at least 60 silver. First off, using the cheapest, even if only doing the lightest covering of silver on 50,000 weapons, it would be an unbelievable 30,000 gold.

- T, that's so much....

- Can you get it?

- 2,000,000 arrows. Enough sterling silver to cast 50,000 weapons. What the hell is happening over there... All right. I'll get started on this right now!

After entrusting Mapan to the purchasing of weapon materials on his behalf, Weed did not have to worry about a thing.

There is a limit to the amount of material that is sold from a shop, but up to this moment, Mapan had learned important lessons from advice given by Weed.

From the beginning, there is nothing that can't be done.

If there is no way, then make one.

Think on how to strive. Money never just comes to you.

Get up earlier than anyone else to earn a copper more.

In the future, earn more money than can be done now.

To fill the sheer amount, he would have to purchase from many blacksmith shops in the Kingdom of Rosenheim every morning and buy from users that obtained silver through hunting. Sterling silver as in silver arrows exert a lethal effect on undead; but for those who do not hunt or look for undead, they turn over such items that they do not need much of. There are not a lot of people in the Central continent, let alone the rare few in Rosenheim Kingdom that would bother to scour cemeteries. To purchase such extraordinary amounts that would be normal for an industrious reason is strange but not impossible.

'My entire fortune is gone, decreased by 75,000 gold.'

This money wasted, never to be seen again, Weed wanted to lament in his pain.

Ordering these weapon materials, he had to pay more than 70,000 gold at the very least.

Truly the saddest moment!

Weed had to quickly recover his motivation.

“Yes, money! When you start off, there is no money, but this is not how it has to end!”

He never spent money so casually and suffered so badly. Rather, this was too big a shock. Shedding tears profusely, he made an effort to try to forget about the money. At a time when a friend fell and broke his knee, he shed no tears. But when he bought land, his tears gushed out with such force.

“But even with this, it will not be enough!”

It was still lacking for Weed. His throat was dry.

In the Plains of Despair, there was still another force that can follow

him. The Village of the Exiled. Scattered throughout the Plains of Despair, but the Dark Elves and Orcs alone are not sufficient. Humans, should they join, the battle ahead will be eased by quite a bit.

“I will obtain the silver weapons from Rosenheim Kingdom, but I have to go there and back.”

Weed pulled out Zahab's carving knife.

Soon after, Weed picked out a rock of good quality without any cracks and sat in front of it for a moment to think.

“Perhaps running, a Cheetah would be a great choice for that right?”

A sleek cheetah!

If disguised as a cheetah, he should be able to pass through the Plains of Despair by running. Also, he already had the map.

Syasyasak! (sound effect for carving)

With his skill, he very nimbly carved through the rock and carved a cheetah. He elongated the torso, and most importantly, lengthened the four legs like that of a horse.

“Should be able to run faster with longer legs.”

It should run well, just like the fact that a child will not run as well as a tall adult can!

T'tiring!

A fine piece! A reward for completing a quadruped animal!

Sculptor, you are approaching towards greatness! Your fame is enough to be widespread throughout the continent. It is not necessary for art to have a fixed form! This is certainly an age where you can experience any kind of art at any moment. However, in accordance to the development of art, various attempts were deployed. As this artwork is made with an abstract impression, to people with a good eye this may be seen as superior but not all will consider this as a work of art.

Artistic value: 3,100.

Special attributes:

- This beast is awarded 25% increase in health and mana regeneration during the day.
- Movement speed increased by 20%.
- Prior stats are raised by 10.
- You will see that 9 random attributes will be applied.
- Can activate Roar of the Beast.
- Overlap with other sculptures does not apply.

Until now, the number of completed fine pieces: 4 (could also be classic)

- - Your proficiency in the sculpting skill has improved.
- - Fame has increased by 320.
- - All stats have risen by 6.
- - Patience has risen by 3.
- - Endurance increased by 2.
- - In response, Weed will have ownership of this beast. If you give life to this beast in the future, it will be loyal to Weed.
- - In consideration of making a masterpiece sculpture, all stats will have an additional rise of 1.

An abstract!

In accordance to the development of the arts!

A created work that really meant that Weed's beast statue was tacky. In fact, it actually had the long legs of a horse and a long torso, but he was trying to create a cheetah. The reward was for an unknown beast. The cheetah's body hair was closer to that of a camel. It had the posture of a cow stepping backward and crushing a frog.

It was rough, but intentionally trying to create a masterpiece does not come so easily. Because of this, his sculpting skill rose by 12% and he reached level 9 and was at 43%.

“Anyways, it's a masterpiece so that's alright.”

Weed was greatly satisfied.

An outstanding sculptor would be confident of himself and might obsess over his work. However, Weed was more interested in what the work led up to.

Traditional art will be like this. You wouldn't know what the history was like if you didn't live in that time. As with the abstract art of Picasso, how would you know what he wanted from his paintings?

A great musician might make a mistake and that music may become the masterpiece of the century. Depending on your own point of view, the interpretation of art is different.

“Although it may be like this now, how it may be considered 100 years from now, it is possible that the work of a beggar can become recognized as superior art. If not in 100 years, maybe 300, or perhaps about 10,000 from now.”

Roughly Weed ended his self-justification of the skill he used when he looked at the beast.

“Sculpture shapeshift!”

You have used Sculpture Shapeshifting.

The boundless affection for the sculptor and his engraving, the sculpture and him are changed to resemble one another! Weed's body became covered with hair and his arms and legs became thin and long. A human with two arms and legs soon finished transforming into an animal similar to a camel running on all fours.

- Many of the changes in the body shape have caused the worn equipment to become unusable. Leather clothes can be especially made to be worn. Depending on the species or form, obtaining new equipment may be required.

- The impact of Sculpture Shapeshifting has increased your agility and endurance. Charisma and Leadership has fallen to the lowest level. The Art stat is reduced by half. Endurance will rise dramatically. This will remain valid until Sculpture Shapeshift skill is released.

The endurance of a quadruped is also greatly increased.

“Okay, I'll run to the Village of the Exiled”

Weed dropped to the ground and started going at a sprint

“Quadrupedal run!”

Quadrupedal run: a moving skill.

Using stamina and mana, you can run at a speed nearly 60% more than that of being on two legs.

In addition, when running against the wind, stamina consumption is increased by 30%. When running downwind, speed is increased by a rate of 20%. Skill cannot be used in hilly and mountainous terrains, plus when in grassland or plains, you gain an additional movement speed of 80%.

In the past he had to act for another sculpting skill, where he had to understand what he sculpted. At first the skill seemed useless.

Weed's paw moved forward. Then the hind foot soon came up.

Tatatatak!

Weed's running speed utilized the Quadrupedal run!

Each step went by quickly as he stepped forward on the plains landscape. This type of running was not at all familiar to an ordinary human. The paw and hind legs move forward and back simultaneously to the point that you forget the fact that you moved the paw itself.

Left front paw, right hind foot, paws and hind legs. Furthermore, his forelimbs and hind limbs made ridiculous wobbly clicks. Walking as a four-legged beast is surprisingly complicated. First stride, the left paw and right hind foot went, and then right front paw and left hind foot moved. Unless with the appropriate intervals, balance and strength otherwise the action will not be sleek and break apart.

It was hard but weed followed these actions from deers and horses with his own body and acquired the Quadrupedal running skill.

Tatatak.

Weed processed his speed into a gallop. At first everything seemed to be going well; but soon a big problem came up.

“Unbelievable....”

He did not take into account that this was trial and error. Weed was a big human. To learn how to run as a quadruped, he was like a toddler! To run at a fast pace, but when you think of running for several days when in an infant stage, it can't be done.

“It can't be; this is such hard work!”

At first, he thought he could do what he saw. It was vicious, he could not run!

His throat was aching. The scenery was going too fast for him to see in front of him as well as what he was running over. Running for a long time, his soles were hurting.

- - You have hit a sharp boulder health decreased by 3.
- - You have stepped on a piece of metal health decreased by 10.

He had managed to tolerate the side effects thus far. With blacksmith

skills, a little bit of the shock can be reduced because of horseshoes. The problem was stamina.

For animals like a cheetah or a horse, the endurance was not so outstanding. The top speed may be very fast but the time maintaining that speed was very short. The remainder of the time was being idle and drinking water or standing about.

- Your stamina has fallen, you can run no further.

It had only been 10 minutes!

The time taken to go at full speed. He had to move slowly on all fours while wandering to rest. Every time he walked, his hips swayed and he had shortness in breath. Hardly anything else to do, Weed finally stopped in place.

“HufHuf! This is not what I expected.”

Running across the Plains of Despair was tricky and frustrating. Although you can be quick at times, when your stamina drops, this is the answer.

“Sculpture shapeshifting off!”

Weed made another sculpture he can Sculpture shapeshift into again.

An animal that runs on two legs, like the ostrich!

He did not even attempt such a thing. This was the time to create a modest choice, like the form of an Orc.

Karrchwi's body consists of a plain Orc with enlarged musculature, and using the same existing form, he made a leaner version of an Orc into a sculpture. He did not bother spoiling it with looks and focused on keeping it skinny to keep only the necessary muscles. It was reasonable to reduce the weight as much as possible.

The end piece looked like a little red pepper. Undoubtedly it was only the impression of Orc Karichwi. Just from looking at his face you could see that it is upset every time of the day, and when its eyes encounter something in the world it had the look that it wanted to break it.

Weed had the talent to make the ugliest Orcs around.

T'tiring!

A masterpiece! You have been rewarded for completing a little Orc monster.

A work from a young great sculptor in anguish! A masterpiece of the century, made from tons of frustration and agony! This object could not be any more uglier, but somewhere in the gloomy atmosphere you can feel that there are hidden secrets.

Artistic value: 1

Special attributes:

- From gazing at the statue, Orc health and mana regeneration is increased by 5% during the day.
- Movement speed increased by 18%
- Intellect decreased by 20. Attractiveness decreased by 100.
- Strength increased by 10. Agility increased by 5.
- Can stop the cries of a crying child.
- Those with a low nerve that view the sculpture will become severely weakened.
- Overlap with other sculptures does not apply.

Special attributes:

- From gazing at the statue, Orc health and mana regeneration is increased by 5% during the day.
- Movement speed increased by 18%
- Intellect decreased by 20. Attractiveness decreased by 100.
- Strength increased by 10. Agility increased by 5.
- Can stop the cries of a crying child.
- Those with a low nerve that view the sculpture will become severely weakened.
- Overlap with other sculptures does not apply.

Until now, the number of completed masterpieces: 9

- - Fame increased by 80.
- - Endurance has increased by 2.
- - Intellect has increased by 1.
- - Fighting spirit has increased by 1.

Weed immediately cast the skill once the sculpture was completed.

“Sculpture Shapeshift!”

His height and face shrunk as changed to a small Orc Karichwi. His hair grew longer and his body became scrawnier and drier than before.

- Many of the changes in the body shape have caused the worn equipment to become unusable. You can wear plate armor. Depending on the species or form, obtaining new equipment may be required.
- The impact of the Sculpture Shapeshift has increased your Agility and Endurance. Intellect and Wisdom will fall to the lowest level. The Art stat will be reduced by half. Endurance will rise dramatically. This will remain valid until the Sculpture Shapeshift is released.

“Chwiik!”

Small Orc Karichi.

As expected, simple is best.

Not requiring art or any other values, ignorant is convenient.

As he staggered, Weed diligently began to run across the Plains of Despair.

# Chapter 7: Past Ties

King Zet, the third king in Belsos La Deus dynasty, has disappeared from all books of Bersa continent.

But then, by a stroke of luck, members of Crimson Wings found a short reference to him in one of the private libraries.

“Looks like there might be some secret associated with him.”

“Maybe. Let’s find out more.”

And since then the guild members started to investigate it. They were asking aware of history NPCs and looking for any mentions of that king or the times he lived in.

Though they didn’t have high expectations, everything was pointing at some high-level quest.

During his searches, one of the guild members reached the distant Mersel kingdom, where he got an audience with Count Kresse, a stingy and very intelligent schemer, which entrusted his guest with a mission:

“King Belsos had many treasures. And the most valuable among them was Black Flute, created from a horn. If you find it and bring it to me, I’ll reward you handsomely. But make sure, that only trustworthy people know about this deal.”

Ding!

New quest : Shadow of the returned King.

The great king, whose rule once spanned over many lands, is now sleeping in the dark below. There was time, when his power was absolute and now his tomb is filled with gold, silver and rare magical items. But even then, there wasn’t anyone brave enough, who would dare to approach it.

If you find the horn flute in his tomb and bring it to Count Kress, you will get a generous reward.

Difficulty: A.

Reward: Treasures from the King’s tomb.

Restrictions: No magic may be used inside the ruins.

Usually players were acquiring quests by finding something unusual during hunt or by talking to certain NPC. Most of them were requests to

find some ingredients, protect something or clear a monster-infested area.

However, thanks to luck and long investigation, Crimson Wings guild managed to find a hidden 'A' rank difficulty quest.

“Yes! This is the Royal Tomb ruins!”

They found the location of the ruins and even the map of its interior. The guild was celebrating their triumph, not forgetting to carefully guard their secret.

“So what if Hermes guild has BadRay? If we complete this quest we will be able to change everything!”

Teros, leader of the Crimson Wing guild, was making a speech for his guildmates.

At the start of the game guilds were appearing everywhere like mushrooms after a rain. But by now the situation has stabilized and the main competition was going on among the few dozen biggest and strongest guilds.

But soon all this was going to change. Guilds became big enough to claim control over entire kingdoms, which meant that times of quiet rivalry were coming to an end.

That was why it was important to gain as much power as possible before the new confrontation begins. The power was based on rare items, high levels and influential allies, and all of this was provided by difficult quests.

The Crimson Wings guild gathered all of their high-level players, 200 players of levels over 330, and hired 50 players of levels over 350 from the Dark Gamers Union.

The result was an extremely powerful squad of 250 people. And if they were to fail, Crimson Wings will lose 60% of its strength for full 4 days of Royal Road time. In this case other guilds might use their weakness to try to capture their castles.

That was why members of Crimson Wings were taking all possible measures to prevent any information from leaking. They did hire players

from outside the guild, but none of them knew where and, more importantly, when they were going.

At the appointed day they gathered at the abandoned ruins, hidden in the center of bersa Continent.

“We’ll dig up the entrance to the ruins. As you all know, this quest is ‘A’ rank difficulty. Be careful not to die, every death will be a huge loss for our guild. Gale.”

“Yes, guildmaster.”

“You will lead the search party.”

“Yes! Leave it to me.”

Gale was very proud to be assigned to such an important task as scouting.

The search party consisted of a few dozens thieves, whose task was to detect traps and monsters along the path of the main forces, led by the guild master himself.

They started to slowly explore the area. Step by step, players were combing one part of the ruins after another. Thieves were going in front, followed by warriors, with priests in the back row.

Even though the latter couldn’t use healing spells because of the quest’s restrictions, they could still provide a helping hand in critical situation or drag the wounded soldiers out of danger.

“Be careful!”

“Don’t miss anything!”

The ruins were inhabited by dangerous monsters with sharp claws and filled with numerous cleverly hidden traps. Those traps were placed just a few meters from each other and were connected in such a way, that even player of level 300, who accidentally activated one of them would be lying dead a few moments later.

If such traps were installed in ordinary dungeons there would be very few players, willing to go into them. Besides, monsters in the ruins had a

pretty high level and weren't easy to deal with.

A great part of hired Dark Gamers, who had to go in the front line and scout the way, died on traps. By now the guild had only lost 30 people.

“We can't give up! Our losses are indeed great, but if we retreat now, everything we did today will be lost and our companions' deaths will be in vain.”

Teros was encouraging the remaining players and they were continuing to steadily advance into the ruins despite the losses. Some of the Dark gamers would prefer to leave this place, but they were bound by contract. Besides they were promised increased payment in case of death.

When the players reached the internal part of the ruins, they couldn't hold their surprise. The entrance to the Royal Ruins was blocked by seemingly new, and therefore obviously enchanted doors with an image of red scorpion and some inscriptions in an unknown language on them.

In front of the doors was a small stone altar.

“Can anyone read the inscription on the doors?”

To answer the Teros's question mages and priests approached the doors. Former knew various ancient languages, latter - holy symbols. But the symbols on the door didn't seem to belong to any of those.

Fortunately, one of the best mages of Crimson Wings, Shavron recognized them.

“Those are letters of Varon.”

“And how are they different from the mages' languages?”

“They come from the runic alphabet. But they were used by shamans rather than mages.”

“That's right. So to provide some encryption some characters were a bit deformed. I learned it just in case and didn't think it'll ever be useful.”

“Come on, read them.”

Shavron started carefully interpreting the symbols on the doors.

“The entrance to the Royal Tomb will open for the one who will show true respect. His entire life King loved and revered scorpions, and only the one who will bring 7 scorpion figurines will be able to open the doors and enter the tomb.”

That must be why altar in front of the tomb had 7 small pedestals with 7 red gems.

“Figurines?”

All the members of the squad were confused.

Like everyone else, Teros got stunned for a while, but he quickly recovered and sent a guild-wide message, meant not only for those participating in the mission, but for the rest of the guild members, spread across the continent and kingdoms, too.

“Sculptor. Find a sculptor, who can create scorpion figurines!”

\*

On a warm and sunny morning a group of players left Seraburg through eastern gates.

“Wow! Cool!”

“Look, they have Pluto and even Haisyns...”

“And their leader is Oberon!”

“Great! They must be going to the Plains of Despair again.”

Players, hunting around Seraburg couldn't hold their admiration. Participating in such a dangerous adventure was the limit of their dreams at the moment.

“I'm jealous! When will we be able to go on a journey like that?”

“Not anytime soon. Let's go, we have a lot of hunting to do if we want to raise our levels and be able to join them. They only accept players from level 250.”

“Eh, really?! Maybe there're a lot of people like that in central kingdoms, but in our they're less than one in a hundred.”

“That’s why they’re elite.”

The party, that caused such an excitement, headed along the road. They marched in unison, nodding proudly to encountered players, who were looking at them with admiration and reverence.

Soon the party reached the eastern border of the kingdom and their leader gave an order to stop.

“You already did so in the city, but I’ll ask you again to check your weapons and equipment.”

Following his own order, Oberon sat on the ground and started to check his equipment.

Usually the party leader position was occupied by a warrior with high leadership attribute. Fighting under the command of such a player, everyone was receiving a bit more experience and a slight stat increase.

As the hunt in Plains of Despair was very difficult, the most experienced and renowned warrior was selected to lead it, Oberon.

“All good.”

“I finished preparations.”

After waiting for every member of the party to report, Oberon nodded approvingly and commanded to move out.

On the eastern border of Rosenheim Kingdom a high wall was built, that was blocking the way of monsters, living on the other side. And to pass into Plains of Despair one had to climb up the stairs to the top of the wall and carefully descend the small hidden ladder on the other side.

“Wow! There’s a place like this...”

“Yeah, spectacular view.”

The players, who joined this hunting party for the first time, glowed with delight.

However Oberon, Pluto and Haisyns only smiled slightly.

“Let’s go. Wait a bit and you’ll see something even more breathtaking...”

These three were the most experienced in the party, they has left the Kingdom before for over five times and already knew what was waiting ahead.

The party just descended and moved a bit away from the wall, when they were attacked by a pack of wolves. Soulless Wolves with levels just below 200, and number just over a hundred were quickly approaching the players.

Calmly looking at the wolves, Oberon was giving orders.

“What’re you standing for?! This is just the beginning! Mages, attack!”

“Fireball!”

“Wind blades!”

“Blessing!”

Some of the 30 members of the party immediately started to cast one spell after another. Multiple elemental spells were directed at the wolves, burning, cutting and exploding many monsters at a time.

“Guaaaaaaah!”

The commander yelled at the top of his lungs. This shout was similar to Lion’s Roar, but instead of Fighting Spirit it was raising Vitality and Stamina of nearby players.

“Mages, aim at the ones on the sides and in the distance!, Warriors, attack!”

All the warriors and paladins gripped their swords and maces and rushed into fight, with Oberon in the lead.

“They’re poisonous. Be careful, don’t let them bite you! Each of you should watch your Health and Mana and retreat to mages and priests when needed. If you die, that’ll be your own fault.”

Oberon continued giving orders.

The dangerous fight has started. Monsters were coming from all sides. Warriors were trying to not let any of them near mages and not die from

their sudden attacks at the same time. Maces and swords were striking wolves' bodies with deadly force, priests were shouting healing prayers, mages were casting spells repeatedly. For the next several minutes the party was repelling one attack after another.

Finally, when the number of wolves dropped by more than a half, monsters, as if following some order, rushed back and disappeared as suddenly as they appeared before.

"Hurray! Victory!" - were cheering some of the newcomers.

"What will come next if we just entered the Plains of Despair and already encountered such monsters?" - were asking others.

However there was no answer. Oberon just calmly looked at them and said:

"Thanks for the good work. We'll take a short break for mages to restore their Mana."

After a fervent battle, the party settled to rest near the recent battlefield. Some players went to gather the loot, left after the wolves' death.

"What do we do with hides?"

"yeah, and meat and teeth?"

The players, who came here for the first time were looking at their more experienced companions, who were sitting on the ground, talking leisurely.

"If you take them, they might become a burden later." - said Pluto.

"True. hides, teeth and the rest aren't worth much. take it all if you want." - confirmed Oberon.

However there weren't any players willing to collect the loot after his words, and the ones who already gathered some, threw it out under approving gazes of more experienced players.

"There must be something valuable waiting ahead of us and this junk will only take up place."

After a short break the party packed up and headed further into Plains of Despair.

“Be alert, you might already understand what’s waiting us ahead. Cover each other and then no one will die.”

The party only moved some 100 meters away from their resting place, when a black dot appeared in the distance. It was gradually growing and approaching the party with great speed!

First it was discovered by archers, who had the sharpest eyesight.

“Monsters!”

“Take positions. Monsters approaching!”

Like the last time, players quickly formed a battle formation, hiding mages and priests behind warriors’ backs. Mages prepared their spells, priests renewed blessings, thieves unsheathed their daggers and hid on the sides of the party. Everyone was ready for an ambush.

Finally the growing dot approached close enough to identify it.

“What?.. That’s an Orc!”

“A very thin Orc...”

A small, all skin and bone Orc, dressed in some torn and dusty rags was quickly approaching the party.

“Chwiik!”

Tap-tap-tap...

“Chwiik!”

Every three steps he was making loud abrupt noises, covering the constant clanging of tree huge backpacks on his back.

“There weren’t any Orcs in this area before...”

“But where did this one come from then?”

“And what’s he carrying?”

It looked like this tiny Orc suddenly decided to go on a journey or move

to a new place with all his belongings.

No one in the party has ever heard about anything like this. While they were standing there in confusion, guessing what was going on, Orc came close enough to see his face.

He looked very tired, but at the same time he had extreme determination in his eyes.

“Chwiiik!”

He shouted twice as loud as before and then passed the party in a wide arc, not slowing down for a second. And though no one knew why he was doing it, all of them sympathized with him, seeing how hard it is to make every step for him, like there was a mountain on his shoulders.

And then Orc's eye suddenly brightened up and he rushed to the place where the party left their loot a while ago! He ran to that place and started to scurry all around it.

“What's he doing?”

“Beats me. He's weird.”

“Looks like he's gone crazy.”

The party members were still standing and staring at the strange Orc. And he was still rummaging through the former battlefield, and wherever he was passing, all items were disappearing. With his right hand he was grabbing teeth and hideas, with left - wolves' meat.

Suddenly his eyes sparkled even brighter, like those of a jackal who found food for the first time in 10 days. He found 3 silver coins!

“Chwi-i-ik!”

After grabbing the unexpected money, Orc continued to run towards Rosenheim kingdom, laughing with satisfaction.

\*

“Almost there.” - quietly muttered Weed.

Of course that Orc was him.

After turning into small Karichwi he ran across Plains of Despair. But first he visited the closest to the mountains villages of exiles.

After a little persuasion, absolutely all of them agreed to take part in the battle against the army of undead.

“We don’t like Orcs, but if undead win, no one will survive. We will join the battle to defend our new homeland.” - said the blacksmith in the first village before gathering as much warriors as possible and departing to the Yuroki Mountains.

It then repeated in other villages in a similar manner.

Generally it wasn’t hard to persuade them to fight against the undead, the main problem was traveling. Villages were scattered all over Plains of Despair and he had to visit each of them.

‘Tired like a dog...’

Weed, who was running at the top of his speed all this time, was under a heavy stress. Even for a trained by heavy manual labour human, this would be a hard challenge, and Weed has turned into a small Orc. Besides he had a huge weight on his back, consisting of backpacks with his items and a small, but heavy Orc statue. Because of all that, he couldn’t feel his legs any more.

Though the first few days went relatively good. He was still at full strength and running was actually pretty entertaining. He had to avoid the dangerous monsters at all costs! Such a race with death was very exciting for Weed.

The Plains of Despair were among the top 10 most dangerous regions of the game, that had barely any information about them. No one knew what monsters inhabit them, how many or where their lairs are.

But Weed had a map of this land.

The map had precisely marked villages and dangerous areas, that must be avoided. And moreover - information about each of them!

Weed was just passing the dangerous areas along the edge and

continuing to run along his way. Therefore, though his journey took a long time, it was absolutely safe.

On the other hand, those who didn't have such knowledge, were sooner or later walking into a wrong place and dying in battle. And that was why these lands were rumored to be very dangerous.

But even though he knew the way, he had limited time. The battle against undead was going to start in 20 days, and during that time he had to complete all preparations and return.

When he was still at full strength he was running on all fours. The skinny orc Karichwi, running like the wind through the dangerous Plains of Despair.

Full 24 hours a day Weed was under a constant tension, as he had to watch for occasional wandering monsters. He was even eating on the run. As a result he ran out of stamina and got sick.

You are exhausted.

Strength left you because you haven't rested for a long time.

Your Stamina, Strength and Agility attributes are reduced.

You are suggested to rest. If you don't do it, you may lose consciousness because of exhaustion.

To collapse from exhaustion and wait for death by some monster's claws. What could be more ridiculous? He would probably be the first player in Royal Road to die because of exhaustion.

After reading this message Weed was furious.

“So I wasn't working hard enough until now?!”

All this time he thought that he was working at the limit of his ability. And now he got such a message! At this moment he remembered his entire time in Royal Road and regret over all the possibilities he missed filled him and he screamed.

“A-a-a-a-a-ah!”

And then the rain came pouring down.

It was so strong, as if some god made a hole in the sky and all the water in the world was flowing through it now. It was raining heavily all across

Plains of Despair. Dry soil was greedily absorbing the water. Withered grass started to fill with life.

And Weed kept running.

At first it wasn't troubling him at all, on the contrary, cold water was only cooling down his overheating body!

But however long he was running, the rain didn't stop.

And that's when he had a second nervous breakdown.

"A-a-ah! A-a-a-ah! A-a-a-a-argh!"

The rain went on for 3 days and 3 nights. The ground was covered with mud puddles and water streams, that obstructed the path like small rivers.

Weed had to make great efforts to avoid them. Unfortunately, he was alone on this journey and there would be no one to help him, were he to make any critical mistake.

The Plains turned to one big muddy swamp, which made it very hard to travel through for a short-legged Orc. And the most unpleasant part was that he couldn't stop to rest because of constant heavy rain.

The weather in Royal Road was known to have very quick and drastic changes. many Royal Road websites even had discussion groups, that were trying to figure out weather patterns and make a forecast.

But Weed was passing through a barely explored region. And of course the map was of no help here.

"Winter... I hate winter! Chwiik! Summer too...Hate summer. Spring and autumn - those are the best." - was muttering he on the go.

Weed had already fallen down many times, but every time he was getting back on his feet and continue walking.

The rain was going on and on, and he was gradually losing his strength. He got a fever too.

"Just exhaustion. Nothing wrong with that." - he was trying to convince himself.

The time was running out and he had to hurry. But such disregard of his body didn't pass without consequences. His speed dropped even more, backpacks' weight seemed to increase even more. He got dark circles under his eyes and his face turned a pale shade of blue instead of green.

You are severely exhausted.

The Stamina recovery has stopped.

Health is gradually reducing.

To prevent collapsing from exhaustion you are strongly advised to rest.

Weed couldn't allow himself to collapse in the middle of flooded plains. He searched his bags a little and started to chew one healing herb after another. He was doing everything he could to sustain his tired body in a working condition.

In such manner, constantly urging himself, he reached the Rosenheim Kingdom in 6 days. Or, more precisely, on 7th day he saw the walls of Seraburg.

“Cancel Sculpture Transformation!”

After shouting that he fell to his knees, but already in his human body.

It was a miracle, that he managed to reach Seraburg without dying. Crossing the plains of Despair was the most dangerous thing he did since he started to play Royal Road. Not because they were filled with dangerous monsters, but because he nearly died from exhaustion.

After transforming back into human, Weed sat on the ground for a while staring into the void. His body finally got to relax and he wasn't able to make himself move again.

Meanwhile players were passing by him on their way to and from the city. And most of them, especially girls, couldn't just ignore him!

“Cheer up...”

“Live, uncle. Do not give up hope!”

“ ... ”

One small coin after another were falling to the ground in front of Weed. And hearing such a sweet tingling of money, he would never admit

that he's not a beggar. So he was quietly scooping them into a small pile.

'3 silver and 14 coppers.'

There were times, back when he was in school, when he didn't have anything to eat. Almost all of the small monthly allowance, paid by the government, he was spending on his little sister. So he often had to eat expired food. For someone who experience such things, every coin was a fortune.

"Uh-oh..."

Weed finally forced himself to get up. His body was still fatigued and legs trembling.

That was one of those moments when he felt that Royal Road is made just too well. He was tired not only physically, but mentally as well. Running for seven days straight wasn't something just anyone could do.

And if he wasn't using the four-legged running, it would take even more time.

Weed shook his head and slowly headed towards the city walls. He agreed to meet with Mapan at the fountain on central square.

Lately Rosenheim Kingdom had a lot more players, than before. Now its population wasn't much lower than that of central kingdoms.

Other frontier kingdoms as well noticed that population of Rosenheim was growing. And of course the cause was the giant statue of a Sphynx. It not only had restorative effects, it was raising various attributes too. Besides the nearby monsters became a lot easier to hunt.

Of course, this situation wasn't going to hold for long.

'When other kingdoms get their own sculptors, painters and other artists, players will disperse once again.'

Because of the Sphynx sculpture many players were choosing a profession of a sculptor. And with time more and more Fine pieces and Masterpieces will be appearing in other kingdoms, and then Rosenheim will lose its advantage.

“Weed! I’m here.”

Deep in thoughts, Weed didn’t notice that he got to the central square, where he was met by Mapan. He was waving his hand, trying to get his friend’s attention.

“Wow! It’s been a long time. Here, I got what you asked for.”

Like a true merchant, Mapan has already prepared everything.

“Two million silver arrows, some weapons and enough silver to smelt into the rest of required 60 000 weapons.”

That was 10 wagons worth of goods.

“I tried to get it as cheap as possible. In the end I got everything for 65 000 gold. I know we agreed on 70 000, but you can pay the actual price. Want me to put it on your tab?” - carefully finished Mapan.

To be honest, he was grateful to Weed, because he introduced him to Pale’s party and Geomchis, which really helped him to earn some extra money. Besides this deal helped him to raise his trading skills quite a bit.

So he was expecting that he’ll have to make a discount for such a big deal, or at least postpone the payment.

However Weed shook his head.

“70 thousand. I’ll pay in cash.”

“Woah! Really?”

Mapan knew, that Weed is secretly a money bag, but didn’t expect him to be THAT rich! But then it hit him and he started to worry. This was his old friend Weed, that wouldn’t move a finger without a good reason.

And like he expected, Weed continued:

“But only after you deliver it to the place. At your destination I’ll pay you the full ammount.”

“ ... ”

Mapan sighed with relief.

He still considered himself lucky. He would still be the one, responsible for delivery, as there would be no way Weed would be able to move the goods, occupying 10 carts.

“So where should i deliver it?”

“To the Plains of Despair.”

“ ... ”

“Yurokin Mountains to be precise.”

“ ... ”

“And it should be done in 10 days.”

“Damn!”

Saying that Mapan was angry would be an understatement! He was about to blow up in Weed’s face, when he passed Mapan his trump card. The map of Plains of Despair! With it anyone will be able to avoid the dangerous areas and reach the destination by following a safe route.

And Mapan didn’t have a choice but to agree. Besides...

‘Villages of exiles... This is my chance to boost my trading skills!’

By making good deals in settlements, which haven’t been visited yet by other merchants, Mapan will be able to receive a lot of experience and make a lot of money.

Fame and wealth captured his imagination.

“Excuse me. Then i need to hurry.”

After bidding his farewell to Weed Mapan hurriedly checked the carts and immediately left towards Plains of Despair.

Weed decided to take another route. Traveling through portal had certain restrictions concerning the maximum load that could be carried through, so it didn’t fit his needs. Besides, he still had to visit remaining villages of exiles. Therefore, after quickly visiting some stores and completing his preparations he went to the stables, where he bought a horse, on which he headed to the city gates.

The main square of Seraburg suddenly lighted up by a bright flash of a portal, through which two players stepped into the Seraburg.

A beauty, dressed in red, and a bald monk.

“So you say there’s a sculptor here?” - asked monk his companion in a calm voice.

“Yes. Don’t you read any forums? There was a huge uproar about the construction of that sculpture...”

“Hmpf! Like I don’t have anything better to do. The fact that we had to come to this hole of a kingdom is enough! If it wasn’t for this damn quest...”

“Ha-ha. Calm down. Soon we’ll finish it, get inside, and you’ll get what you want.”

Psyche and Mako were walking around the city, talking to each other. Psyche was a girl in a gorgeous red velvet robe, and Mako was a monk, wrapped in bright yellow ceremonial clothes.

“Hmmm... Those people...”

“A witch and a saint.”

“What are they doing in Rosenheim?”

Here and there people started to loudly discuss them. These two players from the Hall of Fame of Royal Road were widely known in the game.

Psyche and Mako, who were used to such reaction weren’t paying any attention. And though they weren’t showing their power, every player who was looking at them got an impression that there’s nothing they cannot do.

“Psyche, you remember that game we used to play?”

“Huh?”

“I wonder what that guy is doing now.”

“Mako, you’re talking about that guy, Weed, again?”

“Yeah. About that bastard. He was the only one to get ahead of me and humiliate me.”

A lot of best players of Continent of Magic were playing royal Road now. And most of them were looking for Weed.

Not so long ago, the old and dusty secrets of Continent of Magic were being discovered because of Weed. He was always hunting alone in the most dangerous locations of the game, and his fame was absolute.

Mako and Psyche, like many others, were zealously following his footsteps. Many times they watched from his hunt from a distance, and they saw, that however ridiculous that seemed, he was fighting, like his life was at stake.

When he was entering dungeons, he was slaying every monster inside. He was extremely violent and efficient when he was fighting the most dangerous monsters in the game. Players, that were following him were trembling in excitement, seeing how every strike takes one life.

Back then Weed was considered the most dangerous and most successful player, that never gives up, but always keeps going ahead, fighting and winning. That’s why everyone called him the Dark Knight.

Psyche and Mako reached the east gates.

“According to our information, the sculptor was last seen around here.”

“That’s him!”

Psyche pointed at Weed, who was riding a horse.

After going through so much trouble in the past 7 days, Weed decided that the way back he’ll spend with comfort.

Plains of Despair had small herds of wild horses, but only players of certain professions, like Knights or Mercenaries, were able to tame them. They could even make horses run faster.

But Sculptors didn’t have any abilities related to horses. Though even druids could use ‘Wolf Spirit’ and bards - their singing. But sculptors...

‘Profession, that thrives only through hard work.’

Only after crossing Plains of Despair, Weed seemed to truly understand the Sculptor profession.

‘Hya! Let’s see how fast you can run!’

He was about to send his horse into a gallop, when two players blocked his road. A woman in red robe and a bald monk. Not giving him any time to express his anger, woman asked:

“Are you the sculptor?”

“Yeah... That’s my profession, and what is it you want from me?” - warily asked Weed.

He didn’t like unnecessary complications and he didn’t have time for them.

Psyche smiled slightly and continued.

“That means I was right. It was you, who built the pyramid. Could you by any chance make us scorpion figurines, uncle?”

“I’m afraid not. It seems you purchased some figurines from me before, but unfortunately I don’t make any more souvenirs.”

Weed didn’t have enough time to spend it for a couple silver coins, so he decided to lie. Some extra profit was always welcome, but right now he had an important quest waiting for him, with hopefully great reward.

“But we have an emergency. We need those figurines right now. Could you please help us?”

“I’m sorry, but that’s impossible. Ask another sculptor.”

Weed refused abruptly, showing that he’s not going to continue this conversation.

But Psyche, seeing that the situation is developing in a wrong direction, handed him a small gem.

“We already talked to other sculptors. They say, that we need a Sculptor with an intermediate skill level. Only such a sculptor will be able to carve us the necessary figurines.”

Unfortunately for Weed, the situation was getting more and more complicated, it was obvious that they're not going to let him go easily.

“My skill level isn't that great, besides I'm in a hurry.”

“We know, that it's a difficult request. So if you agree to help us, you'll get this gem as a reward.”

Shiny red ruby got Weed's complete attention. He already had experience of working with gems and he easily estimated its value.

‘I could sell it for 400 gold. Or even 500 if i put enough effort.’

The regret over spending 70 000 gold was only strengthening his usual greed.

Weed quickly got off the horse, smiled brightly and said:

“If you give me a little time, I'll make them right now. You can count on me!”

Psyche and Mako were looking at each other in confusion.

The moment they mentioned a gem, the sculptor's attitude completely changed! He was even looking younger! They never before seen such behaviour in the game.

“We need seven figurines. Can you start right now?”

“Hmm... seven?”

“Is that too many?”

Psyche looked at him, a bit worried. Weed answered her with a sad look.

“As you know, I'm an artist. I admire art, that's why I became a sculptor. Even when working on similar figurines, I have to make a lot of effort to maintain their originality, I have to use special techniques.”

Weed was saying that with crystal clear eyes of the most honest man in the world. From the side he looked like a most moral player, who devoted his life to art. Weed, who had a lot of experience in such matters, became an incredible actor.

“Oh! I haven't thought about it. In this case, if you make us the figurines,

we'll add another gem to your reward. Can you make them from this material?"

Psyche took out seven red stones. At that moment she was warily examining the surroundings.

The monk has put his hand on the sword handle. If they noticed any suspicious movements, they'd immediately get rid of the sculptor.

But Weed was only looking at stones.

'To cut them, one indeed needs an intermediate skill level. With Zahab's knife I'll be able to work with them easily.'

No wonder, that other sculptors refused the job, messing with gemstones of these two with just beginner skill level was very dangerous.

"Sure, I can. Wait a bit. I'll make you best scorpions in the world."

Weed relaxed, but kept the appearance of extreme focus, and started working. Usually there were many curious players gathering to watch him, but this time Psyche and mako were repelling any unwanted attention.

"Hey, Mako..."

"What, Psyche?"

"Do you think he might be playing this game too? Weed, I mean."

Skillfully moving hands of the sculptor froze for a moment, before continuing work, like nothing happened. It was unlikely, that in this huge world someone was talking about him! Them must be talking about someone with a similar name.

"Hmmm. Most probably. I heard, that he sold his account in Continent of magic and moved here. There are rumors, that he's not only playing this game, but became a paladin of Order of Freya. Of course you shouldn't trust it much, but..."

"What, did he realize his mistakes and decided to follow the path of light? That Dark Knight, that was destroying everything in his path, like a death machine?!"

Weed's hands started to tremble slightly. He sneaked a look at their faces.

Mako added in a low voice:

"I want to meet him so much..."

"I know, Mako. When you started playing this game 2 years ago, you was only regretting not killing Weed in Continent of magic."

"Yeah... I wanted to best the one who was considered the strongest by everyone else."

"I understand you. Everyone, who achieved anything significant in Continent of Magic must have had that feeling."

"You bet! To beat the one on the top. To take his position and make him suffer. If he's here, I wish I could meet him. No, I will definitely meet him! The continent is big, but our paths will definitely cross someday."

"And what will you do when you meet him?"

"Oh, I'll happily greet him. It'll be such a joy. Ho-ho-ho!"

Psyche gave him a wry smile.

"Those are my thoughts exactly. When I meet him I'll happily welcome him."

"Right. We should kill him at least a thousand times."

Weed's hands were moving so fast, that they were barely visible. Only Zahab's knife was flashing from time to time.

"Sculptor, there's no need to hurry that much..."

"No..."

Weed finished the figurines as fast as possible and showed them to Psyche.

"You did a great job."

She nodded with satisfaction, handed him the promised reward and turned to her companion.

“We can finally return.”

“Yeah, let’s hurry.”

Mako and Psyche said goodbyes to the sculptor, turned around and walked away.

When they were far enough, Weed sighed with relief.

‘Phew! I really shouldn’t tell anyone, that I have played Continent of Magic.’

As big was his fame, as strong was the hate, others felt towards him. After all he was dealing with everyone who ever attacked him with no mercy.

He has heard of Psyche and Mako before. But thanks to virtual reality, he was able to see faces of people, who might become his worst enemies in the future.

# Chapter 8: Strange Companion

Once Weed finished his business in Rosenheim Kingdom, he headed into the Plains of Despair again.

Though, this time he was riding a horse. It was a cheap common breed, known for its short stature, short and muscular legs and good endurance.

People, who wanted to make an impression, were usually picking a horse of pure black or white color. But Weed certainly wasn't one of them, so he chose a simple brown one.

“Okay. Let's go. Come on, run!”

Loudly hitting the ground with its hooves, the horse broke into a gallop.

In rocky or swampy areas it wouldn't be the best means of transportation, but on the plains, across which Weed was traveling, it was unrivaled.

“Yeah. It's worth the money.”

He was enjoying the fast and comfortable journey.

Now Weed could understand why other people were buying horses. But he still was bitter about spending those money! So he had to constantly comfort himself about it.

“Right investments is the only way to success.”

Though he only spent 3 gold on it, he had to constantly praise his new purchase to not feel regret. He was doing everything to suppress his greedy nature.

But whatever was his reasons for praise, the horse really was a worth investment, as it allowed him to travel a lot faster than even when he was using Quadruped Run skill.

In a single day he reached the border and passed into the Plains of Despair, then he changed direction and started to move in a strange pattern. Plains had passable terrain and great visibility in every direction, but Weed was riding to south-east for an hour, then making a sharp turn

and riding another hour to north-east.

Making such zigzags, he was gradually making his way to the east, towards the fortress of Dark Elves, though he had to spend his valuable time on meaningless wandering.

A few hours later Weed encountered a party, that was hunting on the Plains again. Oberon and his companions just finished another fight and were resting. Of course they were alert and noticed the approaching rider first.

“What in the world...”

“There’re solo players, who come here!”

Everyone in Oberon’s party turned around and looked at Weed in surprise.

When they entered the Plains of Despair, they had to fight monsters almost non-stop. If in Rosenheim Kingdom they could brag that they can deal with any monster, here it was different. They’ve got to feel what real battle is the hard way.

Abyss Knights, Lightning Casters, Poison Lords, Dark Dancers, Night Lords! And many other monsters of level 350, that were setting traps, making ambushes, casting deadly spells and summoning minions to aid them in battle.

These lands were a real challenge for their party. A couple times when they encountered monsters of level over 400 it was only by their tremendous effort that their hunt didn’t end at that moment. With every day the mood in the party was getting gloomier and gloomier.

So it was no wonder, that the moment Oberon saw Weed, his eyes took a perfectly round shape.

“It is dangerous here. This is Plains of Despair... Hurry up, turn around and get away from here as fast as you can! Or no, we better escort you back.”

Oberon was a really noble man. He was ready to defend others even

when he was being attacked himself. The warrior profession was often picked by such open, good-mannered and kind people.

But Weed wasn't anywhere near that kind of guy. It could be said, that he was an exact opposite.

Weed just rode past them. He totally ignored the players, but not the items, left by them, like on their previous meeting!

He didn't even get off the horse to pick them up, he just bent over to gather them into his saddlebag, holding on the horse only by his legs.

'I must gather everything.'

Having picked up the items, Weed continued his way to the east.

"Huh? He just left?"

"Does he not value his life?"

Players from the hunting party were watching him ride away.

"Everyone is free to choose his own way to die."

"Really, there are people who like to travel alone everywhere."

However Pluto, Oberon, Haisyns and a couple other veterans weren't so quick with conclusions. Weed's behaviour wasn't that of a person, who was going to die in near future.

A few thoughts flashed in Oberon's mind. He remembered how they encountered Soulless Wolves right after passing the border, and how they saw a strange Orc, that picked up all the items, left after the fight.

"Could it be..."

Pluto looked at Oberon.

"That Orc!"

"So it was a player?"

"If that was a player, then..."

They nodded to each other.

"The player, who can turn into an Orc... Only one person comes to

mind.”

Now others understood as well what exactly Oberon was implying. After all this hunting party consisted of high level players, very passionate about Royal Road.

“Hall of Fame!”

“The Orc from that video!”

“He looked different this time, but that’s him! The same terrible face.”

“Right. There are no Orcs in the game as ugly as this one!”

“So that event is going to happen in Plains of Despair!”

\*

Though this time Weed was traveling on a horse, his mood wasn’t quite as good as it should have been. On his way he was noticing traces of the hunting party, or, to be precise, items, left by them.

Weed could see them clearly, but couldn’t come close enough to pick them up. There were strong monsters living in those areas, that would be hard to deal with alone. Besides, hunting party was coming through the middle of such areas, where the number of monsters was the greatest.

At first glance plains looked like they were empty, but that was a misleading first impression. Every kind of monsters had its own territory, by walking into which players were forcing all of the monsters inhabiting it to attack. These territories were scattered around the plains, forming a complex labyrinth.

Weed had a copy of the map, therefore he was able to avoid all the dangerous areas. But even with that map and a horse, he had to follow a tortuous path, which was really slowing him down.

After a day of constant gallop the horse started to foam at the corners of its mouth. It was getting exhausted. Especially since Weed was carrying a pretty weighty Orc statue in one of his bags.

Usually horse owners were taking care of their rides: stroking, comforting, feeding carrots to them, and of course letting them rest when

they were tired.

Weed was rushing his horse instead.

“Come on, run. You can do it. You belong to a species of runners after all, aren’t you disappointed, that you never actually reached your limit?”

After that he suddenly started to thump out a tempo on the horse’s back. And it did start running a bit faster, expending the little power it still had. But after some time the speed started to drop again.

“It’s hard, isn’t it? Hold on a bit more. When we arrive you’ll be able to rest as much as you want.”

The horse believed those words, stopped slowing down and put some more effort into it.

Weed’s kind voice and his high charisma and leadership attributes were helping him to convince the poor horse to run ahead in hopes of reaching their destination.

But however long it was running, there was no sign of their destination and Weed wasn’t letting it to slow down.

“Come on, a little further.”

The horse was running.

“Almost there.”

It was still believing.

“Just a bit left.”

Weed’s attitude towards his mount went beyond horrible. He was squeezing every last drop from his horse.

In the end it couldn’t stand such a treatment any longer, made last few steps and fell to the ground, completely exhausted.

After examining the heavily breathing horse and realizing, that he won’t be able to ride it any further, Weed took his bags off it and said:

“You’re free now. Go wherever you want. Good luck.”

He took out the small Orc statue. He didn't have time to wait for the horse to recover, so he switched to his original way of traveling.

“Sculpture transformation!”

The journey to Rosenheim Kingdom took him 7 days. But now, that he covered a significant part of his way on the horse and saved his strength, this time was going to reduce by half.

“Chwiik! Chwik!”

The small Orc headed to the east.

He still was terribly short on time. Last time he visited all the villages of exiles in the center of the plains, now he had to visit as many of the remote ones as possible.

Taking into account the way back to the fortress of Dark Elves, it was going to take about 12 days.

“And I have 15 days until the battle starts.”

Having concluded, that he has just enough time, Weed was continuing to run, when all of a sudden, he noticed someone standing on a hill. The person was standing with his back to Weed and looking at something out of Weed's field of view.

“A player? How... It's not easy to get here. That must be some villager. Chwiit!”

Villages of exiles were scattered all around the plains. And despite the abundance of monsters, they were full of life, villagers were hunting and going out of villages for other business. It was not unusual to meet one of them here.

“Chwiik, is there a village nearby?”

As he was coming closer he was noticing more details about the person on the hill. Graceful posture, waist-long hair.

‘That must be a woman.’

Though he could only see her back, his sculptor's senses were telling

him, that she must be very beautiful. A woman watching the sunset. No, a young lady.

Deciding that it was not his business, Weed continued to run. The girl could obviously hear him, but wasn't paying him any attention, so he decided to simply run past her.

While running up the hill, Weed noticed something at the edge of his field of view. A huge bull-like monster was running in the same direction.

"Hunter of Plains!"

That was one of the few kinds of monsters, that didn't live on some set territory. Hunters of Plains were roaming all over the Plains of Despair, hunting people or even occasional monsters.

Villagers said that they were warriors of about 320th level, who got cursed by a dark spell and turned into monsters with large health pool and an unpleasant ability to reduce player's vitality a bit with every hit.

That last feature made them incredibly hard to fight against.

Weed prepared for a hard battle.

"Damn. I didn't even sharpen the sword or polish the armor..."

He was focused on running, so he didn't prepare for a fight at all. And the difference between fighting after preparations and fighting unprepared was huge.

If he encountered the monster on plain terrain, he'd be able to go around the monster. But on a slope he noticed it too late and there was no way to avoid a fight.

However Hunter of Plains wasn't going for Weed, but for the girl, standing on the top of the hill!

It was hunting her.

'Great. I'll escape in the meanwhile... Oh, no, I can't run away!'

At first Weed got relieved and was going to use the opportunity to escape, but then he remembered another trait of that kind of monsters.

Hunters of Plains were always chasing their prey to the end.

Once it finishes the girl, it'll follow Weed until it catches up with him. And that'll most probably happen when Weed will be tired, which will make fighting with it even harder.

So his best bet would be to deal with it now. Besides this monster had a certain weak point.

'While it's busy with the girl, I'll come from behind and stab it.'

The Hunter aimed his spear at the girl.

Weed got a better grip on the glaive. He was counting on making a single powerful strike, that'll most likely be lethal.

He thought he planned for every possibility. But in the last moment the girl turned around with incredible speed and unsheathed her sword! The blade flashed and seemingly divided into 3 separate edges, which immediately struck the Hunter, that was about to thrust his spear forward.

The next moment the monster was dead.

The girl looked at Weed.

When their eyes met Weed got stunned.

He knew her.

Knew her well!

That was Seoyoon.

"Chwi, chwiik..."

He froze with a glaive lifted in a striking position. From the side it looked like an ugly small Orc was going to attack a lone girl.

\*

After leaving Rosenheim Kingdom Seoyoon went on a long journey, that ended in Plains of Despair.

in the game she was a Berserk, which allowed her to master all kinds of weapons. However her real power was showing when fights were dragging

on for some time. Players with that profession were never getting tired and instead were getting stronger when they saw their opponents bleed.

Seoyoon was fighting like a machine, as any real Berserk should. No matter day or night, she was restlessly hunting and slaying one monster after another, leaving only dead bodies behind.

Sometimes, during her journey she was getting stranded in the center of some dungeon and getting killed as a result. Even a player like her, who was fighting non-stop since the launch of Royal Road couldn't win against such an overwhelming number of opponents.

But that wasn't disturbing her. Losing levels and skill levels was insignificant. All the more so, as she preferred fighting monsters to bothering with her skills.

However she wasn't able to play for 24 hours after death, so she was trying not to die. She tried to win in all the fights.

Though, that wasn't the main point either. She only needed battles to let out the accumulated frustration! To take revenge!

And monsters wouldn't find even a spark of compassion in her cold eyes.

'Enemy.'

Seoyoon noticed the Orc, that was approaching her with glaive in his hands and looked straight at him.

She didn't relax for a single moment, as new fight could start any moment now. The sword in her hand turned towards a new target.

\*

Seoyoon.

Having recognized her, Weed froze in place.

Beautiful. He already saw her before, but now that he met her again he couldn't avert his gaze, her beauty struck him too hard.

'A human can't be this beautiful...'

It seemed like her face was shining. Eyes, mouth, nose - everything was in harmony, filling her face with incredible charm.

After seeing Seoyoon so close, Weed felt despair. He created so many sculptures, but none of them reflected her beauty properly.

If it was possible, he'd look at her like this all day. He would never get tired of it.

But right now wasn't the best time for that. He had to get away from here, until something terrible happens.

If he's discovered to be the player, who created a sculpture of her without permission, he may end up like the Hunter of Plains.

However strong Weed considered himself, Seoyoon had a pretty high level even on their first meeting. And all the items she was wearing were above level 300!

'Trouble.'

Besides the situation was very delicate. Orc with a glaive was assaulting a lone girl.

Weed swallowed. Of course, he'll just explain it to her and clear the situation.

"Chwi, Chwiik!"

Weed was hurried and agitated, but all that came out of his mouth were meaningless orcish sounds!

"Chwichik..."

"Chwi-i-i-it!"

Every time he tried to say something he was spitting in Seoyoon's direction instead!

And then he felt some sinister aura coming out of Seoyoon's body. Like if she was already slicing him in pieces in her mind. It was making his body numb and his knees tremble. Something menacing and oppressing.

The breath of death!

That overwhelming pressure made Weed think that he'll die even if he explains himself. But he couldn't at least try. He must tell her, that he's that guy she once shared a meal with in the instructor's house.

Though even that fact might not stop her. Even the most beautiful rose has thorns. After all she already had a red mark of player-killer on their first meeting.

She was the first Player-Killer Weed met in Royal Road.

'Who would think, that in Plains of Despair I will meet the person I never expected to meet again.'

Since that memorable meeting at the table the image of that beautiful but cold girl was imprinted in his memory. Every time Weed was creating a new sculpture, he was trying to give her face different expressions in his imagination. He tried to fill this cold angel with a living beauty.

"Chwiik!"

Weed opened his eyes wide and looked forcefully at Seoyoon.

If his opponent is a murderer, the fact that he was a player too may only encourage her to attack. But it may prevent her from attacking as well.

'Can I defeat her?'

Even if he gives it his all, he's still significantly behind her in levels and equipment quality. At first sight, judging by her items, he was behind by about 70 levels.

'A few months ago BadRay had level 370. Now he should be around 390. Though her level was slightly lower, she was still among the top players!'

Weed wasn't afraid of players with higher level than his. He was compensating the difference with his crafting skills, heightened attributes and Sculpture Mastery!

But for him, who started to play to earn money, worst enemies were Player-Killers.

They were bandits.

While ordinary players, like Weed, participate in hard quests and battles to acquire items, those murderers train to fight against players. And in the end they were killing other players and taking all their items!

Though he already had experience of encountering Dwichigi quartet, which ended in his victory, that case was very different.

Seoyoon was going to be a tough opponent.

She went through the same training in training hall he did, so he couldn't rely on raised attributes much. And he wasn't able to use his secret advantage, blade sharpening and armor polishing. Besides a fighting profession, like hers, must have some unknown to him skills too.

He didn't see any way out!

However, Weed put even more intensity into his glare. He must show that it's exactly opposite situation! That he's at least of the same strength as her, if not stronger! And then use any chance to get away!

Weed already prepared 36 different escape scenarios.

But then Seoyoon simply lowered her sword, turned around and continued on her way.

Weed couldn't understand what just happened. How would he know, that Seoyoon only fought monsters, that attacked her first! In his eyes she didn't see any threat, so she didn't do anything to him.

Confused Weed quickly came to his senses.

'Anyway, I don't have time for this.'

He continued to run towards Yuroki Mountains.

But Seoyoon was moving too. And, surprisingly, they were going in the same general direction. Therefore a few days later their paths crossed again.

At first Weed couldn't understand how did that happen. He was running as fast as he could for 2 days straight, but Seoyoon was slightly ahead of him anyway.

But then he realized. He had to avoid all the monsters and their territories, while visiting exile villages at the same time.

Of course his path was much longer and more difficult. Unlike him Seoyoon was walking straight, fighting all the monsters on her way!

“Chwi, chwiik!”

Weed was hurt.

He was putting all his efforts into running, but they still were moving with an equal speed! And Seoyoon was simultaneously hunting monsters and receiving experience and items.

The third time they met at the Yunopu Canyon. Since that moment they had to travel together. Seoyoon wasn't paying any attention to the Orc, that was following her, she was just following her way.

Yunopu Canyon was located in the northern part of Plains of Despair. Two twin mountains were attracting travelers, like a giant pair of doors. Besides the canyon between them, the only way to get to the other side would be going around them or climbing over, which would be even more difficult.

“I don't have much time, chwiik!”

Weed decided to go through the Yunopu Canyon.

He was a bit worried about having to follow Seoyoon, so he decided to keep some distance to avoid danger. Or monsters, to be precise.

This area was inhabited by giant Yetis. They had thick white fur, that made them immune to ice magic. Besides they had level 340!

They used to live in mountains, but were driven out by other even more powerful monsters, so they moved into the canyon, that happened to be a popular route for hunters in Plains of Despair.

“Can't help it! Will have to fight with Yetis.”

Weed decided to go through the canyon and was now watching Seoyoon demonstrate her outstanding sword mastery on occasion Yetis.

“She’s strong...”

While running through Plains of Despair, Weed was avoiding most of the monsters, but in Yunopu Canyon he had to confront Yetis. He had to fight!

Even with his crafting skills, every fight required all of his skill. During fights his health was dropping to critical level, but for now Weed was winning them.

It seemed, that fighting didn’t require any effort for Seoyoon. Using her techniques, with incredible grace she was killing several Yetis at a time.

Of course she had higher level and better equipment, but Weed noticed something else. Skill.

Royal road was a game, set in virtual reality. Here no matter how high was one’s level of skills and abilities, only by using them effectively was one able to realize the full potential of his profession.

It can be demonstrated on a duel between a monk and a swordsman, two most popular among players professions. The player with a sword would try to keep his opponent at a certain distance during the duel, while monk on the contrary will try to approach as close, as possible.

If their skills are on equal level, the outcome of the duel will depend from their tactics, reaction and a bit from luck. And in this case the fighter with most experience and skill will most likely win.

Of course, that wasn’t as important during monster hunt, though newbies, who didn’t want to learn at all, could be killed even by weakest monsters.

However, even experienced fighters didn’t have a single chance against Weed, who spent an entire year on learning swordsmanship.

‘Nice moves.’

Weed was admiring Seoyoon’s sword skill.

Her technique wasn’t as organized, as his own. Weed’s swordsmanship didn’t have any weaknesses. He was correctly using all his muscles,

concentrating his strength on defence or sudden offence.

Sometimes Weed was getting carried away and rushing into battle, completely forgetting about defence. Relying only on his agility and reaction, showing incredible feats, he was raining strikes on his enemies, defeating them sooner or later.

But Seoyoon was fighting in a different manner. She was thinking about defence and offence at the same time. When she saw a weakness - she was attacking, when in danger - defending.

Of course, she developed that tactics during multiple battles against monsters, which was why her skill will eventually reach the limit. But Weed was envying her anyway. In the battle she looked like she was dancing. Because of her agility, she was able to make strikes only a woman could do.

When the situation allowed it, Weed was watching the girl's actions with full attention.

'She likes to hunt!'

Though during this entire time she didn't say a single word and was always fighting with the same cold expression. It looked, like it was telling that these terrifying monsters aren't a competition for her.

But Weed saw something else.

Deep inside her beautiful cold face was hidden sadness. Some burden on her heart.

Since their first meeting, while creating sculptures, Weed was often thinking about her inner world. He didn't have much experience in understanding people back then and didn't see much.

Now he could understand people's feelings better and was able to see those hidden feelings.

'Why is she so sad?'

Weed tried to take even closer look at her.

Though he was captivated by her secret, just watching her was no less

pleasant. He never before saw a girl of such beauty, that he couldn't capture in a sculpture even after so many tries.

While watching her, Weed noticed something else.

Seoyoon was never aiming at the opponent's head. Though Yetis were higher than 2 meters, while the girl was about 1.67 meter, with a sword she would be able to hit it anyway.

Weed would definitely aim for the head, as it was the least protected part and hitting it would likely be a critical strike.

But Seoyoon was never hitting the face. It looked like she wasn't even looking at their faces. He was just using all the techniques, available to her to kill her opponents as fast as possible.

'She doesn't look at their expressions? Maybe she's afraid to see their pain... No, there's most likely some other reason.'

Because Weed was following Seoyoon, he didn't have to fight much. He was mostly fighting the few enemies, who tried to attack the girl from behind.

"Chwiik, experience!"

Yeti hides was a top grade item and costed a lot. Besides their fur looked very impressive and clothes made from it were very warm.

"Chwichichichit!"

'If I pick it all up - I can forget about cold. I'll sew clothes and even earn some extra money.'

Weed got absorbed into hunting and gathering hides.

"..."

Seoyoon was continuing to fight and paid no attention to her unexpected companion. It's just that when she was turning around now, she was always noticing a small Orc behind her.

She still didn't say a word, and Weed considered it natural. He didn't hear her talk before as well. Besides even ordinary players wouldn't talk to

him now that he was transformed into Karichwi.

Though at first he was worried a bit about following her, Weed quickly realized, that she won't attack him. It became clear after he watched her for some time and saw, that she was trying to avoid fighting Yetis, who had offsprings.

'How did she became a murderer? And she doesn't have to walk around with such a cold expression then.'

Weed was very curious, but as he didn't like others intruding his personal life, he was trying not to intrude others'. So the only thing left for him was hunting and gathering loot, while traveling through the Yunopu Canyon. The canyon didn't have any turns or crossroads or other paths, only one straight and very long road. And it would take 4 more days to pass it according to the map.

Half a day later Seoyoon made a stop to rest. She took out a stale barley bread, which she stocked up with back at Rosenheim Kingdom and started to chew it slowly.

Weed respected Seoyoon for that.

"Yeah, to reduce expenses one should start with the food. If you do that, you can accumulate good money. Money is power. One should constantly save up, then he will never run out."

But unlike the girl, Weed wasn't eating only barley bread.

Because of his high cooking skill, he was able to gather ingredients during hunt and then, with a bit of spices, cook himself tasty and almost free meals. Which didn't only satisfy his hunger, but boosted his attributes.

Weed lighted a fire, threaded Yeti meat on wooden sticks and started to slowly roast it over the fire. The tasty aroma of roasted meat gradually spread around him.

"Chwiik!"

When it was ready, Weed grabbed one of the sticks with both hands and

started to eat. The thin Orc was eating with great appetite.

Your Satiety increases.

- Stamina increased by 40%
- Health increased by 15%

You ate flesh of Yeti, who have great strength.

As a result your strength has been slightly increased for a certain period.

Intermediate cooking skill!

Some people use precise timing and exact amount of ingredients. But Weed achieved everything through practice of cooking great number of meals for the parties he used to command.

So even the most simple dishes, cooked by Weed, were very tasty. Besides they were slightly increasing attributes.

“ ... ”

While eating, Weed glanced at Seoyoon. He thought that she'll continue walking after eating the bread and he'll have to catch up with her. After all in a filled with Yeti canyon even the most unsuitable companion is important.

However, to his great surprise, the girl was standing just a few steps away, staring at the Orc. Or at the meat in his hands to be precise. The tasty tasty-smelling roasted yeti meat!

“Chwiik!”

Weed was stunned for a moment, but then quickly handed her the other meat stick. He could hunt for meat and cut another stick from a free branch, all of it was certainly not worth risking his life.

Since that moment Seoyoon was always joining the small Orc for meals. In this journey Weed completely unexpectedly became her personal cook.

Though he didn't think it was quite fair.

‘If I don't share, she might eat me... She's a true murderer.’

# Chapter 9: Sculptures of Her

Since Weed and Seoyoon entered the Yunopu Gorge together, they haven't said a single word to each other.

But at every stop they were sharing food. And of course Weed was the one cooking, though that wasn't bothering him much, as he didn't have to run this time, but instead walked calmly while hunting Yetis along the way.

At first they were moving about 100 meters apart from each other. But that distance was gradually reducing. After another hard fight Weed was the first to shorten the distance to 50 meters, as he was worried about being attacked by another group of Yetis. And after a few shared dinners the distance shrunk to 30 meters.

Usually Seoyoon just approached him, taking her share silently and returning back to her place. Each of them ate alone, carefully watching the surroundings.

After another day they were already 20 meters apart. And they fought at the same distance from each other, which gave Weed a chance to observe the girl from up close.

“ ... ”

After one of the battles Seoyoon stopped and took off her half-plate armor. She was fully equipped in heavy armor. Weed had a lot of opportunities to appreciate their expensive shine. But what he didn't know was that she was wearing chainmail underneath them.

‘That's the melee profession for you.’ -he thought enviously.

Knights and other melee fighters had the ability to wear all the different kinds of armor at the same time. By equipping 3 kinds of armor: iron, leather and cloth armors - at the same time, one could get the best possible protection.

The only problem was that the combined weight required high strength, endurance and agility attributes. If they were not high enough, one would

quickly tire out and lose the ability to move.

After getting an Intermediate level of Blacksmith Weed also gained that ability, but as he lacked the attributes, he didn't dare to equip all 3 kinds of armor like a knight.

Absorbed by those thoughts, Weed almost crashed into Seoyoon, who was carefully examining her unequipped armor.

'Is it time for repairs?'

Almost all of the surface of armor was covered in cracks, some places even had pieces missing.

"Chwiik!"

Weed quickly approached Seoyoon and snatched the armor out of her hands. He did it unconsciously, as he was always repairing armor for people around him.

And then he noticed Seoyoon's murderous glance.

"Chwi, chwiik..."

Reflected in her eyes was a small green thief! So he took the instruments out of his bag, repaired the armor, and returned it to her as quickly as possible.

Seoyoon took her armor back like nothing happened and started to examine it carefully. Its durability increased, and formerly damaged parts looked completely fine.

Then Seoyoon took off her chainmail and handed it to Weed by herself this time. He silently took it and repaired, and then did the same with her leather armor.

When the girl took off her last set of armor, she was left almost naked. As any proper man, Weed couldn't help but try to oogle her, but at the last moment he thought otherwise.

He valued his life more.

And since that day he was responsible not only for food, but for

equipment repairs too.

Actually, skills like cooking and repairing were very rare among unintelligent Orcs. Some Elves, Hobbits or Dwarfs did have Intermediate Cooking or Blacksmithing, but Orcs - never.

But Seoyoon didn't seem concerned about it at all. Maybe she thought that the Orc she happened to meet wasn't ordinary, or maybe she just wasn't interested in surrounding creatures.

Whatever it was, Weed wasn't eager to explain himself, so he just silently walked ahead. However when Seoyoon was logged out of the game, he didn't have anything to do, as he didn't dare to continue his way alone.

Seoyoon left Royal Road every 4 hours. Maybe she needed to eat, or rest. After leaving, she always appearing exactly 2 hours later.

Weed himself ate very quickly. Besides, for the sake of the quest he was spending all of his free time inside the game, and as a result he barely slept 2 hours a day for the past several days.

'Since she's logging out so often, I should do something useful in the meantime.'

And Weed started to make sculptures.

If one was to sum up all the time the girl was absent, there would have been enough for Weed to pass through the rest of his path alone and reach the fortress.

However the risk was far too great. Sometimes Yeti's appeared in groups of 3 or more, and it was extremely hard to deal with all of them alone.

And if he died, he wouldn't be able to login into royal Road for 24 hours! Which would be 4 days in Royal Road time...

Under such conditions the safest way was also the shortest and the best. Sometimes even Weed was able to silence his inner unreasonable greed.

"Yeah, sculpturing is always the best way to spend free time."

Lately, his Sculpture mastery has grown significantly and his art became

more diverse. Which actually wasn't surprising, since he had cut many different monsters, castles, people, a dragon and even a tomb with a sphynx.

However Weed decided to make more sculptures of Seoyoon.

“I should cut what I have seen so far while I have time.”

The first sculpture was full of motion. The cold side of Seoyoon, fighting with monsters. He had cut the female warrior with a sword.

Ding!

Fine Piece!

You have completed a statue of 'Beauty with a sword'!

The master, whose hands create only great sculptures, left a statue of a beautiful woman in desolate plains!

Her cold face is full of fury towards her enemies.

Artistic value: 260.

Effects:

- - Everyone who looks on the sculpture has his health and mana regeneration increased by 4% for the next day.
- - Movement speed increased by 5%.
- - Strength and Agility increased by 10.
- - Intellect and Wisdom increased by 3.
- - Men have their fighting spirit increased.

These effects do not stack with other sculptures.

Number of Fine Pieces created: 10.

- Sculpture Mastery has improved.

- Fame increased by 19.

- Endurance increased by 2.

- Art increased by 1.

- Fortitude increased by 3.

His Sculpture Mastery improved again!

Weed exclaimed impatiently:

“Check skills. Sculpture Mastery!”

Sculpture Mastery: Intermediate 9 level (46%).

You can create sculptures, sell them at high prices, and win the favor of ladies.

Even though Weed created a Fine Piece, his skill increased only by 3%.

“Terrible work. The worst of Fine Pieces. What did I do wrong?”

Even if his aim was Fine Piece, that doesn't mean he can do his a sloppy job and still get the desired result. Even when working on a small figurine, a sculptor has to put his heart and soul into it.

For example, in a fight, one can win even without using his full strength. But when engraving a sculpture, even the smallest one, one had to spend a minimum of half an hour not to get a failed work, which would decrease your fame.

The statues of Seoyoon required not half an hour but half a day of in-game time. He had to thoroughly work on every detail and facial features to capture the image of the girl into the sculpture.

And naturally, creating giant sculptures, like Ice Dragon, Pyramid and Sphynx, required weeks or more time.

“Maybe I'm noticing the wrong details?” - Weed asked himself.

In exactly 4 hours, when Seoyoon left the game again, he started to work on the next sculpture. And even though he made a Fine Piece again, 'Female Warrior with a Sword', his skill only increased by 4%.

“Maybe I'm lacking understanding? That's why I get such small skill increases?”

The next day, once he was left alone again, Weed started to cut another sculpture. He was trying to convey the unearthly beauty that was driving him crazy.

He was cutting a sculpture of a beautiful girl, bitterly watching the sunset with a calm face and very sad, almost crying eyes. He was engraving an image of a girl, grieving deep inside.

“Hmmm. This is hard.”

It was the first time creating a sculpture was so difficult for Weed. He was used to feeling like his hands moving on its own, as his skill level was very high. But the higher his skill level was and the more knowledge he

had - the harder it was for him to work.

“Damn! Why is it like this?”

Weed had already created many sculptures of Seoyoon, but every time it was getting harder and harder. The more he looked at her, the more he was saw and the more he wanted to convey her charm. And it was an incredibly difficult task.

This time Weed created a Masterpiece and his skill increased by 13%.

But the closer he was to the next level of Sculpture Mastery - the harder it was to increase it. And to actually advance to the next level he needed something special. For example to go from Beginner to Intermediate he had to make a statue of Headless Dullahan.

And to go from Intermediate to Advanced level he'll have to make something truly outstanding.

“Right. I'll never pass to the Advanced level with Fine Pieces. With my 63% in current level it'll take 3 or 4 Masterpieces...”

Now Weed started to closely watch Seoyoon's every move. Not only in battle, but in-between them too. How she walks, which hand she eats food with, where and how she sat - he was engraving absolutely everything in his memory.

This small and ugly Orc was secretly spying on Seoyoon!

If only she realized that she was accompanied by a player, she'd have gone off far ahead or even kill the annoying little creep.

Sometimes it was difficult for Seoyoon to even look at people, which was why she was trying to hide from everyone by going somewhere remote. Sometimes she wasn't able to do it, men would chase her everywhere, fight each other, and show off their strength. But she still wouldn't talk to them, which was getting her into trouble and making her a player killer in the end.

If Seoyoon knew that there was a man besides her, she wouldn't be able to stay with him.

But not with an Orc! Simple Orcs did not cause any repulsion from her. And that's why Weed managed to see the real Seoyoon that was fighting monsters and sleeping under the warm sun. Her face still remained expressionless, except for her eyes...

With sadness in her eyes, she was watching leaves falling off trees. She often looked at the small brook in the middle of the Gorge while humbly sitting and waiting for the food to get done.

Once, while walking, Seoyoon plucked a flower and put it into her hair. She herself didn't notice it at all, but Weed almost jumped from surprise!

“ ... ”

Weed thought that she was a murderer who did not have any place for tenderness in her heart. That was completely opposite from what she was letting others see. But when he witnessed Seoyoon watching with her sad eyes two squirrels play... He understood.

“Yes, that's it!”

Weed immersed himself into work again.

“When making a sculpture, one shouldn't jump to conclusions. Even if you think that you fully understand a person, you should stop and think it over. Not everything is simple.”

He might just be making another mistake right now. But this mistake will bring him another step closer to the true Seoyoon.

“I should not only show her cold appearance that catches the eye, but her feelings too. I should try and trust my heart once, rather than think it over again and again. I should try to create the Seoyoon I feel, rather than the one I see.”

Zahab's knife started to dance in his hands again.

To depict the girl's appearance was a relatively easy job, but to convey the harmony of facial features their unique feel was incredibly difficult.

Weed forgot everything he knew about Seoyoon and started to engrave the impression he got after looking at her for a long time. In this sculpture

he was putting emphasis not on her appearance, but on the feelings and humanity he saw in her.

And making only the sculpture of Seoyoon would not be enough. The site, where Weed was working was littered by edgy stones, that were depressing to look at. And for the success he had to fix it.

“She’s a girl, so there must be flowers. Lots of flowers.”

First Weed carefully recreated the flower she had put in her hair earlier. Then he proceeded to the stones that surrounded the future sculpture. He wanted to cut multiple flowers from them, and every single one was going to take him some time. It was going to be hard to finish it before Seoyoon returned.

“No. I can’t give up now... I can’t stop here.”

Weed continued to cut flowers, waiting for the girl to return. But to his surprise, two hours passed and she was still absent.

“Maybe she’s sleeping?..”

He was so absorbed by his observations and work, that he completely lost track of time. It was already night in real world, and what’s more important - they had almost reached the end of Yunopu Gorge, and he could continue to travel on his own.

“So she’s not going to return for a while. I have time, so i should finish the sculpture and then go ahead. There’s no reason to give up the work I already started...”

Weed proceeded to cut the next flower.

\*

Dr. Cha Eunhee from the rehabilitation hospital was checking on her main patient, like she did every morning.

“Aren’t you tired? Maybe you should rest some from Royal Road?”

“ ... ”

Seoyoon, like always, kept silent, which was not a surprise for her doctor.

She was submerged deep into herself, and didn't show any reaction on the outside, but that didn't mean she was rejecting everything. Usually Seoyoon would follow the advice of people who genuinely cared for her.

'Looks like i should accept that I'm in a dead-end. Seoyoon is still not talking, despite all the treatment methods... Maybe it's time to try something different?'

Dr. Cha Eunhee started to think.

Royal Road was one of the newest treatments for people, who were shutting themselves off from the outside world. Once they started to play and got a taste of life in the game, their status in reality would start to improve.

However despite her long stay in the game, Seoyoon's state did not change at all.

'Should i push her harder? But such strong-willed people like Seoyoon are better off when encouraged to change on their own. The use of medications, hypnosis and other means may only make it worse...'

As a very experienced psychologist, Cha Eunhee was the most worried that her patient will become shut in so deep, that there will be no way to bring her back. Seoyoon was already on this path.

'She doesn't express any emotions, so it's hard to determine the state of her illness. Fortunately I know her. Such a kind and honest Seoyoon won't get shut in so fast. But... Why won't she start talking yet?!

It was time for dinner and Seoyoon went to an adjacent room. She was placed in the best VIP ward of the hospital, so she was eating in the next room. Of course, if the patient was too weak, the food would be delivered to his bed, but Seoyoon could walk on her own.

"Okay, I'll sneak a peek on what she's been doing in the game lately."

Cha Eunhee called the captured recordings on the screen.

Almost all of the free time Seoyoon spent was on fighting monsters. That didn't provide the necessary medical help, but Cha Eunhee still

continued to look through the recordings every day.

The higher Seoyoon's level, the stronger the monsters were that she fought. Fights were gradually becoming longer and more violent. At times the entire battlefield was covered with blood and Seoyoon was falling in such a rage, that she looked like a goddess of war.

This was temporarily relieving the patient's stress, but nothing more...

After watching such recordings it took Cha Eunhee great effort not to immediately go to play her own character.

"Yeah, Seoyoon has really high level, if she can hunt in Plains of Despair."

Dr. Cha Eunhee was a bit jealous. If she was in Seoyoon's place, she would die from the weakest monster there.

But Seoyoon was fighting and winning most of the time. Not only because of her high level, but because of her vast experience that she gained from numerous fights.

"Now. I should quickly look through the rest before she comes back. - Cha Eunhee enabled fast-forward."

Seoyoon was still traveling the Plains of Despair and fighting monsters. Everything was the same.

But then... Something unusual happened.

The girl was resting and looking at the sunset, when two monsters started to approach her from behind, a Hunter of Plains and some terrifying shortie.

"Oh... She will be in trouble if they attack simultaneously."

But Cha Eunhee wasn't very worried.

If she did die, Seoyoon would leave the capsule the same moment and Cha Eunhee have been notified. But that never happened...

What happened next was what surprised Cha Eunhee.

When the Hunter of Plains died, Seoyoon looked at the other monster

that proved to be an Orc. But nothing happened! They just looked at each other for some time and then Seoyoon lowered her weapon and walked away.

However some time later she met the same Orc again and soon they started to hunt and eat together. The orc even fixed her broken armor!

Seoyoon loved to travel alone and never let anyone close. However this Orc didn't seem to bother her at all.

“Last time she became friends with the instructor in Seraburg's training hall. Maybe it's easier for Seoyoon to be close with NPCs and monsters? This Orc isn't half bad. He makes a great servant. I wonder where could I get one like that? Wait a second!!”

Suddenly Cha Eunhee almost jumped out of her chair.

“Orc! What kind of Orc has skills like that? That's a human, a player!”

After battles he was collecting loot, applying healing herbs, and bandaging wounds, cooking... If you try hard enough, you could find another such monster in the game. For example, Cursed Goblins or special mini-bosses had an advanced artificial intelligence.

But an experienced psychologist like Cha Eunhee, was not so easy to fool. She was noticed the tiniest details: the way he was moving, fighting, where he was looking, and how he was picking up the items.

Everything was pointing to a real, live person obsessed by some idea.

“It can't be...”

Cha Eunhee flinched, like she was struck by lightning.

She saw something similar in the Hall of Fame! Moreover, she was certain, that it was the same Orc from the video.

“There can't be any other Orc as greedy in this game as that one!”

The Doctor's heart began to race. Of course the fact that Seoyoon was traveling with someone was great, but Cha Eunhee was a devoted fan of Royal Road.

“There’s only 2 days left before the battle! What the hell is he doing!”

\*

On the stone floor the flowers were blooming.

Cut from stone, they looked extremely real and alive. So real, that on a few of them the stone butterflies were sitting and a pleasant aroma seemed to be in the air.

As the flower field was made out of stone, it had an unusual color. White, grey and black, with pattern and without a pattern. Together they created a mysterious atmosphere on the stone terrace, In the center of which Weed was completely immersed in creating the main sculpture.

“Strange...”

The closer he was to completing the piece, the stronger it seemed that tears were about to flow out of Seoyoon’s beautiful eyes. And though the rest of the sculpture didn’t give that impression at all, her eyes were filled with unbearable sorrow...

Following his instincts and trusting the impulse of his heart, he created an extremely sad statue. It even seemed that, out of sympathy to the beauty, all the surrounding flowers were crying too.

From the realization of that fact, Weed’s mood also worsened.

“I should make her happier. I can’t change the eyes any more, but i can do something with the rest of the face!”

Very slowly and carefully Weed worked on the statue’s face and in the end he made a sad, but heartily smiling girl.

Ding!

The moment Weed completed the statue a window appeared in front of weed.

Please set the name of the created sculpture.

“Give a name?”

This had never happened before. Weed tilted his head in confusion and

said:

“Seoyoon.”

You chose to name it ‘Seoyoon’?

“Yes.”

Grand Piece!

You finished the sculpture of ‘Seoyoon’!

This work contains contradiction itself.

Depending on their feelings and mood, everyone will see something different in it.

This young and incredibly talented sculptor created in these lands a statue that causes mixed feelings.

Artistic value: 8700.

Effects:

- - Everyone who looks at this statue has their Health and mana regeneration increased by 40% for a day.
- - Movement speed is increased by 20%.
- - All stats are increased by 30.
- - The effects of 2 various attributes are increased by 30%.
- - Granted bonus to Earth elemental attacks during the daytime.
- - Sculpture emits a special aroma, that heals wounds.
- - In case the rights to this sculpture are transferred to a certain person, the sculpture’s effects are increased by 20% for that person.
- - In the previous case, the effects for others are decreased by 60%.
- - Effects do not stack with other sculptures.
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Number of Grand Pieces created: 1.

- - Sculpture Understanding skill raised by 1 level.
- - Handicraft skill has reached Advanced level 2. Efficiency of all crafting skills have increased by 8%. This will affect various aspects.
- - Fame increased by 1680.
- - Art increased by 65.
- - Fortitude increased by 7.
- - Endurance increased by 4.
- - Charm increased by 40.

All the rights to this sculpture belong to Master Weed.

If this sculpture is given life in the future, it will be loyal to him.

As a reward for creating a Grand Piece, all attributes increased by 3.

Grand Piece!

Weed had created something he had never even dreamed of.

“Yeeeeeah!”

From the ancient times there were many artworks left in the world! And most of them were portraying women. Maybe because they are so complex and beautiful.

But Weed was happy not only because he managed to create a Grand Piece. Most importantly, because of it he finally got to the Advanced skill level.

Sculpture Mastery reached Advanced 1 level.  
Now you can engrave patterns and work with any material.

Your Sculpture mastery reached the Advanced level.  
This affected your attributes and skills.

- Sculpting Blade technique efficiency increased by 30%.
- Additional properties were added to the ability.
- Mana cost on use reduced by half.

Sculpture Mastery is linked to other crafting skills.

Blacksmithing skill:

- You can now create bronze sculptures.
- Sculptures, created by pouring molten metal into the mold will be harder and more durable.
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Cooking skill:

- Your dishes are now more vibrant and delicious.
- Also they will be more beautiful from artistic point of view.
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Sewing skill:

- You can now decorate clothes to create custom outfits.
- All attributes increased by 20.

- Fame increased by 600.
- Art attribute increased by 20.

New Skill available for learning:

- Moonlight Sculptor Technique.

This technique only available to players with Advanced skill level.

Now, apart from Fine Piece, Masterpiece and Grand Piece, a new hidden grade of sculptures is available - Moonlight sculptures.

This kind of sculptures embodies the nature itself, it will allow to protect your friends from enemies.

The master, that wishes to protect his loved one from all dangers, will appreciate this incredibly valuable ability.

You can learn more about Moonlight Sculpting Technique in Arts Guild.

He finally went from Intermediate to Advanced skill level!

“Hahahaha!”

Weed bursted into happy laughter.

What can be more enjoyable for a sculptor, than reaching the Advanced level of Sculpture skill.

The Blacksmith profession was a lot more popular, and certainly someone must have already reached the Advanced level in it, but among sculptors he was the first. The only Sculptor with Advanced skill level on entire Bersa continent!

“Now I don’t regret becoming a Sculptor!”

Weed felt like the whole world was smiling with him. But then he quickly snapped out of it and started thinking about the immediate future.

“This is not the right time.”

Seoyoon should be returning soon.

The Grand Piece had special effects and was hard to miss. An inevitable consequences of Sculpture Mastery.

When the girl comes back she may discover it, and then the other sculptures. When she learns about them she won’t let him get away.

“It’s time to run!”

Weed looked at his sculpture for the last time and headed towards the exit from the Gorge.

The great master Sculptor, that just created the Grand Piece and reached Advanced level of Sculpture Mastery had to run away from it as soon as possible.

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Late at night [in-game time] Seoyoon logged back in.

After appearing she examined her surroundings like always.

Orc!

In the past few days she had gotten used to his presence.

He was feeding her sometimes, repairing her armor, covering her back.  
Useful Orc.

But however long she was looking for him, he was nowhere to be found.

‘He Left.’

Though they were traveling together, Seoyoon didn’t quite open up to him. But still she was feeling somewhat empty. She was Alone again.

Having checked her armor and sword, she set off on her way.

After leaving the Gorge she was going to look for some new lands, inhabited by many different monsters. But then she smelled some unusual aroma.

“...?”

She followed it.

And in the end it led her to a small flower meadow, in the middle of which a sculpture was standing.

A sculpture of a girl, that was laughing and crying at the same time. And it looked much like herself.

“...”

Seoyoon froze in confusion.

‘Crying? Me?’

It was like she was looking into a mirror. But in the mirror she was crying.

‘No. That can’t be me. I never cry. At least as far as I can remember...’

Seoyoon had forgotten when she was crying last time. Lately all she did was try to become as strong as possible.

Ever since she was a child, she was always keeping her grief inside. She

was deliberately avoiding all the suffering and pain. And the best way she found to do it was to avoid all people altogether. If no one was talking to her, no one could hurt her, and she could live peacefully.

And she wouldn't have to cry. Wouldn't have to feel the pain, that was shattering her world into pieces.

That's why she was always calm.

Yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

She had never opened up her soul to anyone.

At some point it became hard for her to talk, she started fearing getting close with other people. She stopped talking even to herself. She was hiding her feelings deep inside.

She was threatening everyone who tried to get closer to her with doubt and suspicion. Trying to avoid pain and sorrow, she lost happiness as well.

The cry, coming from the depth of her soul, was rising in her chest, with all the feelings she hid inside coming out with it.

“ ... ”

Seoyoon hid her face with her hands. Down her cheeks tears were flowing.

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Hall of Fame on the website of Royal road!

The assigned time of the quest was approaching and the tension was rising.

“The day of the battle against Immortal Legion is close.”

“Can that Orc finish the quest? After all it's 'A' grade difficulty.”

“Look at his face. It's terrifying! Someone with that face can deal with anything.”

“He can. He ought to. Because I'm a mage.”

“I'm a mage too. I've picked the Dark Magic specialization and suffered

enough... Now I will definitely become a Necromancer.”

“Tell us more about Necromancers.”

“Wait, just wait...”

“Is there anyone who knows something new?”

The upcoming event was actively discussed on the forum.

There were already many topics with various questions and ideas about the battle against undead and the new profession. Hundreds of thousands of players were reading the topics every second and leaving comments.

Every minute someone was asking about news.

As the quest was directly affecting mages, they were heating up the discussion the most.

“Aaaaah! I want to know the outcome. All the mages agree with me, right?”

“I’m interested not only in the outcome, but in the battle itself too. The war against the undead on such a large scale! That’s a whole new level, nothing similar has ever happened before!”

“Yeah, I’m already tired of ordinary sieges. Most of them finish very quickly and they all go the same way.”

“Warriors charging, mages barraging each other with spells... I've seen it all too many times already.”

“Only if one side is significantly stronger it gets interesting.”

People switched over to complaining about sieges.

Once some guild was starting to get significantly ahead of the rest, others were immediately forming a temporary alliance and sending that guild back in its place.

“I want to see how it goes soon...”

“Where? It wasn’t announced on any channel.”

“True... So we have to wait until it appears in the Hall of Fame?”

“Unlikely.”

“Huh! What are TV guys doing?”

And then a new person joined the conversation.

“Friends! In the Free City of Somre player called Weed finished another quest. Do not be surprised, but that’s the Weed from Continent of magic!”

“Weed from Continent of magic?!”

“I heard that he plays Royal road, some even say, that he joined the order of Freya.”

“Yeah. We thought so too.” - continued the new player - “But this time he finished the quest, associated with defeating Necromancers!”

“Wait. So that’s the chain quest after getting rid of vampires and returning the Fargo’s Crown?”

“Necromancers? So that Orc from the video..?”

“Weed. Weed became an Orc and is fighting against the army of undead!”

At that moment the discussion thread of the video practically exploded. In just a few minutes time thousands, or maybe even millions of messages were appearing one after another. Some were happy, some angry, but no one was indifferent.

The Hero from the Continent of Magick.

Though the peak of the game’s popularity long since passed, many former players still treasured their memories about it. They loved to reminisce the past.

“Yeah... Anyone who seen him in action at least ones would never forget the charisma and poser he showed in Continent of magick.”

“Right. He’s a true Dark Knight, sweeping his enemies away like a storm.”

“The combination of skill, efficient use of abilities, and smart use of terrain features in his endless battles. No compromises. Weed is the role

model for many of us!”

“Weed was opening the way into places no one else could get to. He was a legend.”

Former players of Continent of Magick were leaving numerous messages. Others were asking questions.

“Who’s that Weed?”

“That Weed is so great?”

“You don’t yet know Weed, because he must have joined Royal Road not so long ago. Everyone who ever played Continent of Magick know him. He has set the record!”

“I once was following him. Let me tell about it. We went into Rosenda Plains that time. They were inhabited by Hell Guardians and Cerberuses. And Weed was just slaughtering them! That was really cool.”

“But with a high level that shouldn’t be a problem?”

“Yes. That’s true. But at that time noone ever hunted there yet. Weed was the first. No one of my friends from the Continent of Magick believed it. That’s why I was following him, to check it myself. And he slain absolutely all the monsters, without making any mistakes. In the battle he was like a wild beast, mountains of dead bodies left after him. But that’s not all.”

“There’s something else?”

“Just don’t be surprised. Once he hunted for 200 hours without breaks!”

“200 hours?!”

Many of players of Royal Road were devoting all of their free time to the game. Many of those, who considered themselves good players were proud of it. And of course all of them had at least once accidentally forgot to eat or played until a very late time.

But even for them 200-hour long game marathon was something impossible. Weed wasn’t a legend for nothing.

And then some more players with new information joined the discussion.

“We were hunting in Plains of Despair. Maybe that’s not very hard for players from the center of the continent, but in Rosenheim only a few dozen people dare to go there. And we met a small thin Orc there...”

“If you don’t get it yet, we met Karichwi there! He was thin this time, but the face was the same.”

“The battle against Immortal Legion will happen in Plains of Despair!”

Everyone was waiting in the Hall of Fame to see the outcome.

Maybe if someone posted the full information about the quest, people wouldn’t be so anxious. But the absence of any news only fueled players’ curiosity of large number of players.

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New section “The Bersa Continent” opened on KMC Media.

And today Shin Hye Min and Oh Joowan were reading the first news.

“The prices of mithril continue to rise. The Pirate Guild, that owns the mythril mine, rised the price by 20% already, that caused an uproar among other players.”

“How to strengthen your weapon? The effect of the sharpening stones found so far isn’t that great. But did you know, that a Blacksmith with Intermediate skill level can significantly increase the durability and damage of your weapon?”

“The new trade route was open between Kingdoms Lootun and Thor. The road passes through the Forest of No Return. The Scarlet Wolves guild cleared it from the monsters and built the road. Merchants, who use it, must pay the 10% tax.”

“Though they lose 10% of their revenue, considering how much sorter that way is, many players will choose to use it.”

“Right. For a while the guild’s income will rise. Many players will consider joining their ranks.”

Tales from the Bersa Continent.

First there was information about monsters, hunting sites and professions. Then discussions about politics, society and economy. When large powers, like kingdoms, were confronting each other, there were many changes and many new quests were appearing.

Therefore the second part was shared between the experts in various fields.

Today they were discussing the quest about stopping the Immortal Legion.

“His level is very high. Many players hope for his success, but most probably the quest will be failed.”

The military expert Yee Yonghan confidently stated his point of view.

“In any war quantity is not the most important part. What’s important is not how much soldiers you have, but how good they follow your orders and work together. It’s impossible to fight against an army of undead with such diverse forces - Orcs, Dark Elves and Humans.”

Han Yeelseo, who was sitting besides him, was nodding in agreement. He was playing Royal Road too and was among Top 300 strongest players.

“Right. To manage such different races he need a lot of leadership. Will he be able to lead them into battle?”

“I think so too. Fighting with Orcs and Dark Elves against the army of undead is a waste of time. If I was in his place I would have got away from there long ago.”

“And no one would judge you. This quest is impossible to do alone. And as far as I know, none of the Top 50 guilds received a request for help. In my guild Crimson Mercenaries no one heard anything about it. That’s why he will definitely fail the quest.”

“It is entirely possible, that after their death all the orcs and Elves will become undead and attack other kingdoms. According to our research all the quests of ‘B’ grade difficulty, received so far were associated with

defeating small groups of very strong monsters or passing some very difficult route. However the 'A' grade difficulty quest will affect the situation on an entire continent.”

“But you don't have to worry about it. When the Immortal Legion comes our guild of Crimson Mercenaries will be there to defend human kingdoms.”

Almost all of the participants of this discussion tended to think that the quest will be failed. Many of the invited players were using this opportunity to attract new members to their guilds, promising help in the upcoming disaster.

Shin Hyemin was frowning.

“So the quest everyone is rooting for may fail?”

“Who knows... Maybe it's already finished, or...”

“Or he dropped it and ran away long ago.”

Everyone was talking about the failure.

But then they faced the colossal protest of ordinary players. Of the people who knew Weed! Those, who were waiting anxiously for the profession of Necromancer to become available were swearing at them.

# Credits

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