

The Legendary Moonlight Sculptor

(달빛 조각사)

Volume 15

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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: Dwarf's Gift

"I think I'd better go now."

When Weed said he would leave Kuruso, the Dwarves were disappointed. They had become friendly through quests and sculptures.

"Do you really have to go?"

Herman asked with a sad voice, "Can't you just continue making sculptures here in Kuruso."

Blacksmiths did not often leave after settling in Kuruso. It had all the facilities and materials for blacksmithing, so there was no need.

Weed shook his head.

"I am a Sculptor. It's difficult if a Sculptor does not travel the wide world and gather experience. Now that I've done what I wanted to do in Kuruso, I shall leave."

He had acquired the secret skill of sculpting!

Although he was unable to find the wooden sculpture that the Sculpting Master had hidden somewhere, he had perceived the secret skill of sculpting on his own.

He had used over 300 Art stat to create the spirits, but at the end of his grinding he had recovered them all.

In the end, all he would leave behind were memories of gruesome grinding in the Dwarven City of Kuruso. Although of course, there were thrilling memories of when he restored Kendelle's water sculptures hidden deep within the lake.

Herman spoke bitterly.

"In the end, you appear to be leaving."

"Yes. I'm sorry."

"Then we will have a Dwarven farewell party."

"There's no need to go that far."

“It is a tradition here in Kuruso.”

Though it was a tradition, Weed was uncomfortable and tried to refuse. Herman saw right through Weed’s thoughts and began to speak.

“It’s an event where all the Dwarves who settled in Kuruso comes out to drink and have fun. Because Blacksmiths spend most of their time polish their skills, they don’t come out often. However, all the Blacksmiths will attend the farewell party, and each one will give a present to the departing Dwarf.”

“It seems that we definitely have to have a farewell party.”

The word present changed Weed’s mind. It would be a joyful thing to leave with his belly amply stocked and his hands full of gifts.

Herman added, “Your Dwarven farewell party will probably be the last.”

“What? Why?”

“Because the sculptures you restored made the headlines, the number of Dwarves coming to Kuruso has really increased by a lot. Also, there aren’t any Dwarves who are as friendly with both the combat-related and crafting-related Dwarves.”

The rivalry between the craftsmen meant they felt extreme jealousy towards craftsmen who were more outstanding than themselves. However, Sculptors are not craftsmen and therefore were not regarded as competition, so everyone was comfortable with them. This was also a big part of the reason why Weed was able to become friends with Kuruso’s 5 Great Craftsmen, including Herman.

“Since this might be the last farewell party, we’ll have to make it magnificent. I’ll tell the Dwarves I know to be sure to bring out the goods they’ve been saving.”

“Thank you.”

“A Dwarf that’s leaving for a journey will need many things, so take this opportunity to get them, hahaha.”

“Hahaha, I sure will.”

Weed laughed happily.

Unlike birthday presents that he had to give back sometime later, he could simply and happily receive the presents from the farewell party.”

He could just receive them and give heartfelt thanks for them.

Weed thought the Dwarves were an unexpectedly romantic race.

‘I thought they’d just be a small and stubborn race, but they have a nice tradition.’

When Weed left for the lake to plan a new sculpture, Pin asked Herman.

“Grandpa.”

“Hmm?”

“There’s one thing you didn’t tell him about the farewell party.”

“What is it?”

“The drinking tab.”

Herman just grinned.

“Would he have said yes if he had known?”

“Still, that’s...”

“If we’re to throw an enjoyable farewell party, it’s better that he doesn’t know. Even if us Dwarves eat and drink, how much could it possibly amount to?”

Herman did not lie.

He just didn’t say one thing.

That it’s customary for the leaving Dwarf to pay the drinking tab for the farewell party.

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“Congratulations.”

“Go to the wide continent and unfurl the Dwarf’s dream to your heart’s content. Cheers!”

“Cheers!”

“To you!”

Over 1,000 of Kuruso’s Dwarves gathered in the plaza next to the lakefront and drank beer.

“Kyaa, so good.”

“This is the taste!”

On the lake, there were duck sculptures made of water making ripples on the surface as they leisurely moved about. From beneath the water enormous whale sculptures were splashing up and about, creating rainbows.

The fantasy-like scenery that Kendelle’s sculptures showed, and the beer drunk in the Underground Kingdom!

The Dwarves were busy drinking beer from the barrel.

“If someone asks why Kuruso’s the best place, you can’t leave out the taste of the beer.”

“I dun think I can leave Kuruso just ‘cus of the taste of this beer.”

Although their mood probably played a part too, Kuruso really did have incredible tasting beer.

Beer Artisan!

They were an existence in Kuruso that the Dwarves could only respect; they boasted that the beer made by Kuruso’s Beer Artisans had the best taste.

Dwarves find joy in drinking beer and happily getting drunk. They have the racial characteristic of liking beer. Their concentration, as well as several stats and skills, increases when they drink beer. If they fully rest for a day after getting completely drunk, they are back to their best condition by the next day and are able to make goods.

Every time they slammed empty iron cups to the table and saw the positive changes that occurred, the Dwarves felt rewarded.

“Art Hand, get over here!”

“Here, you oughta drink a cup here too.”

Weed moved from place to place and was busy drinking the offered alcohol. Since he was to some extent the main character of the farewell party, he had to participate.

“The quest that time was truly incredible.”

“You created a strategy for Dwarves to fight in caves, didn’t you.”

The Soldiers and Warriors praised Weed.

The way the drunken Dwarves said the same thing over and over again was the most awkward part of it all! Since Weed had to move from place to place, he heard similar words, but he endured it all.

‘If it’s for the sake of a free present, this level of boredom... I can endure it whenever.’

The Dwarves gave him short swords, leather rucksacks, and things like bait food as presents.

The bait food not only emitted an incredibly good smell, it also had the effect of putting monsters to sleep. It only applied to monsters of life, and it had the drawback that monsters with a lot of suspicion didn’t often eat it. Monsters with big frames had to eat a huge amount of the bait for an effect to appear, and there were cases where monsters gathered because of the bait.

However, even taking into account the drawbacks, its considerable effects made it a type of dish that sold for high prices. Talented chefs had to make it with excellent ingredients, so the amount produced was low.

“It’d be good if this bait could save your life. The continent truly has many dangers so always be careful. And only go where there are a lot of Dwarves.”

“I’ll use it well.”

“Ya Dwarf, Art Hand isn’t even a beginner so there’s no need to say something like that. Art Hand... go. This Kuruso has really become a nice

place to live, thanks to you. There are the even sculptures of water...”

In the warm atmosphere, Weed received and stowed away gifts. But Dwarves who were giving him their well-wishes suddenly tilted their heads.

“But the wings you made in the victory against Death Hand aren’t there anymore. Where did they suddenly go?”

“...”

“They were really magical wings but they suddenly disappeared. What happened to those wings?”

The Dwarves were wondering about the Wings of Light that Weed had granted life and stored away separately.

Weed explained in an evasive way.

“It’s made of light, isn’t it? What happens when you keep a candle lit for a long time?”

“It turns off.”

“That’s how it is.”

“Ah! So that’s how it was.”

“I thought it was something else. Haha!”

As they drank their beer the Dwarves smiled brightly, their doubts relieved.

The evasion went well because the Dwarves had drunk alcohol.

— Intoxication level is going up.

As Weed received and drank the offered beer, he became rather pleasantly tipsy.

“Art Hand, you’ve gotta drink the beer we’re givin’ too!”

“Come here, here!”

Though it was to the point where he had an unsteady gait, Weed walked over and received a glass topped to the brim with beer.

“Drink it aaaaalll at once.”

The Dwarves were a race that didn't like to drink it sip by sip.

Weed superbly drank it all down in one shot.

“Kyaah!”

“You're a man after all, now, have a drumstick appetizer too.”

As Weed ate some appetizers and walked around, he even got to drink alcohol with Exper.

He was one of the 5 Great Craftsmen, and when Weed had first come to Kuruso his had been the first name he'd heard – the artisan who had songs made in his honor.

For Weed's farewell party, all 5 Great Craftsmen had come here.

“Art Hand.”

“Yes, elder.”

“One day I will definitely make a spear that can catch a Dragon. Hic.”

“I'm certain that if it's elder, you will definitely make it.”

Though he was drunk, he made an effort to match Exper's mood.

“Hiccup. I'm drunk. Anyways, I made this spear for you, so take it with you.”

|| -You have acquired the Spear of the Fire Lance that was made by Artisan Exper. ||

With a furtive check, he found it to be an incredibly excellent spear with over 78 attack power.

“Since it's a spear with my name on it, don't give it to anyone else. Haha.”

“Yes. Then have one more glass.”

“Now, pour it!”

Weed drank three glasses with Exper and moved elsewhere. When he was gathering plenty of presents again, Kuruso's farewell party distinctly

came to a climax.

“Drink, drink up!”

“Let’s drink it by the casket. That’ll show ‘em our most Dwarfliness* side.”

[T/N: Like manliness... but Dwarfliness.]

“Wild Boar Roast, where’d ya go! Chef, bring us 5 Wild Boar Roasts!”

The Dwarves were boisterously making a clamor.

As Herman and Pin also drank beer with some Dwarves, they became extremely worried.

“Grandpa, is this gonna be okay?”

“Well... even I didn’t know that this many Dwarves were going to come. Oh man.”

“The drink tab is going to be enormous.”

“Since they don’t consider drinking moderately and going back, it looks like this is gonna become the best farewell party. These Dwarves really didn’t have anything to do. Or did Weed become this famous somewhere along the line?”

To the point where Herman clicked his tongue, almost every Dwarf in Kuruso was participating in the farewell party.

The Dwarves could feel that this might be the last farewell party, and there were many Dwarves who were only slightly related to Weed. Towards the Weed who might become the best Sculptor, there were many Dwarves who came because they wanted to build a personal connection with him.

Even though it was past midnight, the farewell party showed no signs of ending.

Weed even received a glass of beer from Fabio, one of the 5 Greats.

Fabio was in his mid-forties, had broad shoulders, and keen eyes.

Though it was Weed’s first time meeting him in person, through

broadcasts and films, his was a face Weed had seen many times.

The most famous artisan Dwarf, who was believed to have enormous wealth and had outstanding Blacksmithing skills.

“Take it.”

“Yes, thank you.”

Weed was one step away from being totally drunk.

– Intoxication level has severely risen.
All stats are temporarily reduced.

As a result of the drinking he was getting dizzy, and his hand was trembling, but he endured with willpower.

‘Cannot be beaten by this degree of alcohol.’

Compared to the mental training he’d learned from SwordNoob, he could tolerate this degree of alcohol.

By strength of his will, Weed straightened his posture, and though his hand trembled, he did not spill a single drop of alcohol and received it.

The look in Fabio’s eyes deepened.

“I heard this story from my daughter. You refused the armor I gave out of goodwill when you were doing the quest.”

“ ... ”

“I felt that you were a presumptuous kid. I thought you would fail because it was a perilous quest, but you proudly succeeded. And for a while this story about you became the hot topic in Kuruso.”

“I am flattered.”

“As long as you have ability, it’s fine to be arrogant. I saw you had engraved even the armors I entrusted fairly excellently.”

As Fabio downed his beer, Weed also followed and drank. 2 beer mugs were emptied. Both of them filled each other’s mugs.

“Seems you’re not a normal Dwarf.”

At Fabio's words, Weed raised his gaze.

Their eyes met resolutely.

The whites of Weed's eyes were red and bloodshot as a result of his intoxication, but they were deep and strong.

"I watched you drink alcohol as you moved around earlier. If you were a normal Dwarf, it'd be difficult to maintain a clear mind after drinking that much alcohol. Since I'm a Dwarf too, I know."

"I'm on the side of holding liquor well."

"Is that so. However, the way I see it, at the very least you're not a normal Sculptor."

Fabio's eyes became more intense.

They were not eyes meant to investigate Weed.

As a person aged, insight formed and their temperaments strengthened. Following their impression from even their first meeting, it was possible for them to approximate what kind of person they were, what kind of nature they had.

Fabio's temperament was like rough and thick steel. It was strong, and did not break easily.

Ordinary users were intimidated from simply meeting Fabio. But Weed didn't appear even a little daunted.

Weed was handling and using steel; he was walking the path of the sword. He would treat the sword as an extension of his body and endlessly devote himself to it.

Even the steel-like aura of Fabio subsided in front of Weed like a torch before a typhoon.

Fabio was feeling that.

'He has a personality that is stronger than mine. And though I don't know what work he does, he's a guy who has less fear than me.'

Fabio threw away the judgement that he was dealing with a Sculptor,

and acknowledged Weed as one of the few men who had frankly surprised him after he'd met them in person as he played Royal Road.

“Say what you want as a gift.”

He also decided to give him the option of choosing his gift.

The majority of the armor he made was engraved by Weed's hands. Since Fabio already knew that, he was telling Weed to choose what he needed!

‘Through this, I'll be able to see what kind of stat distribution he has!’

Though Fabio made the armor, he believed that the person was the most important in the end.

Weed's eyes lit up.

“Please give me the Pauldrons of the Iron Wheel.”

“The Pauldrons of the Iron Wheel? Even among armor, that's an severe item with an offensive build... No, besides that, isn't it impossible for you to use it because of the level and profession requirements?”

In the middle of asking the question, Fabio looked like he himself had just found the answer.

“No. Seems like you can use it.”

“That's so.”

“Alright. I'll give it to you.”

Fabio changed the evaluation he'd made of Weed. He noted that Weed's Blacksmithing skill was considerable and that he was an extremely high-level user.

‘Since he dared to ask for that, he's a guy with ample boldness. No shame either. I shouldn't have asked him to choose anything.’

As he mentally grumbled, he swore quite a bit too. That was because even out of the armor he had made, the Pauldrons of the Iron Wheel was at the peak of his works.

As Weed collected presents, he reached Herman as well. His body staggered and he was unable to steady himself.

“You’re very drunk.”

“I am not.”

“Will you receive my beer too.”

“Anytime.”

Weed guzzled down the beer. Then, Herman took out a pair of earrings.

“Maryong’s Earrings. It’s an item that has the effect of amplifying Mana.”

As an advanced accessory, effects of attacks that used Mana were amplified, so this was an extremely valuable item for not only Magicians, but everyone.

At the very least, it was an item worth 30 thousand gold.

“Thank you.”

“No. More importantly, there’s something I want to ask...”

Weed’s head dropped down, then, as if he’d suddenly come to, quickly raised it.

“W-What is it?”

This was a slack appearance of Weed that wouldn’t ordinarily be seen.

Weed’s efforts to stay in control by sheer force were obvious to the eye.

A smile formed on Herman’s lips.

“I’m not trying to say something all that important, but what do you think about the mission of the Sculptor?”

“The mission?”

“I have a certain mission as a Blacksmith. Because of that, I’m making an effort to make one specific sword, but it’s not easy. You probably have some kind of mission as a Sculptor as well... hey!”

In the middle of talking, Herman tched. It was because Weed’s head had

been falling down inch by inch and then completely folded forward.

“Look here!”

“Mmm-yeah.”

Weed must've fallen into a deep sleep, because he could not come to.

Herman looked over the area and found Dwarves tipsily drinking beer, same as ever. He saw many Dwarves who were so drunk that they'd spread-eagled their short two arms and legs and fallen asleep.

‘Well, it figures that he's down after drinking one glass each from all those Dwarves.’

Herman shook his head back and forth.

“Pin, will you help me a bit? Grab that side a little.”

“Yes.”

“Now, let's move him.”

Then together with Pin, they laid Weed in a corner.

The drinking party looked like it would be going all through the night, and there were many Dwarves holding a glass of alcohol who came looking for him, so Herman was deeply immersed in conversation.

And then at some point, when he turned around he felt something was missing.

Weed, who had collapsed and fallen asleep because of his intoxication, had disappeared like magic!

“Oh, where'd this guy go?”

Herman hurried and searched.

“Is there any Dwarf who saw Art Hand?”

One dwarf pointed towards the exit leading above ground with his finger.

“He left that way earlier.”

“That-!”

Herman's tipsiness completely flew away. Then he hurriedly whispered Weed.

- Look here!

- ...

- Look here!

After calling him several times, Weed's reply came through.

- Yes, Grandpa Herman.

- Humhum! Have you sobered up?

- No, not yet. I think I'm gonna die from nausea.

- It must be tough after drinking that much. Alright, when are you planning to come back.

- I was going to go aboveground to get some fresh outside air.

Even as Weed was replying, he was running toward the coal mine and was quickly making his escape.

He'd completely seen through it – he'd seen that the Dwarves had no inclination to pay as they drank the beer.

'Then it was arranged to have me pay this money.'

He didn't let his guard down even as he drank.

And the escape that utilized exquisite timing!

- Look here, how can you just leave like this?

- Why not. I thought the farewell party was pretty much over.

- That... You have to pay for the drinking tab.

- What did you say? Was I supposed to pay for that?

Weed sent the whisper with a tone that said that was ridiculous. It was a bewildering moment for Herman. Weed spoke again.

- You should have told me sooner, sir. If you had done so I would have paid before I left.

- Ahem. How about returning even now and paying. The drinking tab... let's see, it should be a little over 3,500 gold.

For them to have drunk over 3,000 gold of beer, it was something impossible if not for the Dwarves' stupidly enormous drinking ability.

- I have already left for the road, so how can I return.

- Even so...

- How about we do it like this. Please pay for it for now, Grandpa Herman. Next time I'll repay you.

- Sh-should we do that.

- Yes.

- Looks like we'll have to do that then. Alright. Later on you have to repay me for sure.

- Don't worry. Who am I? Hahaha!

- Ha, haha.

*

Weed came out of Kuruso Kingdom and arrived at Iron Hand Village to turn in the quest.

As a Sculptor, when he left the kingdom he was required to offer 1 sculpture, so he took out the parrot sculpture that he usually carved and had kept with him.

Compared to the Sculptor Weed's fame, it was a truly small item!

Although the sculpture would stay in Kuruso as something Weed had made, he had no interest in that kind of honor.

"Did you hear? The Resurrection Church has finally captured even the Phenomph Region."

"Huh. That's really terrible."

"Who can stop them? If this keeps up, even capturing the Versailles Continent is not far in the future."

Weed also heard the conversation of the Dwarves in Iron Hand Village.

The powerful Resurrection Army that Daymond led was menacing the Versailles Continent.

Earlier they had avoided a monster swarm invasion, drought, and a flood, but Daymond's invasion this time was becoming the greatest crisis of the Versailles Continent.

The Dwarves whispered.

"They say that the kingdoms have decided to make their move."

"They're going to form a league and block the Resurrection Army."

"They must be fretting 'cause the Army is gonna cross over to their land too."

"There's no need for other words, 'cause they've hung a 60 thousand gold bounty on Day's head."

This talk was a topic in the Dark Gamer guild too.

60 thousand gold was an enormous sum. It was enough to get people aiming for a quick fortune and encouraged Daymond's assassination.

However, it was difficult to sneak through by routing the Demonic Spirits' attention, and there was also a lot of talk about waiting because of predictions that Daymond's bounty would increasingly rise.

'To get a somewhat stable income, chaos that's too drastic isn't good...'

Weed entered the Sculpting Guild.

No matter what crisis troubled the continent, the Sculptor Guild was still the same.

"What a waste of materials. How many times do I have to say that this isn't how you carve for you to understand!"

"You're the shame of the Dwarves, the shame!"

The Dwarves who were sorrowfully learning the Sculpting Skill while being scolded by the instructor!

They recognized Weed's face as he opened the door and came inside.

"He's the Dwarf who left after taking the request that time."

"Are you talking about the request to find the trail of Kendellev?"

"He's the Dwarf who boldly accepted the request that no one could solve and left."

"Tsk tsk. Looks like that Dwarf also finally came back to give up after trying and trying."

The Dwarves were secretly gleeful.

When Weed received the request they had worried that he might possibly succeed, but at the sight of him returning covered with dust and without any energy like that, they figured that he had failed.

Although the discovery of Kendellev's sculptures had already circulated through Royal Road broadcasts, by the look of it these Dwarves were completely in the dark.

Weed walked towards the Instructor.

"I have come to report the result of the quest."

Sculpting Instructor Jorbid politely asked.

"You went through a lot. Was our Dwarf Sculptor's legend the truth?"

"It was. There was a Sculptor in the Dwarf race, and his sculptures were beautiful."

"Indeed! I believed that it was true. Can you show me Kendellev's trail?"

"Of course."

Weed opened his rucksack and stuck in his hands. After rummaging through the items in the rucksack, he grabbed something. Then, he pulled out something enclosed in his two hands.

"Here, this is Kendellev's sculpture."

As Weed parted his two hands, a confined bird made of water flew out.

The bird sang out with a bright voice as it went around and around the

Sculptor Guild.

“Ah! This is the sculpture that our ancestor made!”

The Sculpting Instructor Jorbid could not hold back his deep emotion.

The comical sculpture in the shape of a sparrow flew in between the Dwarves.

The Dwarves had on a shocked expression that looked like they had seen a new world. Their jaws didn't drop this much even when they were guzzling down beer.

“To say this is a sculpture! How is this a sculpture?”

“Isn't this an item made by a genie or magic!”

“Sculptures have to be carved to be made, this is a fraud.”

Meanwhile, it was difficult for the Dwarves to accept this new sculpture.

From the stereotypes they possessed, they could not be convinced that the bird made of water that was flying around was a sculpture!

Weed shook his head.

‘It'll be difficult for them to achieve lifelong Sculpting Skills with thoughts like those.’

Sculpting was a three-dimensional art.

If it was something a Sculptor made, and was visible or if the idea could be grasped, anything could become a new attempt.

‘I don't know why they think they just have to carve only wood or stone.’

As if Weed couldn't remember himself looking down on the Sculpting profession until not too long ago, he maintained a dignified expression.

The Dwarf instructor grabbed his hand.

“Thank you. Now, no matter what race, they won't be able to look down on us Dwarves when it comes to Sculpting.”

Ding!

— You have completed Sculpting Instructor Jorbid's request.

The legendary Dwarf Sculptor Kendellev's sculptures were in Kuruso.

After finding out about his sculptures, Humans and Elves that are wise craftsmen will no longer be able to criticize the Dwarven Artists.

- Fame has gone up by 130.
 - Evaluation of you in the Sculptor Guild has improved.
 - In racial prestige, respect toward Dwarves has increased by 3.
 - Friendship with Thor Kingdom Dwarves has increased by 82.
- Dwarves will throw aside the pickaxes to help you in your work.
- Level has gone up.
 - Level has gone up.

The Sculpting instructor held out a pair of black gloves.

Honestly, Weed was more expectant of the reward item than the levels or fame.

‘That’s the reason why Thor Kingdom quests are good.’

Through quests from the Elves, for the most part friendship or affinity with spirits increased. In the case of the Humans, you could obtain fame, a reward, or a special status or profession.

With the Dwarves, especially Thor Kingdom’s case, through quests they gave you good items; it matched Weed’s tastes perfectly.

“This is a glove I’d like you to use. Though it’s not Kendellev-nim, the Dwarf who wore this glove was extremely outstanding.”

“Thank you very much.”

- You have acquired the reward item from the request.

Gloves that delicately gleamed with a black luster.

“Identify!”

Skilled Producer’s Glove:

Durability 45/45. Defense 13.

Gloves that were personally made and used by Thor Kingdom’s Seventh Blacksmith, Spindal.

Even while doing Blacksmith work he had adventures, so in order to make the gloves perfectly comfortable while catching Orcs, he made them through a lot of trial and error.

Although they were produced for Blacksmiths to use, they can be utilized in a wide variety of uses.

Requirement: Intermediate Handicraft and over. Level 150.

Option: When equipped, Blacksmithing skill +1.

Sculpting skill +1.

Effect of Handicraft skill +5%.

Attack increased by 7%.

When using long-range weapons, casting speed is improved.

As he'd expected, it was a high-class item.

Though the level requirement was low, with the Intermediate Handicraft limit it was an item that not just anyone could use.

The Sculpting instructor added, "I believe that Kendellev-nim's trail is left somewhere in our Thor Kingdom. Will you do more searching for that trail?"

Ding!

Kendellev's Hidden Sculptures

The very talented Dwarf Sculptor's artifacts are still suspected to be left somewhere.

Find and restore the additional sculptures that Kendellev left in Thor Kingdom.

Difficulty: Dwarf race Sculptor quest.

Reward: Honor of the Dwarves.

Quest requirement: Limited to Dwarf, Sculptor.

The still unfinished Kendellev's quest!

However, Weed shook his head.

"I must leave for the path of adventure. Since the Humans and Elves have been sufficiently informed of greatness of the Dwarves, I want to entrust this to a different Dwarf in my stead."

There were things Weed had to do, and he wanted to end the sculpture searching with this.

The Sculpting instructor nodded morosely.

"Alright. Even if it's not you, ordinary Dwarves should now be able to do this work."

– You have refused the quest.

Your intimacy with Sculpting Instructor Jorbid has slightly fallen.

Although intimacy had dropped a little, the Sculpting instructor liked Weed all the same.

"It is an honor for me to have seen an excellent Sculptor like you. What

will you do from here?”

“Even I do not know that. Only that I may have to go to Dale Kingdom to meet my colleagues.”

“May the sculptures made by you be blessed. Come back sometime and make a sculpture for Iron Hand Village.”

“The many things I’ve seen in the places where I have walked, if I return to this place, I will definitely make them for you.”

Chapter 2: Undiscovered Dungeon

Ahn Hyun Do cleaned his sword with a clean cloth.

The famed sword that the craftsman had completed with his soul and by smelting even the purest part of iron. As famous swordsmen used it generation after generation, the sword's value had grown.

“Through the sword, what makes a human capable of rising to the sky... is the sword.”

Ahn Hyun Do possessed many famed swords, but he never carelessly took out the Radiant Sword. Only when a big decision was ahead did he meditate over the resolve of his time of youth while cleaning the Radiant Sword.

“The years when there was nothing scary in the world. The years when I was so bent on just fighting that I didn't have time to look around. I received my undeserved Radiant Sword at that time. This is the sword that let me realize that the days of the sword had no meaning, that in the end people were more important.”

Ahn Hyun Do gazed at the Radiant Sword that he had cleaned to a mirror-like shine.

The azure sky and the clouds drifting away that shone through the office room's window were also reflected on the blade. The sunlight made him squint his eyes.

“Swordsmanship is learning the way to use the sword. If the motive of fencing is merely strong swordsmanship, what worth is there in learning it?”

The sword that nurtured a person.

Like the flourished weed of the rough wilderness, in the end, a human also had to pass through training. There was a need to learn not just in the small dojo, but the vast world.

“True fear, the drive for life... and also one's self can be learned through the sword.”

Ahn Hyun Do slid the sword into its sheath and left the office.

“Yul Min.”

The one who took care of the secretarial jobs in the Dojo was named Yul Min.

“Yes, Uncle.”

“It seems like it is time to teach the youngest disciple the way of the sword.”

“So it has already come to this. Then I will book two tickets. On about what date should I reserve the departure?”

“Since he has to go to school right now... Around summer should be fine.”

“Though it appears he’s not ready yet... Might you be rushing it too much?”

“If he’s lacking, he should be able to earn something greater from his insufficiencies.”

Anyone can learn swordsmanship.

For a sword faster than anyone else’s, repetitive effort and studying are necessary. However, simply possessing such a fast sword doesn’t equate to winning matches. A heavier sword or developing muscular strength didn’t mean winning in matches either.

The reason for learning the sword was to see one’s self clearly.

In Ahn Hyun Do’s opinion, young people these days were weak.

“When they go to school and study, prepare for employment... If they spend ten or so years like that they’ll end up running into the world without knowing what they like or what they want to do.”

Once they are out in the workforce, there wouldn’t be a chance to change one’s self. At their workplace, after working in the store and earning money, they would see that the precious times had completely passed and were gone.

Time doesn't ever come back. It would be great if you could cheat time, but that was an impossibility that only happened in movies.

You would discover yourself through the sword.

Here, there was also the reason of victory by the sword. Observation of yourself and your opponent!

As you compared each other's might, you would crave for greater heights. Seeing themselves clearly, swordsmen fought with the appetite for advancement.

"A truly powerful sword. Why you must learn the sword, what a true swordsman is... I should be able to show him what those are through travels."

*

As the Korean University's festival approached, with less than one week left, Lee Hyun's school life became really busy.

"Those of you who are preparing for the bar; since we've gotta win the snack contest, you must absolutely not do it carelessly!"

To make the snacks for the bar, they were abruptly thrown into culinary processes!

Though Lee Hyun didn't need to learn because he was quite well-versed in cooking, there was no time to rest because he had to teach the other students.

"Lee Hyun-oppa, how do you break an egg?"

"It's okay to clean the apples with the sponge. Right?"

"When you wash the dishes can't you use facial soap instead of Dawn™?"

Every time a question was asked, Lee Hyun sighed heavily.

These days, instant and delivery foods were set up too well. There were many cases where kids who had been conditioned to only study never even once made their own meal until they enrolled to university.

“But who’s gonna make the rice?”

“The Cuckoo makes the rice.”

[T/N: A Cuckoo is a popular brand of rice-cooker in Korea.]

“ ... ”

These kinds of conversation!

Lee Hyun controlled his frustration and endured as he taught the students the basics of cooking.

“When you fry an egg, you have to spread vegetable oil in the pan first. It’s probably better if you use olive oil instead of vegetable oil.”

“Peel the skin of the apple first so it’s easier to cut. Don’t slice pineapple with a fruit knife!”

“You don’t cut the bananas, if you just peel it...”

Truthfully, the students were enjoying watching Lee Hyun get upset and explain, so they purposefully asked about even things they knew.

“But can’t you make rice with flour?”

“I heard that originally, stew is boiled as ramen soup by putting this and that in...”

Lee Hyun’s patience hit rock bottom.

Nevertheless, Seo Yoon was on the side of learning cooking quickly. Although she burnt the vegetable pancake (buchimgae) as black as coal, once he taught her the trick of it, her next attempt was beautifully fried.

With her chopsticks, Seo Yoon held out a bite of the kimchi pancake she had fried to Lee Hyun.

“You want me to try it?”

When Lee Hyun asked anxiously, Seo Yoon nodded with a similarly anxious face. As he stared at the kimchi pancake, Lee Hyun’s eyes became as sharp as knives.

‘Ingredients, flour, kimchi, kimchi liquid, egg, scallion, octopus, some

others. There are no problems based on the ingredients.'

It was a kimchi pancake fried using normal ingredients.

'Seeing as it's been well grilled to a reddish color, there shouldn't be any particular problems with the cooking process...'

After resolving his doubts, he received and ate the kimchi pancake Seo Yoon was giving him.

The kimchi pancake went into his mouth, and the rich aroma of kimchi fully diffused throughout!

'It's fragrant. It's the taste of local kimchi after all. The cabbage grown in neighborhood gardens with the pickled fish and red pepper powder mixed in well... And its fitting rebirth as a pancake, good! It's a well-made kimchi pancake.'

Although his evaluation of the kimchi pancake ended quickly, Lee Hyun's mouth was as hot as a fire.

There was no way it wouldn't be hot since she had given it to him fresh off the pan.

'I'll have to be more suspicious after all.'

Lee Hyun's eyes became more sharp.

Eyes with a look that could kill!

Even as he glared, he raised his thumb for the taste.

"It's tasty. Keep making them like this."

"..."

Although there was no reply, Seo Yoon's eyes looked like they were laughing, if only a little.

'Did she know how to laugh too?'

It was an expression that flickered past too fleetingly. However, the beauty she had shown for just a short moment's instant was the smile he had imagined when he had made the first Goddess of Freya.

Seo Yoon made the fruit salad well too, and the skill with which she arranged it in the platter was also excellent.

The cooking practice they did in the Department of Food and Nutrition's classroom that they had borrowed ended like that, and they did the planning for the opening of the bar separately.

10 men and 7 women made up the personnel for the bar.

"Make it a tent bar. Doing that will reduce the expense, too. Looks like about 5 tents in an array will do, so what do you think."

At Hong Sun Ye's words, the guys nodded in unison. The festival wasn't going to end in a day, so they also had to prepare for rain.

"Then 5 tents. We'll be able to set them up before the festival starts, right?"

Hong Sun Ye looked at Lee Hyun.

She had seen the construction ability that used all sorts of materials at the MT as well, so she thought that at that level, a tent or the like would be nothing.

"It's definitely doable."

"But where should we get the tents?"

"There should be a specific place that rents them out."

"Then the tents are fine..."

Hong Sun Ye swiftly drew the blueprint. She actualized the place where they would set up the bar and the tent size as she drew the blueprint on the spot.

"I think 20 tables will go in."

"Then about 100 chairs should do. Is that too much?"

"We have to prepare for cases when customers come all at once, too. Since there are really a lot of students from other schools and people who are coming, many customers will gather. We can borrow the chairs from the classrooms so let's get plenty of them."

“In the morning before the festival, we’ll have to set up the tents, tables, and even the chairs.”

“The materials for the gas stove and cooking...”

“If we make an order at a supply house, they’ll send it to us by truck.”

As Hong Sun Ye and Lee Hyun conversed, all the jobs progressed like lightning. The guys merely occupied space; in truth, the female students and Lee Hyun took on the bar preparation.

“But what should we choose as our bar’s concept?” Hong Sun Ye went around asking everyone.

All the bars in Korea University progressed with their own concepts. To attract amiable customers, it was vital that they dressed up and put out their individualized bar.

“Should we do a club atmosphere?”

“How about a schoolgirl atmosphere. I still have my uniform...”

“I have my uniform too. But I put on a few pounds...”

Every time the female students chatted, the male students were speechless.

The short skirt, clothing that exposes her bare shoulders and back that Seo Yoon would wear in a club.

Seo Yoon dressed as a pure, innocent schoolgirl.

‘This is the jackpot.’

‘This is the jackpot.’

‘This is the jackpot.’

‘This is the jackpot.’

“ ... ”

The male student’s fantasies were taking flight.

“What concept should we use?”

It was the female student’s greatest worry. If only to win in the pride

competition with the other school bars, they needed to plan out a concept that stood out.

“For now, guys should come dressed comfortably. The girls will think about the concept more and try to choose.”

At the female students’ words, the male students answered earnestly.

“Alright. Hope you choose a worthy concept.”

“Don’t think about it too seriously, the ones you talked about earlier were also very good.”

“Ahh. If it was the festival today...”

“ ...”

The female students gathered separately and debated.

Club girl, schoolgirl, office uniform. Although they had initially chosen concepts that were enough to excite the guys, all of them were cancelled.

“We can’t just become eye candy for the guys!”

They were also considering Seo Yoon’s position, as she was obviously troubled about the exposure of the clothing.

“What concept should we use? As we serve, a lot of people will see us, so isn’t there something that’s elegant yet alluring, that can bring femininity to life but never prods our conscience to wear?”

“Since it’s a festival of May, how about a bride?”

[T/N: May is known as the month of weddings in Korea.]

“Bride! That’s pretty good. Bride of May. With student brides in wedding dresses and even bridal veils, I think it’s gonna have a lively feel.”

“I approve too!”

“The idea’s good, but is there a place where we can borrow the dresses?”

“We would buy fabric or material and make them ourselves. Can’t we just look at a fashion magazine and make it roughly similar?”

The female students came to a mutual understanding.

Didn't they say the clothing that made women the most beautiful was the wedding dress?

It would also be an opportunity for them to wear a wedding dress once before they married.

"Seo Yoon-sunbae, is senior okay with this too?"

"..."

Seo Yoon hesitated for a moment before nodding.

*

The dungeon exploration for the school assignment!

Because they had to complete the exploration before the festival started, they were really pressed for time.

"Please come here quickly."

"I'm saying that the rest of us were all here."

As soon as the group members gathered in the capsule room after finishing their morning studies, their complaints flowed out.

However, Lee Hyun also had an excuse.

"The traffic was severe."

"Lies. You walked here."

The group members weren't deceived.

"It takes 3 minutes to walk here from the school, so why would you come here by car."

"It's more than one stop by bus so if you get on it takes longer."

Lee Hyun's eyes became mellow and moist.

Choi Ji Hoon, who uses the in game name Zephyr had taught the elder brothers this; Lee Hyun tried to use the method to pacify girls.

Lee Hyun wagged his finger, and spoke with his most sweet voice.

"These sly deer... Are you doubting my words right now?"

“ ... ”

At that moment the female students' expressions indicated that something from within their stomachs was urgently coming up.

‘Ah, the breast milk I drank when I was a baby...’

The queasy and greasy feeling!

Even if you mixed peanut butter and cheese and made ramen, it wouldn't be this bad.

“Ah, we get it. For now let's just hurry and start.”

Hong Sun Ye, who saw Lee Hyun a lot doing this and that these days, took his side for him. Though he was even harder to deal with than her hair-splitting cousins that her uncle left from morning to evening, she demonstrated patience.

“Oppa.”

Lee Yoo Jung addressed him before she went into the capsule,

“Hm?”

“You're near Dale Kingdom, right? We're already all gathered, and we also did a lot of exploration practice.”

Lee Hyun answered as if there wasn't a problem.

“Of course. I'm almost all the way there.”

“Yes, then that's a relief. We'll go in first and wait. Please come quickly.”

“Just wait a little. I'll be there soon.”

Lee Hyun went into the capsule, and as the sensors mounted he thought, ‘I guess I should leave soon.’

*

He had been busy selling the accessories and sculptures he had made in Kuruso Kingdom to merchants, so he was still at Nest Kingdom's Herom Castle.

Even by riding a horse, Dale Kingdom's Nekan Castle was over five days

away.

‘In Korean terms, I’m almost all the way there. Since “soon” means “still gonna take a long time” now, they’ll probably be understanding even if I’m late.’

Herom Castle!

As the Kingdom had a position in the borderland, it was a castle bustling with Merchants dealing in entrepot trade. As a result of the users who were buying had wagons and goods. It was so disorderly it reminded him of the marketplace at dawn.

There were users who struck out at the prices as they bargained, and Merchants who weren’t going to cut down even a single penny were even having a fierce fight.

“Why, no matter how money-grubbing a Merchant ya are, how can ya do this? How can ya buy the wares that are like my own children that I created at the end of so much suffering with that price?”

“Look, elder. Please calm down for now and listen to my explanation. The current market prices of wares...”

“Market prices! What did ya say the wares I made were like? Is there even a wee scratch somewhere? Or are ya saying the quality of this ruby is low?”

A small Dwarf was in hysterics. Of course, the Dwarf’s true identity was Weed!

He became an obstinate Dwarf to the novice Merchants and was striking up the prices.

He sold crafted jewel ware accessories and sculptures, and even the Dwarves’ gifts. To be honest, when he sold the gifts he had received at the farewell ceremony, he felt a small prick of his conscience.

‘Even so, the market nowadays has changed. For the gifts I don’t need, I can just think of them as receiving a gift certificate.’

Gifts from the heart!

He had received the hearts of the gift-givers and thought that was good enough, and was selling them with overcharged prices to his heart's content.

Since they were goods being sold by a Dwarf the credibility was high and the quality was good too, but because he insisted on the high prices, transactions weren't made quickly.

*

"Ugh, when is he coming."

"It's getting too late... Should we just give up and go by ourselves?"

"We can't. 'Cause if there's even 1 person missing from the group we won't get points."

Beneath the old tree by Nekan Castle, a party of people were waiting for someone.

A party composed of two Swordsmen, a Thief, Enchanter, Elemental Magician, and Ranger!

Hegel set the shield he had cleaned to a sparkling shine on the ground.

"It's getting late. Though I pulled out Kudram's Shield for a change."

Kudram's Shield.

A kite shield that could cover the whole body, it had a defense of over 70, and had the effect of blocking charges with its ponderous weight. Choe Sang Jun had borrowed the armor and shield from his older brother, who was a member of the Black Lions' Guild.

When Enchanter Rumi saw the shield, she said with a curious face, "Sang Jun, no Hegel, who enchanted that shield for you?"

"The best magic user in Haven Kingdom, Perrier-nim did it. He's the Enchanter of Black Lions' Guild."

"Ah, that famous person did..."

The party members' gazes were bent toward Kudram's Shield.

Even inside Nekan Castle, the attention was focused on Hegel, who was

attired in outstanding equipment.

In the Versailles Continent, generally it was possible to show a person's might with equipment. A Swordsman's attack power could become the strength to support the whole party, and they could also be the root of enemy pulverization.

If you looked at the outstanding Swordsman, being envious was a given.

"Must be nice, Hegel."

"It's really enviable equipment. The armor isn't a normal item either, right?"

"You guys wouldn't know 'bout it even if I told you, 'cause it's the Snake's Bantis Armor Set. The boots and pauldrons, and helmet are a set item."

"I've never heard about the Bantis Armor."

"Of course not, though it's not a famous item, no! It's an armor that's so rare that only the people who know use it, so it's less well known. However its performance is more outstanding than Norman's weapons."

"It's better than Norman's weapons?"

"The comparison in itself is impossible."

When Hegel was boasting about the equipment, the Elemental Magician Selsia's eyes gleamed.

"With equipment like that, there's really no need to wait."

"Hm?"

"Won't I be doing most of the hunting anyways? Then let's just go between us."

"But if hyung doesn't come, we won't be able to get a proper grade..."

"We can go first and start exploring first, can't we meet up later?"

"Should we?"

Hegel had a tempted expression. He was also eager to hurry and try out

the equipment he'd borrowed from his older brother.

Swordsman Bella also opened her mouth.

"There's not much a Sculptor can do in an exploration anyways. So even if he isn't there in the beginning, it shouldn't stand out too much."

With even Bella's approval, Hegel made up his mind.

"Alright. Then let's go between us."

"But what's the dungeon you decided to explore?"

The ones who had researched the information about dungeons and had made the choice were Hegel and Nide.

Nide gave the answer to that question.

"It's not far. If you pass Plain's Red Territory, a forest of dried up trees comes up; the entrance is there."

"Is it a famous dungeon?"

"No, the only people to have discovered it is probably us."

"Really?"

Hegel widely broadened his shoulders.

"Yep. It's a location that Nide and I found by investigating the booklets of the Kingdom's library. Though of course, Nide was the one who discovered the booklet."

"Do you mean it's a dungeon that hasn't been opened before yet?"

"We'll prolly be the first."

If they discovered a hidden dungeon, not only fame would rise, but they would receive 2 times the experience.

"Even if there's a trap, Nide can deactivate it, and I can take responsibility for the fighting."

Enchanter Rumi looked worried at the talk of the hidden dungeon.

"What about Weed oppa? If it's a hidden dungeon, shouldn't we wait and go together?"

“Will that be necessary? We can just hide the booklet with the dungeon info in this old tree and go. Let’s just have him look at the booklet and approximately find his way to the area ‘round the entrance.”

“But since he can’t fight, he might not be able to come.”

“He shouldn’t be that bad. Then he wouldn’t have been able to travel all the way to Thor Kingdom. Then let’s hurry and go.”

Hegel dug in the ground and hid the book.

- – You have thrown away Gildras’ Strange Story Booklet.

They finished their preparations at a simple supply stand and left for the Plain’s Red Territory.

*

With the sale of the wares in Herom Castle, penny pincher Weed had made 35,000 gold!

“The stagecoach leaving for Dale Kingdom departs the day after.”

“What’s the travel fee?”

“7 Gold.”

Although he had planned to ride there by transport stagecoach, not only did he have to wait, but the price was expensive too.

‘This won’t do.’

Weed left Herom Castle and went into the rarely visited forest.

The beginner’s forest where small animals like birds and squirrels lived!

Chik chik.

The squirrels, which had been picking up and eating acorns, gathered in the area around Weed. Though they were close, they didn’t think of coming down from atop the neighboring trees.

If he was a Human, they wouldn’t even have come near. Because Dwarves had the attribute of not enjoying killing, they had come this close.

If he was an Elf, they might have even come and rubbed their faces on him. It was because the Elves, who had an affinity with nature's beings, were a race that were welcome anywhere.

It was then.

While standing motionlessly, Weed's mantle fluttered and beamed with a brilliant light. The Wings of Light on his back had widely unfurled, displaying majestic allure.

The piled leaves on the ground were swept up into the air, and the squirrels covered their eyes at the bright light. Weed spread the wings in the forest and soared up.

The Verona River that flowed grandly next to Herom Castle looked like a stream. Herom Castle, which had been so crowded when he had been selling his wares, now looked as small as a sesame seed.

A Dwarf flying in the air; this was something unheard of.

"Light Wing, let's go!"

The Wings of Light flapped gracefully.

Since he hadn't thought to make it a body, the Wings of Light could only survive by existing parasitically off another body.

As soon as the Wings spread out in earnest, he moved at a fast speed. Before he could even catch his balance, he shot away like a bullet.

The acceleration was so incredible that it could be expressed as instantaneous movement!

- – You are flying in the sky.
- Wings of Light can give 26% of the maximum speed.
- Due to a Dwarven racial characteristic, you might experience severe dizziness.

The Dwarven trait of not being able to ride neither a horse nor stagecoach well!

Since he was flying in the sky, that Dwarf race's penalty was undoubtedly in effect. Like when he had guzzled beer and become

smashed, his dizziness became severe.

Weed knew the most simple way to solve this problem. He just had to cancel the Art of Sculpture Transformation!

However, Weed was still enamored with the body of a Dwarf. Stamina was good, and an additional effect was granted to Handicraft, so he didn't want to cancel it just yet.

“It should be fine if I can somehow bear with it.”

As he flapped the Wings of Light like an angel, Weed positioned himself southwest and dizzily flew forth.

Whether they were mountains or hills, he flashed past them like that in the sky that was above everything.

Occasionally he'd be heading towards a precipice or a mountain peak, so there were times when he'd come perilously close. They were emergencies caused by flying with dizziness and motion sickness!

It was a flight so overwhelmingly fast that he had to adjust his path to avoid eagles he would collide into.

*

The Hegel party passed the land of the red sand and went past the Forest of Dead Trees. Without a single leaf, a forest with an eerie feel.

It was a forest in which there would be nothing strange if a ghost came out at any moment.

The Thief Nide, who had a lot of experience traveling round the Versailles Continent, spoke.

“You can't wander around here at night. When it becomes night, though only every so often, fierce Grollers come out and root around the forest.”

At that, Rumi put on a fearful expression. Simply imagining the Grollers plunging out from within the forest and raising an axe or bamboo spear in her direction just terrified her.

“If we meet 'em, we probably can't even escape?”

“Yeah. If we meet Grollers at night, we’ll have no choice but to give up our lives.’

They were able to find the dungeon after struggling amongst the trees for a long time. The entrance was covered with dirt and stones, and was buried together with animal bones.

“Let’s go inside.”

As Hegel went in the entrance first, the rest of the briefly hesitant party followed him inside.

Chapter 3: The Strange Booklet of Gildras

Korea University's Student Council was tied up with festival preparations.

Each department secured a venue, and minor help was given for preparations. The cultural festival and events for the local residents were being prepared at the same time. They even busied themselves with stage preparations, and organising singers for the events.

“But who should we cast to MC the event?”

“How about Yu Jae Dol?”

[T/N: Spoof of Yoo Jae Suk]

The highly praised one, who was born for hosting, MC Yu Jae Dol. He doesn't know when to stop when he starts chattering. He was praised as the national MC because of his kind and considerate nature.

“I tried contacting him, but they said his schedule doesn't work out 'cus of the We Must Challenge filming.”

“Then did you try contacting Kang Ho Eun? He hosted our school festival last year, too.”

[T/N: Referring to Kang Ho Dong, an MC who was just as wildly popular as Yoo Jae Suk when this LN was published. Before his years as a comedian and host, he was a champion ssireum wrestler, the traditional Korean national sport, which is often compared to sumo.]

The former wrestling athlete Kang Ho Eun! Although he had a body as big as a house, he pulled programs along with his naivety at times, and his charisma at others. With ample strength and passion, he was an MC who was like a big brother.

“That person went on a 3 night 4 day vacation. He said he was really sorry he can't attend this time.”

“Dang it... Then who should we cast?”

Plays, musicals, performances, and concerts would all progress together

at the Korea University's festival.

It was a given that it would let the students worn out from studying enjoy the energy and university culture, and since it was a party for the local residents, they couldn't be negligent. In the end, they couldn't find just the right person, and it was decided that they'd go back to the idol Park Min Su, the eternal number 2, as the host of the main show.

*

Jung Hyo Rin moved her fingers fluidly on the piano keyboard.

A pure, lyrical melody.

She was in the midst of personally writing a song to put in a new album.

"The song has a really good feeling... but how will you choose the lyrics? Do you want to try hiring a famous lyricist? Teacher Kim Tae Hwan who you worked with last time was saying he wanted to work together again."

When the manager asked her in the practice room, Jung Hyo Rin shook her head.

"No. I want to write it myself."

"Is that so? Since Hyo Rin-ssi has a talent for writing lyrics too... you'll make an excellent song."

Jung Hyo Rin was actually in a state where she couldn't make up her mind on what kind of feeling to use for the lyrics.

'I'm going to write the lyrics for the song I want to sing.'

It didn't seem like it would be easy to make the song.

Since the release date of the new album and the song's live debut was still a ways off, she tried to write the song so she wouldn't have any regrets.

Jung Hyo Rin, who had been playing the piano, raised her head.

"Manager, could you freed up my schedule in 3 days, right?"

"I cleared it up as Hyo Rin-ssi asked, but is there something going on?"

“It’s a matter of personal privacy.”

The manager was relieved because Jung Hyo Rin had never stirred up problems in her private life. However, he couldn’t help but ask of her destination.

“Where are you going to go?”

“Korea University. A person I know is a student there. I’m going to go together with my friends.”

*

- You have become the first discoverers of the Kramado Dungeon!
- Reward:
- Fame has increased by 230.
- Experience and drop rates have doubled for a week.
- The first monster hunted will drop some its the best items it has.

“Yay!”

“We’re really the first. Just look at the fame that went up.”

The party members who entered the dungeon shouted out cheers of joy.

“With this, we’ve accomplished this assignment as a success.”

“Yeah. We’re probably the only ones who found an undiscovered dungeon.”

Swordsman Bella spoke with confidence.

As they had come through relatively safe hunting grounds, an adventure like this was enjoyable.

Even the other groups would have difficulty discovering a new dungeon for their assignment.

“Nide, well done.”

“I’ll treat you if we get a good grade.”

Like an expression from real life, Nide blushed as if he were embarrassed to receive praise.

“It’s nothing. It’s just that somehow my luck was good.”

Hegel patted Nide's shoulder as if in encouragement.

"Nice work."

"It's nothing, We all did it together."

The discovery of a new dungeon was an impressive opportunity to gain experience and items.

Hegel drew his sword.

"Then everyone get ready to battle!"

Their opponents were monsters that looked like white lizards crawling around inside the dungeon.

"Shield Bash! I'll push them away altogether!"

While Hegel was holding the Kudram's Shield in his left hand, he charged/rushed toward the monsters.

The greatest strength of a swordsman is their damage.

Attack power was maximized with the Twin Sword Skill and Great Sword Skill, so they could deal more damage than any other similar combat Profession.

"Shake. Ignite. Crumble!"

"Triple-Sword Strike!"

"Strengthen metal, Blessing of Flame!"

Elemental Magician Selsia, Swordsman Bella, and Enchanter Rumi had their share in the battle as well.

Enchanters can permanently grant an item a unique strength. The effectiveness of fortification spells that were applied to people was less than that of a Priest or a Shaman, but they could temporarily pull out the strength of a weapon many times over.

The Kramanoims that were attacked by the Shield Charge were wounded, pushed here or there, or flipped over. In that situation, as they suffered attacks from the Elemental Magician or the Swordsman, they weakly turned into grey light.

The thief Nide approached the Karmanoim with his stealth skill activated.

“Creature Identification!”

It was a profession skill only available to thieves, scouts, assassins, and adventurers. It was a skill to enable you to see detailed information of your opponents.

The information thief Nide found on Kramanoim was shared with the party.

Ding!

- Monster Name: Young Kramanoim
- Level: 234
- A monster that dwells in old dungeons.
- It has lived only inside a dungeon for a very long time.
- Eyesight has degenerated to the point of being almost blind.
- They detect enemies through sound or ground vibrations and they enjoy eating meat.
- They can crawl very quickly through use of their 4 legs and from the mouth they can vomit out a weak paralyzing venom.

Not only did it provide information on the Kramanoim, it highlighted its weak point, its neck emitted a bluish glow. The areas where you can get fatal strikes!

From Hegel’s fierce attack and Bella and Selsia’s united efforts, the Kramanoims lethargically changed to grey light.

In about 3 hours of fighting, they were able to clean out the monsters on the basement 1st floor.

Enchanter Rumi and Bella had their level increased by 1, and the dropped items were considerable as well. Thanks to the doubled experience, even Selsia looked pleased.

“It’s the best.”

“It’s a really good dungeon. For our assignment this time, an A will be no problem.”

By the time Weed arrived in Dale Kingdom, it had already gotten dark.

“The old tree...was it near here?”

He found a booklet in the place where there were traces of dugged up brown soil on the ground.

Gildras' Strange Story Booklet.

Weed read the book.

- I, the cheerful wanderer Gildras, had a date with my new wife in the Dolne Village yesterday. The daughter of a farmer, she was overflowing with health... At night, the windmill was extremely cozy and the atmosphere was good.
- The next day, I left Dolne Village and walked somewhere, but I wasn't able to find the direction. For a traveler like me, who has wandered so much the soles of my shoes have worn off. to get lost, something impossible had happened.
- Here, the trees were sucked dry of moisture, and when I look back on it, I think I also passed by red dirt.
- What kind of scary event had happened here in the past?
- However, these old trees didn't seem harmful to humans. That's because even a traveler like me was able to pass them safely. Ha. Ha. Ha.
- While I was lost and struggling, I saw an entrance leading to somewhere. Although it seemed fairly well hidden between the trees, it couldn't escape my sharp eyes.
- Still, I didn't try going inside. That was because I was searching for the village first.
- Oh my God. Why in the world am I so good at finding dangerous places like these, when I can't even find a village I've been to?
- I want to find even a hunter's lodging quickly. It would be nice if there was a lady overflowing with health in that place too...

It was the travel log of the traveler named Gildras, who wandered the Versailles Continent.

There were truly a lot of stories like these that bards would circulate around the Versailles Continent. In fact, even if you stayed in a tavern for just 1 hour, you could hear stories like these three or four times!

Nide had gathered information like that and had found the dungeon.

Gildras' Strange Story Booklet was divided into 8 chapters.

1. The Hot Night with the Childhood Friend After Leaving Home
2. The Single Night Spent in the Windmill with the Farmer's Daughter
3. The Stimulating Night with the Mermaid on the East Coast

4. The Short Night Within the Traveling Carriage
5. The Night with the Dream-like Woman Beneath a Region with a Prosperous Trail
6. Captured by a Slave Merchant, the Thrilling Night with the Slave Beast
7. The Night I Felt I Overcame my Stamina in the Barbarian's Village
8. After Wandering Everywhere in Versailles Continent, the Affectionate Night with my Childhood Friend Again

Each chapter was named with titles that seemed like they were mostly profanity.

Moreover, there was something written clearly in red letters on the bottom of the cover.

Not suitable for minors!

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Hegal and Nide took out and started eating the bread and fruit from their backpacks.

“It tastes really bad.”

“Even so, everyone eat up. It's so you can keep up your stamina.”

“How far do you think this dungeon goes to?”

The party members turned their attention to Hegal and Nide, but they too just shook their heads.

“After entering a dungeon, no one can know if there's something at the end of it.”

“Me too... as a Thief, though I'm on the side of having explored a lot of dungeons, predicting beforehand is impossible. Sorry.”

Rumi asked, “Then how many basement levels do dungeons usually have?”

“There's no way to tell. Normally, there's 2 or 3 basement floors. We can define it like this, but it's not a certain thing. In severe cases, I've even seen dungeons with up to 12 basement floors.”

“There's dungeons that deep?”

“Defining a floor in a basement dungeon is ambiguous. Though there's times when you definitely go down a floor through stairs, in the case of

dungeons that are gradually connected the basement, you've just gotta define a floor when the level of the monsters goes up or the atmosphere changes.”

“Then I guess you could even die when you're exploring a dungeon?”

“It's possible.”

After listening to Rumi and Nide's conversation, Hegel grinned toothily.

“However, if it's monsters of this level, there's prolly no reason for me to die.”

Hegel personally held great belief regarding the armor. With materials that couldn't be made without superior Handicraft skills, it was armor that couldn't even be imagined by Blacksmiths of low caliber.

A work of art that could supplement a swordsman's slightly lacking defenses because of the focus on attack!

A properly made Bantis Armor Set was over 5 thousand gold for one set. Although it was heavy, it had more than 5 or 6 times the defense of normal armor. Meaning he wouldn't die, even from considerable damage.

Armor at a level where tolerable arrows or swords would just bounce off!

What swordsmen could call their dream was full plate armor. The armor Hegel had equipped was an item of first class, that had even been rigged with magic resistance. The handicraft or ornaments, even the form could be called a work of art without shame– it was that beautiful.

The best product that neared perfection!

Not only did the durability barely drop, for swordsmen, there was no better item than this.

On the 2nd basement floor, adult Kramanoims appeared.

However, it was just that their bodies were a little bigger. Their actual attack power was similar. A monster that had no development despite growing up!

Except, the dose of poison the monsters spat out had built up by quite a

lot; for a party that didn't have a Priest, it couldn't be anything but hard work.

“Shit.”

Hegel was covered in revolting paralysis saliva. He couldn't help but have a bad mood from fighting while getting hit by yellow spit.

Since Swordsman Bella was weak, if she got paralyzed by the adult Kramanoims, she could only die shortly.

Since his other party members didn't consider themselves combat-related, there was no helping it – Hegel had to take on the role of the meat shield.

“Damn it. Why are these dirty monsters appearing.”

Hegel's mail and shield were covered in saliva. Of course his equipment was getting dirty, but even a disgusting smell was coming off. Since he was equipping accessories that had outstanding magic and poison resistance, he was still able to move his body vigorously, but if it were someone else, they would have lost their ability to fight.

“Barrage!”

Twitter shot forth arrows like a shower, and the others were pouring attacks as far as the bounds of their mana would allow. The Thief Nide lured the Kramanoims as he walked with an elaborate step and landed. If not for the extremely Thief-like quick movements that drew their attention, the Kramanoims would have charged the other party members.

Even so, Hegel was surrounded by Kramanoims with no place to run.

“Damn it. I didn't want to use my top skills in a place like this...”

Hegel snuck a quick glance at the other party members, then put the Longsword he'd been using in its sheath and pulled out a ponderous Mace.

Generally, the Mace was a weapon with an incredibly powerful striking power. Although Swordsmen mastered the Sword as their Profession, they acquired weapon skills of the Spear and Blunt Weapons separately at the

same time. That was because the defense of the armor that Swordsmen used in fights was so impressive, it became efficient to use a Spear with a pointy tip or a Blunt Weapon.

Rupture's Mace!

It was a weapon worth 680 thousand Won (~\$680) in the cash trading market.

As an Option, it could spread a violent shock, even if it was blocked by a shield the destructive force penetrated through armor unhindered, so it could blow people away with strength alone.

Granted, it was hard to handle because it was short and heavy, but it was the best method when fighting monsters that had high Health and didn't die easily.

"Hyaa!"

As he changed his weapon and raised it, an powerful, imposing aura surged out of Hegel's body. Perhaps it was a characteristic of the Mace itself, but his Fighting Spirit was enhanced and the monsters were intimidated.

Hegel didn't miss the opportunity to take advantage of the Kramanoims' dulled movements.

"Earth Wave!"

With great strength Hegel smashed the ground using the Mace, the earth rumbled and trembled.

The bodies of the Kramanoims within the 7 meter radius turned to grey light due of the shockwaves.

The area of effect skill demonstrated by a Swordsman of over level 300 by overdoing it, that destructive power!

"Flash of Fighting Spirit!"

The Hegel who broke through the blockade hunted the Kramanoims as if he was slaughtering a flock of sheep.

Although he also had the help of the other group members, he was the leading player who hunted the most monsters.

Even so, Hegel didn't seem like he was satisfied.

"Damn it. If the Earth Wave's skill proficiency was even a little higher, it would have made at least half of them unable to fight in one hit..."

Even with the lacking skill proficiency, it was good enough to transfix Bella or Rumi.

"A level 300 Swordsman sure is strong."

"I only saw 'em on broadcast all the time, but I've never seen one myself. But just as they say, it's like they were born to fight- they're incredible."

A Swordsman's attack power was to the point of inducing awe.

After they finished taking a short break, they headed to the 3rd floor basement.

"Haha. If old Kramanoims show up, this'll be a really good dungeon."

Hegel lead them with confidence.

However, starting from the 3rd floor basement was not as they had expected. A damnable labyrinth blocked the way in front, and there was no end to the traps.

Something charming like arrows flying from walls! They stepped on the ground and had their feet sink right in, and were ambushed by venomous snakes. Thief Nide dismantled the traps and hunted the snakes, but they were delayed by a lot of time.

And then, in a moment while they were advancing like that!

Rumble!

A big boulder was rolling towards them from an alley they had passed.

It filled up the entire passage. The boulder that rolled forward without even a corner to escape out of.

"Run!"

The party that had seen the big boulder that was rolling forth behind them ran for their lives into the dungeon.

“We don’t know what might be in front!”

“Better than being crushed and killed by the rock.”

“The passage was getting narrower!”

Rumble!

The passage became narrower and narrower, so the big boulder was wedged in between the walls. The walls were considerably ravaged, and although it was a boulder that had rolled all the way here, it finally stopped..

“What a relief.”

“Are we saved by this?”

There wasn’t any time to nonchalantly express happiness. Thief Nide knew from experience that in cases like this, even greater crises would come find them.

Nide hurriedly opened his mouth.

“Hey, guys.”

“Hm?”

“There’s three things of bad news... there’s really bad news and less bad news. And there’s also one piece of unlucky news.”

Selsia beamed a smile. After repeatedly doing only boring hunting every day, experiencing this kind of dungeon exploration was very exciting for her.

“Tell us the less bad news first.”

“Ok. That’s that our way back is blocked. And the really bad news is, that we don’t know what kind of traps there are in the place where we’re standing.”

“Traps, you say?”

“Just now, I tried using my Trap Seeking Skill... this entire place is lit up by traps, blue light, so by the way, I think it’ll be better to stay put.”

“Dismantling the traps is impossible?”

“Yeah. This whole passage is marked with traps... this place is probably not originally a normal path, so it’s a passage connected separately. By the look of it, it seems like we chose the wrong direction ever since the boulder came rolling.”

“ ... ”

Rumi’s skin turned pale. Still, before she gave up she asked hopefully, “Then what’s the unlucky news? Isn’t there nothing worse than this?”

“Yeah. Right now that the one who is coming to where we are, that the sole person who can help us... is Weed hyung.”

“ ... ”

The party members who sank into despair, hopelessness, frustration, and dejection!

They could easily feel Nide’s drooping meaning from his tone.

‘It ends here.’

It seemed like they’d somehow be going back with the dungeon exploration assignment as a failure. The points for finding an undiscovered dungeon would probably be high, but if they all died in the middle of it, it would become a total failure in the end.

The assignment in itself was regretful, but the level or skill proficiency they would lose from dying could be nothing but extremely upsetting.

Then Hegel strode in with a detached step. After resting quietly, his exhausted stamina had been restored.

“What’re you all doing. Are you just going to sit here quietly and die?”

“Hegel! It might be dangerous.”

“We don’t have the freedom of choice anyways. Then we’ll press on. And it’s a dungeon where weak monsters like Kramanoims come out... even if

you say it's dangerous, it's probably not that bad.”

Hegel's remark was strangely persuasive.

Even if were still standing here, they would move forward. If they were going to die all the same, be it this way or that, they would not die standing still.

Although it was a Swordsman-like action, it was before he had even taken just a few steps.

“Hegel!”

“What?”

Hegel didn't turn around to look and was only walking forward.

The party members could see the spiders clinging to Hegel's back and shoulders. They were spiders the size of fists that furtively crawled over the walls, floor, and ceiling. Because of the armor he had equipped, only the person involved couldn't feel them.

“Umm, you're in danger right now.”

“What is it.”

“On your armour.....”

“Is something there?”

By the time Hegel turned around to look, the spiders had already spewed silk and had tightly encased his whole body in it.

His body was completely wrapped up so he couldn't even swing his weapon.

The so-called airtight seal!

Every time he squirmed, trying to escape, the spider silk didn't break and became more and more tight instead.

“Ah!”

A scream burst out of Hegel's mouth. His Health didn't fall by a lot because he was wearing good armor, but no matter how much strength he

used, he couldn't move an inch in the spider silk.

All the other party members were also tightly tied up by the spider silk that fell from the ceiling, wall, floor, and behind them.

The entire passage was filled with spiders, so there wasn't even a place to escape to.

Even though Ranger Twitter's arrows got in the way of the spiders' approach, it wasn't that much of a help, and even Thief Nide's dagger only managed to cut a few spider silk strands.

"Kruuung!."

A Demonic Spirit that resembled a huge spider appeared from the wall of the passage.

Elfin Queen Spider.

The boss level Demonic Spirit leisurely watched over the dying party members.

"Oh no. Looks like we're dying just like this."

"It was still a fun exploration."

It was a point of comfort that at least they could still have a conversation since only their mouths weren't covered by spider silk.

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Weed was wandering the forest of dried up trees and was searching for the dungeon's entrance.

The darkness had fallen deeply, and the forest gave off a gloomy spirit.

"Where the heck is the entrance supposed to be."

If he were a Thief or an Adventurer, he could follow them just by looking at the preceding party's footsteps. However, it wasn't just that Weed didn't have those kinds of tracking skills, but because he had flown in with the outstretched Wings of Light to the middle of the forest of dried trees, he was struggling even more.

Hunnng hunng.

He heard the rough sound of breathing from a living thing somewhere, and the chirping of grasshoppers died away.

The desolate and lifeless forest!

Something was thudding, charging towards him from between the trees.

“D-I-E, IN-TRU-DER!”

Growlers!

Monsters holding axes came rushing at him.

A group of a hundred. It was the advent of a Growler charge.

Instead of running away, Weed drew and raised his sword.

“These experience points and items! Come quickly!”

It was just that he welcomed the appearance of an enemy because he hadn't hunted in awhile.

“Call Death Knight!”

With smoke, even Death Knight Van Hawk appeared.

“Master!”

Van Hawk quickly recognized the sight of Weed. Even though he was in the form of a Dwarf, he had seen Weed as an Orc in the past, so he wasn't surprised. They weren't simply in a relationship of training together for one or two days, either.

“They're enemies. Fight.”

“I understand. Master!”

Van Hawk turned round and swung his sword. The earth was turned over, and Growlers were pushed and fell over.

When Van Hawk was fighting with group of savage Growlers, the rest of them made a detour and made Weed their target.

“Moonlight Sculpting Blade.”

From within the forest of dried up trees, Weed scattered beams of light as he ran forward. He grazed past the trees at a rapid speed.

The dried up trees became obstacles, so the number of opportunities the Growlers chasing after him had to attack were limited.

“Intruder!”

“I’ll chew and eat you alive.”

Two Growlers leapt forward as if to intercept him.

The axe strike overflowing with energy! It was a reckless act to take the attack charged with all the Growler’s weight head on.

“Seven Celestial Footsteps!”

Weed’s body left an afterimage as it moved brilliantly.

A skill that could perfectly ignore the law of inertia! A skill that could move you in a completely different direction even at full pelt!

When he took the first step, his whole body faced backwards. In the next step, he moved to the right. After completely evading the Growler’s attack, he swung the sword as if to cut the enemy entirely.

It had been a really long time since he’d fought, but that much wasn’t a problem.

Pow pow pow!

The rampaging cut that pursued the intercepting Growlers!

When he had hunted two of the Growlers, Van Hawk had already cleared away at least five enemies. Van Hawk stood in place and was mowing down Growlers that rushed at him like moths to a flame.

“Seven Celestial Footsteps!”

Weed activated the skill without reserve. Quick skill use to attack the Growler’s openings, a useful skill even in the moments when he was picking up japtem. Since his Mana and Stamina were unparalleled, there was no hesitation in skill use.

At that moment, a whisper from Rumi was relayed to him.

– Weed-oppa.

- Yeah, what is it?

The calm voice even while crazily hunting and collecting japtem!

It was illegal to speak on the phone while driving. That was because it diverted attention and increased the probability of an accident.

Since whispering while fighting was incomparably dangerous in Royal Road as well, most people knew to restrain themselves.

However, Weed's concentration was terrifying.

'Experience point, skill proficiency, item!'

He was so blindly bent on these three that even if something totally unexpected occurred, he would not be shaken.

- Have you entered the dungeon yet?

- No, not yet.

- Don't enter. We fell into a trap. We are all only awaiting for our deaths to come.

- ...

- You shouldn't come inside and die needlessly, so stay in town and rest.

Skiid!

Weed halted on the spot.

Then, he surveyed the forest of dried up trees with dimmed and lowered eyes.

At some point, Van Hawk followed suit and stopped.

'What kind of trouble is that master with a dirty personality going to raise...'

Since he had accompanied Weed from the time since Weed had only barely come out of the beginner stage, Van Hawk knew Weed well. That while hunting, there was absolutely no hesitation or wavering.

The truth that that kind of Weed had stopped was couldn't be anything but horrifying for Van Hawk.

The Growlers that had lost their fighting spirit peered at Weed with fearful eyes.

If Van Hawk was based on an explosive attack power, Weed was on a totally different level. Movement that couldn't possibly be chased.

Nimble, phantasm-like movements that rendered them helpless.

Users had to personally go through the process of fighting in Royal Road. Because of that, despite having the same level and skill, the gap between fighting level was enormous.

A character that had learned even Advanced Sword Skill that was controlled by a young child, and a character controlled by a real swordsman was the difference between heaven and earth.

Since Weed used the skills in the right places at the right times, it wasn't possible for him to miss the place of even a single downy hair.

The concentration he showed in the fight, the skill he displayed while engrossed was giving of an awe-inspiring feeling.

Not only would normal users be shocked by those remarkable body movements, but monsters were also feeling it and were afraid.

His Leadership, Charisma stats made the effect even greater, for monsters lacking intellect, it easily made them fall into horror.

That Weed stopped during combat.

"You guys have really good luck. Something urgent happened, so it seems I've gotta go now."

The Growlers expelled breaths of relief.

Could there be anything more joyful than this!

But Weed hadn't finished speaking.

"Van Hawk."

"Your command, Master."

"Don't let any of them get away and hunt down every one of them. Don't forget to pick up all the japtems as well."

“Okay. Master.”

Weed was not one to neglect and leave monsters.

After handing the duty off to Van Hawk, he searched for the dungeon entrance once again.

Fortunately, he was able to find the entrance in a place not too far from the place where he had fought with the Growlers.

Weed went into the entrance without even a moment of hesitation.

Chapter 4: The Ability He Shows

– You have entered the undiscovered dungeon of Kramador.

Bonus: Extra experience for one week, 2x Item drop. (6 days and 11 hours remaining.)

Weed did not receive the Kramador Dungeon's first explorer message because he came after Hegel's party, who discovered it first.

However, time had passed by and the monsters inside the Kramador dungeon had already respawned.

Slimy creatures similar to White Lizards were crawling about.

“Nide must have gone through a lot of trouble to discover this dungeon.”

Even for Dark Gamers who made money in Royal Road by tracking and investigating clues, it wasn't easy to discover a new dungeon especially in the Central Continent.

He could imagine Nide suffering terribly in a dim, dark place.

Gildras' Book of Strange Stories!

If it wasn't for that book, it would have been difficult to find this dungeon.

The Forest of Dried Trees wasn't a good hunting ground, and Growlers rampaged aimlessly at night.

“You've gotta read a variety of books after all.”

There was literary fiction, historical books, biographies, and economic textbooks. These kinds of book were not the only valuable works of literature. In particular, Weed couldn't understand the common notion that famous foreign books were the only valuable ones.

Porn!

There were a lot of things you could learn from reading porn books, which ignited fires in the chests of all men. Is there any other book that makes one concentrate as well as porn does?

Of course there isn't!

While reading a book, as the words flowed into the head, those situations were drawn intact.

Moreover, it was an impressive story that had been filled with the infamous seven passions of mankind!

However, even porn books have their varieties. There are a lot of things to learn from the protagonist's agony, their inner conflict, and the development of their faithfulness to their desires. Gildras was a man who received his domestic education from erotic fiction!

Hasn't everyone experience bitterness after finding out there were only a few pages left to read when they were young? There probably wouldn't be any students who would be sad at not having many pages left to read on their textbooks. So from porn, you can learn the mindset of cherishing books.

"Books are truly precious."

Weed felt pleased when he saw Gildras' Book of Stories. These types of books were classified as miscellanea, and were traded even by the Dark Gamer Union. Unexpectedly, these books were sold for a greater price than encyclopedias, and he couldn't just ignore the book's value.

Underneath Weed's mantle, Wings of Light unfurled magnificently.

Although the wings were spread inside a narrow cave, the wings were not meant for flying in the sky, but for flying at a breakneck speed.

"Moonlight Sculpting Blade."

Weed swung his sword as he flew inside the dungeon.

In an extremely brief moment as he flew past the monsters, he slashed at their weak points.

Because he was flying way too fast, by the time he saw the monsters, they were already in front of his nose. He swung his sword continuously to cut down the monsters.

Completely disregarding the fact that Knights wouldn't dare ride their horses inside a narrow cave, flying with outspread wings at a breakneck

speed was reckless enough to call him crazy. At a speed where it was impossible to dodge, in a blink of an eye, he would receive serious damage if he were to collide into a wall.

Even with complete concentration, one had to be insane to fly in a fast pace inside a narrow place.

However, Weed was not someone who would reasonably consider something others knew as common sense.

There was no established method for hunting. Monsters had to be slayed by any means possible! Any method as long as it was quick and effective.

Even so, flying at a rapid speed with spreaded wings inside a narrow passage of a dungeon, while slashing away monsters, was a method Weed hadn't considered before.

Although he didn't have Wings of Light before, and though the monsters inside Kramador dungeon were relatively weak, it was not an idea someone would usually think of. Even if their reflexes and instinct were honed to a superhuman state, it wasn't something a person would dare to attempt unless they had complete confidence in their control over their body and sword!

Even though this was the first time Weed had thought of this method and put it to practice, he found it fun.

If he muddled up at any moment, he could die.

Since the passages weren't just in a straight line, there was a terror that made his heart plummet every time he had to change direction.

If he collided into a wall, it was possible that he might just turn into minced fish paste!

However, whenever he accomplished the impossible, his blood boiled with excitement.

And Weed was considering this kind of act with natural nonchalance.

"I'm starting to feel really dizzy. It must be because of my Dwarven body. It's definitely not a good idea to fly rapidly while drunk!"

He was flying while drunk, even near-death situations couldn't get him to sober up. Speed driving!

In an instant, he found his way to the second floor of Kramador dungeon by cutting through waves of monsters.

Weed sent an urgent whisper to Rumi.

- Are you okay? Are you still alive?

- Yeah. But well, we're slowly dying.

- How much Health have you lost?

- About 55%. I think we'll be completely dead in about 30 minutes or so.

- Really?

Instead of proceeding to the second floor basement, he turned around.

Back to where all the monsters had been annihilated!

"Then I have a few moments to spare."

Weed unfurled his wings and flew faster than before, tumbling through the path he had traveled through not long ago.

He flew at mach speed to collect the loot! Weed wasn't someone who would walk away even from trivial japtem.

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Most of the monsters on the second floor basement weren't any different from those on the first floor.

In fact, since the passage had become more wide, his flying speed became even faster.

Swoooosh!

By the time he saw a halo-shaped light discerning the exit of the passage, he had already flown through it.

Before the monsters could counteract by opening their jaws wide to spew spit, his sword had already pierced through them.

- You have delivered a critical hit.

Speed!

If it could kill with one blow to the fatal weak spot of any monster, it was a useful technique.

However, it could get problematic if the monster endured the attack. The attack was a method which could only be used with high level of skill and concentration. A narrow passage was enough to impede counteraction.

Weed grumbled as he flew.

“I truly am nothing but a mediocre Sculptor. If I had sculpted these wings a little sooner, I could have hunted in dungeons so much faster!”

However, this method wasn't something that could be used all the time, as dungeons have different structures. In spacious dungeons, even though he would be free to fly, the danger would be greater.

Ranged monsters could attack him if he unknowingly flew past them. His speed would only urge him into their rain of arrows, and Weed would die because of his speed and suffer disastrous injuries!

In addition, for monsters who survived the first blow, it wasn't easy to attack them again with his sword while trying to brush past them.

It was an idea that spontaneously popped into his head when he saw the monsters gathered within the dungeon of Kramador. Although it was a smashing success, Weed still berated himself for incompetence!

After he had cleared the second floor, he descended to the third floor.

Naturally, he made sure he did not overlook any of the japtens.

Since he was flying in midair, he was able to avoid many of the traps, even for traps that were activated magically. Before they even triggered Weed had already passed by and was long gone.

Ruuuumble!

From behind him, the boulder trap that had made Hegel fear for his life had been triggered.

Even though the boulder was rolling forward, Weed's speed was much greater. He was flying at least five times faster than the boulder.

Weed waited for the boulder and allowed it to come close enough.

"Fortunately, that boulder will help me find my way through this complex labyrinth."

He had heard from Rumi beforehand, how the others had fallen into a trap. While they spoke, he heard an interesting tale, all the while, he had been looking for a way to save them.

Within moments, he saw a passageway where a large boulder had destroyed part of the passage and was stuck.

"Rumi is probably on the other side of that boulder."

Weed took a deep breath as he flapped his wings.

No matter how he looked at it, the boulder which looked to be about 10 meters in height, was impossible to destroy.

Even if he flew to build up his speed then crashed into it, though his destructive powers would greatly increase, it was obvious the boulder in front of him would not break, and he would only turn into a piece of beef jerky. And if he survived thanks to his Resilience and Perseverance, if he was crushed underneath the other boulder that was rolling towards him from behind, the pressure would spell his definite death!

"That's no good."

Weed reached into his pockets and pulled out a sculpture. It was one of the Fine pieces he crafted and kept when he was making sculptures in Thor Kingdom.

It was a sculpture of a young female adventurer laughing happily.

Weed mercilessly twisted the neck of the sculpture.

"Sculptural Destruction! Add additional stats into Strength!"

– You have used Sculptural Destruction.

The pain of destroying a Fine sculpture! The grief!

5 Art stats have been permanently lost. Fame has been decreased by 100.

His Fame and Art stat were consumed and converted into Strength!

The muscles in Weed's stubby legs and arms began to inflate like balloons. His chest became muscular and his thighs bulkier.

His Dwarven body was unusually muscular, it surpassed the body of a Barbarian. In fact, the only strange factor of his physique was his extremely short appearance.

"Let's go."

Weed unfurl his Wings of Light and flapped it slightly.

Since the boulder behind him was rolling closer and closer, he didn't have time to hesitate.

Weed flew rapidly towards the boulder and struck it with his sword.

The spectacle looked liked a shooting star was penetrating through the passage.

Claaaaang!

In a single strike, half the boulder was destroyed. However, because it wasn't completely destroyed, Weed's body was hit with the recoil impact.

The recoil impact was not the end of his troubles. His body collided with the remaining boulder.

"Dammit! Nothing ever goes right for me."

His Health was reduced by two-thirds.

If it wasn't for his Resilience and Perseverance, as well as the Dwarven racial characteristics, he would have experienced death for sure!

As he flew as fast as a shooting star, Weed had faltered.

After all, he was still Human.

'Do I really need to crash into it at such a fast speed? Wouldn't it be fine if it was a little weaker?'

His fleeting hesitation reduced his speed, and as a result, Weed fractured

his body instead of destroying the rest of the boulder.

If Weed was able to cast magic, he would have been able to destroy the boulder more effectively, but since he couldn't, his body was forced to suffer for his attempt.

With his battered body, he spread his wings once again. Since the Wings of Light did not receive any damage, he was able to extract his buried body in an instant.

“Let's try this one more time.”

The boulder behind him had rolled much closer, so he didn't have time to do anything half-heartedly. Nevertheless, in that short space of time, he accelerated 30% times faster than he had before.

“Whatever happens, happens. If I die, so be it, but I will take down this damn boulder with me!”

Death was something all Dark Gamers feared most.

The agony of losing experience points and skill proficiency.

Weed felt the same way, however the current situation was 'all-or-nothing'.

In order to completely destroy the boulder, Weed flew towards it at full power, reassured by the fact that he will get resurrected by 'Power to Reject Death' even if he loses his life.

In addition, Weed focused all his strength and speed at the point of his sword. The point of his sword started to quiver, and because of his Moonlight Sculpting skill, the sword was enveloped with beams of light.

Claaang!

Then the other half of the boulder was destroyed in a single slash.

*

“Hey Rumi, how much Health do you have left?”

“About 350.”

“We're gonna die soon. After all dungeon exploration is dangerous.

Looks like we're gonna die without another squirm."

"Damn. If we were in a wide plain instead of this narrow passage, there would've been no way we would've gotten caught in this spider web crap."

Hegel and the rest of his party were tightly wrapped up in spider webs like mummies, with only their mouths free!

As they were awaiting their deaths, they heard an extremely loud noise — as if a thunderbolt had crashed down before them. Without delay, a shockwave swept past them and shook the entire pathway.

"Wh-what's going on?"

"I don't know. Could it be that Weed-oppa has arrived?"

"Rumi, how could Weed-oppa know where this is and find us?"

"Because I told him."

"That means he has fallen into the same trap as we did? Wasn't the sound earlier was of a boulder crashing? It seemed like the sound came from the same direction where the boulder was..."

"No way. How could the likes of a low-level Sculptor come into this dungeon."

"I'll try to send him another whisper."

"That's a waste of time."

Rumi sent another whisper to Weed, but she did not receive any response. At that time, Weed was preparing to unleash all of his strength.

"Maybe not after all."

"Probably not."

Then they heard another sound. An explosion so loud, it felt like their eardrums were going to burst!

The fragments of the boulder that had shattered flew everywhere as the passage shook. Their bodies which were bound in spiderwebs and suspended in the air, bounced from side to side.

The lump of rock that had blocked the entrance as a result of the trap had been destroyed.

They suddenly heard a voice.

“So I found you properly.”

“Weed-oppa?”

“Just stay still. I’ll free you soon.”

With a swing of his sword, Weed severed the spider webs that had immobilized the bodies of the party members in midair.

Although they had been lowered to the ground, there wasn’t a chance for them to regain their senses.

Weed continually swung his sword and cut away the heaps of spider webs that clung to their bodies. He was removing the thin silk on people’s bodies by swinging his sword.

Although it was hard to believe, it really happened.

As even the silk covering their faces was peeled away, they could see a dignified Dwarf of muscular stature standing before them. It was a Dwarf holding a sword that looked longer than his body.

Every time the Dwarf swung the sword, the silk on his colleagues was peeled away.

It could only be described as sword skill that verged on the miraculous.

Hegel asked with a hint of disbelief in his voice, “Is it really Weed-hyung?”

His mind was still muddled and his thoughts were in a disarray. Even so, since Weed had appeared and saved them while they were totally helpless, he felt grateful.

But just then, a huge lump of rock came rolling into the passage entrance.

It destroyed part of the passage, and once again blocked their escape.

“Weed-hyung, what about that rock?”

“Seems like it’s the trap I triggered.”

“We’re screwed! What did you come in here to do. Hyung.”

There was no time to even be relieved at receiving salvation.

The spiders that had withdrawn swarmed and crawled out of small holes in the ceiling and walls. Simultaneously, spider silk descended upon them like a curtain and completely enveloped the whole area.

A unique attack that rendered the body completely immobile like a mummy had begun.

Weed extended both arms.

“Thread winding!”

An Intermediate Sewing skill.

The technique for acquiring additional materials!

A technique that wound the spiders’ freshly spewed silk and made skeins.

The silk extracted from the spiders was wound into a sphere, sealed with cloth, and was being loaded into Weed’s backpack.

Hiss hiss hissssss!

Since their silk didn’t have any effect, the spiders made threatening noises and crawled down on their silk. However, Weed didn’t bat an eyelid.

A lot of strength was loaded into the Dwarf’s short and thick thighs. Right before his calves were about to burst!

The spiders chose the wrong time.

He was covered in wounds from breaking the boulder and his clothes were also considerably crumpled, but that was no problem.

“Sword Dance!”

The fourth of the Imperial Formless Sword Technique.

Weed’s movements became like flowing water. Sword Dance was a skill that added explosive power to the truly dance-like movements.

All the spiders that touched his sword was blown away. Each and every one, without end.

As the sword flowed on without stopping, the power of the skill was reaching its peak..

The sword that weaved forcefully and lithely between the spiders!

Although the sight of him stepping forward with short legs and swinging his long sword was amusing, it was impossible to laugh while watching his great power.

Weed was effortlessly swinging his sword as he leapt between the spider webs. The sticky and elastic spider webs were cut away like rotten string.

“Move. I don’t have time to waste on the likes of you!”

With the exception of the paralysis and spider webs, the small spiders weren’t threatening.

The Sculpting Blade that demolished the enemy’s defensive abilities. Thanks to the Blade’s special characteristic, the spider webs couldn’t do him much harm, and thanks to his Tailoring skill, he was even collecting spider thread at the same time.

Weed, who broke through the small spider swarm, faced off with the Elfin Queen Spider.

A powerful monster with a level in the late 380s!

Big hairs were heavily forested on its twelve legs, and the head portion was incomparably terrifying and grotesque.

It was this monster that forced Nide to give up resisting and left him to despair after confirming its stats.

However, Weed’s bounding steps became even faster.

“Don’t block me. I’ve gotta recover my expenses!”

He had increased his strength with Sculptural Destruction, and a Fine piece at that.

It was the Weed who even ordinarily despised piffling around while

hunting, so in a time like this, he had to go completely crazy with hunting. If only for the sake of extracting the expense of the lost Fame and Art stat, there was no time to delay.

Then, the Elfin Queen Spider turned around and began to hastily scurry away.

Scuttle scuttle scuuuttle. (Sound of Spider Queen running away)

It wasn't that it was funny just because it was a spider, but its fleeing speed was terrifyingly fast.

The spider, which took to fear especially well, characteristically chose to run away rather than fight. Even if a prey other than Weed were to appear, it would initially flee if the prey tried to resist. Facing the prey after waiting until the prey had completely drained of strength was the Elfin Queen Spider's method.

Even as it did so, it moved towards the opposite side of the passage as it spewed forth spider silk that was thicker than a forearm.

“Kaiser Sword!”

Weed used the mana he had left to fall back on his most powerful attack.

He swiftly pierced the vital point of the Elfin Queen Spider, the rear point where the spider thread came out.

— You have delivered a critical hit.

The Kaiser Sword that had its power maximized through Sculptural Destruction!

The horrible destructive power that equaled the ultimate attack skill of the Magicians, Mana Burn.

The Elfin Queen Spider's huge body trembled.

Claaaaang!

An explosion, flash, and tremor even greater than when he broke through the boulder that was blocking the passage burst out.

The best that Hegel and the group members could do was to crouch down and block their ears. However, the explosions and light didn't stop with that.

“Kaiser Sword, Kaiser Sword, Kaiser Sword!”

The final form of the Imperial Formless Sword Technique that he used even by consuming his own Health and Stamina after his Mana had run out completely!

He was hunting the Elfin Queen Spider relentlessly through the barrage of Kaiser Sword.

– You have delivered a critical hit. 29% additional damage.
– You have delivered a critical hit. 47% additional damage.
– You have delivered a critical hit. 82% additional damage.
– You have delivered a critical hit. 114% additional damage.

This was the reappearance of the single point attack technique– all those attacks were bombarded on a single point!

He was attacking a precise point through the invocation of an extremely difficult skill while mindlessly chasing the rapidly fleeing Elfin Queen Spider.

Although Hegel and the others weren't able to see it because they had their heads ducked down, the attack technique that Weed was currently demonstrating could be called the strongest attack.

The damage that increased through Kaiser Sword with Sculptural Destruction and his Sword Grinding skill. All of this attack power was applied to the single point attack technique.

With its exponentially decreasing Health and increasing injuries, the Elfin Queen Spider's movement speed was markedly diminished.

It might have tried resisting if it had the strength since escape had

become impossible, but in the face of such incredible damage, it staggered a few steps forward and then died.

The Elfin Queen Spider's body turned to grey light, and from it poured out sapphires the size of duck eggs and a waist-high pile of relics and gold coins.

Weed collected the loot with lightning speed.

“Wahhh, although he said he was a Sculptor...” Hegel moaned as he clutched his head.

It was as if his mind had gone dumb; Hegel couldn't think. Though he said he was a Sculptor, what the hell did it mean that he could collect spider silk as Sewing materials.

“And those athletic movements... it wasn't skill, but real sword technique.”

The majority of users fought while relying on in-game skill. However, special fighters used their own power and were able to optimize their fighting even with skills. In a case like this, the difference they could show in their fighting was incredible.

While holding the same sword, a normal human and a trained swordsman fight. The result would already be decided. Even if their bodies and equipment were on par with one another, with the practiced person's judgment, sense, and experience, they could only show a world of difference.

Even in Royal Road, if an expert of fighting in reality and a normal person hunted monsters, of course the difference would be apparent.

Maintaining the optimal distance, making minimal evasive movement, and using an attack method that let them draw out their maximum strength! The mindset with which they hunted would be different, and fundamentally, just the way they moved was extremely and completely different.

The majority of people weren't up at that kind of level.

From their days as a beginner, they would become used to the character and become experts at skill use as they developed more and more. As they hunted repeatedly, the method with which they fought with monsters would become increasingly proficient.

That you could catch a monster that you had hunted hundreds of times before much more easily than a type of monster you were fighting for the first time was this kind of logic!

However, Weed or the SwordNoobs didn't need that process.

“All you've gotta do is knock it down.”

There wasn't a speck of sympathy in those who ignorantly knocked down the monster.

*

“He must've succeeded in the hunt.”

“Let's go and see.”

After about 20 seconds had passed, Selsia picked her body up. Following her, the other party members walked to where Weed was.

They felt something like awe.

The fact that they were feeling intimidated because of this mere Dwarf was laughable, but it was the truth.

If it was someone they didn't know, they wouldn't have even dared to approach him.

When they had neared him, Weed was wrapping a bandage around his body. He was using the technique of holding a bandage in both hands and winding it around his torso, arm, leg, neck, and back. He rubbed herbs on thickly and was deep in meditation with his eyes closed.

Skill mastery of Bandaging!

The skill that brought even competent Warriors esteem if they raised it to Intermediate – Weed had mastered it through his combat labors.

His Health and Mana were being steadily restored.

Although they'd approached Weed, upon seeing how he was so heavily wounded, Selsia couldn't dare disturb him.

"What should we do... It looks like he got really hurt from fighting with the Elfin Queen Spider."

"We can't even treat him cause we don't have a Cleric..."

It happened when they were fretting helplessly.

After he'd recovered just 8% of his Health, Weed opened his eyes.

They were narrow and sidelong, slitted eyes. Weed's eyes weren't originally like this; his eyes normally appeared bright and gave off a clear image. Now, his eyes were changed because of the Art of Sculpture Transformation.

The life in the narrow and slitted eyes was bleary.

"I don't have time to play around like this. I've gotta recover my expenses!"

After taking a long, deep breath, he staggered as he walked to the passage where the Elfin Queen Spider had emerged.

His ankle must've broken in the thick of battle, as it was dragging on the ground. If not for his Perseverance and Resilience, it was an injury that would have already rendered fighting, even moving, impossible.

"Something like a broken ankle will probably reattach itself with time."

Weed plowed on as he used his sword like a cane.

Since he had experienced a broken ankle or wrist over a hundred times, he knew the state of his body better than anyone. Therefore, he was going to continue fighting.

*

Choi Ji Hoon was having a date with Lee Hyun's little sister, Lee Hye Yeon.

He fixed her electric appliances, and had become friends with her as he taught her the things she didn't know in Royal Road. Although they

weren't on couple terms yet, their relationship was very close.

While drinking strawberry milk, Lee Hye Yeon asked, "Oppa, should I show you my personal talent?"

"Personal talent?"

"Yeah. I wanna show you my imitations, like what comedians often do."

Choi Ji Hoon couldn't control his considerable expectations.

"You're really going to do it for me?"

"Yeah. First I'll express the sound of a person walking from far away through imitation."

Lee Hye Yeon spoke after slightly licking her plum-colored lips.

"Clap. Clap."

"..."

"Next is the sound of a car starting up. Vrooom!"

"..."

"This is the sound of an airplane taking off. Swoosshh!"

The click of a picture being taken, the riing of a phone call, the boom boom boom sound of a drum being played, the bark sound of a dog cry, the meow of a cat cry!

Choi Ji Hoon laughed himself to tears.

The imitations weren't at all similar, but seeing a girl of such innocent and youthful appearance earnestly doing the gag was delightful.

'This child, she has charm.'

Although he had met plenty of girls, the feeling of being sucked in like when he was with Lee Hye Yeon was a first. It seemed like he would have no regrets even if they lived their whole lives together.

'I would be happy every morning when I open my eyes, hear the chirping sound of the birds, and be able to see the fully bloomed flowers.'

The figure of a man who was completely immersed in his fantasy!

It was to the point that he was worried that he might just be a normal oppa here by Lee Hye Yeon's side.

Choi Ji Hoon asked casually, as if it wasn't a big deal, "What's your ideal man?"

If she couldn't reply properly, he was prepared to ask her what she thought of him.

Lee Hye Yeon answered without hesitation.

"Height about 187 (6'1") and weight 78 kilograms (172 lbs), it'd be good if his attire suited him well. His ankles have to be thin, slightly slim body and muscles. For hobbies, cooking and cleaning. Annual income around 200 million won (\$190k), financial businessman. Will an age of about twenty-eight do?"

"..."

"I'm joking. I like a family man. Everything else is fine as long as he's to my liking. If need be, I can work and feed the family."

"A family man?"

"Yeah. A man who'll only look at me and love me."

Choi Ji Hoon was speechless.

In terms of eligibility, he had more than anyone. He had confidence in his appearance as well, and had the charisma to charm any woman.

However, those kinds of conditions held no meaning for Lee Hye Yeon.

'Apart from the things I've had since birth... I'm really a worthless person.'

This had become an opportunity for Choi Ji Hoon to turn himself around.

Just then, he met a familiar face over Lee Hye Yeon's shoulder. From the time he'd known, spent, and met with Lee Hye Yeon, this was the primary person he feared to even meet in his dreams!

It was the first among the SwordNoobs, Jung Il Hoon.

Jung Il Hoon, who'd come to the city to buy a present to give to Cha Eun Hee, had caught him red-handed.

“Oppa, what're you thinking about?”

“Huh? Mmyeah.”

“Your face went really blue, are you okay?”

“I-it must be the lighting.”

“There aren't any blue lights here... anyways, I'm going home now.”

“You're going already?”

“Yeah. Because my oppa gets worried if it gets too late.”

“Should I take you home?”

Choi Ji Hoon spoke as if he considered that a novel idea he'd thought of himself.

‘No matter what, I have to leave this place.’

An instinctive struggle to survive!

Lee Hye Yeon got her bag and stood up.

“You don't have to do that. From here, it's only five stops on the bus. I don't even have to transfer.”

“I'll see you home on a taxi.”

“Save your money. Why would you waste money on something you don't need? You would go back on taxi after dropping me off, right?”

Choi Ji Hoon couldn't lie and say that wasn't true.

Even if he tried to ride the bus, he'd never done so in his life, so he didn't even know what the fare was.

In his preschool, elementary school, and middle school years, a chauffeur had dropped him off in a limousine.

In high school, he'd ridden his motorcycle. Although it was a dangerous ride with a high chance of an accident, his bodyguards and an escort of police cars were behind him.

The most frugal means of transportation he'd used was a taxi.

His imported cars at home were taking a long break in the garage.

Somehow, he'd become the inheriting son of a business franchise CEO. He couldn't tell her the truth because he was afraid that she might become prejudiced or hostile towards him.

Although he didn't dislike the time he spent comfortably on these modest dates, he'd never felt a painful regret like this before.

"I'm going first. Go home safely."

"H-Hye Yeon."

Just when Choi Ji Hoon stood awkwardly to take her home anyways, he saw Jung Il Hoon wagging his finger and stopped.

He was even saying something. The blatant words his lips conveyed were clear.

'If you run, you'll die.'

*

After he'd seen Lee Hye Yeon off, Choi Ji Hoon approached Jung Il Hoon, his shoulders cringing and his eyes trembling. Without a doubt, he was the picture of a prisoner.

"It's hot. Let's walk a little."

"Yes, hyung."

They headed towards a nearby park.

For Choi Ji Hoon, it was an incredible relief that they didn't ascend into the back mountains.

'At the very least, it's better that I was caught by Jung Il Hoon and not someone else.'

He was the first instructor and had a strong sense of responsibility. Since he himself was courting someone, he was unusually considerate.

Fish were swimming peacefully in the clear, park lake.

'I'm jealous of you guys.'

At this moment, even Choi Ji Hoon was jealous of the fish.

Jung Il Hoon moaned loudly with a drawn face, "Do you... like Hye Yeon?"

"Yes, that's right."

Choi Ji Hoon didn't make any excuses.

They might not be in a dating relationship, but he was certain that the feeling of love had blossomed in his heart.

"So that's how it is."

Jang Il Hoon didn't speak for a long time.

Choi Ji Hoon's body, which had been trembling like a leaf, gradually relaxed.

'I survived.'

He hadn't been thoughtlessly beaten. So with the optimistic hope that he would make it to the other side safely, he tried carefully moving forward.

After a moment of silence, Choi Ji Hoon gallantly straightened his chest.

"As long as Hye Yeon likes me, I want to try being in a honest, serious relationship with her."

"In the end, you..."

"I'm sorry. Hyung-nim."

"It's fine. What reason is there to be sorry to me. Love is a matter for those involved. And if it doesn't come to dating?"

"I'm in love with her."

Choi Ji Hoon explained how some expressions of Lee Hye Yeon were so beautiful to him.

It was an explanation that spanned a long 10 minutes. He even spoke honestly of the empty feelings he'd felt while meeting other girls.

"I'm still young, but I think she's a girl who'd be hard to find again in my

whole life. More than anything... Even now, it's like I can still hear her voice. I think of her when I sleep, too.”

Choi Ji Hoon realized something as he spoke.

Lee Hye Yeon was different from other girls. He realized that if he lost her, she was a precious person he would never be able to meet again, and also just how enthralled he was with her.

Jung Il Hoon clapped his shoulder with a thickset hand.

“Alright. It's fine if you're that determined. A man doesn't have to talk pathetically about this and that.”

“Are you giving me your permission?”

“What do you mean, permission. I told you that love is fine if those involved like each other.”

“Thank you very much. Hyung-nim!”

“Ah, but you know...”

Jung Il Hoon spoke genially, “Come to the dojo starting from tomorrow.”

“What?”

“If you're a man, you should pay a little attention to your muscle fitness too. Do you think a flaccid body will do.”

“It's not flaccid...”

It was a body trained with basketball, soccer, swimming and all sorts of sports.

Jung Il Hoon shouted sharply, “It's weak! With that level of fitness, could you win against about 3,000 thugs if they lunged at you while in the middle of a date?”

“3... 3,000 of them?”

“No matter the situation, you have to be able to protect your girlfriend. Even if a war broke out, a drought struck, a flood happened, earthquake, even if a tsunami were to rise, you have to save your girlfriend. Are you prepared for that much?”

“N-not yet.”

“I shall raise that kind of strength and courage in you. It’s too bad all I can do for you is this kind of small help.”

“Thank you very much.”

“If if they find out the truth that you like Hye Yeon, then even the students will diligently come to help you like it’s their own business. You’ll have no lack of sparring opponents, so come early at dawn. That way, you can receive the teachings from at least one more person.”

Sparring with the instructors and their 500 trainees!

Choi Ji Hoon’s face drained of color.

He thought he might understand the meaning of what it was to come to the dojo.

“Surely your feelings of liking Hye Yeon isn’t fake, right?”

“It’s real.”

“It’s fine if you want to run away. You can run away. That means you don’t have to come out to the dojo.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. Since we can just go catch you.”

“ ... ”

Chapter 5: The Pure-White Beauty

Kramado Dungeon.

Intermediate monsters called Kramanoims appeared on the 1st and 2nd floors.

That alone was enough to call it more than a beginner dungeon; a veteran's hunting ground. However, dangerous traps and even monsters in the late 300s came out from the 3rd floor onwards.

They wouldn't have met the Elfin Queen Spider if they'd taken a normal path, but it was still an asphyxiatingly dangerous dungeon.

If it was just up to Hegel and the others, they would choose the path that would take them back out!

“Huff huff.”

“Please slow down a little!”

However, they were now advancing even deeper into the dungeon.

Granted, the way in front of them was perfectly cleaned out by Weed. It was destruction that didn't leave even 1 tiny baby spider alive. As for the monsters, they couldn't even sightsee them, and the traps were completely destroyed.

That was because Weed had given Nide a separate task.

“Nide.”

“Yes. Hyung!”

“As you go forward, dismantle the traps.”

“What about the fighting?”

“I'll take care of it. Just keep moving on ahead and dismantle the traps. Leave all the monsters alone.”

“Yes, hyung. Please leave it to me.”

For Nide, a Thief who explored dungeons and labyrinths as a profession, something like dismantling a trap was child's play!

He had also experienced a near-death crisis with the Elfin Spider Queen, however it was merely because Thieves had characteristically low attack power. If he had created an opportunity for an ambush after hiding his body behind pillars of obstacles to fight, he wouldn't have been able to win, he wouldn't have lost either. Even when the boulder was chasing them, if not for his teammates, he could have somehow squeezed himself into a small crack in the wall and escaped, though there would've been no reason for him to get caught in the trap in the first place.

The Thief, Nide, was entrusted with a task appropriate for his specialties, and worked to disable or destroy the traps as he passed by.

Weed was assigned to the remaining monsters.

- Weed-hyung, there are a considerable number of level 300 Morron Chasers ahead.

Nide also performed the task of scouting.

- How many are there?

- There are around 65 of them. With this many of them, it's going to be immensely dangerous...

- 3 minutes.

- What?

- I'll finish up within 3 minutes, so find me another monster mob.

- I understand.

Short and sweet!

When he was whispering someone, he made it short and straight to the point, however the time he was in battle was far more briefer than that.

Run up, fight, hunt and kill, collect the japtem!

There was nothing more frustrating than grilling and eating meat at a restaurant than having the meat suddenly stop coming in the middle of it. For Weed, the most stressful problem was running out of monsters while fighting.

[This refers to Korean BBQ places where you grill your own meat, there's nothing more annoying than running out of meat.]

In other battlefields, monsters didn't come out like they did in this dungeon. Since he didn't have to fight sparingly, it was something to be welcomed!

A week hadn't passed since the dungeon discovery, so double the item drop rate and experience were applied. The first discoverers got to obtain discovery fame and the very best items from the monsters, but as long as you came in within a week, the experience and item drop rate applied to everyone.

You could say that it was the gift the monsters that had grown with warm and full bellies inside the dungeon gave to outsiders.

"65 of them..."

Weed could take on that many Kramanoims easily. With that many it would take a significant amount of time to dispose of all of them.

"Summon Dirtman, Fiery Pebble!"

Weed summoned the Spirits he'd personally created.

Since he had max intimacy with them, as long as his Mana held out, there was no limit to what the Spirits could do. It was a privilege only the Spirits' creator could have!

The Dirtmen were mostly low-class Spirits, and many of the Fiery Pebble Spirits came as intermediate Spirits.

A part of the ceiling collapsed and the dungeon became a sea of fire.

Chaos!

The Dirtmen rode on the Morron Chasers' backs.

"Get off!"

Although the Morron Chasers swung their spears, the Dirtmen didn't budge. That was because the Spirits of earth had nearly infinite Health. They squashed the Morron Chasers with their weight and slowed them.

The Fiery Pebbles went into the Morron Chasers' mouths. Searing flames spewed out every time they opened their mouths!

Every time Weed ran in, only the flames were left behind. He cut down the flame-engulfed Morron Chasers without using any skills and just his basic swordplay. That was because he needed to pool his Mana and use it for calling Spirits in this large-scale battle.

Dwarves had faster regeneration than humans, so thanks to their quick regeneration he could fight with basic swordplay and occasionally use Sculpting Blade.

When he was finishing the Morron Chaser group, Hegel, Selsia, Rumi, Bella, and Twitter ran into the nearby vicinity. The distance between them and Weed had shortened although they ran without stopping.

Thanks to being in the same party as Weed, they also received experience.

- – Your level has risen.
- – For being together with the party member who slayed a Morron Chaser with one blow, your Fame has risen by 1.
- – Your level has risen.
- – Your level has risen.
- A low grade boss monster, Morron General, has been massacred by your group.

Their experience was rising so quickly that they were terrified to check their information windows.

With the exception of Hegel, the level 200ers were electrified and couldn't believe whether it was a dream or reality.

By the time they'd caught up to him, Weed was already running off again.

Running as he wrapped bandages, with eyes closed for meditation, and using the defense skill Close Eyes Tightly, he managed to save a little Health even in the middle of battle!

As long as you weren't blind, it was normal to always keep your eyes open if you weren't sleeping. Since he was raising the efficiency of his

fighting as he forcibly closed his eyes, it was absolutely ridiculous.

If you carefully examined Weed's fighting method, it makes you wonder if it was made for humans to imitate!

"He doesn't rest."

"He's probably not human."

"He's a Dwarf."

Hegel became irritated listening to Rumi, Bella, and Twitter's admiration.

"What the hell."

He really couldn't wrap his head around how the situation had become like this.

Common sense!

Although he'd grown up since youth hearing often that he had no consideration, at the very least he had common sense.

Whenever he tried to use his common sense, his head just got muddled up.

"Though he said his profession was Sculptor..."

Hegel suddenly remembered something he'd said to the Black Lion guild members just 8 hours ago. It had been on the chat channel of the Black Lion Guild!

*

While they were resting after hunting Kramanoims on the 1st floor, Hegel had chatted with some people he knew.

Provence: Hegel, where are you now?

Hegel: Ah, yes. I spoke to you about this before. I have to explore a dungeon with friends from my school...

Provence: Oh, that was today?

Hegel: Yes. I've come to a dungeon in the Plains region of Dale Kingdom.

Do not be surprised, hyungnims, but I was the first to find an undiscovered dungeon.

Provence: Really?

Ject: That's a bit surprising, Hegel.

Shen: Have you already grown this much?

As large as the Black Lion Guild was, there were many people who recognized Hegel.

Finding an undiscovered dungeon was a rare and glorious deed.

Shen: Approximately what level of dungeon is it?

Hegel: It's a low-level dungeon. Although I had expectations, jeez. It's about perfect for level 200s to come play. Whatever.

Hegel whispered quietly so his nearby group members couldn't hear him.

Ject: Don't disregard low-levelers. Even low-levelers get big quickly. You were also below level 200 not so long ago.

Hegel: I'm not disregarding them, I just mean it's a dungeon for low-levels to play in.

Provence: You must be getting the appetite for exploring an undiscovered dungeon. You also get tense from not knowing what'll come out...

Hegel: Ah, it's fine. It's a low-level dungeon anyways, so what would there be? I want to finish the dungeon exploration quickly and also return to the guild hunting ground.

When he was chatting like this, he heard a dignified tone through the chatting room.

Bindel: Are your friends strong?

It was the Dwarven Warrior Bindel, who ranked within the top 3 in the Black Lion Guild.

Hegel: No. They're weak. There's one Thief who has a higher level than

me, but besides him they're nothing special.

Bindel: Isn't your level over 300 right now? A Thief that's higher than level 300...that's amazing.

Thieves were a tough job to raise.

If they joined a party, they could use close-combat, but they often died because of their weak defense. The risk of exploring alone could not be compared to hunting with a party.

Bindel: What kind of build of Thief is he? And what is his level?

Hegel: He's just a little over 300. His build is probably just mainly party hunting.

Hegel cut his words short since he didn't want to flatter Nide.

The Swordsman who shone as the battle's flower.

He had some contempt towards other professions, and although he himself knew Nide wasn't normal, he didn't want to acknowledge it.

Bindel: At least with a Thief it will be easy to explore the dungeon. Since you said something about not having a Priest.

Hegel: Well, it's just meh. Since I'm almost entirely handling the battle. And there's still 1 Dwarf who hasn't arrived yet.

Bindel: Oho, a Dwarf.

Bindel seemed to be quite interested since it was a Dwarf.

Bindel: Is he a Soldier or a Warrior?

Hegel. No, he's a Sculptor.

Bindel: Sculptor?

Hegel: Yes. He's a hyung I know, but he happened to be a Sculptor, so... he probably won't be much help in the dungeon exploration, but I squeezed him in for the sake of the school assignment. You know, I wish I could just breeze through and defeat just enough monster. After I'm just about done with my work here, I want to quickly go hunting with you, hyungs.

Bindel: Is that Sculptor's level high?

Hegel: It's...I don't know. I never asked. Wasn't really interested. Why are you asking?

Bindel: Because I worked with an impressive Dwarven Sculptor some time ago.

Hegel: So he made an awesome sculpture?

Bindel: Though that's true too... he was a Sculptor with an abnormal Charisma and ability to command troops. I also was following his orders mindlessly and before I knew it, we'd blasted through the dungeon in an instant. Not just me, but dozens of Dwarves were pulled in by his control.

Hegel: I'm surprised there's a Sculptor like that.

Bindel: That wasn't all. His cooking skills were also outstanding. If you just ate the food he made, the fighting became even more ridiculous. The miscellaneous ingredients that went through his hands became an invigorating meal that made you feel strength was surging into your body.

Hegel: For a Sculptor to have that level of cooking...

Bindel: It was really comfortable because he also repaired weapons and armors that were in bad shape. If that Dwarf repaired it for you, items that were damaged beyond its durability limits were also restored.

Hegel: What? Durability limits can be restored? What are you talking about... is there such a thing?

Hegel didn't know that items past their durability limits could even be restored.

Provence: Bindel hyungnim, does that mean durability limits can be restored?

Ject: So you can return completely ruined weapons or armors back to perfect condition?

The majority of the Black Lion guild members didn't know this. Although the Black Lion Guild had a considerable number of high level users like a prestigious guild, they didn't know much about repairing the

durability limit.

In the first place, there were hardly any cases where the durability limit of weapons or armors lowered by a lot while hunting. On top of that, they had never met a Blacksmith who could repair durability limits.

In order to repair the durability limit, you had to raise the skill level to at least intermediate mastery. For a craftsman with that level of skill, they could earn a fairly large sum of money simply by making and selling weapons or armor. There had been no cases where someone was willing to repair the durability limit, which wasn't much help in making money and was just cumbersome.

Bindel: Anyways, there was such a Dwarven Sculptor.

Hegel: Surely not, hyungnim! Versailles Continent is wide, so there can only be one Dwarf like that. But the hyung I know probably isn't a Dwarf like that.

He had boasted to his guild members like this just 8 hours ago!

Hegel was devastated.

“This is far worse than than the case Bindel-hyung talked about!”

He was simply resentful that this kind of thing would happen to him, of all people.

*

They hunted a variety of monsters as they roamed about in the expansive third floor underground labyrinth. Once they entered the heart of the dungeon, there were dangerous traps, and boss-grade monsters were crouching in each place like that.

Weed and Nide deliberately fell into those traps and massacred the boss-grade monsters there.

It was a hunting method of complete monster annihilation.

If even 1 monster was left, it was somewhat galling, stifling. Like when you wash your face but don't wash your forehead, you can't feel refreshed.

Besides, there was a double experience bonus applied!

Weed was getting a large amount of experience and items from the boss monsters.

Thanks to Nide destroying the traps, they gained additional fame, skill, and experience as they safely cleaned out the dungeon.

Those who were following were also able to gain experience, fame, and the japtem that hadn't been completely picked up.

In this fashion, the Thief Nide completed the dungeon 3rd floor map.

- – The Kramado Dungeon's third floor basement has been mapped for the first time.
- Fame has increased by 75.
- Mapping skill proficiency has improved.
- Experience has been increased.

That means they have gone through every single passage there was. They had completed the perfect occupation of the Kramado Dungeon.

“Huff huff.”

“Thi-this exploration is now finally over with!”

Hegel sank to the ground.

A dungeon exploration spanning five days!

Even considering the time difference that was four times faster than reality, almost a whole day had steadily passed since they'd come into the capsule room at noon. It was midday in reality, when the sun was hovering in the middle of the sky outside.

“It was a really long day.”

Everyone could sympathize with Nide's words.

They had never felt that hunting was this scary and gruesome before. They had also formed belief and confidence in themselves. Instead of always hunting safely with their Health bars filled up, they had chased down monsters like their tails were on fire.

Although they did it with Weed taking the majority of the fighting, when the others had enough Mana and Stamina, they had also participated in the fight.

‘Hunting is fun.’

‘Will I be able to try this kind of hunting again.’

Even though it was scary, the thrilling pleasure could not be denied.

Hegel’s legs were knocking together.

“Good job everyone.”

Twitter smiled as her dimples showed.

“Yeah, you too. Since the dungeon exploration is over too, I think I’m going to go home and rest up.”

They planned on catching up on the sleep they’d lost. However, Weed raised his sword silently and was walking away somewhere.

“Oppa, where are you going?”

“I have to hunt.”

“Bu-but the dungeon exploration is over.”

“The double experience time hasn’t ended yet.”

“But it’s already noon.”

“There’s no school on Saturday.”

“ ... ”

Bella butted into the peculiarly flowing atmosphere.

“But oppa, if you keep going like this, you’ll ruin your body.”

“Body?”

“Since we’ve stayed up the whole night, you got to go home and at least have a nap. You also have to eat.”

“I ate earlier. And slept too.”

“When?”

“At dawn. I went home, made food for my little sister, slept for 2 hours, and came back.”

“ ... ”

That meant when the group was taking a break and resting during the dungeon exploration, Weed had returned after eating and even sleeping!

In order to play Royal Road for a long time, body maintenance was essential.

*

“Come to the masquerade the Law Department is hosting! Freshmen can enter at a 30% discounted price.”

“There is Slavery Blind Dating in the Microbiology Department, which has lots of pretty older sisters. Only those younger than the older sisters can participate.”

[Slavery Blind Date is an event where one student ‘buys’ another and makes them do whatever they want as their ‘slave’, all in good fun.]

“The Social Physical Education Department is having a super strength show in the Recreation Club Crew.”

“Look here! An opportunity doesn’t come day in and day out! Bare-handed fish catching that you can do during the festival period!”

It was the day of the Korea University’s festival.

This could not be a more unpleasant moment for Lee Hyun.

‘In the end, this day has come.’

After finishing school, he usually had free time right afterwards. He would play Royal Road as much as he wanted. With sleep adjustments, he invested about 12 hours a day into Royal Road. Since he couldn’t help but play for less time than other Dark Gamers, it was essential that he spend his time sparingly. He even raised his level to level 358.

But to think that he was helplessly forced to stay at school for the festival duration!

It felt like a prison to Lee Hyun.

“Examination hell is no big deal. If a man is indeed ceaselessly imprisoned, then does that mean he is an existence that cannot help but live?”

A question about existence!

Lee Hyun was having a philosophical thought for the first time in his life.

Other little kids raised their sensitivity as they played with the neighborhood puppies. When they saw the napping dogs, they were also dipped into speculation about the routines of animals.

However, Lee Hyun had not lived a life like that.

The law of the jungle!

If he saw a dog, and it was an easy target, the first thing he thought of was doenjang.

[Doenjang, fermented soybean paste, is a brown, thick paste. Depending on how it is prepared, it can be savory, sweet, or spicy.

Japtem does not endorse the eating of dogs.

Remember the cultural difference – although the majority of new-generation Koreans frown on eating dogs, there are still a significant number of older Koreans who do eat dog meat.]

Dog and doenjang. Like the relationship of ramen and egg, it was a naturally occurring process of association.

The ten year old Lee Hyun who gazed with pleasure at the dogs that approached with their tails wagging if you threw them a few bones!

‘That puppy looks like its meat broth will brew well.’

Although it was a festival everyone was enjoying, Lee Hyun just waited for it to end quickly.

“Dishwashing squad, mobilize!”

Lee Hyun was in charge of managing the bar.

His responsibility had grown because he was older than his teammates and had shown ability since the bar preparation.

“Alright!”

Students used rubber gloves washed the cups and bowls. The bowls in the store were rented so they had to thoroughly wash them before use.

“When should we start receiving customers?”

“The girls will be ready in 10 minutes!”

Business would begin as soon as the female students, who were entrusted with serving, arrived. Even as they were making the appetizers, they heard music and the sound of firecrackers outside. Many people were coming and going past the outside of the tent bar. There were far more students from other schools and outsiders than students from their school.

Finally, the female students, who had changed in the dressing room and had put on light makeup, appeared.

The college girls appeared wearing a white veil and a wedding dress!

The college girls each walked toward their close friends.

“Don’t just stand there blankly. Take off my veil!”

For some reason, the male students felt their hearts thump as they took off the veils.

The female students had instructed them in advance.

“It doesn’t really mean anything. It’s just because the man is supposed to take it off to get that feeling.”

“I know!”

The male students threw back the veils.

“You look different when I look at you like this.”

“Well tomboy, you look elegant when I look at you like this.”

“Wanna die?”

The group members also exchanged jokes without reserve.

Since the female students' wedding dresses had been personally handmade, they weren't that pretty or the designs weren't really impressive. Even so, they were similar imitations and gave off slight impressions of a young bride.

All the female students came out, and Seo Yoon, who had gone in last, hadn't come out.

“ ... ”

The conversations in the bar stopped. Even the students preparing appetizers in the kitchen and the students cleaning the tables with rags were speechless.

It was because very many eyes were drawn to the dressing room as they waited for something.

Click.

Seoyoon carefully opened the door to the dressing room and walked out.

In that moment, the men were captivated.

She was the woman of every man's dream.

The beautiful skin that looked like it could only be maintained by drinking dewdrops that were purified by about 8 filters!

Seoyoon had light makeup on her face.

This was a common misconception men make; they think that makeup is plastic surgery.

Makeup adds expression and color to the face. The light makeup on Seo Yoon made her own beauty seem all the more beautiful.

The face that was extremely beautiful even in its normal, bare state, was now difficult to stare at for a long time.

Although her eyes, nose and lips were far too beautiful, they merged together and manifested in complete harmony. She was a beauty who made them wonder what the peak of natural radiance was. Their

breathing stopped, and they felt like they wouldn't have any regrets even if they died like this simply by looking at her face.

In addition, the thin fabric of the wedding dress evoked a stunning figure from the shape of her body.

It felt like a dream every time Seoyoon walked forward. Even if you knew that she was pretty even when she went plainly, after getting dressed up, her beauty was enough to make you lose your senses.

The men's mouths went dry.

They were enormously moved, like a person who discovered water after not drinking for a decade, and not just water, but honey water!

The miracle of the century was here.

The line of the dress from the thin fabric that swept from the legs to the waist, chest, and collar bone was perfect.

With the enchanting beauty Seoyoon possessed, her forearms alone could be considered sexy!

The most beautiful face wearing the veil was flushed pinkly with bashfulness.

Every time Seo Yoon walked forward, the dress made a swish, swish sound. She walked forward towards Lee Hyun with her head bowed.

"It's a goddess."

"She's a goddess."

Sounds of admiration came from around the room.

The female students murmured their envy.

"That dress, the works of a world-renowned designer Marie-Ange Chloe."

"Ugh... It's really too pretty a dress."

The boys were deeply sympathetic.

"A world-renowned designer!"

“Impressive. Impressive!”

Then, just as enormous respect for the designer was forming!

Seoyoon went to Lee Hyun and raised her head a little. The clear light of her eyes were visible.

Anyone could see that it meant she was asking him to take off her veil.

Chapter 6: Slave Date

As soon as Lee Hyun took off the veil, the customers rushed into the tent bar.

“It’s time to start business, right?”

“The bar is open, yeah?”

They asked the customers who were waiting in line to wait for 10 minutes. Since there was no news after waiting 15 minutes, the customers started to push their way in.

“Whoa!”

“It’s Seo-Seoyoon.”

Seoyoon was a celebrity that no one in Korea University did not know.

“Your order, please.”

The female students in charge of serving were running around in dresses.

“Customer, please order!”

“Are you not going to order?”

Even after being pressed to order food, the customers were only captivated by Seoyoon and were just staring.

The visual shock from the stunning beauty!

When the female students brought the menus to them and urged them to order, they were once again surprised by what they saw.

“Live Sea Eel, Wild Sea Bass, Steamed Crab, Roasted Eel, Seafood Black Bean Noodles... Is this a real menu? It says spicy stew will be added when Sea Bass is ordered...”

“Yes. Today’s menu is primarily centered on seafood. The main menu changes daily throughout the festival. However, items like fruit appetizers, Korean omelette rolls, and vegetable pancakes can be ordered at any time.”

[T/N: Korean omelette roll is basically the Korean equivalent of tamagoyaki, the Japanese rolled omelette.]

“For now, please give us 3 servings of Live Sea Eel.”

“3 servings of Live Sea Eel here!”

A burner and grill were quickly set on the customer’s table. Then, the live sea eels were cooked along with seasoning. Every time the eels squirmed, they mixed with the seasoning. Once they were cooked, the nutritious and perfect sea eels were eaten piece by piece.

If they were going to do a bar, Lee Hyun wanted to make profit and bring out the quality of the food.

“Even though it’s a festival bar, it can’t be done half-heartedly!”

It was food customers would pay money to eat.

It couldn’t be made artlessly. It was a job that could only be done if he took responsibility for ensuring taste and nutrition.

Since no one but Lee Hyun could carve the sushi off the sea bass, he was the busiest one.

He was slicing things on the cutting board so artistically!

The sea bass that had its meat deboned flickered its eyes, still alive. It was skillfully cut so as to avoid damaging the nerves.

Today, the wild sea bass, snow crabs, and sea eels were delivered from market merchants with whom he was normally acquainted with. The freshness of the ingredients was guaranteed, and he could obtain reliable wares at a bargain price.

“You were really a college student?”

“Anyway, advertise us to the students. I mean, tell them to buy products from the market.”

Thanks to their generosity, he could use quality ingredients. But since it was a school bar, the prices couldn’t be expensive.

In Royal Road, everyone could make money by hunting, so it didn’t

matter much even if you ripped people off. However, asking students to pay expensive prices was a problem of conscience.

In the end, he reduced the servings moderately and adjusted the prices so they weren't too high.

Nevertheless, the customers were satisfied.

“Here you go.”

“Please go and take their order at table 9.”

Seoyoon also went around taking orders in her dress.

The force of a Goddess gushed out, even when she was simply walking around!

There were many cases where customers spilled their food while staring blankly. It was a frequent occurrence for them to just stare at Seoyoon for several minutes as they drank their alcohol.

Every time Seoyoon walked by, she left behind a sweet lemon scent.

She only applied a light toner and some lotion for makeup. Nevertheless, she was still overwhelming with just a bare face, but today, she had especially sprayed on some perfume.

Seoyoon held out the menu for the customers.

“ ... ”

She stood still and waited for their order.

She was embarrassed by the gazes of the customers surrounding her, but she endured.

“Please give us a fruit appetizer.”

“ ... ”

Seoyoon lightly nodded and turned around.

Even customers who had a considerable amount of appetizers on their table were scrambling to make a new order. It was attributed to their greed to try to speak to Seoyoon once.

“The customers have been waiting for 30 minutes.”

“Chef, when will the steamed crab be ready?”

“It will be out shortly!”

Only Lee Hyun was being worked to the point of death. Because of the other students whose cooking speeds were so slow, he had to do 2 times, no 3 times the work.

On the first day of the festival, he couldn't sightsee the fireworks or the student's songs, and wasn't even been able leave the bar at all.

On the next day, even more customers pressed in early on.

“Please take our order!”

“We're ready to order here!”

Although the kitchen and tables were still busy, they had more time to spare compared to the first day.

The cooking had already been finished ahead of time, and plenty of side dishes had also been prepared. The alcohol was stacked up by the box and the tent had also been expanded.

Since the department sent around 10 people as reinforcements to do jobs like washing the dishes and cleaning the tables, the workload had decreased.

Lee Hyun felt the work's worth through the fun of making money.

‘The first day's profit amounted to 700 thousand won (~\$700). Even after deducting the rental fees of the bowls, etc., for five days, this much is left.’

The business right now was all experience for the future!

He knew plenty about how to treat customers and cook from his part-time jobs, but self-employment wasn't something to be taken lightly.

‘If I can't make a crazy success in special situations such as this, I won't be able to consider any sort of career in business from on!’

On the day of the festival when everyone else was enjoying themselves

and playing, he took responsibility of the bar with resolute determination.

They made a large profit on the second day as well, and, from the third day, at no time was a seat at a table empty. Even on the fourth day of the festival, it was impossible for Lee Hyun to sightsee the festival.

The sight of him must've been pitiful because his seniors grabbed the kitchen knife in his stead.

“Lee Hyun, we'll take care of this place so you should also go have some fun.”

“But I have been entrusted with this place.”

“Is this the Silla Dynasty or what, that you're displaying such a 'show no retreat' mindset? The festival isn't some kind of battleground either, so go have fun. The other kids are playing like they've lost their senses, so you should also enjoy the festival.”

Lee Hyun took off the apron and straightened his back.

‘The festival... there's probably a need to see what kinds of business the other departments are doing. Even restaurants need a lot of know-hows. The more diverse the information I have, the better.’

“Then I will leave briefly and return.”

“Just rest up today. It's already 6 in the evening. Since the bar is only set to go until 10 o'clock, we'll try and do the rest on our own.”

In order to avoid straining the festival's energy too much, the bars closed at 10 o'clock.

“Alright.”

Lee Hyun looked around the tent bar.

The tables were full of customers, and the students were hectically taking orders.

For the last three days, Seoyoon's popularity was definitely at its peak.

All the customers wanted to order from her. Due to that, the hardworking Seoyoon had received a break today and didn't come out to

the bar.

“Even if I’m not there, I’m sure it’ll run well on its own.”

As soon as Lee Hyun left the tent bar, he was swept along in the festival’s crowd— people who came with their families, students from other schools, and Korean University students who dressed up and were wandering around.

The campus that had been quiet was now clamorous. It was a place where the excitement of youth could be felt!

As if to breathe in that excitement, Lee Hyun took in a deep breath.

“Ah, how nice. The air is filled with the scent of money!”

A stage had been set up in the grass plaza where he had always unpacked his lunch, and bands were performing there.

Multiple teams from the Virtual Reality Department participated in the athletic meet, song festival, and play.

The results were disastrous!

They were eliminated in the preliminaries in the athletic meet, it was impossible for them to sing high notes in their performance for the song festival, and they said an audience of only a few elementary school kids had come for the play.

“Seems like those noonas didn’t practice.”

[T/N: Noona is a friendly, casual term for ‘older sister.’ Like hyung and oppa, it can be used for a non-family member.]

An elementary school kid wearing glasses with a sharp gaze even said something like this. “How sloppy.”

It was a play criticized by even elementary school kids!

That was the conclusive trigger that sent all the Virtual Reality Department’s support towards the bar.

*

It appeared that the other departments had done a lot of preparation in

advance, as they were hosting a variety of events.

The Department of Veterinary Medicine brought the characteristics of their department to life and were selling beef.

In the Department of Social Welfare, the students were pushing the wheelchairs of the disabled and elderly as they guided them. It was said that the department accommodated them in a nearby hotel or in their own houses as they personally gave them a bath and performed a meaningful deed that gave the people a gift.

In the Clothing Design Department, clothes they had made themselves were sold cheaply.

The music students were on the side of always having high popularity. Since the pretty female students were performing, there was a swarm of male spectators and they were a big hit.

Stages were set up here and there, and even the small events were unceasing.

Even a flea market that sold off unused products was lively.

It was when Lee Hyun's steps took him towards the flea market behind the main stage, someone beside him grabbed his arm and dragged him.

"Look, it seems like 1 more volunteer has appeared."

An announcer was in the middle of conducting Slave Dating on the stage.

The event crew had been choosing Slave Dating participants from the audience, but Lee Hyun had pushed through the crowd and barged in.

A total of 30 male students were participating in the Slave Dating!

The announcer pulled the mic close and shouted.

"It's time for them to show off their respective honed skills in the talent show. Your master can change depending on how cool a talent you show, so slaves, you should do your very best! Then let's start with participant number 1."

Lee Hyun received number 23.

He tried to resist and not go up on the stage, but because of the crowd's jeers, he inevitably went up.

'A fricking talent show, my luck today is the worst.'

What the hell was there that he was good at!

Well, the only thing he knew how to do was martial arts.

Lee Hyun's face hardened more and more whenever the other participants showed off their singing, dancing, playing musical instruments, magic shows, or comedy skits.

He was scared of the frosty look in the audience's eyes!

He wasn't a person with an extroverted personality, and he didn't have any individual skill, so his anxiety increased even more.

Stage fright. Since students from the same school were watching, it was more repulsive.

'Let's dance. Should I do the national gymnastics, at least?'

Participant number 6 did the national gymnastics first.

"Boooo!"

"Boring! Throw him off!"

Lee Hyun was relieved.

'It's lucky I didn't do the national gymnastics. Then should I sing a song? Seems like the classic < I will love you until the end > would be good.'

Participant number 14 sang that song first.

I could not even laugh~

I remembered your laugh each time, so I couldn't even cry~

Since if I'm sad, you might be pained~

Although Lee Hyun thought the participant had an outstanding singing ability, he wasn't able to get a high score.

Now the problem wasn't getting a good score. He just needed to pass this situation somehow.

"Now we'll watch participant number 23's talent show."

Suddenly it was time for Lee Hyun's turn. Since it was a short talent show, there wasn't time for him to think leisurely.

"Get me a knife..."

"What?"

"I will show you apple peeling."

"An apple. Is there an apple prepared? Yes, they're saying they can get one with a knife prepared for you shortly. Participant number 23's talent show is apple peeling. Everyone, please enjoy."

The nicely ripening apple and fruit knife the event crew gave him!

Lee Hyun rubbed the apple as he turned it around and around. Then, in a single moment— Sliiceeeee.

In a single breath the knife cut the apple and the peel slipped off.

When the blade grazed by, the apple peel fell, as if taking off its skin. There was no break in between or any residue left behind.

"Did you peel it already?"

"Yes."

"You peeled it really quickly. In any case, we've seen a nice trick!"

The announcer praised him to drum up the amusement. It was because of the thought of seeing a new trick after only watching commonplace talent shows of songs or dance.

The audience also applauded moderately.

'Phew. Looks like I was able to pass.'

7 more people did their talent shows after Lee Hyun, and then it was time to set the prices of the slaves.

The announcer lined up the slaves.

“Good looking people in the back! For those of you who think they look ordinary, please stand in the front!”

In accordance to the announcer’s words, Lee Hyun moved to stand in the front.

‘It’s probably better to be sold first.’

But other slaves had bounded up first, filling up the front.

A slave could be purchased by only one person from the audience!

The people with friends to purchase them already had prearranged the selection, so they went to stand in the front.

The people who’d come on their own were only Lee Hyun and a few others.

“Sold for 30 thousand won (~\$30) .”

“Sold for 15 thousand won (~\$15) .”

“The slave this time is quite valuable. 48,000 won (~\$48)! As for words for the purchaser, today you can really work them and get your money’s worth!”

Lee Hyun’s turn rolled around.

The announcer looked over Lee Hyun and sighed deeply as if depressed. Then he said into the microphone.

“If I were to tell you able the slave this time... It looks like he has good strength. I give up on a price. We’ll start from 10 won (~1 cent).”

A slave priced at 10 won!

Although the other slaves had started at a few hundred or even thousands of won, at least... Even though he knew it was a joke, Lee Hyun felt miserable.

But even at 10 won, no one was raising their hand.

“Here. 20 won!”

A middle aged woman with a child on her back within the audience

must've felt sorry for him, because she raised her hand.

Then a hand from another side went up.

“I've got 20 won and another 10 won more!”

When he looked at the place where the shout had come from, it was his little sister Lee Hye Yeon.

To call out 30 won with such emotion, all for the sake of family!

The announcer shouted, “Now, it is up to 30 won. Does anyone want to go for 40 won?”

“40 won!”

“55 won!”

“80 won!”

Since it was cheap, more people started calling out prices.

“175 won.”

“199 won!”

“390 won!”

“390 won! If there isn't anyone who'll bid more than 390 won, then the winning bid will be awarded as it is. I'll count from nine. Nine. Eight... Seven...”

A miserable price of 390 won!

As no one who would call out a higher price appeared, the announcer was going to award the winning bid.

It was when the countdown had gone down to two—

A girl in jeans, baseball jacket, and a hat jammed on, raised her hand.

“2 million won (~\$2,000)!”

“2 million won! I heard 2 million won. Did I really hear someone say 2 million won?” The announcer shouted excitedly.

The crowd's eyes also moved as one towards that girl. They thought it

was really definitely a joke.

However, when that girl took off the baseball jacket and sunglasses, sounds of wonder emerged.

“It’s Jung Hyo Rin!”

“Jung Hyo Rin came to our school festival.”

She, who sang on world-renowned stages and was called a fairy, Jung Hyo Rin, had called 2 million won in the Slave Dating. Lee Hyun was sold to Jung Hyo Rin like that.

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“Slave, your arm!”

“Yes.”

Lee Hyun hurriedly locked arms with Jung Hyo Rin.

They were so close that he could smell an alluring fragrance. They locked arms and cleared the crowd as they headed toward another location. There were constantly people trying to ogle at Jung Hyo Rin, and the attention was focused on them.

Jung Hyo Rin couldn’t stop smiling.

“Hey, you’ll show me through the festival, right?”

“But I don’t know it well either...”

“It’s fine. The fun part is trying this and that while wandering around together. Although I’m a college student too, I haven’t been able to come to school much. You see, it’s my first time sightseeing a festival, though there have been many times when I sang at a festival.”

“Why don’t you just go around with someone else. Since I’m a busy person...”

“Slave, shall I return you?”

“...”

An explicit threat to return him!

For the slave, there was no freedom of choice. He couldn't get onto the stage again or return the 2 million won, either.

"I'll show you around the festival."

"You should have said that earlier."

Jung Hyo Rin understood Lee Hyun well and had gotten used to the way to handle him.

'A threat is the most effective!'

Jung Hyo Rin clung onto Lee Hyun's arm tightly. Lee Hyun could feel her body every time he walked. Her body which possessed not a shred of fat and her cushiony chest kept bumping into his arm.

"Hey, Master. Is it alright to do this, even though you're a celebrity?"

"Do what?"

"If we go around holding arms, it could create a misunderstanding."

"What kind of misunderstanding?"

"In general, if you see a guy and a girl and attached like this..."

He heard people's voices.

"Jung Hyo Rin-ssi, she's really nice."

"They say she donated 2 million won to the charity event Slave Dating."

All the proceeds from the Slave Dating were to be used as charity donations.

"Just look at them holding arms."

"Shhh! It's fanservice. Fanservice."

"Since it's the kind Jung Hyo Rin, she's treating him well like a boyfriend even though it's a guy like him."

"A newb slave that wasn't even getting sold has completely grabbed a golden chance, jeez."

Although there were reporters at the Korea University festival, they passed by them easily.

“We thought she had nothing to do with university festivals ever since she debuted and soared up from her first album, but for Jung Hyo Rin-ssi to be in a place like this... it’s surprising.”

“The fairy known worldwide is truly kind.”

She radiated plenty of dazzling charm.

Lee Hyun, who had left after working at the bar, didn’t just not suit her, but he really didn’t suit her.

It wasn’t possible to think otherwise, all the more because there had been times when she had brushed off proposals from Hollywood’s famous male actors. It was Jung Hyo Rin, who’d been far too clean when it came to scandals or things to do with men.

It was she who only loved songs.

“After holding arms with a guy once, it’s a little thrilling. I wonder if everyone holds arms for this kind of feeling...”

“What?”

“I am just talking to myself.”

Lee Hyun had heard what she had said.

‘Although it’s my first time holding arms with a girl too...’

As he passed over twenty-two years of age, his contact with women was solely with his little sister.

The life that had come in contact with women only in the faint age when he’d carried her around on his back when she was a baby, changed her diapers, and given her baths!

“Shall we play human whack-a-mole?”

“I don’t want to...”

“It’s 2000 won (~\$2).”

“...”

Two crumpled sheets of bills emerged from Lee Hyun’s pocket.

‘So a date with a woman costs money after all.’

For him to use 2,000 won, it seemed like this would be a day he wouldn't be able to forget for the rest of his life.

It might even be something that could resurface in his moments of death in old age.

Jung Hyo Rin raised the plastic mallet without releasing his arm.

“Ya! ya!”

Lee Hyun tried to stand by and watch, but as he kept seeing her plastic mallet only missing, he couldn't help himself from focusing on it.

“A little more to the left.”

“Alright.”

“Now they're about to come from the right!”

“I saw!”

“The second from the left! It's not going in right now. Catch it quickly!”

“I said I'm going to do it on my own!”

The competitive spirit of the two was raging up.

“Dang, I missed 12 of them.”

“You should have moved quicker.”

“I'm saying it was like that cause you kept making me talk on the side. If you just hadn't made me talk, I wouldn't have missed.”

“Try it again.”

“I'm really going to catch them all.”

Even though Jung Hyo Rin was swinging the plastic mallet even more fiercely than before, she didn't release his arm.

As he was trying to remove his arm because he thought it might be uncomfortable, Lee Hyun's hand grazed her hand slightly. Then, Jung Hyo Rin grabbed Lee Hyun's hand tightly.

It was something that happened so naturally and intimately.

“Che! I missed three of them.”

“You did well though.”

“What do you want to play next?”

The couple that had grown friendly while catching moles!

Perhaps because Lee Hyun also felt comfortable, he suggested, “Wanna get some plushies by shooting BB-pistols?”

“Sounds good.”

300 won (~30 cents) per shot!

Lee Hyun checked the prices and chose the cheapest game.

“Mister, please load ten bullets for each of us.”

This time, Jung Hyo Rin took out her own wallet and paid. It was an action that struck Lee Hyun deeply.

‘So she’s a nice girl...’

Jung Hyo Rin raised her pistol with one hand.

“I will shoot first.”

“Okay.”

The bullets Jung Hyo Rin shot missed the plushies exquisitely. Even when they hit a plushie by some chance, it didn’t fall over.

This game was originally like this.

It was a war between the owner and the customers who were recklessly coveting the plushies!

After Jung Hyo Rin’s failure, Lee Hyun didn’t aim for the big plushies.

‘A medium-sized plushie was roughly 780 grams (~1.72 lbs). It’s a weight I’ve felt countless times whenever I sewed eyes onto plushies. It won’t be easy to take it down precisely with a BB-pellet.’

Even if it hit the center of the plushie, the force was not enough.

It was only possible by shooting a barrage.

Since he was throwing away 300 won per shot, Lee Hyun aimed carefully at a small sparrow plushie and knocked it down.

‘Success.’

Lee Hyun planned to give the sparrow plushie to his little sister.

‘Looks like I can brush off this year’s birthday present with this.’

But Jung Hyo Rin snatched the plushie.

“Are you giving this to me?”

“...”

He couldn’t bear to refuse the sparkling eyes and beautiful expression that was asking him to give it to her.

“Y-you can have it.”

“Thank you.”

Jung Hyo Rin embraced the plushie preciously.

The two of them also rode the merry-go-round and watched a play by college students.

On the roof of Korea University’s main building they had the opportunity to see the night view of the city and the festival.

Even when the fireworks were embellishing the sky, Jung Hyo Rin didn’t let go of Lee Hyun’s hand. She didn’t confess her feeling for him; this was her way of conveying what she felt.

Lee Hyun thought, ‘She must really like holding hands.’

*

Jung Hyo Rin went up onto a small stage by the lakeside.

It was a shabby stage without much of an audience. There was only one master piano as an instrument.

“Shall we sing a song?” Jung Hyo Rin asked after sitting on the piano’s bench.

Since they were still holding hands, Lee Hyun also sat next to her.

“What song?”

“Any song... please tell me what piece you want. Any song is fine, but a happy piece would be nice. I feel so happy right now, I’m in a good mood.”

Jung Hyo Rin had toured around the world for concerts. With her magical voice, she made 60 thousand people go wild in her concert, and in some socialist countries, crowds of hundreds of thousands of people gathered in the plaza and fully enjoyed the freedom of music.

Although she was charming and shone incomparably bright when she was singing her song, once she left the stage, she went to sleep alone in her lonely hotel room.

Music was her only friend, a means to soothe her emptiness and loneliness. She sang of happiness, but she was actually very lonely after she sang.

She had the feeling that she would be able to sincerely sing happily if she was with Lee Hyun.

“Will you let me hear < Dialogue of Eyes >?”

Jung Hyo Rin’s debut song was < Dialogue of Eyes >.

It was also the song Lee Hyun’s little sister liked the most.

It was released when Jung Hyo Rin was still a sixteen-year old high school student, this song became a worldwide hit and she became a star.

Although her subsequent songs received even more love from the public, there were many people who couldn’t forget the < Dialogue of Eyes > a youthful lady had sung.

“I’ll sing it for you. In return... I’ll play with only one hand.”

For reasons, I didn’t want to let go of your hand.

There are no words in this world.

Just us repeating the meaningless murmurs.

Please say what you want to say.

Since I cannot listen.

Jung Hyo Rin's voice spread out like magic, amply rich and beautiful as it was enveloped in the melody of the slightly lacking piano which she played with one hand.

No gestures allowed.

Dialogues does not exist.

Connections made by the glint of the eyes.

Please show me the light of your eyes.

Earnestness, pain, despair, anger, regret, desire, intimacy, love Please express all these feelings through your eyes.

A crowd, drawn by the music, walked towards the stage.

They found a place to sit quietly in order to avoid making even a slight disturbance.

Then they pulled out their cellphones and sent texts to their friends.

'Jung Hyo Rin's singing on the lake concert stage. Come quickly!'

What shall we choose when we eat.

Please tell me if you've eaten well, and where we must go with your eyes.

If we look into each other's eyes, we can read our feelings.

A world without misunderstandings and distortions.

So I can understand you, your feelings while looking into your eyes, we must make an effort.

Even so, we can never truly understand each other's thoughts.

Even if you see an action you cannot understand, I can accept it.

Because I may also do the same.

Looking at the light of your eyes is an uncertain vagueness.

They aren't words without feeling, please illuminate my happiness.

So that I can see myself in your eyes.

Even for just a short while, don't divert your eyes from my face.

One heart in one glance.

Please illuminate my heart.

The closer your shining eyes are, the better.

As ever, she sang with a magical voice.

She wasn't the youthful high school student she had been, but a woman who was now learning to truly love.

The magical voice did not convey sadness and grief, but was weeping to be taught about love.

If hard words cannot make the heart quiver.

Then, I want to speak with the light of my eyes.

Hear the sound of your eye's voice.

Because it will furrow far more deeply into your heart.

I will be able to convey what words cannot.

Speak with your eyes.

I want to see the light in your eyes.

Jung Hyo Rin did not look at the piano.

She looked at the Lee Hyun who was sitting right next to her, as she sang with her sparkling obsidian eyes.

Chapter 7: Smith's Curiosity

Weed returned to Nekan Castle with a haggard face.

The hunting without breaks inside Kramado Dungeon!

He could still gain a considerable amount of levels and items, but with his exhaustion, he incurred an Overwork Hex and fell into critical condition. His current Vitality and stats weren't even a third of what they originally were.

Weed entered a Tavern after purchasing a sack of peanuts, an onion, and garlic.

"Give me one half stout!"

He ordered beer and took a swig.

– A small amount of Vitality has been restored.
You are in a state of severe Overwork.

He felt he might live now.

'It wasn't just hunting; the festival was wearisome too.'

The first festival of his youthful college life and it was boring to him!

'I can't relax like the others when it's time to make money. If I ate whatever I wanted to eat, played everything I wanted to play, and did whatever I wanted just like other people, then when would I be able to make money?'

These days, even little kids knew about the gap between the rich and the poor.

In Weed's perspective, a child who comes to kindergarten riding the foreign car their parent drives is full of confidence and dignity. However, a child who comes riding a school bus is somewhat intimidated.

"You...."

"Huh?"

"You use a Monami ballpoint pen for writing."

[T/N: Monami is the name of a Korean company. It's a little more expensive to use a Monami.]

“My mom was laid off... Next month, I'll replace it with a Japanese-made pen.”

It was a conversation between kindergarteners from Weed's dream.

In truth, having money or not made a difference in even little things.

When eating the food on their lunch trays, a kid from a well-off family will dip their sausage in ketchup and eat it first. But kids from poor families ate their bean sprouts or vegetables first.

The obsession that the sausage needed to be saved for last.

Lee Hyun acknowledged his inferiority complex.

‘Kids who grew up drinking white milk can never be the same as those who grew up drinking strawberry milk.’

His heartfelt theory on strawberry milk struck a chord in his heart!

As he drank his beer, Weed recalled the things that happened in the festival.

Jung Hyo Rin's live concert lasted until dawn.

It kept going as encores continued to be called out, and since she was grabbing onto Lee Hyun's hand, he had to stay with her.

‘And that wasn't all, was it?’

If it had just ended there, his vitality wouldn't be so severely exhausted like this.

*

On the last day of the festival, the seniors spoke to Seo Yoon.

“Seo Yoon, you've gotta enjoy the festival too. Are you just going to work here?”

90% of the pub's customers came to see her, but her upperclassmen gave her freedom.

“At least go out and take a look around. Everyone should participate in the festival together. Is there maybe someone you would like to go out and play with?”

In response to her seniors' goodwill, Seo Yoon reflexively stared at Lee Hyun.

Lee Hyun immediately smiled brightly for her.

“Alright. Don't worry about the pub and go enjoy the festival.”

The pub was a success and since the orders went well, it seemed there were almost no ingredients left. If they closed early at 8 pm, he could go home and log into Royal Road.

Lee Hyun was one to refuse even a date with Seo Yoon if he had 2 hours to spare in Royal Road.

“Lee Hyun.”

The reserve forces who came back from the army did not miss the delicate matter.

[T/N: In Korea, all able men are required to train in the army for two years. They come back as reserve forces.]

“Yes. Sunbae.”

“Although we can't believe it, looks like Seo Yoon wants you. Go guide her around the festival.”

Since he couldn't refuse his reserve force upperclassmen, Lee Hyun was forced to take on the role of a festival guide.

“Argh, I envy him.”

“Ah, I can guide you well too...”

In the midst of the seniors' and customers' envy, Lee Hyun and Seo Yoon left the pub together.

She changed from the wedding dress into casual clothing, but her beauty was still enough to make the eyes of the men who came to check out the festival pop out. The men who passed them looked back again with

expressions of disbelief and did not move.

“Shall we go?”

Lee Hyun suddenly grabbed Seoyoon’s hands.

Jung Hyo Rin had liked holding hands to the point of not letting go, so he held Seo Yoon’s hand first believing that she probably wouldn’t dislike it. It wasn’t manly courage, but the festival crowds were large, so his main reason was that it seemed they were going to get separated if they didn’t hold hands.

“...”

Soft and tender, her hands were surprisingly warm.

He felt Seo Yoon’s body go rigid after he grabbed her hand, but she soon relaxed.

“Is there something you want to do?”

When Lee Hyun asked, Seo Yoon couldn’t answer.

Although her voice got stuck whenever it came to speaking, it was also because she had never looked around a college festival before.

“Then I’ll guide.”

Lee Hyun went to play Whack-a-Mole with Seo Yoon because the price was not very expensive and the reaction had been considerably good when he played it with Jung Hyo Rin.

The students of the mole event who had seen Lee Hyun before were resentful.

“Argh...”

“It’s the same guy from yesterday.”

“Sunbae! It’s that guy who came with Miss Jung Hyo Rin yesterday... And today he’s with Miss Seo Yoon.”

The people from the moles event could not hide their severe jealousy.

As if it wasn’t enough that he was with Jung Hyo Rin yesterday, so today

be brought Seo Yoon.

Moreover, Lee Hyun's behavior was incomparable and extremely despicable.

'Yesterday when Jung Hyo Rin was holding onto his arm, he acted as if he was shy... but today he's enthusiastically holding onto Miss Seo Yoon's hand.'

'Pretentious bastard.'

'He's the player among all players.'

The moles surged in anger.

"You have to grab onto this plastic mallet and hit them."

Under Lee Hyun's advice, Seo Yoon raised the plastic mallet.

Pyok pyok pyok pyok pyok pyok!

[T/N: A pico hammer makes squeaky noises on impact.]

It was extremely different from playing with the clumsy Jung Hyo Rin.

Even while holding Lee Hyun's hand, Seoyoon didn't miss a single mole with her swift strikes.

Compared to her simpleton personality, her athleticism wasn't normal.

Every time they got hit by the pico hammer, the moles simultaneously felt bitter and sad.

'It wouldn't be as unfair if it was a guy with a handsome face or had a whole lot of money.'

'What kind of charm does such an ordinary guy have...'

They also went to shoot plushies. Thanks to yesterday's experience, he was able to easily shoot down a small carrot and a kiwi plushie.

"Gift."

Lee Hyun gave Seo Yoon the carrot plushie as a gift.

"I have to give the other plushie as a gift to my little sister, so you can only have one."

“ ... ”

Seoyoon grasped the carrot doll firmly in her hand.

Since it was the last day of the festival, Lee Hyun took Seo Yoon to sightsee the festival until late at night.

They were such a sight that a lot of people stared at them with looks of wonder as they went around various events.

Seo Yoon didn't burst into radiant laughter, but she was blushing bright red. When passing a crowded place, she went where Lee Hyun led her, and she even grabbed his hand tightly.

“Would you like to dance?”

Lights were brightly lit on the grass lawn where the main stage was.

A ballad piece was playing and couples were dancing, so Lee Hyun also asked Seo Yoon if she wanted to dance.

Seo Yoon nodded slightly, with a face flushed red.

Lee Hyun held her hand and brought her closer.

Their bodies moved naturally in beat with the music.

The piece wasn't extremely hard to dance along to, but they were both clumsy. They couldn't determine who was going leading, so they both stepped on each other's feet a couple of times.

“ ... ”

Lee Hyun was very uneasy because he didn't know when Seo Yoon would explode.

*

“The accursed festival is finally over. Seems like I'll be able to return my usual routine now.”

After drinking his beer, he stretched and yawned.

It was a restful and restorative when in an Overwork state. While in a Dwarven body, drinking beer and resting had a huge effect.

‘When my body goes back to normal, I think it will be the right time to release the Sculpture Transformation.’

*

Each race had its advantages and disadvantages. Dwarves were advantageous in terms of Vitality and Endurance, but because of their short limbs, they were considerably disadvantaged in actual combat. If one couldn't adapt quickly, that alone would make a fight more difficult.

Barbarians had the best physical ability. With their vast height and muscle strength, made their bodies optimal for becoming a warrior. However, they couldn't use Mana and have the disadvantage of being easily seduced by charms.

The Humans could be said to be right in the middle. They were good at using divine powers or magic and supplemented their weak points for each other while party hunting. Special races like Orcs, Elves, Fairies, or Hobgoblins were also in the spotlight, but the most commonly selected race was Human.

They also occupied the largest kingdoms and exerted the greatest influence in the Central Continent.

“They said the army of Demonic Spirits led by Daymond are currently engaged in a back-and-forth battle with the allied forces in Odin.”

“Fort Odin is showing its power, right?”

“Probably! Ain't the fort notorious for being impregnable. It'll probably be difficult to break through Fort Odin's line of defense even if they're giant Demonic Spirits.”

As the Versailles Continent fell into chaos, the allied forces gathered at Fort Odin to block Daymond and his Demonic Spirits.

Over 100,000 allied forces had gathered in one place, and another 100,000 reinforcement troops were concentrated on attacking them from behind.

Just the fact that some 10,000 attack spells were cast from Fort Odin

each time the Demonic Spirits made a charge alone was magnificent!

“Heroes, come to Fort Odin!”

“We welcome Magicians to join the war.”

The Empire of Prosperity Guild was in Fort Odin, including the gathered mercenaries. They were desperate because their territory would be stolen from them if the Demonic Spirits were able to break through Fort Odin.

Even nameless high-level users joined. Since massive amount of mercenaries participated, Versailles Continent’s attention was focused on Odin.

The overwhelming battles occurred daily from the walls of Fort Odin to a point where it was difficult to make a hasty prediction of the victor.

When the Demonic Spirits climbed the wall, the allied force’s defeat was predicted. However, the Demonic Spirits were barely driven back by the miraculous fighting spirit of the mercenaries, Warriors, and Knights.

The allied forces had been able to push the Resurrection Army back, but soon additional Demonic Spirits joined the battle and the allied forces had to retreat back into Fort Odin.

Battles by the regular armies of every kingdom were dispatched as expeditions to recapture territory seized by the Resurrection Army were also raging.

Dark Gamers had plunged into Fort Odin with a sword strapped to their waists, so the market for weapons, armor, and combat goods was skyrocketing.

The whole Versailles Continent was raucous from the aftermath of what could almost be called the first large scale war.

*

Weed pulled out the statue of Death from his bosom.

This was the reward he’d earned by defeating Death Hand in Kuruso. It was an item he suspected was related to another chain quest.

“It probably isn’t a quest that’s related with the Resurrection Army, right?”

The difficulty of winning the match against Death Hand had been considerably high. He wouldn’t have been confident of his win if he had made a normal sculpture out of wood or stone instead of a light sculpture.

“It’s an evil sculpture holding a scythe...”

The appearance of the sculpture brought considerable suspicion.

The Resurrection Army had first appeared at a place not too far from Morata. As adventurers discovered the original location of the Resurrection Church, the shape of their symbol was revealed.

It looked exactly the same as the sculpture Weed was holding.

It was bad for Weed if the sculpture had any connection to Resurrection Army!

He never thought it might be a quest to fight against the Resurrection Army who was fighting 100,000 allied forces.

“Surely it won’t be such a ridiculous quest...”

Weed’s expression became serious.

In all actuality, Weed hasn’t been able to complete a difficult and ridiculous quest without any sacrifices.

Even though seriousness hardened in the wan-faced Dwarf’s expression, it made his wretchedness worse.

An employee approached him.

“Customer.”

“Yes?”

“The merchant sir over there have sent you a pitcher of beer to drink.”

“...”

His miserable attitude went as far as to induce sympathy!

It was Weed, who had virtue, power, and charisma far from what heroes

possess.

After waving his hand to express his thanks, Weed drank the beer.

– Your body is becoming languid.

Taking a nap will increase the speed of recovery from fatigue.

His overwork and abused body kept demanding rest.

Weed made up his mind after careful consideration.

“Even though it’s a difficult quest, if I avoid it completely, I won’t be able to advance. Essentially, it’s because I’ve succeeded the previous quests given by Church of Freya that I’m where I am now.”

His battle with the Death Knight Van Hawk, Vampire Lord Tori, the war against Lich Shire and the Undead Legion, and even becoming the Lord of Morata were all related to quests he had accomplished.

If he hadn’t been able to find the Helain Cup in the City of Heaven, Laviyas, he might’ve become a Dark Gamer who only knew how to hunt.

Even way before that, if he hadn’t received the quest from Sage Rodriguez, he would have become a Warrior or a Knight and progressed normally.

Iron becomes stronger the more you temper it.

Whether it was increasing his fame faster than others by becoming a Sculptor or the difficulties he faced as he acquired Sculpting techniques, they were all precious related occurrences.

He did not want to avoid any quests.

‘Even if it’s really difficult, I won’t know before I try. Nothing will come out of it if I just avoid it.’

Weed cast his skill with resolute determination.

“Identify!”

Ding!

– Your skill has failed.

You have failed to identify the item due to lack of concentration.

“ ... ”

He was completely disappointed.

His elevated alcohol exhaustion had made the usage of his skill fail.

“Identify!”

Ding!

– Your skill has failed.

“Identify!”

Ding!

– Your skill has failed.

“Identify!”

Ding!

A wooden toy box.
The toy's appearance had been sullied by dirt.
It is the appropriate size for children to play with.
Artistic Value: Too shameful to mention.
Special Options: You can stop crying children.

A child around seven years old with candy in his mouth left a toy hidden underneath the fence.
“Hyung absolutely can't find out about this, because hyung will steal my toy again. Hyung is mean, he always takes my toy and breaks it. He's a really bad hyung.”
The young kid hid his toy while uttering bad remarks about his older brother.
It was a heartwarming scene communicating the bond between families.
The wooden box was hidden between thorns underneath the fence so it wouldn't stand out.
Then, Death Hand saw the toy as he was passing by and picked it up.
“This is... a wooden box worth using.”

Lost Toy

A toy a boy named Brave, who lives in Hagen Village in Sur Kingdom, used to play with.

If you return the toy to Brave, he will give you one of his precious candy.

Difficulty: F

Reward: Brave's Candy

Quest Restrictions: If play with it instead of returning it and get caught by little kiddos, you'll build

“GACK!”

He was so shocking that he completely sober up from his alcohol daze.

A sculpture he had identified with resolute determination yielded nothing but a rank F difficulty quest.

“Of all the places, I have to go all the way to Sur Kingdom... What a pain.”

It was annoying to go find the place just to solve a minor quest.

“A candy...”

Weed heaved a sigh.

Although he usually avoided annoying and common quests, since he has heard bad rumors about them, he never expected a rare request from Kuruso Kingdom to be an F-rank.

“But since I’ll be able to get there quickly if I fly... It’s a little better.”

Flying was only possible if he has recovered from exhaustion. If he crashed because his Mana flow got cut off while he was flying in the air with the Overwork hex, then it would lead to his death.

Weed decided to rest up while drinking beer.

“The cost of the beer I’ve had so far... Ack.”

He drank his beer while cracking peanuts and peeling onions and garlicks.

No matter what he did, there wasn’t time for any luxury or pleasure. Even as he drank beer in the tavern, he intended to recover his expenses.

*

Hagen Village, a village famous for its baking ingredients!

The town’s main products were sugarcane, flour, walnuts, grapes, corn, and the like. The quality of the produce was made to attract chefs. Now, homemade cakes, cookies, and sweet wine sold well.

It was a town where couples sought out intentionally to enjoy the romantic atmosphere.

“Oppa, eat a lot!”

“Honey, honey has to eat a lot too. Should I feed you?”

Couples were scattered everywhere like cockroaches!

Weed ignored them and walked with level shoulders, like a person who had a lover; a man who would come to buy a cake for his girlfriend.

“Please take a quick look at the cakes before you go!”

He didn’t forget to glance at the wares the peddlers were selling, either.

While wandering around, he spoke to aunties he met.

“Do you happen to know about a child named Brave?”

The uncles might not know something like the names of children. However, he had a feeling that aunties who had kids of a similar ages would have a higher chance of knowing children’s names.

“Brave? Jeez, has he gotten into some kind of trouble again?”

“What?”

“Him’s a nasty, mischievous prankster in the town. He pays no attention to what adults say. My child shouldn’t play with that kid, but...”

“Where can I meet Brave? I have a toy to return to that child.”

“It’s still early in the evening, so it’ll be difficult to meet him even if you visit his house... You’ll be able to see him iffen you go to the backstreet or the playground.”

It was a small town, but finding Brave wasn’t easy. Although he found and looked through all the places the aunties had suggested, he was still unable to find Brave’s whereabouts.

Eventually, he found Brave in a warehouse behind a bakery. The rascal was in the middle of stealing and eating bread while smearing tons of cream and bread crumbs around his mouth.

‘Found him.’

Weed said gladly, “Kid, this sculpture is a toy you’ve lost, right?”

“Huh? It’s a Dwarf. A Dwarf is talking.”

“You see, I found the toy you lost.”

“Your mustache is really funny. Are your legs shorter than mine?”

“This is your sculpture, right?”

Brave took the sculpture Weed had handed over to him.

Ding!

The quest “Lost Toy” has been completed.

You found and returned the toy to Brave, a boy in Hagen Village.

Quest Reward: If Brave is in a good mood, you will be able to receive one candy.

That annoying quest was completed.

Weed waited patiently to receive the candy.

‘It was a quest that doesn’t even pay the labor cost, but I can get about 3 coppers if I sell the candy at the store.’

Instead of a candy, Brave returned the sculpture.

“Yeah, this is mine. Although I thought my hyung stole it... But I don’t need this anymore.”

“ ... ”

“I’m no longer a kid. I’m eight years old. You see, I’ve passed the age to play with toys and the like. Mister can go play with it.”

Griiind!

The sound of Weed grinding his teeth could be heard. But he was patient, and remained patient.

The profits were greater the more you maintained the possible friendly relationships with the residents of Versailles Continent.

The basics of service mentality were friendliness, assistance, and dedication.

Endure even if you're angry, and if there was something unfair, you must never bring it up.

You could call it a grievous ironclad rule of a Dark Gamer.

"Even so, you should take this toy, since it's yours. Take it as a consideration of my sincerity; I came here especially to find you. Don't you think you should give me a candy?"

"I said I don't want to play with it!" Brave suddenly shouted. "Mister, do you want my candy that badly? How'd you know my cinnamon flavored candy was delicious..."

"Ahem."

"Anyway, I'm not gonna give you my candy, so you can take the toy and play with it. Oh yeah, try giving it to the drunkard mister Smith, who wanted that toy."

"Mister Smith?"

"He's just an old uncle with nothing better to do. But well, I guess he's better than a Dwarven mister who goes after a kid's candy."

Ding!

The Toy the Old Drunkard Smith Wants.

The toy the drunkard Smith from Hagen Village is asking for.

Smith who drinks in a tavern until he becomes dead-drunk, wants Brave's toy.

Difficulty: F

Reward: There may be none.

Quest Note: There is no penalty even if you abandon it.

Brave grinned as he added, "He's an old, incompetent uncle who always pushes left his alcohol tab unpaid. He doesn't have any family, either. I'll never get old and useless like him. Hehe!"

Weed breathed out a sigh.

An F-rank difficulty chain quest.

Since the tavern was nearby, he'll go in to see Smith at least once.

"Alright, Kid. I'll see you later then."

“I said I’m not a kid. And there probably isn’t any more reason to see mister anymore. If you maybe bring me the iron sword that I want, then we’ll see.”

Weed quietly put the sculpture in his bosom and disappeared.

Brave was intent on stealing another fresh bread from the warehouse.

After a short while, a dreadful Orc leapt out from the place where Weed had disappeared.

The Orc Karichwi!

A powerful existence that reduced even vicious criminals to gentle lambs with his face and body!

“KYAAAK, IT’S AN ORC!”

“Chwiik! Found you. Little human boy!”

Weed did not say much.

He gave him a scare, to engrave respect for adults into the very marrow of his bones.

*

When he showed the sculpture to the tavern’s drunkard Smith, a glimmer returned to his bleary eyes.

“Where did you get this sculpture?”

“It’s a sculpture a kid named Brave used to play with.”

“I did want to have the kid’s sculpture... Did you perhaps steal it from him?”

Weed shook his head.

After his transformation into Orc Karichwi, he cancelled his Sculpture Transformation and returned to his Human form.

“No. I found the lost toy with difficulty and tried to return it to him, but he said he no longer wanted to play with it. Brave told me an elder wanted this toy, no, this sculpture, so I brought it here.”

“Is that so. Will you lend me the sculpture to me for a bit? I wanted to examine it when Brave had it, but he only let me see it very briefly.”

“Here it is. You can have it.”

Ding!

The Toy the Old Drunkard Smith Wants has been completed.
The drunkard Smith got his hands on the sculpture he wanted.
Although it's still midday, you will be able to get a drink from him.
Quest Reward: Get it directly from the drunkard Smith.

– Your Fame has increased by 1.

Smith examined the sculpture carefully.

“This sculpture... I've seen it once before while traveling during my youthful days.”

“What?”

“Did Brave ever tell you where this sculpture is from?”

“He did not say.”

“This is a story goes back from 20 years ago. The time when I roamed the continent as a mercenary... Ahem! Back then, I was an extremely prominent mercenary. You might not believe it, but I even commanded a mercenary squad.”

Of course, Weed didn't believe it.

Drunks were one and the same— there was no one who hadn't been a big merchant or first-class mercenary in the past. Their boasts didn't encompass one or two days, so he agreed to his claims and let it slide.

“Under the command of Her Majesty the Queen, I executed the traitor Count Savoid together with the Royal Forces. There was a sculpture that looked exactly the same as this one inside Count Savoid's warehouse.”

“I see.”

“It's regrettable, but I didn't know what kind of piece the sculpture was

either. It's not as though I didn't have my suspicions... Do you think there might be a story about this if you went to check the local library?"

Weed somehow had a strong feeling the quest wasn't going to end here.

"Why don't you look into it a little for me? If you do, I'll tell you the stories in my old days as a mercenary."

Ding!

Old Smith's Curiosity.

The former mercenary, Smith, has questions about a sculpture he saw in his youth.

If you gather information about the sculpture and give it to him, it appears he will tell stories he gathered as a mercenary.

Difficulty: D

Reward: Smith's Story

Quest Restrictions: None

Chapter 8: Reconstruction of the Niflheim Empire

The linked quest already had 3 stages. It did occur to him that it was convoluted, however Weed continued on to the Kingdom's Library.

It held a considerable portion of the general history of the Versailles Continent, but you would have to personally search for information on individual histories.

Count Savoid (Sur Empire Year 436~Year 479)
Received his Knighthood at age 17.
Returned from fulfilling Knightly duties at age 20.
Inherited his territory at age 36.
Possessed exceptional talent for swordplay and horseback.
Executed for rising in revolt at age 43.

There was only simple information in the Biography section. He also read the History and War sections, but parts involving Count Savoid were missing, as if someone had intentionally erased them.

“Found it.”

“Where is it?”

“It says there's a treasure hidden in this area.”

Adventurers and Magicians who'd been reading in the library hurried to leave. There were almost 20 users who, like Weed, had come to obtain information in the library.

A jackpot was hidden somewhere, but he would have to invest a lot of time and recovering the costs was difficult— this was the situation while hunting inside the library for information. It was also a condition in where many basic information was lacking, or there was simply nothing to be read.

‘Seems it'll be difficult to find it this way.’

Weed was submerged in labor.

Finding a clue through a book was hard even for Adventurers with vast experience, so it seemed it wouldn't be easy for his Sculptor self to gather information.

'Is the method of my approach wrong? Alright. Since I'm a Sculptor, it might just be that I was supposed to look at the Sculptors first.'

Weed sifted through the art-related books.

« History of Monuments », « Excavated Carving », « Sur Kingdom's Proud Sculptures ».

He saw a book titled, « Ancient Sculptures » entangled among the many books he was reading. The contents of the book, although the name was different, there was information about the sculpture he currently had possession of.

Figure of Rest : Symbol of Religion

It is the symbol of the worshippers who followed the God Matallost, who guides the dead. They did not have a flag or pattern, but were famous for having a sculpture.

The Priests of the Matallost Church had strong holy power and can guide the dead.

After the birth of the continent's official language, rather than using their God's name, they also called themselves the Resurrection Church.

They weren't very high in public favor because they were close to and conducted research about Death. It was assumed they used as sculpture as their symbol primarily for preservation of secrets.

There was a story of some Matallost faith idol being special and sacred artifacts, very different from normal sculptures.

– You have acquired all of the required information for the quest.

He did flounder a little, but still finished the quest.

He went to the tavern and reported to Smith.

“This sculpture was apparently the symbol of the Matollost Church.”

“Whaddaya say?”

“It said it was a symbol of an ancient religion. And it might even be an idol.”

Ding!

“Old Smith's Curiosity” quest completed.

You have answered the former mercenary Smith's question about the sculpture he saw in his youth.

Now he will tell you the stories he knew of during his mercenary days.

– Sculpting skill proficiency has improved by 0.4%.

– Your Faith stat has risen by 1.

Since he could raise his sculpting skill proficiency while completing a quest, these kinds of commissions weren't all that bad either. Though it took up too much time for going to various different places.

“So that's what it meant after all. Hiccup.”

The old drunkard Smith was very intoxicated.

“As promised, please tell me stories of what you saw and heard when you were young.”

“Ayup! I was, ya know, a really reliable and well mannered Mer-mer-mercenary. I made lotsa money, too. Though I did use most of it buying drinks and women.”

With a loose-tongued way of speech, Smith told of how he came to be a mercenary and roamed the continent while fulfilling requests as a free mercenary.

For Weed, of course, it went in one ear and went out the other— there was no end to listening to each and every word of a drunkard.

After a long while, Smith finally spoke of the the main subject.

“This sculpture, ya see, at that time, the Count was going to escape through the castle's basement together with this sculpture. Haaah, I'm gettin' drunk.”

“Why do you think he did that?”

“I dunno either. Anyways I thought it to be really very strange. Hiccup. The alcohol tastes real good right now. What were we talking about again?”

With a befuddled look, Smith babbled on about more irrelevant stories

for a long while.

He boasted of his job as a mercenary, and a drunkard's preaching about the continent's drinks!

Smith's attention was directed at the sculpture once again, and as if he had regained his senses, he asked.

"Though I didn't see this sculpture after long while... you're not busy, are you?"

"I am busy though."

"Could you take me to solve this mystery?"

Smith pulled out a rusty key from his bosom.

"If I remember correctly... after that time, the basement was sealed, so you can probably only go in if you have this key. Can you take me there with you and solve the mystery for me?"

Ding!

Old Smith's Second Curiosity.

The old, drunkard Smith has a question about the last time he saw Count Savoid.

In order to answer his question, search the Count's mansion, find the basement, and dig up the secret.

Chain quest, leads to the long-cherished wish of the Matallost Church, which guides the dead, and the reconstruction of the Niflheim Empire.

Difficulty: A

Reward: A drink from Smith.

Quest Restriction: Limited to Sculptors. Quest failure upon Smith's death.

If it was Niflheim Empire, it was a great empire that existed a dozen years ago in the Northern part of the continent, where Morata was part of, and Weed was her current Lord!

The castle and villages went up in flames due to the monsters around and Bone Dragon who descended from the Forest of Darkness. The emperor tried to seal them using the Serbian Beads, but it only resulted in lamentable freezing of the entire Northern area. Under the attack of the cold, the monsters, and division of the people, the empire collapsed.

If the Niflheim Empire were to be reconstructed right now, the North

would stabilize on its foundation.

It was a little unexpected that a quest such as this would become available from a sculpture, and then linked to the Resurrection Church. But it wasn't very surprising. The Resurrection Church and the Matallost faith were churches that had originated in the North.

If he solved mercenary Smith's question, then he would also solve the quest relating to the reconstruction of Niflheim Empire.

'I'll be able to sell off Morata for a more expensive price.'

Weed nodded his head as he tore into a chicken leg as an appetizer.

"I will do my best to solve the mystery."

— You have accepted the quest.

*

The Savoid County was made into an enormous hunting ground. Sur Kingdom was infested with level 150 to 200 monsters, so a considerable number of parties were out hunting.

"Recruiting people to hunt inside the mansion. Preferring People with experience or courage."

Count Savoid's Mansion was a region-class dungeon. The max level of the monsters was 282.

The astral Knights, Soldiers, and even astral maids spawn there.

Weed entered the mansion with the drunkard mercenary, Smith.

"Arghh. My insides are gonna die of heartburn."

Smith complained as he followed.

"Won't you give me just one bottle of booze?"

"I don't have any."

Weed firmly refused. There was, of course, a lot of liquor in his rucksack. All because he made brandy or whisky whenever he saw edible fruit or wheat, etc. There were a few cooking items that sold well, and easy to store

like liquor. With its astounding taste, disinfectant properties, and since it even raised Health recovery speed, liquor received the most limelight among preferences.

Since well-distilled liquor could be priced expensively, it was no different from cash.

Although he distilled liquors in his spare time by plying his cooking skill, he was frugal with it to the utmost, to the point where if it wasn't SwordNoob or the other elder brothers, no one would even ask Weed for it.

"Ahem, my mouth is dry."

Smith grumbled as he followed.

In the old mansion, dust was piled thickly and pieces of furniture were scattered around. The mural was damaged to the point of unrecognition, and the chandelier had fallen to the ground, shattered.

"Fire Ball!"

"Cold Strike!"

He saw many other parties, but they were hunting ghost monsters.

Weed looked around the mansion a little before giving up. It was a colossal site, so it wouldn't be an exaggeration to call it a castle.

Weed had wandered through many castles of Vampires when he was in Todeum, but this was different from those castles, even the estimate of the number of rooms in the powerful Count's mansion was immense.

Weed asked, "Where is the basement?"

Smith just shook his head from side to side.

"It happened a long time ago, so I don't remember. Though, I might remember if I drink a bottle of booze..."

Weed frowned.

'Good-for-nothing alcoholic, drunkard!'

Other hunting parties were hunting all over the place in Count Savoid's

Mansion. If it was a basement they didn't discover, it was either meticulously hidden or had to be an extraordinary place.

'Even if it was discovered, it might not have been made public.'

They wouldn't have been able to enter the basement even if they found it if they didn't have the key. It was human nature to not want to do something that was good for someone else. Even if the basement's entrance was discovered, it was possible it hasn't been made public.

If so, Weed figured he had to cooperate with Smith to find it.

Weed opened his rucksack and pulled out a bottle of beer.

"Come to think of it, I do have liquor."

"Harumph. Give it to me!"

"The basement..."

"... I do remember. It's probably down by the staircase."

The place Smith had pointed out was the bottom of the stairs, leading to two additional floors.

Weed tried going behind the wooden staircase. There was nothing there, except thickly piled up dust. However, when he probed around with his hands, he could feel an imperceptible crack.

'So it's here.'

Weed cleared the dust and found a small key hole. Then, he placed the key he received from Smith and turned.

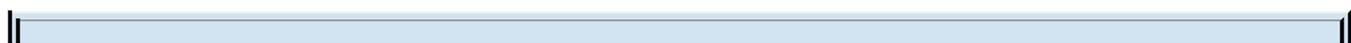
Creeaaaak!

He had to push forcefully to barely open the old door.

Weed entered the basement together with Smith and closed the door. He didn't forget to pull out the key, either.

Because it might be discovered by another party hunting in the mansion!

Weed was absolutely not one who would fall flat on his face when the prize is in sight.



You have discovered Count Savoid's basement.

Fame increased by 50.

Through adventure, experience has slightly increased.

“Aha! So this is the Count's basement.”

Smith had emptied his bottle of beer somewhere along the way and smacked his lips as if he was in regret.

“If it's a done deal, why didn't ya give me whiskey?”

“I absolutely do not have whiskey.”

Beer was at least common and cheap, but since decent whisky was at minimum a few gold, he had no intention of offering it.

Weed looked around the basement.

Many books were arranged in this place, which seemed to have likely been used by the Count as a secret study.

« The Basics of Flame-Based Magic »

« The Study of Wind Elements and its Affinity »

« Ten Law of Flatterly Elementalist Should Keep in Mind »

« Traveling the Versailles Continent on Foot »

« Money-Making Opportunities »

« Witch, the Sorceress Who'll Read Books for You »

He could tell just from looking at the titles, a variety of books were adorning the bookshelves.

Weed stuffed every book into his bag.

‘I'll make money if I sell them at a curio store or antique bookstore.’

Since the quest's next chain was determined, he packed them away cleanly.

He also searched the Count's desk.

There were gold coins worth about 300 gold in the drawer, and a carving knife as well.

‘I’ll have to sell this too.’

Weed was one to memorize the prices of a wide variety of items on the spot.

Even if a supermarket’s automatic price calculation system broke, if it was Weed’s store, there probably wouldn’t be a slightest reason to worry. It was all because Weed was the type who would thoroughly remember the buying price starting from the factory to the selling price, surtax, and even what applied to the “Buy 1 Get 1” marketing deal.

365 gold coins multiplied by 12 gold coins is 4,380 coins!

It was to the point where he made calculations in the blink of an eye.

When it came to money calculations, he beat math prodigies!

Weed saw a book spread open on the table.

« The Origins and History of the Matallost Religion »

He began to skim through it.

The ancient Matallost faith’s congregation was the largest compared to others who arose from rituals conducted by the people who held death sacred.

They considered death as returning to the embrace of their god... as the Matallost faith was adhered to as the Kingdom’s established religion, Warriors pay their respects to the Church before going out into battle.

However, the public perception of the Matallost church changed as the years passed.

Wars between tribes decreased, and a castle was built against invading monsters, establishing peace.

The Matallost faith became shunned as death was regarded with fear.

In addition, the Arpen Empire’s continent unification war, each kingdom competitively gave preference to the church in their own territory.

In particular, churches related to war received respect, and the Matallost Church was disadvantaged by its doctrine of being led and guided by Death.

Death became the last name the remnants of the Matallost Church yelled, and even mention of the name alone became abhorred in public regard.

Priest candidates of the Matallost Church decreased more and more, and the position became occupied by another Church.

The churches of Freya’s prosperity or of the God of Fighters, Belacus, increased.

...The Matallost Church lost its power, and the support of each Kingdom was severed. It was assumed they, who hid in the shadows, increasingly could not throw away their desire for power.

The power to guide through death!

They dreamed of revenge by using their strong holy power. Specifically what kind of revenge they’ve planned is unknown.

Ding!

– Intelligence and Wisdom have both increased by 5 from reading advanced information about the Matallost faith.

– You have acquired information about the Resurrection Church.

Weed found something else from the desk. It was the robe worn by Resurrection Church Priests.

Matallost Church. Since currently they were more often being called the Resurrection Church, it didn't matter if you spoke carelessly about them.

“Count Savoid must've been a Priest of the Resurrection Church.”

Weed guessed judging from how Count Savoid had possession of the Statue of Death, the symbol of the Resurrection Church.

“Huuh, look here a bit!”

Just then, Smith discovered a wide room.

A magical circle was drawn inside the room, and in the middle, on top of an object looking like a tombstone, was a bowl where something could be placed inside.

An image of the Statue of Death was drawn into the bowl.

“Maybe this is where it should be placed in?”

Weed took out the sculpture from his bosom.

The Statue of Death he'd acquired at the end of his duel with Death Hand in the Dwarf's underground Kingdom, Kuruso!

The second coming of the Matallost faith and the reconstruction of the Niflheim Empire.

He didn't know what kind of effect it would have on the Versailles Continent, but when he recalled the contents of that quest, there was no reason for it to end here.

Weed placed the sculpture in the bowl. Then, as if it were given life, the scythe-holding malevolence flashed open its eyes.

Ruuuummmble!

The mansion shook, as if there were an earthquake.

A damp fog filled the basement, and a black vortex formed above the altar. A gate to another place had opened.

Smith staggered backwards in surprise.

The black gate.

Not only had he never seen a gate of this color anywhere, but the scythe-holding malevolence figure was glaring at him. An incomparably terrifying look.

However, Weed was not afraid.

There was nothing as terrifying as an empty account balance. It was so scary he had nightmares of negative interest even in his dreams!

– A gate to the River of Lamentation has opened.
Access is impossible for general users.
The quest will proceed in the River of Lamentation.
The success or failure of this quest will affect the Resurrection Army accordingly.

The message window popped up to all the users in the Versailles Continent.

Weed swiftly approached the gate, and the black vortex swirled as if it were going to eat him up. However, Smith hurriedly shook his hands.

“Hey.”

“What?”

“In order to solve my request, won’t I also have to follow?”

“Of course.”

Weed desperately wanted to leave Smith behind, but he had to take him.

“I have a condition. If I go in there, you have to make it so I can drink five bottles of liquor every day.”

“ ... ”

“If I don’t drink, I can’t fall asleep, you see.”

Weed nodded his head and agreed.

“Alright.”

He couldn't look after Smith all the time. It would be better to put him to sleep even if it was by drinking liquor.

“Also, recruit a mercenary.”

“What?”

“You're a feeble Sculptor, aren't you?”

If Weed was feeble, then the majority of Warriors or Swordsmen would be crawling around on the ground for lack of strength.

Smith continued, “I don't feel safe with just you. And we don't even know where we'll arrive if we go through that gate, so wouldn't it be better to bring one mercenary?”

Ding!

– It has become possible to recruit one mercenary to progress the quest together.

Hiring a mercenary in a Sculptor-only quest!

This meant there was going to be an actual battle.

‘Even if it's low, it is an A-rank difficulty quest...’

If he considered the chain quests that would occur as Niflheim Empire's reconstruction or the Matallost faith's second coming, the actual difficulty could be much higher.

It was to the point where it wasn't the end of the chain quest that was a burden.

He had to find someone to do the quest with whom he could trust to some degree.

Weed immediately sent a whisper.

-Pale-nim.

- Yes.

Pale responded promptly.

– I'm doing a quest, but I need one mercenary.

– Really? Where are you?

– Hagen Village of Sur Kingdom.

– What to do? It'll take a minimum of twenty days to go from the North all the way to there.

– Might there be someone else who's in the Central Continent?

– Mapan-nim left towards Rosenheim Kingdom to trade, the others are all gathered here.

Mapan's fighting strength was too lacking to bring him as a mercenary, so he was ruled out from the start even though he was a little closeby.

– Right now we're also doing a quest called "The Secret of Manufacturing Ancient Breastplate."

– Seems difficult. I understand.

Weed clearly had to give up. If he were to ask Pale to come, Maylon would be sad.

Irene would be a big help since she was a Priest, but there would be a lot of times when he'd have to protect her. In that aspect, Romuna was also in a similar position.

Surka was young and timid at times, so it was burdensome to go through thick and thin for a dozen days with just the two of them in a difficult quest's dungeon.

Hwaryeong's dance skill was good for increasing stats or putting monsters to sleep. Her usefulness was outstanding, but her actual attack power was weak so it was dangerous. Even if she was good in general hunting, it was a strain to bring her to a fight where he didn't know what kind of difficulty might be waiting.

Zephyr was out from the start.

Though his Health was strong, Resilience was good, and he even had an

AoE skill.

“Since he’s being friendly with my little sister, he is absolutely a no.”

Weed erased Zephyr’s existence from his mind.

How could he give his dearly raised little sister to a playboy. It was something never to happen even if the sky were to collapse.

“Since she says they’re just meeting, I’ll have to wait and see. Since my little sister has an eye for people.”

His little sister’s actions or demeanor hadn’t changed, so he was relieved for now.

A father’s ripping heart when his daughter when out on a date with her boyfriend wearing a short skirt!

Weed could also sympathize a little.

“Men are all wolves and thieves. If a man dies at the hands of a woman, she’s innocent. Because even if he dies, he was sure to have committed an inappropriate deed, or wanted to commit one!”

Even so, he couldn’t take Yurin either.

He sent a whisper to SwordNoob.

– Master.

–

– Master.

– Ahem! What’s up!

– What are you doing right now?

– I, I didn’t do anything. I absolutely wasn’t starting a conversation with a Dark Elf Lady. Disciple. There was just something I wanted to ask.

– Master...

SwordNoob’s honest reply returned after a while.

– Shouldn’t I also marry? It’s difficult, but I should try a late marriage, at least.

- The other elder brothers are also busy, right?

- Yeah. They're in the Orc village, and many are in the Dark Elf's village as well. The Dark Elves with their dark-complexioned skin are healthy, so they like them very much.

- How are the Yuroki Mountains?

- There are many monsters. It's alright since there're a lot of monsters worth fighting. Making a party together with Orcs and trying out their hunting style is also fun.

SwordNoob and the other elder brothers were enjoying Royal Road. Flaunting their hearty masculine beauty as they protected the weak Orcs.

- Master, Dark Elves also like flowers.

- Oh, really? Alright. You should work hard as well. And call me anytime if you need help.

- Yes, master!

Weed ended the whisper with SwordNoob.

'Who should I take?'

The Travellers of the Wilderness Guild!

A minority elite group of Armen Kingdom. A guild he estimated as having many unknown high-level users.

It was a guild Weed was a member of, but he hadn't looked at the guild chat window for a while. It was turned off because the guild members frequently chatted idly amongst themselves! It was also a burden due to fact that he didn't know anyone well enough to invite just one person from the Travellers of the Wilderness guild.

Just then, a whisper from Pale came.

- Weed-nim, you said you were getting one mercenary, right? Will you perhaps take one Shaman?

- What kind of Shaman are they?

- Her skill proficiency and utilization are to the point of being ridiculous.

She is the most famous Shaman in Morata. She's being a really big help even in party hunting together. I said spoke about Weed-nim just now, and she said she really wants to go.

Weed recalled his time as a beginner, when he hadn't been playing Royal Road for very long.

'I party hunted with a Shaman in the City of Heaven, Laviias.'

An unforgettable name. Dain.

She was exactly his ideal woman. It was difficult to say what exactly he liked, but his time together with her had been enjoyable. They talked a lot while dungeon hunting with just the two of them, and they had clicked even when they were hunting.

'Although she left to undergo surgery... is she doing well now?'

Since there was no word, he could only hope for her wellbeing.

Weed brushed off thoughts of the past and spoke.

- It seems too dangerous a place for a Shaman to come.

A Priest-type profession was fundamentally a big help in party hunting, but they couldn't protect themselves.

- Please convey my apologies for not being able to do it together.

- No. It can't be helped.

He couldn't call Hegel. If he called him, the news would soon spread all over through the Black Lions' Guild.

The Thief Nide wasn't an alternative, either.

'A Thief is a profession with a lot of uses in a dungeon.'

A stereotype where Thieves or Assassins were vulnerable in a melee match!

Since he was getting a mercenary to help him in battle, a hiding, ambushing profession was unsuitable.

'If it's the strongest person I know, there's only her...'

Weed recalled Seoyoon in his mind.

She, whose blade sliced up most monsters! A Berserker who grew stronger as the battle continued.

She had an outrageous level, and her utilization of skills was rapid.

The Berserker Seoyoon!

It would be the safest if she was here.

However, Weed shook his head.

His trust in Seoyoon was kindling a little, but it was too much to ask her to help him with a dangerous quest that had absolutely nothing to do with her.

‘Besides, I don’t even know where she is right now, and it would take lots of time if she were to come all the way here.’

He couldn’t get anyone he knew from around Sur Kingdom.

Weed made his decision.

“Call Death Knight!”

Death Knight Van Hawk appeared with smoke.

Since he’d been with him for a long time, he was used to meeting even Death Knight’s savage eyes.

“Did you call, Master.”

“Yes. Work has arrived.”

“I will knock down whomever it may be,” was steadfast Death Knight’s cry.

Weed turned his head and looked at Smith.

“If it’s Death Knight, we will not need another mercenary.”

Smith had not been that alarmed even when Death Knight had appeared.

“Seems like Death Knight can protect us. But the alcohol?”

Weed briefly opened his rucksack and pulled out several bottles of beer. There were dozens of beer bottles, he also had considerable amount of whiskey and wines. There was no need to purchase liquor separately, and if it was urgent, he could distill alcohol at any time.

Since there's always a chance he could be called to leave for an adventure, he prepared plenty of bandages, a whetstone, or herbs and the like.

He was done with preparation for departure anytime..

“Let us go.”

“Alright.”

Weed took the lead first, and Smith followed behind. The bodies of the two vanished completely with the black gate.

Ruuuuuuumble!

As the gate disappeared, the shaking of Count Savoid's mansion gradually faded.

*

The scattered corpses of monsters!

Fragments of monsters fell whenever Seoyoon swung her greatsword.

The monsters who ambushed from hiding beneath the earth or assaulted by falling from trees!

Seoyoon simply swung her sword.

Every time her blade flashed, monsters turned to grey light.

In the past, she had fought to forget everything. While dripping wet with sweat, if she could fight, then it was enough, and she would blindly run towards a monster group.

The fate of Berserkers who grew stronger the more they shed blood!

‘This place is too weak.’

A Berserker had the characteristic of drawing enemies and monsters.

A group of monsters gathered in Seoyoon's location. Her footsteps were naturally drawn to a place where there were increasingly stronger monsters.

The absolute sense of a Berserker who sought blood and battle.

When there was a Berserker, the place would quickly become a battlefield with ceaseless screams.

The high-level hunting ground renowned even in the North, Maban's Forest!

Monsters were running en masse to Seoyoon's location.

'Nobody loves me.'

Although it was she who had thrown herself into battle so her past wouldn't resurface, now her heart didn't hurt compared to the past.

'Friend...'

Whenever she recalled the friend she had, a part of her chest became warm. The time when they shared an adventure in Royal Road was not long, but they could also meet in reality.

'I want to protect him.'

The sight of him dying quickly at the Bone Dragon's Breath...

She was hunting for the sake of the feeble Weed as she amassed experience and skill proficiency.

Her level was 422!

Seoyoon entered an area with even stronger monsters.

Chapter 9: Sculptor of Hell

The place Weed and Smith arrived at after passing through a black gate was a jet-black stone mountain without a single growing tree .

It was definitely not going to be a normal stone mountain.

The stone was jet black with holes all over, and a river flowed through the area.

– Waaaaah.

– Save us. Save us.

– Let me escape from this pain.

The river cried out. It was wailing like a ghost.

‘Is this the River of Lamentation?’

There were quite a number of sculptures on the stone mountain.

Like evil, murderous antagonists, they were sculptures creepy enough to make demons tremble!

The neck of a mother embracing her child was cut off. The mother and daughter were not Human, but Orcs. The Trolls were stabbing each other with spears. Humans were waging war en masse. Even a scene of a village being plundered and burned down was expressed through sculptures.

Following the flow of the river, groups of sculptures were lined up, and continued on endlessly.

“Ahem.”

It was enough to make even the likes of Weed grimace.

Some sculptures only depicted negative scenes that weren't positive at all. For a normal person, it was at a level where one couldn't help but feel repulsed.

But the one sculpture Weed liked and could understand was provokingly depicting a slaver. The sculpture of the man was ignoring the scrawny kids and enjoying a steak by himself. The kids, who looked like slaves, were

eating barley bread at most.

“If you don’t have money then you will starve! They must be treating them well to give them barley bread...”

It was a sculpture evoking 100% of Weed’s sympathy!

Those kids might be considered lucky to be enslaved under the wicked trader. Because if it was Weed, he might not have even given them a single bowl of porridge!

The procession of sculptures continued endlessly down the River of Lamentation. The river made more rough and raspy groaning noises as it flowed downstream.

– Waaaaah.

– Kill me. Kill me.

When Weed looked after approaching the river, he saw it wasn’t normal water. Deep inside the river, ghosts of all kinds of monsters and humans were intactly flowing down the river. They had expressions of distress difficult to see even in the chilling horror of a haunted house.

Smith approached and said, “Maybe it’s the influence of the sculptures?”

“What?”

“I’m talking ‘bout the artwork. The basics of artwork is to move emotions. These sculptures are making the river wail.”

They were words Weed could relate to.

The sculptor’s feelings were buried into a sculpture. They all looked like the same sculptures, but they were actually very different.

A person who keeps waking up at night will definitely look haggard. But there’s no reason for a girl who receives a confession from someone she really loves to appear haggard.

Hopes and aspirations. Feelings full of affection!

Even if the subject was the same, a sculpture will convey a completely different mood depending on the feeling it was sculpted with. It was

something as natural as a poem written by a poet or an author's writing conveying a different mood depending on their feelings.

A work of art can move the emotions.

If a person's house was filled with gloomy drawings or sculptures, of course they would also feel depressed and wouldn't be motivated, either. If their house was filled with negative sculptures, they wouldn't even want to get up in the morning. It might be a momentary impulse or simply a feeling, but after several years, several decades, it could definitely change a person.

"It's the topography."

"Huh?"

"Shall I say it's similar to how an apartment overlooking the Han River is more expensive?"

"What do you mean?"

"The better the view, the more expensive the apartment gets. Well, it's something like that."

Weed thought he could understand.

If artwork could convey emotion, it was hard to see sculptures made with evil intent, could have given the river a good influence.

Sculptures created by the topography!

Weed was experiencing just about everything as he lived.

"Traditionally, there's nothing as accurate as an apartment's price. Besides, we should find out where this place is."

It was at that time.

Ding!

– The Entrance to Hell.

You have entered the River of Lamentation.

The end of the continent where living beings can breathe.

It is the place where the Priests of the Matallost Church lead the dead to hell.

“Oh my.”

Smith shrugged his shoulders.

“So this is the end of the human continent. I’ve never been here even while working as a mercenary... At least gimme a bottle of liquor. With this, the boasts you can make to your friends at drinking parties have grown. Haw-haw!”

Smith was delighted as he drank.

Weed exhaled a deep sigh.

After wandering here and there, he was now at the entrance of hell. And with a drunk, no less.

‘No wonder the surroundings looked so strange...’

The eerie atmosphere was slightly similar to when he went to Todeum!

He couldn’t feel any traces of humans, and it was incomparably desolate and bleak.

Weed tried pulling out a compass, but the needle just spun around and around without settling. He couldn’t even discern the position of the stars in the sky.

‘I won’t even be able to return like this...’

Weed walked along the River of Lamentation with Smith.

At least a thousand sculptures were grouped thematically along the river.

He couldn’t find any positive sculpture no matter how hard he looked. When he approached a sculpture of a beautiful and adorable lady, the moment he took a closer look, he was able to confirm a shocking scene.

That cute lady was spitting! She was also clutching a frog in her hand. It was an indescribable scene, plunging him into an emotional shock.

There was also a grotesque scene of muscular women playing soccer. Of course, the soccer ball was an Ogre’s head!

Weed identified to check the information of the sculptures.

“Identify!”

Ding!

Sculpture of Shameful Ogres

The work of a little known Sculptor. Ogres were Kings of the forests and mountains. With the pride they hold for their territory, they will show a savage attitude towards invaders.

However, because of a commission from the Matallost Church, they were sculpted in this manner instead.

If Ogres were to see this, it would make them seethe with rage and resentment.

Artistic Value: None at all

Special Effect: Stimulates the sadness of the Ogres.

– Waaaaaaaaah.

The groaning sound of the River of Lamentations only amplified as they continued down the river.

On the second day at the River of Lamentations, Weed found some ruins. The temple of the Matallost Church!

The temple of the church which was thought to have completely disappeared from the face of the continent was here.

The building, which he estimated to be made out of marble, was completely no more than a ruin. It was hazardously built like it was going to collapse at any moment, so it made him worry about entering.

“Summon Death Knight!”

Death Knight appeared with a puff of smoke and raised his sword.

“You called. Master.”

“You, go in there. If there are any living humans or monsters, come out immediately and report.”

“Understood.”

It might lower his Intimacy with Death Knight a little, but seeing they had spent a long time in each other’s company, they were connected through sticky and tough situations.

After searching the temple interior thoroughly, Death Knight came out.

“There is no one inside. Master.”

“Really?”

Weed went inside the temple.

Inside, there were only stone statues worshipping the God who put the enormous temple’s entrance to shame.

“The temple remains but all of the Priests are gone.”

Weed soon came out of the Matallost temple.

There was not a single item left in the Priests’ quarters. His clothes only got smudged with a ton of dust inside the temple.

*

The third day on the River of Lamentation!

In a place not very far from the temple, Weed found over 100 Priests and Dark Knights.

“The Embinyu Church!”

A groan escaped Weed’s mouth.

Even in the region where the Bone Dragon had been, he had found traces of the Embinyu Church. He remembered getting rid of them, with the help of the expedition, Seoyoon, and Alveron.

Weed’s face hardened with seriousness.

“So the Embinyu Church is involved again!”

For him to find the Embinyu Church who had influenced the fall of the Niflheim Empire here, the situation was serious.

For now, Weed hid himself.

There had been over 1,000 Demonic Spirits gathered near the Priests and Knights of the Embinyu Church. Mighty power indeed!

Moreover, they were performing a grave ritual.

“Kehhh. Do not leave. Take revenge on those who made you like this!”

“Painful and agonizing feelings. Awaken the meaning of despair!”

“Return once more to take your revenge.”

They were performing a Ritual of Slaughter downstream the River of Lamentation.

The river sloshed every time a lamb or deer was offered as a sacrifice. The water spurted high like a fountain and surged like it was going to swallow them. Every time it happened, the Priests of the Embinyu Church hurried to escape the river.

“Erupt the bitter feelings, endless sorrow, and boiling anger!”

It was when the Ritualists offered the heart of a lamb.

Wooooosh!

The river’s waters sloshed like they were going to reverse direction, and gushed up 10 meters high. The dirty and murky waste water!

Ghosts made groaning noises while making extremely distorted expressions in the river.

“Looks like they’re doing something... Death Knight.”

“Speak. Master.”

“Defend Smith here.”

“Got it.”

He planned on leaving Smith and Death Knight to try infiltrating alone.

Smith came forward.

“Woah, no. I’ll help. It’s ridiculous to leave recon to a fledgling Sculptor like you.”

“...”

“Where do you think you’re going without me, a first-class mercenary. Trust me.”

Weed threw him the remaining whiskey, about half of what he’d had.

“Ahh! Luxury whiskey! Sure enough, it tastes real good.”

Drinking the liquor thoroughly erased Smith’s thoughts of following the

recon. Weed solved the luggage lump problem and infiltrated the Embinyu Church area alone.

‘Infiltrating’ was an exaggeration. In reality, he was just climbing the rock mountain while slowly approaching them!

Every time he crawled, stone debris fell down. When the Priests and Dark Knights of the Embinyu looked like they were going to turn their eyes, he quickly crouched and hid.

The wind blew through the holes in the rock, letting out an eerie ghostly sounding wails. Weed climbed as near as he could towards the Embinyu Church at the top of the rocky mountain. It wasn’t enough to eavesdrop on the conversation or activities of the Priests, but he was able to hear what the Dark Knights on guard were saying.

“... Did what?”

“Today... seems like... reported they did that many.”

“To utilize the sculptures... It’s an excellent plan.”

“The Versailles Continent into misery... our goal.”

The words he heard in fragments! Bits and pieces were cut off because of the wind.

Weed tried putting the pieces together to get the meaning of the conversation.

He’d survived thanks to his senses. By simply seeing the boss’ expression, he could tell if his wage was going to come safely or be withheld.

‘They did that many. Dunno know what that is, but seems like it was about they what were doing with the ghosts in the River of Lamentations... Utilize the sculptures. They’re probably using them to give evil power to the ghosts in the River of Lamentations.’

There could be no other reason for them to be using the sculptures.

The River of Lamentations was becoming increasingly filthy downstream and the spirits were suffering. He had to assume they were interfering

with the negative power the sculptures gave off.

“.. Time is like this.”

“Replacement... get a break.”

“Fresh sheep’s blood...”

The Dark Knights’ guard duty was rotated.

Weed silently waited as the next Dark Knights stood guard.

“The wind is strong.”

“The weather is bad... Caltrops emerged...”

They only spoke one or two words in an hour! And they were only talking about things unrelated to the ritual the Priests were performing.

Weed withdrew to the place where Death Knight and Smith were hiding. And when he took out the figure of Death, he saw it was shedding tears.

“No way... Identify!”

Horse-like in appearance, the relic of the Matallost church opened its mouth. The voice of an old man could be heard.

– Listen.

This is the history of the Matallost Church that guides the dead.

The Matallost Church lost its influence to the other churches. Then, it formed an alliance with the Embinyu Church while dreaming of revenge.

The Embinyu Church is a cult that worshipped demons knowing nothing but hatred.

“Use the power you have. Keke!”

“Make it so the Versailles Continent cannot help but worship the Matallost Church.”

“Our sole desire is destruction. We will help.”

The Matallost Church became corrupted.

They neglected their duty to guide the dead and became the eleventh sect of the Embinyu Church.

They trained Demonic Spirits, becoming an evil army that would trample the Versailles Continent.

Cleanse the River of Lamentation, the source of their power.

If the River of Lamentation is purified, the Demonic Spirits will lose their power.

Ding!

The Fight Against the Embinyu Church

Stop the deeds of the Embinyu Church, from attempting to stain the continent with evil.

As the Embinyu Church's ritual progresses, the Versailles Continent will fall into chaos. In order to prevent the progression of their ritual, change the sculptures in the River of Lamentation basin.

Note, if you destroy the sculptures, you will be pursued by the Dark Knights.

Quest is linked to Rescue the Prisoners of the Matallost Church, Eradicate the Embinyu Church's 11th Sect, and the Matallost Church's Long-Cherished Wish.

Difficulty: Sculptor-limited Quest

Reward: Will be recorded as a great work of sculpting. Favor of all the churches in the Versailles Continent, except the Embinyu Church, will increase. An honorable title.

Quest Limit: If the Resurrection Army and Embinyu Church destroy the Versailles Allied Forces, the quest will automatically be cancelled.

Weed's eyes brightened.

"Looks like this is the start of yet another chain quest."

A Sculptor quest!

it was a following quest he received after getting the Statue of Death.

If he accepted this quest and succeeded, a chain quest would continue after he interfered with and destroyed the Embinyu Church's ritual.

It also meant this was really the starting point of the quest.

Weed did not reject the challenge.

"I will attempt it."

– You have accepted the quest.

*

The River of Lamentation's basin!

Monsters and Demonic Spirits were overflowing even a little way off the riverside. It was no exaggeration to say this was the worst hunting ground.

Thin physiques so scrawny, there were only bones left and monsters with dark blue skin radiating electricity!

Hellish monsters were wandering about en masse.

Since the monsters and Demonic Spirits were fighting, Weed couldn't escape to a safe spot in the riverside either.

"Though the monsters are at the very least in their late 300s..."

The weakest monsters on the river bank were about that level.

The weather was drab, and if there was fog in the air, the electricity the monsters radiated would be formidable in power.

Weed tried an experiment.

“Death Knight, attack!”

“Okay. Master!”

He verified Death Knight couldn't last 10 minutes before dying after engaging two or three of them!

Since he couldn't leave the area near the River of Lamentations, it was impossible to guess what kind of monsters he would encounter if he traveled further.

Death Knight could keep reviving since he was a Knight of Death, but he was severely weakened for awhile.

Weed meekly raised his carving knife.

“I should do this slowly, step by step.”

He went to work on the mother Orc with the chopped off head who was holding the child.

The work of creating and attaching the mother Orc's head!

Since he had to positively change nearly a thousand sculptures on the River of Lamentation's basin, even Weed could call this a great work in history.

It was when he was making a warmly laughing mother Orc's head.

The Orc's eyes gained a sharp, piercing look, and hunger surged in the eyes as they looked down on the child.

Eyes that looked like it wanted to eat its own child!

Its head looked like it was going to make the baby Orc die of a heart attack while breast feeding it.

He had ascertained plenty of the unique sense of beauty with Orc Karichwi, but because his head was full of distracting thoughts, he couldn't make the sculptures like he wanted.

“This won’t do.”

Weed set down his carving knife.

It wasn’t because he didn’t dare change the thousand sculptures on the River of Lamentation’s basin, or because the ghosts within the river were wailing and the sculptures looked terrifying on the foggy riverside.

The monsters!

He couldn’t ignore the Embinyu Church’s Priests and Dark Knights and while sculpting. It was like telling a growing elementary school kid in his prime to ignore the meat on his plate and only eat the vegetables.

Desire for experience and items. It boiled within Weed until he couldn’t bear it anymore. Copious strong monsters and items. He couldn’t leave those monsters alone and sculpt an Orc’s head.

With explosively rising thirst, Weed raised his carving knife again. His plan wasn’t to correct the sculptures on the River of Lamentations basin, but to create an entirely new sculpture.

Slice Slice!

He was making a sculpture by hewing the darkness.

Making a huge sculpture out of stone was the method he was used to. Unexpectedly, he couldn’t cut the brittle, porous stone easily.

“I must make a mount first.”

He recalled back when he had been a Skeleton Knight.

The Skeleton Knight alone had managed the battle he’d been transported to from the Tower of Heroes.

The tremendous acceleration he’d had while riding his horse on the plains in the historical Palrangka battle!

There was no obstacle for a Knight’s gallop.

When he charged, his attack cleaved through monsters. Given a horse, Knights became at least 3 or 4 times more powerful.

“I may be a Sculptor, but I can run.”

He didn't have a special skill like a Knight did, but even if he didn't have a skill that allows him to become one with a horse, he was still able to run.

It was also common for Mercenaries to have their own horse once they grew to some extent.

“Even so, I don't need to bother to sculpt a horse.”

Weed did not want something weak like a horse.

A horse was fast, but didn't have very high endurance. They behaved differently in variable moods. They were also often afraid of fire, lightning, ghosts, and the like.

He wasn't a Knight specialized in horses anyway.

“The best of mounts is that after all.”

Weed was a Korean citizen.

The livestock that had appeased people's pain numerous times in Korea's lengthy, winding history!

There was no reason to sculpt a horse when there was a strong and firm livestock possessing immense, leathery muscular strength he was so familiar with.

Our cow.

Korean beef!

Weed sculpted the special rock, the jet-black darkness.

The legs were thick and solid. The thigh muscles were incomparably delicate, and the entire body was completely muscular.

If a normal cow raised on grain was dangling with fat for the sake of the meat, the cow he was sculpting right now was different.

This one could enter Versailles Continent's Mister Bull Olympiad!

If hunk-loving heifers were to see him, they would immediately shake their short tails as they lied down.

“It won't do to blindly develop muscles.”

Weed even demonstrated the virtue of self-control.

A muscular body might have strong bursts of power, but it had the disadvantage of lackluster endurance and agility.

“I have to minimize the unnecessary muscles and optimize the muscular strength and endurance.”

Weed paid attention to even the bull’s beauty.

Before he won his sculpting victory from Death Hand, he had intentionally made a failed bull to appear weak. He had gained experience while losing Fame. It was why he couldn’t help but be much more skillful as he sculpted the bull.

He sculpted the size of the horns to be around 30 cm (~1 ft) long with its tips sharp enough to penetrate a steel plate, and also made its face broad.

It was a muscular bull, but its butt was expansive.

“The face of Korean cattle must be broad. The bigger the butt, the better. The eyes have to be round.”

His deep-rooted bias concerning cows!

Weed finally completed the sculpture.

– Please set a name for the sculpture you’ve made.

“Yellowy.”

– Would you like to name it ‘Yellowy’?

It was a black cow right now, but he planned on dying it yellow afterwards.

Weed nodded his head as he looked at the 5 meter (~16 ft) mass of darkness inspiring awe and horror.

“The name ‘Yellowy’ really is perfect for a cow.”

Ding!

You have completed a Historic Sculpture, the Legendary Bull Yellowy!
A Legendary sculpture!

All that you have sculpted will be written in the Versailles Continent's history.

With noble talent and abundant artistry, you have created a piece of work people cannot help but marvel at, time and time again with your unrivaled, delicate skill.

A work invoking the solemn charm and dynamism of a cow.

With its different interpretation and perspective, it will become a legendary sculpture of livestock.

Artistic Value: An artwork of the Master Sculptor Weed. 6,124

Special Effects: Those who gaze upon Yellowy will gain 15% increase in health and mana regeneration for a day.

Those who gaze upon Yellowy will gain 49% increase in obtaining meat products while hunting for a day.

Strength has increased by 80.

Perseverance has increased by 25%.

Production related skills are enhanced by 5%.

Breeding capacity of female cattle has increased by 38%.

Cattle gain weight faster.

Suppresses monster activity that threatens cattles everywhere.

Effects do not stack with other sculptures.

Number of Historic Sculptures completed until now: 1

– Sculpting skill proficiency has improved.

– Handicraft skill proficiency has improved.

– Fame has risen by 412.

– Art stat has risen by 70.

– Strength has increased by 3.

– Perseverance has increased by 10.

You have created a Historical Sculpture of a cow. Intimacy with cattle has increased, and if you own a large grassland, they will start gathering naturally.

If talented Sculptors see this sculpture, it will be a considerable help in developing their sculpting.

– For creating a historic sculpture, all stats have increased by 2 additional points.

Weed was satisfied.

“There is no other livestock that understands our people so well and has rewarded us like the cow has.”

His gratitude towards cattle!

If cattles hadn't existed in the past, it would have been difficult to farm and many people might have struggled with starvation.

Cattle had supplied the Korean food industry with endless assistance until the development of agricultural machinery.

Weed immediately returned the favor.

It was a waste to simply appreciate a sculpture this awesome. Plus, this was a place normal people couldn't come to!

“Sculpture Life Bestowal!”

– Sculpture has been granted life.

The sculpture ability will be converted from the current art stat of 1316 accordingly to a level of 422.

Due to the effects of a Historic Sculpture, the level will be added an additional 15%, increasing it to 485.

However since the material of the rock is weak, there is a 20% penalty to the level.

The creature has been given three properties.

Depending on the sculpture's level and form, the granted attributes will differ in level and ability.

Perseverance attribute (100%), Earth attribute (100%), Loyalty attribute (100%) Perseverance will raise its patience no matter what kind of work it performs. With increased defense, it will not topple easily from poison or magic attacks.

Earth attribute slightly increases defense and weight. Can obtain special assistance due to familiarity with the earth.

Loyalty will make him follow its master's words well. It does not choose its master easily, but when it does recognize its master it will profusely devote himself to the death.

Historical sculpture will be given special abilities.

It possess dominance over cattles. Bulls who have seen Yellowy will lower their heads and display obedience, while heifers will feel safe and bear offspring.

Wild Frenzy.

Yellowy possess a gentle, loyal nature. He does not anger easily, but humiliation, abuse of a young cow, or witnessing the death of his owner will make him run amok.

5,000 mana has been used.

The skill efficiency has increased, so the level and stats consumed when bestowing life have decreased by 20%.

Art stat has been permanently reduced by 6. The reduced stats can be recovered through sculpting or other art related activities.

Level has declined by 1. As a result of the level reduction, the stats you have gained have decreased by 5.

The reduced stats can be restored again by raising your level.

Please cherish the sculpture you have granted life to. If life is lost then it must be granted again.

In the case where it is completely destroyed, it can not be resurrected.

Yellowy!

Light flashed in its jet-black eyes.

He raised his cow head as he dug into the ground with his hind leg.

Mooooo!

It was the sound of Yellowy's dignified bellow.

Weed was also very satisfied. It would have been more ideal if the rock material was good, but for a mount it was first-class!

"Yellowy."

Yellowy blinked his innocent eyes.

He was an enormous bull full of muscle, but his eyes were good-natured.

Yellowy opened his mouth. Then he said.

"Yellowy is my name?"

"Yes."

The bull communicated with his feelings. It wasn't very surprising, either. Even if it was made out of a sculpture, Bingryong and the Wyverns also spoke.

Communication was possible because they had mental connection with Weed. They could understand the words of other people too, but there were many cases where they would ignore them or be unable to express their intentions.

Unless they had outstanding intelligence like Bingryong or Gold Man, communication with a Human or Elf was impossible.

"I don't think the name is very good. Do you think it matches my rough behavior?"

Yellowy furrowed deeply into the ground with his hind leg.

The ground crumbled as pebbles flew back.

He was a bull with great strength indeed!

"But Yellowy is a good name with feeling. From now on, your name is

Yellowy.”

“You are a master I really do not like,” Yellowy said roughly.

He was a loyal cow, but he displayed wariness in the beginning. He was inspecting Weed like a fearful baby calf. He gave off the feeling he was going to decide his attitude after looking at Weed’s subsequent actions.

“What do you plan to do with me from here on? I want to graze on a wide grassland, meet a pretty heifer, have calves, and live peacefully.”

Yellowy dreamt of grazing freely!

Weed shook his head.

“I’m going to ride you and hunt monsters.”

“ ... ”

Yellowy’s brow furrowed severely.

It seemed he possessed reluctance to hunt or fight because of a cow’s nature.

Weed felt the need to teach this naive cow the way of the world.

“Do you think freedom is so easily obtained? Do you have money?”

“I don’t.”

“You spoke of grassland, but have you got land on a wide grassland?”

“I don’t.”

“No money, no land, but you think a pretty heifer is going to like you? Tsk tsk. Heifers these days are very shrewd.”

“ ... ”

“How will you raise your baby cows. Do you want your children to grow up eating weeds their entire lives? You’re going to need something to feed them nutrient-rich hay.”

Weed was informing a cow about the bitterness of society!

Yellowy’s high spirits fell and he became meek.

“Looks like I will need money in life. I understand why I must hunt monsters.”

Yellowy was soon persuaded. He possessed obedience because Weed was his master.

However, Yellowy made a dissatisfied expression when he looked back at his own body. Because on the side of the perfectly muscular body, about one handspan of flab was attached.

Every time he walked, the flab jiggled.

“Master, what is this?”

“That’s rib-eye.”

“ ... ”

Weed considered the rib-eye and shanks important!

Yellow furrowed the ground with his hind leg, showing his obvious displeasure. He was protesting with force.

It was a completely ineffective action.

Weed said in a low voice.

“Yellowy, I see there’s no end to your arrogance.”

“Gasp.”

“I’ll pierce your nose tomorrow and start dragging you around with it.”

“ ... ”

“I’ll make you do field work. Do you want to farm? Wanna plow the wilderness?”

“ ... ”

“I’ll butcher you, nom nom nom, and swallow you. You know soy paste isn’t spread on cooked beef, right? Just as raw beef...”

“How can you say such horrible things...!”

“I’m not one to leave behind a tailbone even for the broth.”

For Weed, making threats for 2 days and 3 nights was possible if he so desired.

At some point, Yellowy furtively bowed his head.

Obedience!

With that, Yellowy's fate was decided.

*

Weed felt Yellowy alone was lacking and made another sculpture.

A sculpture made of light.

His proficiency had increased after making the Wings of Light, and it was a sculpture he attempted with painstaking care.

Blazing bright red color.

The concentration darkened as if flames were taking form.

He made a giant bird.

Since it was a sculpture made of light, making a small figure was much harder. His technique wasn't perfect, so he won with size over details.

Phoenix!

He created a sculpture of red light and granted it life.

The sculpture came out as a Masterpiece instead of a Magnum Opus of light, but that alone wasn't too bad of a success. The Phoenix's special characteristic was especially awesome.

Unquenchable Fire Attribute

Even if its Stamina is completely depleted, it can revive as long as a small flame remains.

Will have 50% of its maximum Health and Mana when revived.

The awesome appearance of the Phoenix Down!

[T/N: Phoenix Down is a revival item from Final Fantasy.]

Strength was important for sculptures made by Weed, but the durability of Health was more valuable than anything else.

Necromancers could steadily raise undeads if they had a bit of Mana and

a corpse. But every time Weed gave life to a sculpture, it consumed his level and art stats.

So even if he carved a sculpture and made something stronger than an undead, it was over if it died!

Sculptures were faithful, independent individuals.

If they were destroyed, he wouldn't be able to recover his losses.

Longevity.

Sculptures granted life weren't consumables, but family he had to develop together while backing their shortcomings.

"The Phoenix is alright."

Weed made a total of 5 Phoenixes.

Since they were sculptures with the same appearance, they only came out as Fine pieces when he sculpted them again.

Their final level was 400.

"You will be known as the Five Phoenix Brothers!"

"We understand. Master."

The Phoenixes folded their wings and bowed.

Weed received the bow of the Phoenixes while atop Yellowy.

Chapter 10: The Bull Riding Sculptor

The Proam Allied Mercenary Guild.

The Black Sword Mercenaries had garnered the right to call themselves first-class Mercenaries.

“Heh. It was really difficult to get to this point,” said Michel, the leader of the Black Swords.

There had been a whopping one hundred and eighty-nine requests that led them to this point.

They were acknowledged within the Proam Allied Mercenary Guild, who had branches all over entire Versailles Continent.

The Black Swords even owned a castle and a village. They were the best mercenaries, and they lived up to their reputation.

It was a guild consisting of thousands of mercenaries. It possessed numerous Warriors and Magicians and even had connections to nobles.

The uniforms of Black Sword Mercenaries were embellished with their distinctive symbol, a jet-black crossed swords. Other Mercenaries who saw it expressed respect. Simply being a member of the Black Sword Mercenaries was enough to garner great respect from general players.

Michel had access to the Proam Alliance Mercenary Guild’s records.

“Unfinished commissions. If we can finish them, the Mercenaries will become even stronger.”

Michel glowed with pride.

Not only was he level 431, but a considerable number of other top-rankers also belonged within the Mercenaries.

He was a celebrity who appeared on television, and his relationship with other guilds was good. Whenever occasional conflicts occurred, even if he solved them with brute force, there was no complaint afterward.

In the Versailles Continent, there were many weak and endangered people. Countless people desired the power of the Black Sword

Mercenaries, so their influence continued to grow.

While reading the Proam Alliance Mercenary Guild's records, Michel stumbled upon a section that caught his eye.

"Former Mercenary Guild Master Smith. The man who made the Proam Alliance Mercenary Guild the best in Versailles. So no one has seen him since he retired?"

*

Kyaaaaaaak!

Hehe!

It was the desperate struggle between the Human army and the Demonic Spirits.

The Demonic Spirits were fighting at Odin's walls.

The short and long-legged Demonic Spirits advanced unsteadily, looking like they were about to collapse, closely resembled zombies.

"Fire!"

A rain of arrows flew down from the walls.

The Archers fired without sparing any arrows.

The Resurrection Church Priests raised their wands.

"Regors, go forth!"

"Charge. Trample Odin."

Demonic Spirits resembling huge elephants or mammoths ran forward.

The small Demonic Spirits in the Regors' paths were kicked and went flying into the air, but they paid no attention to them and continued to charge forward.

Kuuooooooooo!

Small Demonic Spirits blew horns, shrieked horribly, and stamped their feet.

"Archers, what the hell are you doing, FIRE!"

“Stop those Regors!”

It was a nightmarish Demonic Spirit for Odin.

Many Human players had been trampled to death by a Regor on the Plains of the Great War.

Twa-twa-twaaang!

Arrows poured out from Odin’s walls, covering the sky.

The Regors deflected the arrows with their thick grey skin.

Grawr rawr!

Kweeeeeeee!

Medium-sized Demonic Spirits kept rushing out from hiding under the Regors’ bellies and behind their rumps.

Saliva dripped as they let loose jaw-splitting shrieks.

There was only 200 or so meters left until they reached Odin’s walls.

The Knights defending Odin knew the Demonic Spirits they fought to exhaustion could cross the distance in an instant.

“Shoot more arrows!”

“Magician squad, what are you doing?”

“We’re replenishing our Mana through Meditation,” replied Kiam, the representative of the Fort Odin Magicians and a Magician of the Prosperity Wings Guild.

“What Meditation are you doing in a time like this! Don’t you know there won’t even be a chance to use magic if the walls fall? Quickly, stop those bastards even if you have to use all your Mana!”

The Magicians cast spells from the walls of Fort Odin.

CRAAAAASH!

The ground was upturned and thundering lightning came crashing down.

There was a deafening roar as flames, lightning, water, and magic arrows

exploded towards the Demonic Spirits!

It was an attack so powerful, it transformed the terrain and razed the whole area.

The Demonic Spirits, including the Regors, didn't survive. Where the magic had swept by, all that remained was japtem!

“Daaang... and we can't even go pick them up.”

“I'm gonna die. There's no profit since we can only guard the walls.”

The Mercenaries on the wall grumbled complaints, since there were definitely many good items among the japtem.

They had to suppress their greed because going down the walls was no different than a suicide act.

The Demonic Spirits' advance was only beginning.

Although the magic had taken the lead, there was no sign of decrease in the huge Demonic Spirit Army. Due to the attacks of the increasingly fierce Demonic Spirits, Fort Odin was like a candle in a storm.

Daymond shook his Bone Staff.

“Your resistance will end here.”

Suban followed with a laugh.

“It is today at last.”

“Yeah. Deliberately restraining our offense so we could gather our forces has paid off. Today, we will penetrate Fort Odin.”

If they could take down Fort Odin, then seizing Aidern Kingdom would just be a matter of time.

Once they take control of the large granary and armory, the Demonic Spirit Army would be better fed and armed.

The Allied Forces may have been formed, but those who hadn't personally faced the Demonic Spirits hadn't yet realized the magnitude of the situation. The expeditionary force was said to have been deployed from another Kingdom would take a long time to arrive.

High tax rates and army training!

The prestigious guilds and lords hadn't come to their senses. Before the Resurrection Army invaded, except for local siege warfare, every single one of the Kingdoms were peaceful and their only enemies were monsters.

They were deluded by the fantasy that Fort Odin's walls would defend them!

Already, a deadly epidemic was spreading inside the fort. The Allied Forces were breaking apart due to the distress and horror.

Daymond pointed his Bone Staff at the castle.

“Keep attacking!”

More Regors ran towards Fort Odin. There were also Goblins were riding on their backs.

The weak Goblins were not easily motivated, but with money and the Demonic Army as bait, they had been recruited as medium officers.

As the Goblins led, the might of the Demonic Spirits became much stronger.

The Goblins raised their shoddy Spears as they danced upon the Regors.

Daymond, who led the Resurrection Army and was invading the Versailles Continent, was nicknamed the 'Prince of Darkness.'

He an existence of chaos, seeking to stain the Versailles Continent with Demonic Spirits.

*

Jefferson walked in his suit and tie towards the conference room with a frown on his face.

“Today won't be easy either.”

“Hello, Mr. Jefferson.”

“It has been awhile, Miss Johanna.”

Jefferson amiably received every greeting made to him by the passing

women. However, after passing them, dark shadows returned to his face.

The company he worked at was Global J.K.I Financial Group in New York!

As was typical of America, they had one motto with their speculative funds: 'Invest in places that make money.'

Resources, people, companies, and countries.

There weren't any restrictions on their investments.

They had been quiet for some time because their endless greed had netted them a big loss. However, they were once again increasing their capital as of late.

Jefferson, the Executive Director responsible for Asia, presided over a meeting with the major shareholders who held the company's wealth.

Their profit from investing on an American and European infrastructure company was excellent. Their investment on Egypt's oilfields was gradually yielding profit, and the investments in environmental technology were also showing promise.

The problem was in Asia.

The shareholders were annoyed because the returns were too high.

"Our share ratio of Unicorn is currently approximately 7.2%. With current market price, it's estimated to be 16.8 billion dollars."

"The return of our investment must be over a hundred fold," said Benjamin Chandler, who had served as a Vice President of the United States.

"Yes. The return on investment is exceeding 130 times. It has the highest return from all the companies we've seen until now."

"Why didn't you invest a greater amount in Unicorn beforehand?"

A profit of 130 times the investment!

But wasn't enough for the greedy Chandler. The other Directors and Shareholders also criticized Jefferson's mistake.

“We missed out on a chance to make money. Did you forget opportunities soon grows into profit?”

“I cannot believe you were careless with our company until Unicorn developed more maturely.”

Jefferson coughed up an excuse.

“We also tried to take action, but the stock value jumped too suddenly.”

“Stock prices have risen by 130 times. We should have invested more in the beginning!”

“Formerly, it was an unproven enterprise. The press and America’s academia treated it negatively, so a greater investment was difficult.”

“How much is the foreign investment for Unicorn?”

“It is about 19.4%.”

J.K.I. Financial Group, the California Government Employees Pension Corporation, and other investment companies had a combined total of nearly 19.4%.

“What do you think about combining forces and merging with Unicorn Corporation before it gets any bigger?”

Seizing control with the use of astronomical funds!

It was a remark no one but Chandler would dare to say.

The back of Jefferson’s shirt became drenched in sweat.

“We’ll only know by exploring the idea, but I think it will be a very difficult venture.”

“For now, we will get the funds.”

“Even with the money, it is close to impossible.”

As Royal Road hit upon its initial success, Unicorn was already experiencing unbelievable growth.

The stock price skyrocketed in a globally unprecedented manner! As soon as the stock market opened, it soared into higher heights.

There were no sellers either. Those who owned stocks were certain it will still continue to rise, so no one wanted to sell. The money they received yearly from just those stock dividends alone was enough to live off of for a lifetime.

In contrast, people who wanted to buy stocks were trying to buy them no matter the cost.

Stock traders worldwide tried to buy just one Unicorn stock, but exploded in anger because no one was willing to sell.

“How can there be a stock like this?”

Chandler felt like his stomach was overturning.

Even now, Unicorn’s stock was soaring with no limits, and the current price per stock had become the most expensive in the world.

“Even if we offer a high price, no one is trading. And if rumors spread of our plans to merge, the periodically occurring trades would atrophy.”

Jefferson was sorry he could only inform the major shareholders of the bad news, but it couldn’t be helped.

Moreover, Unicorn Corporation had a vast amount of money.

In fact, several finance companies had united and revealed their covert hostile intentions towards Unicorn. They shook Unicorn through the press and credit companies, trying to buy stocks.

Unicorn’s response to those actions were drastic.

They used overflowing funds to drastically expand their shares in foreign media and financial companies. They interfered in company management and forcibly replaced board members, so their opposers had to back down.

Foreign financial companies were swayed by the large losses they suffered because of the economic power Unicorn Corporation possessed.

Unicorn was the largest stockholder of a foreign investment bank.

A monthly usage fee of 200 thousand Won (~\$200)! That was only possible because it was Unicorn Corporation, which was earning

astronomical funds every month.

J.K.I Financial Group's meeting concluded without any results.

The major shareholders pulled up their heavy bodies.

"I'm going home to rest."

"Abigail, are you planning on connecting to Royal Road today as well?"

"Certainly. I even bought a villa near the sea."

"What level are you, Mr. Chandler."

"290. Do you want to go hunting together?"

"Sure. Please help me level a little. Hunting is really difficult after passing level 200."

"It's bound to be hard without know-hows."

The major shareholders were also players of Royal Road.

They had accumulated wealth and power in the real world. Since they could live new adventures and experiences on the Versailles Continent, there was no reason to dislike it.

They lived new lives with slightly younger and more handsome bodies.

"I'll see you in the next meeting."

Jefferson even politely saw off the luxury cars from the door.

He was also a Royal Road player.

Since he was an investment company Executive, he had chosen Merchant as his profession. He was struggling to earn a lot of money through trade to acquire a land and a title as nobility.

After all, Royal Road was an alternate reality no one could help but be sucked into.

*

Moooo!

Yellowy bellowed ponderously.

He looked tired, as if he had been arduously plowing the fields all day!

It was because he had struggled to familiarize himself with strange footwork to be helpful during battles.

Weed pulled out his sword.

“Charge. Yellowy!”

Mooooooooooooo!

Yellowy stamped his hind foot and ran.

Wild Bull Rush. As they ran fearlessly down the steep rocky mountain. Their speed got faster and faster.

Weed’s mantle flapped wildly in the wind.

“This is the feeling.”

There was nothing cooler than a flapping mantle when you while running quickly.

Weed was fully armed in his best equipment.

His blade was the Daemon Sword he’d acquired in Todeum. It was the prized possession of the honorable Knight Kolderim of Kallamore Kingdom. The light-absorbing Talrock’s Armor, the noble Black Helmet of Elegance, Vampire Cloak, and black boots. He even had his Ancient Shield equipped.

Even if he were to ride a wild mustang in the wilderness, his appearance couldn’t be any cooler.

“Clothes makes the man after all.”

Although riding Yellowy was incomparably awkward, Weed was satisfied with his own appearance nevertheless.

“It’s only because I don’t dress up, but if I had paid just a little more attention, even actors aren’t a big deal, huh?”

His baseless confidence even actors couldn’t match to him if he changed his hairstyle and clothes!

It was classy; he was a Knight wearing elegant armor riding atop a bull over 5 meters tall!

He was extremely energized by the force of the gallop.

“Charge. Run faster!”

“This is already the top speed. Master.”

“Hya. Hyaa!”

Weed even made whipping noises with his mouth. He was riding a bull without a saddle or reins, but he had to do everything that needed to be done.

The Caltrops at the bottom of the rocky mountain noticed Yellowy charging in from afar.

“It’s a cow.”

“A Human. How did a Human get here.”

“Is he a Knight of the Embinyu Church? They can’t mess with us because of the agreement.”

“No. Their symbol isn’t on his armor. KILL HIM!”

The five Caltrops settled in their stances.

They charged their antennas and lightning surged out.

BOOOOOOM!

With the sound of crashing thunder, streaks of lightning poured forth.

MOOOOOOOOOOO!

Yellowy wailed lengthily in alarm as he leapt to the side.

He had reduced his speed while changing directions.

The lightning streaks narrowly brushed past Weed and Yellowy.

The lightning streaks struck the rocky mountain and earth, shattering the ground. Broken rock debris flew in every direction.

“As expected of our cow!”

Weed did not save his praises.

It's movements were agile and it's superior stamina exceeded those of a horse. He hadn't given any instructions, but Yellowy had avoided it on his own.

To think Yellowy avoided the approaching lightning in a fleeting moment! He exceeded Weed's expectations.

"Charge again!"

Moooooooo.

"It's scary. I don't like it. I don't think fighting matches my constitution."

Yellowy shook his head.

It seemed battle didn't suit the innocent cow.

Instead of motivating with praises, Weed mobilized a stronger threat.

There should not be the slightest bit of hesitation in a fight!

"If you're scared, run towards those guys. Grilled beef, raw beef, short rib soup, marinated beef slabs, boneless marinated beef, shabu shabu*, oxtail soup, cow heel, bovine bone broth soup!"

T/N: Shabu shabu is a Japanese dish consisting of thinly sliced beef boiled in water. It is served with dipping sauces. Similar to sukiyaki but more savory and less sweet.

MOOOOOOOOO!

Yellowy ran with all his strength on all four feet.

Even though he had a heavy build, his strength and stamina were so great that he reached his peak speed again.

They closed in, coming within 100 meters of the Caltrops.

"Lightning Spear!"

Another lightning attack was fired!

Weed raised his Ancient Shield.

Because they were close, they couldn't dodge the attack completely even

with Yellowy's quick reflexes. Even if they dodged it, attack power would decrease if their speed fell, so evasion wasn't desirable.

The lightning attacks were blocked by the Ancient Shield. They were enveloped by the shield's soft aura and the attack flowed off into another direction.

Weed felt great resistance, but he endured it and swung his sword.

They were already a stone's throw away from the Caltrops.

“Moonlight Sculpting Blade!”

The moment Yellowy ran past the Caltrops, the Daemon Sword also sliced the Caltrops as it passed by.

He quickly struck the Caltrop on his right, then reversed his grip on the sword hilt and slashed again, upwards.

The Daemon Blade frolicked freely within his grip!

Weed's movements didn't stop.

He grasped Yellowy's horn tightly with his left hand and twisted his body.

Moooo!

His legs and bottom rose slightly. He used the centrifugal force that was pulling the sword and twisted his body.

While doing a 360 on top of Yellowy, he sliced the neck of the Caltrop to his left.

“Gaargh!”

The Caltrops' stances withered.

Although it might not be a Knight's charge, but the damage he inflicted was immense because it was sword attack with enormous acceleration. And Caltrops weren't monsters with much Health, either.

Their dry, sturdy skin blocked with formidable defense, but his Moonlight Sculpting Blade had the effect of ignoring the opponent's defense.

It was when they had defeated two of them and were charging between the Caltrops— Lurch!

Yellowy moved with his front legs in a zigzag manner. They approached the clumped Caltrops while executing steps in a much slower speed.

This was the biggest disadvantage of a Knight's charge on horseback!

It became the strongest weapon on the plains, but once you grazed past the monsters, turning around again was way too hard. For a monster who knew long-distance attacks, it actually became a weak point.

However, Yellowy was not a horse.

Sidestep, backwards step. He was a cow who could perform directional changes smoothly!

He sharply reduced speed and changed direction as they grazed past the Caltrops. He even knew the perfect distance for Weed to swing his sword.

He was faithful, his efficiency was good, and like a cow sincerely doing the work it was entrusted, he didn't make any mistakes even when doing something for the first time.

The Caltrops didn't die after getting hit with one slash each, but since they had drastically lost fighting power. All he had to do was decisively slit the thin layer of skin on their throats.

The last remaining Caltrop was in front of Yellowy.

Weed stroked Yellowy's neck.

"Yellowy, take it down!"

"Don't want to. How could I do such a nasty act."

He still had not thrown away his reluctance in battle!

Weed knew how to properly use the carrot-and-stick tactic. If he only fostered threats and horror, there would be resistance no matter how loyal of a cow he was.

"Take it down and I'll give you one copper. If you kill it completely, I'll give you two coppers."

Another incentive in battle!

For Yellowy, one copper was a monstrous amount.

‘Things can be bought with one copper... A handful of highly nutritious hay. Ten buckets of chilled water!’

Apparently he could buy a handsbreadth of land if he saved and saved to gather ten coppers. If he planted at least weeds, he could eat them up whenever he was famished.

If he collected about 10 gold, he could supposedly build a shabby barn, which was Yellowy’s hope in life.

Dreams of owning his own home!

MOOOOO!

Yellowy’s energetic acceleration!

He flew forward to the point of plowing deep furrows in the ground and rammed the Caltrop with his pointy horns.

The Caltrop wailed miserably as the impact knocked it several meters away.

Weed hunted the Caltrops, acquiring savory experience, japtem, a sooty iron plate, howling plant seeds, a blue marble, and the like.

“I don’t know what the marble is used for yet, but if I collect it, there’ll be a place to sell it.”

Weed checked his income and laughed heartily.

The fruits of his labor, such as the smithing item, and the EXP was so savory.

“Hunting has got to be this flavor after all.”

The relationship between the Caltrops and Demonic Spirits was hostile!

Demonic Spirits’ very similar in appearance to Demonic Spirits of the Resurrection Army, and they were dispersed along the River of Lamentation. It seemed beasts who drank water from the River of Lamentation turned into Demonic Spirits.

Weed mainly hunted these Demonic Spirits and Caltrops.

“The Five Phoenix Brothers. Deploy!”

He also made the Phoenixes participate in battle.

The majestic Five Phoenix Brothers!

They vaporized the deep fog with a single breath. The ground glowed with heat and caught fire.

Once the moisture disappeared, the Caltrops' lightning attacks weakened.

The Phoenixes flew long distances at once and pecked at enemy heads.

Since they were guys with almost infinite Health, they simply took normal attacks with their bodies.

They could self-recover, even if their Health dropped significantly! They soon rose again.

They could revive even at the brink of death as long as a slight flame remained; the Phoenixes' contribution made the battle convenient.

“Huhuhu.”

Weed laughed wickedly.

He felt pleasure while watching the sculptures he had granted life fighting very valiantly.

The stronger the Phoenixes were, the more items and japtem he could obtain!

“Fight. Become stronger. Cover the world with your fire!”

The Five Phoenixes and Yellowy!

They became Weed's powerful reinforcements.

As he hunted Monsters along the River of Lamentation, he increasingly expanded his activity zone.

However, he didn't leave the riverbank and wandered around the wide areas because he didn't know what kind of danger might be lurking.

Even so, as many as ten Caltrops could be hunted with just the Phoenixes.

However, he had to wait for a very long time.

[T/N: Weed had to wait for the Phoenixes to keep reviving.]

Chapter 11: The Sculptures Erected on the River of Lamentation

Weed raised his sculpting knife again.

It was the start of the monumental task of changing the sculptures on the basin of the River of Lamentations from negative to positive.

The sound of the ghosts crying in the river was now familiar to his ears. The sound surged forward like echoes, exhausting all strength in the legs and raising goosebumps.

“What’s an affectionate expression you would have while looking at a baby Orc?”

His first sculpting attempt had failed; this was his second.

When he posed as the Orc Karichwi in the Yurokina Mountains, he had seen quite a lot of Orcs. However, he hadn’t been interested in the weak baby Orcs. Even if he had seen them toddling around in the village, as long as they weren’t his quarry for a quest, he immediately forgot about them once he passed by.

Orc infancy was short, and they grew at a very fast rate.

“What kind of thoughts would a female Orc looking at a baby Orc have?”

It was an expression he could only understand if he was in the mother’s shoes.

Weed had a different idea.

Greedy female Orcs. They found meat. They would drool. But what if their bellies were full right now?

“They would have an absolutely peaceful expression!”

Weed made the female Orc’s head.

There was a splittingly satisfied smile on her lips, and her eyes were laughing, creasing into crescent moons. Her expression wasn’t really

bright, but she was still quite pretty considering she was a female Orc.

At least there wasn't a grievous feeling anymore, such as when she had been holding the child without a head.

You have altered "Bleak Baby Orc and Mother", a sculpture of the Matallost Church.

You have purified 1 River of Lamentation sculpture.

Purification of the River of Lamentation: -100%

– Handicraft skill proficiency has improved.

Only one.

Weed had taken the first step, but the path he had to walk was very arduous.

Making one sculpture positive didn't reduce the bitter wailing of the ghosts in the River of Lamentation. Looking at the sculptures all around the basin of the River of Lamentation, it was a bleak task.

The next sculpture he chose was the Trolls, who were fighting desperately while stabbing their opponents with spears.

Weed made a clear decision.

"It'll work if I just get rid of the spears!"

He broke the spears and made them hold bowls of rice instead.

Now they were Trolls giving food as gifts.

You have altered "Slaughtering Trolls", a sculpture of the Matallost Church.

You have purified 2 River of Lamentation sculptures.

Purification of the River of Lamentation: -100%

– Sculpting skill proficiency has improved.

The increase in Sculpting or Handicraft skill proficiency was almost insignificant.

“So slightly modifying someone else’s sculpture doesn’t raise the proficiency much.”

The strength went right out of Weed’s shoulders. Even so, he altered 10 sculptures in a day. However, there was no change in the purification value of the River of Lamentation.

“I need to recover my levels first.”

Weed engaged in desperate hunt to recover the levels he had lost by giving life to his sculptures! He repaired 13 sculptures daily, and led Yellowy and the Five Phoenix Brothers to battle.

If they went too far away from the River of Lamentation, the levels of the monsters leapt drastically.

Boars of Hell.

He estimated the Wild Black Boars to be slightly under level 400. Of course, he ascertained this fact through Death Knight.

“They can fight Death Knight neck and neck – they’re quite delicious prey.”

He didn’t even glance at the Caltrops anymore, since stronger monsters yielded more experience and items.

“I should leave the Caltrops to the Five Phoenix Brothers. Phoenixes.”

“Yes, Master.”

“Hunt the Caltrops. Be careful not to melt the items.”

“Yes, Master. Understood.”

The Phoenixes were handy for being able to be ordered to do various things.

It was similar to Military Discipline Training of new enlisted recruits in the army received! How well they performed in this training enormously influenced their army life.

For the sculptures as well, it was good to establish the hierarchy immediately after their birth, but there was no need to give them this

mental training separately.

The Phoenixes had realized something while watching Yellowy.

‘Ah, we’re stuck with a really dirty Master.’

‘What rotten luck.’

The outstandingly intelligent Phoenixes became obedient.

They were Phoenixes who didn’t die easily and were incomparably tenacious! They dove with their outstretched wings to avoid lightning attacks unleashed by the Caltrops.

And the flame attack they discharged! The damage was weak, but the flames spread over a wide area. The heat wasn’t enough to melt the rocky mountain, but it was still quite hot.

They didn’t even die from area of effect attack skills, and they were quick on chasing land monsters, not giving them a chance to run away. As long as he cautioned them not to burn the japtem dropped by the Caltrops, there were no problems with the hunt.

While the Phoenixes hunted the Caltrops, Weed went with Yellowy to deal with the Black Wild Boars.

The Wild Boars ran through the uneven rocky mountains!

Moooooooooo!

Weed hunted them while riding Yellowy. Together with Yellowy, he defeated the Wild Boars one by one.

Weed’s Moonlight Sculpting Blade and Sword Mastery skill proficiency were increasing rapidly.

“This method of fighting isn’t bad.”

Weed was pleased because the hunting speed was decent. Thanks to Yellowy, Stamina consumption was reduced and damage was doubled.

Sword Mastery did not accumulate uniformly by just swinging a sword. The proficiency rose when consecutively hunting monsters stronger than himself.

Weed's Sword Mastery was currently at Intermediate Level 8!

It couldn't be compared to the SwordNoobs, but it was much higher than normal users.

He had also modified a total of 262 sculptures in the basin of the River of Lamentation.

You have altered "Snakehead Fish Going Belly-up and Dying", a sculpture of the Matallost Church.
You have purified 262 River of Lamentation sculptures.
Purification of the River of Lamentation: -98%

A hopeless purification level!

He was gradually reducing the level, but the point where he could bring the level to normal was still distant.

"This might not be the method to end this."

Weed thought deeply. He had raised his level by 2 while hunting for a week in real time, proof that it wasn't a bad hunting ground. Since monsters stronger than Weed were all around, he didn't need to go looking for them.

It was also the perfect hunting ground to raise Yellowy and the Phoenixes! Even considering the time he spent on mending the sculptures, they were growing extremely quickly.

His level had fallen frequently from granting life to sculptures. Since his combat-related proficiency remained the same, it was gradually accumulating.

"The problem was purifying the River of Lamentation. It will take too long..."

His brilliant judgement emerged every time there was a crisis!

Normally, it would have materialized earlier, but his declaration was delayed because he was grinding. As long as stats and skills definitely increased, he could repeat the same grinding for hundreds of days.

After all, he had the experience of carrying bricks and going up to the

20th floor while others were still going to high school.

“There’s no wage as fixed as the one for a construction site!”

When he returned home in the evening, he received crisp cash as his daily pay.

“Grinding has never lied!”

On the other hand, sewing in plushie eyes and beards was calculated by unit.

A fixed job gave a more definite income. Grinding was boring and difficult work, but the reward had an exhaustive aspect.

Weed had trained in dozens of kinds of grinding, but the task this time was really hopeless.

“There’s at least ten thousand sculptures. Doing them one by one like this isn’t the answer. It’s a hopeless task that I don’t know when it’ll end.”

Weed carefully observed the sculptures he had to change in advance. He found out how much and what he had to modify! He meticulously examined and recorded the size, weight, and how much he had to match the balance of the body.

Then he made the necessary sculptures whenever he took a break while hunting. He utilized the division of labor method of taking sculptures made separately and attaching them!

As his method improved, he became capable of modifying 17 sculptures a day. He could fix an additional 4 sculptures, and the time he could spend focused on hunting also increased.

However, the purification level was still changing slowly.

“This still won’t do.”

While surveying the area around the River of Lamentation, Weed found a swamp. There were a few trees and clay.

“This is it!”

Using the clay greatly shortened the time it took to make sculptures. It

became possible for him to modify about 45 sculptures a day.

Every cloud has a silver lining.

Weed increased his work efficiency like an incarnation of grinding!

– The work of purifying the River of Lamentation basin with sculptures, a great accomplishment of Sculpting, has progressed by 11%.

Weed was struggling alone to achieve a great accomplishment. While doing so, an idea suddenly came to mind.

‘Altering all these sculptures would really be an enormous achievement.’

It occurred to him the reward given to the Sculptor would be really big, because Fame and Contribution points to each of the Churches were very difficult to obtain.

Contribution to Churches or Kingdoms could be used however the player desired. They could earn a weapon or an item, but it was also possible to take an army or an order of Saintly Knights to battle.

‘Do I really need to cling to only modifying sculptures?’

At his level, Weed could tell the sculptures on the basin of the River of Lamentation weren’t great. He estimated them to be completed with an Intermediate sculpting skill or lower, and the finer details weren’t finished either.

He occasionally saw a few Fine ones, but the sculptures were generally just ordinary.

“How about if I made sculptures here instead?”

As soon as the thought came to mind, Weed began moving to take action.

A large Orc family’s meal! Over 20 Orcs made of clay were eating food. It was a moment where Orcs had no choice but to be happy.

You have made a sculpture on the River of Lamentation.
Orcs’ Supper.

You have made 1 sculpture on the River of Lamentation.

He could also lower the purification need by making a sculpture.

The sculpture was capable of overwhelming the the negative effects of other sculptures!

“This is the solution!”

Weed moved his sculpting knife quickly.

Improving a sculpture was also considerably difficult since he needed to form an idea in his mind. He would rather make a work overwhelming the sculptures around it.

“I’ve gotta make a sculpture embodying hope.”

He made hopeful sculptures instead of the negative sculptures that were spread out on the River of Lamentation.

Each of the races who had been engaged in merciless slaughter was now laughing heartily. Money, weapons, and food made of clay were piled up abundantly in a warehouse.

– Oooooooooooooooooooooo!

The birth of a Fine sculpture!

The purification decreased by 3%.

The wails of the ghosts in the River of Lamentation were slowly diminishing. The volume wasn’t as loud, and the grieving had decreased too.

However, Weed could still hear screaming sounds in places far away from where he had created the sculpture.

“This time, I’ll make a sculpture to comfort the Humans.”

On the banks of the River of Lamentation, there was an unusually large number of Human sculptures being persecuted by the Nobility or Military.

A father hanged from a scaffold, and a mother being whipped!

There were even sculptures of children having their hands tied up

together with the Soldiers' hands while being dragged into the battlefield.

Weed changed their appearance a little and sculpted anew.

Nobility, Royalty, and Soldiers hung from a scaffold while being whipped by young children.

It was not an elegant or peaceful sculpture, and had very little artistic value. However, such extreme sculptures could bring great happiness to the those who had been treated unjustly in their lives.

It was a sculpture channeling humor and satire!

The young children were smiling brightly while the Nobles and Soldiers wore agonized looks.

It was completed as a Fine sculpture, decreasing the purification by 4%.

You have made a sculpture on the River of Lamentation.

The Great King.

You have made 43 sculptures on the River of Lamentation.

Purification of the River of Lamentation: 0%

2 Masterpieces.

17 Fine Pieces.

As well as miscellaneous sculptures!

Weed slightly changed the easy-to-repair sculptures and made the rest anew.

“The Great King” was a sculpture of a King leading Humans! The King sculpture was adorned with expensive jewels and his belly was well rounded; it came out as a Masterpiece.

In just two weeks, he was able to purify the River of Lamentation.

– Aaaaahhhh...

The groaning sound coming from the River of Lamentation faded away.

The grievous wails had disappeared, leaving only the sound of serenely flowing water. The river was still incomparably dirty, but the ghosts made

far more comfortable expressions.

Ding!

The Fight Against the Embinyu has been completed

The secret plot of the Embinyu Church to call forth ghosts and fill the continent with Demonic Spirits has been stopped by a righteous Sculptor.

It created a significant disruption in the Embinyu Church's plans, but they will contrive another plot.

In addition, the darkness enshrouding the Matallost Church has not yet been lifted.

– Fame has increased by 720.

You have accomplished a Sculpting Achievement.

For demolishing the Embinyu Church's plot, intimacy with all the Churches in the Versailles Continent has increased by 20.

Contribution to all the churches on the Versailles Continent has increased by 300.

With the Sculpting Achievement, you have acquired the title, 'World-Changing Sculptor.'

Kings and nobles will treat you like a famous figure and be prudent.

– Level has increased.

– Level has increased.

– Level has increased.

He completely recovered the levels he used to grant the sculptures life and even went up by two more levels.

His current level was exactly 360!

“It must be done now.”

Weed pulled out the Matallost Church symbol, the Statue of Death.

The statue was holding a sickle, and opened its eyes. Then it spoke.

– The trial has not yet ended. The Embinyu Church's plan has been disrupted, but they will conceive a new, more powerful ritual.

Ensure their ritual does not progress.

Interfere with the Embinyu Church's Ritual

The Embinyu Church will not cease to interfere with the River of Lamentation.

Stop the ritual completely by taking away the articles necessary for the altar and the ritual.

The Guardian Knights of the Matallost Church who guides the dead will assist you in your endeavor.

Chain quest to Rescue the Prisoners of the Matallost Church, Eradicate the Embinyu Church's 11th Sect, and the Matallost Church's Long-Cherished Wish.

Difficulty: A

Rewards: Relic of the Matallost Church

Quest Restriction: All chain quests will end if you are defeated by the Embinyu Church.

It meant if he were to fail the quest; Rescuing the Prisoners, Eradicating the Embinyu Church's 11th Sect, and the rest would also end.

Weed's eyes had already started sparkling the moment "rewards" were mentioned.

"As a righteous adventurer journeying across the Versailles Continent, I cannot turn a blind eye on the evildoings of the Embinyu Church. For the sake of the Matallost Church, I will ensure their ritual will be stopped for good."

– You have accepted the quest.

Black smoke gushed out from the Statue of Death, and the River of Lamentation began to overflow. The water surged to the riverbank like crashing waves, and after a while, Knights walked out of the river.

Ghosts!

The 100 Guardian Knights who were hazily coming into existence were Weed's reinforcements.

*

Weed put the Guardian Knights, the Five Phoenix Brothers, and Yellowy on standby where he stood and stealthily crept near the location of the Embinyu Church.

The Embinyu Priests and Dark Knights had suspended their slaughter ritual and were plunged into chaos. The over 1,000 Demonic Spirits who had been guarding them also looked somewhat weakened. The light in their eyes had weakened, and their steps were strengthless.

'Seems like the purification of the River of Lamentation had an effect.'

Weed used the opening the Dark Knights on guard duty provided to inch closer.

There was a blood-red Skull and Coffin sewn on the robes of the Embinyu Church Priests. There were only 10 Priests who had Crows on their robes.

He could overhear their conversation.

“The River of Lamentation is not responding to our ritual.”

“Sacrifice more offerings.”

Priests with the Crow emblems looked like they were in charge. As they performed the ritual, hearts of lambs and deers were sacrificed.

The ritual showed a violent response, enough to flood the River of Lamentation! It had been potent enough to erode the rocks, and ghosts flew out helter-skelter.

Weed watched the ritual nervously, but the river continued to flow leisurely.

The Priests, whose faces were barely visible due to upturned robe hoods, halted the ritual and said, “The strength of the ghosts has decreased.”

“What about the Demonic Spirits we sent aboveground?”

“They will also become increasingly weak.”

“The ritual must continue in order to make additional Demonic Spirits... We’ll have to bring the Matallost Church prisoners and ask them the reason why.”

The survivors of the Matallost Church!

It seemed they had become prisoners and were captives of the Embinyu Church.

“If we are to bring the prisoners, we will have to report to His Holiness, the Pope.”

“His Holiness will lead us. Let us return to the temple for now.”

They left about half of the Embinyu Priest and Dark Knight troops

behind and moved downstream.

The temple was at a place where Weed hadn't scouted yet. He snuck behind them, and after following them for about two hours, a brilliant fortress made of gold and jewels appeared.

It was a high-class temple, entirely different level from the ruined temple of the Matallast Church!

The temple had been built into the natural terrain of the rocky mountain. It was equipped with a thick stone gate, a moat, ballistas, and even defensive installments for the deployment of Archers.

“Defend this place.”

Uuuooooohh!

At the command of the Embinyu Priests, the Demonic Spirits guarded the fort like an iron wall.

Weed couldn't go inside the fort, so he turned back to the place where the rituals had been performed.

“If they're to come back, there's probably only going to be a day, maybe two days in between!”

Weed mounted Yellowy in his full equipment, the armor and equipment gave him happiness!

He stood in front of the Guardian Knights with his cloak flapping.

It was a decisive moment.

Weed raised his sword high and burst out with Lion's Roar—

“GUARDIAN KNIGHTS, ATTACK!”

60 Guardian Knights ran forward in unison.

It was a charge made by only 60 party members towards over 500 Demonic Spirits, Embinyu Church Priests, and Dark Knights!

It looked incomparably reckless, but the reality was actually very different from the exterior.

The Guardian Knights who lead the dead were not living beings. As warriors of the Matallost Church, they were no different from ghosts. They would never die from normal methods, and they only received blows from the holy power of high-rank Priests or the black magic of the Dark Knights and above.

“It’s the remnants of the Matallost Church.”

“Stop them!”

30 Dark Knights and over 500 Demonic Spirits held the front lines, but the Guardian Knights broke right through them.

Grawr?

“Get them!”

The Dark Knights turned and chased after the Guardian Knights.

The Guardian Knights only had one purpose.

Eradicate the Embinyu Church’s Priests!

Just as Weed had commanded, they ran straight towards the Priests.

The Embinyu Priests uttered an incantation.

“O beastly and dark power, let merciless punishment fall. Dark Sword!”

Blessing magic! The Priests endowed holy power into the guarding Dark Knights’ swords.

Rawr!

“Wipe out the remnants of the Matallost Church.”

The Dark Knights intercepted the Guardian Knights. Demonic Spirits were surrounding them layer by layer, so they were really like rats in a trap.

Woosh!

Weed raised his hand. Then the Phoenixes outstretched their wings.

The Phoenixes breathed flames towards the ground as they flew over the battlefield. The Demonic Spirits were burnt and the Dark Knights were

also wrapped in flames.

“Death Arrow!”

“Water Blaster!”

The Priests inflicted magic attacks on the Phoenixes, majestic magic creatures who soared in the air! The Phoenixes twisted violently as they dodged the magic. Guardian Knights were crouching down while on board the Phoenixes.

“NOW!” Weed’s voice erupted with Lion’s Roar at the exact moment.

Figures leapt from the flame-bodied Phoenixes! 40 Guardian Knights were falling to the ground.

“Let’s go. Yellowy!”

Weed matched himself to Yellowy’s rhythm.

Mooooooooo!

Yellowy bellowed invigoratingly as he ran on all fours.

Weed cleaved through the weakened Demonic Spirits in an instant and advanced while the Phoenixes dominated the skies. They exhaled flames at Demonic Spirits in midair; wherever Demonic Spirits were gathered, the fires spread and became a sea of fire in all directions.

Weed and the Guardian Knights leapt within the sea of flames!

The 20 or less Priests were the first to be massacred in the fierce battle.

“Guardian Knights, protect the relic of the Matallost Church, fight the Dark Knights and leave the Demonic Spirits alone! Make a blockade and DO NOT ALLOW EVEN ONE ENEMY TO SLIP AWAY!”

Weed burst out with Lion’s Roar as he commanded the battlefield.

The battle was already won.

As long as there weren’t any Priests, he was confident he could win even by only mobilizing the Phoenixes!

‘I can’t just hand over my prey!’

The Phoenixes were still weak.

After surrounding the whole area with the the Guardian Knights, he hunted the Demonic Spirits and Dark Knights with the AOE flame attack of the Phoenixes.

Roaring, blazing flames!

Weed walked through the flames.

“Angry Pebble, Dirtmen!”

The Fire and Earth Spirits were protecting him. He had infinite intimacy with them, so even if their spiritual abilities were lacking, he could call on them anytime as long as he had the Mana for it. It was the benefit of being their creator.

Thanks to Dirtmen and Angry Pebbles, the ground where Weed walked was split open, and flames on his sides were diverted.

He arrived at the place where the Embinyu Church had been performed the ritual.

Weed picked up and looted the goods greedily.

– The Relic of the Matallost Church, the Copper Plate of Perception has been acquired.

– The Relic of the Matallost Church, the Promise Staff has been acquired.

Two relics!

There were also considerable amount of food for the lambs which had been offered as sacrifices.

Chomp!

Weed ate a baked apple.

While drinking its juices, Weed looked around for a place battle was still being fought.

The Dark Knights and Demonic Spirits were collapsing from burns.

Ding!

Interfere with the Embinyu Church’s Ritual has been completed.

The relics of the Matallost Church have been passed to you, the righteous.

The ritual of the Embinyu Church will no longer be able to continue. However, the Embinyu Church's main force is still alive and well.

The head of the 11th Sect, Feylord, will seek your head to get revenge for this humiliation.

You must absolutely not be caught by the Embinyu Church.

To resist them, you must revive the promised alliance contracted by the Deliverers of the dead.

– Fame has increased by 220.

– Leadership and Charisma has increased by 10.

– Faith stat has increased by 10.

– Level has increased.

Quest success!

Weed took a breath at last. However, the linked quests were still continuing.

“I should go to a more remote location.”

Weed finished the ritual interference quest and made time to take the Phoenixes and Yellowy somewhere farther away. He estimated that even if something dangerous were to happen, the Phoenixes would be able to pull out quickly. Weed could also escape by riding Yellowy.

“Even in the worst case, I’ll have to save Yellowy.”

Mooooooooo!

Yellowy’s innocent eyes watered in gratitude. He hadn’t expected it, but his master would sacrifice himself to save him.

While Yellowy was overflowing with emotion, Weed coldly finished making his calculations.

If Yellowy died, the sorry one would be himself, Weed. The damage would be severe if he created yet another sculpture and granted it life.

Of course Weed would throw the Death Knight first before dying.

“Since I’m here, rest easy, Yellowy.”

Mooooooooo!

Weed passed the River of Lamentation with Yellowy and the Phoenixes and moved into a region full of Plains.

There, he saw monster legions! Legions of monsters he couldn't even identify were wandering around in droves.

They were probably one of the the beast-type monsters, but since it was the entrance to hell, he couldn't relax his guard no matter what kind of monster it was. Weed moved further back whenever he saw a monster horde.

“Mhm, where am I?”

Smith, who had gotten dead drunk and had fallen asleep, slowly opened his eyes.

He was riding Yellowy behind Weed's back. Smith was one of the reasons why Yellowy had to be saved no matter what!

“We are on an expedition.”

“Eh. I see.”

Smith hadn't woken from the alcohol and looked around with bleary eyes.

While conversing with him, Weed had gotten the feeling Smith had originally been a truly impressive Mercenary. The stories of adventuring everywhere around the Versailles Continent were impossible if not for a Mercenary of considerably remarkable skill.

However, he was now just a former Mercenary who was living intoxicated!

Nevertheless, Smith's comprehensive knowledge of traps, terrain, and monster traits was a big help. If he was given a little liquor, he also stood guard well while Weed made sculptures. His sword skills had probably diminished, but he still had many uses.

His observation skills identified traits after merely a brief glance at the monsters! His ability to distinguish drinkable water and edible grasses was

also excellent.

In any case, he was being very helpful in his own way.

Smith looked around and said cautiously, "This place seems too dangerous."

"What?"

"The level of the monsters is too high. Even with the protection of the Phoenixes and Yellowy, this isn't a place where a Sculptor can come."

While Weed hunted, he gave Smith liquor and put him under Death Knight's care. It might be the reason why Smith was still underestimating Weed.

"I see."

Weed absentmindedly listened to his words.

"Anyway, let's head back."

The purpose of the expedition was to check the monsters and identify the terrain. Since going too far from the River of Lamentation was extremely dangerous and had no purpose, he was about to turn back.

But something white was flying towards them from the sky.

The dignified appearance of a monster flying towards them as if it was piercing the sky!

"ROOOOAAAAAAR!"

The monster roared, shaking the whole area. The faraway beast-type monsters were also standing nailed to the ground, petrified.

"It's a boss-class monster!"

The boss-class monster dominating the area appeared. The monster was flying through the air was steadily increasing in size. Even from a considerable distance away, it appeared bigger than the palm of his hand.

As the distance gradually shortened, the body continued to grow! It was a huge figure easily exceeding hundreds of meters in length.

The monster closed in with formidable speed while permeating a cold chill all around it.

Smith's face turned a sickly pale color.

"That's an Ice Dragon. It's an Ice Dragon!"

It was enough to intimidate and disperse the Phoenixes who had been circling above Weed in the air as if keeping guard.

"Hurry and run!"

Even at Smith's urging, Weed stayed still. He narrowed his eyes and simply looked at the steadily growing Ice Dragon's body.

Fierce eyes and long snout, a lengthy beard. A strong upper body and a weak lower body!

Even its broad wings comprised the majority of its body!

It was a look he had seen a lot somewhere.

"ROOOAAAAAAAAAAAAAR!"

The Fear hex from Dragon Roar broke out, sending shivers through the body!

In the face of the Dragon's fighting spirit, Yellowy sank down, and the Phoenixes folded their wings.

The Ice Dragon flew in with its enormous power to defeat the Humans and Phoenixes who dared to intrude upon its territory in an instant.

The Ice Dragon's large pupils glanced past Weed and Yellowy.

"You dare to intrude on my territor—..."

The words were suddenly cut short!

There was a slight spasm around the Ice Dragon's eyes. Then, after examining Weed again with wide open eyes, it outstretched its wings.

Flap flap flap.

The Ice Dragon accelerated instantaneously, then displayed incredible agility while turning in a semicircle. It was going to quickly return the way

it came.

Weed said casually, “Are you perhaps, Bingryong?”

The Ice Dragon’s body faltered in the air as if it had received a huge shock.

“You’re Bingryong, right?”

“Absolutely not.”

The Ice Dragon even shook its head while flapping its wings hard.

An action indicating its desperate wish to escape!

Although it was obviously anxious, since it hurriedly turned around, but it still didn’t speed up very quickly.

“Each flap of the wings is about 500 million won.”

The Ice Dragon’s wings stopped right away.

Although it was floating because of its buoyancy, it acted like it didn’t know what to do.

“You want to see the Wyverns, right? Wy-Three asked if you were doing well.”

“Wy-Three! Is Wy-Three doing well, master?”

“See. You are Bingryong.”

“ ... ”

Credits

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