

# The Legendary Moonlight Sculptor

## (달빛 조각사)

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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: Bardray's Ascension

Treasures were piled up like a mountain in front of Weed, the Geomchis, priests and paladins.

After the decisive defeat of Balkan and the Undead Legion, they acquired vast sums of gold, silver, treasure, antiques and equipment.

“Wow, are you really dividing the spoils?”

“Must be tens of thousands of gold. Including all the armour, it will be over one hundred thousand gold.”

The players were extremely happy hearing the news.

“Getting some of this is awesome. I could build a Villa in Morata.”

“It's all thanks to Weed-nim that we enjoyed such success. We must never forget this generosity.”

“Please add me next time as well. If it is Weed-nim I will come whenever you call.”

Weed's anger boiled inside as he heard the thanks from the paladin and priest players.

‘This is the reason why kind people do not live long!’

To share the riches evenly, their hearts must be filled with unfairness and misery of it all, shorten their lifespan.

“Everyone please take your share.”

Mapan with several famous paladin players began weighing the mountain of treasure, gold and silver and distributing it to the other players. They could not do anything about the item drops the individuals collected during battle but the treasures in the Undead Legion's fortress were shared fairly based on the contribution each person made.

“We won't need to grind for money now. Let's eat and drink a lot today.”

“I can buy a bunch of magic arrows for hunting. Hurray!”

Overjoyed by the gold and silver they received, the players expressed

their gratitude to Weed.

‘This is a nightmare. If I close and open my eyes they will all disappear.’

Weed’s insides were burning pitch black at the sight. Closing his eyes tightly and opening them, there were still players with happy smiles on their faces as they receive their gold, silver and treasure.

Sharing the spoils killed a person faster than drinking, smoking or doing drugs.

Weed could feel his blood drying out every time the pile of loot became smaller. Regardless, a 3rd of the treasure looted from the Undead Legion was his share which was still an astronomical amount.

And everyone congratulated each other on winning the difficult battle.

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Lee Hyun turned on the television to watch while he ate his dinner. For a long time the channel he watched was KMC media. Not only were there many media appearances of him, the schedule was neat and the shows told a lot of useful information.

“Look at the pile of treasure over there. It has been decreasing since morning. The players who fought together with War God Weed are receiving their shares from it.”

“So Weed really kept his promise.”

“Yes. No matter how many times you look, this is a heart-warming scene. The War God sent Balkan to his eternal rest and completely routed the Undead Legion! You can’t say this isn’t amazing.”

Lee Hyun lost his appetite right at that moment.

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The distribution of the Undead Legion’s treasure became the biggest topic on the Versailles continent. They originally agreed to do it, but to actually share it was another story.

Lies, scams! Such honesty did not exist in the world that fanned distrust.

So this was an inspirational story that people could be proud of in the Versailles continent.

Weed's true desire to keep everything for himself burned fiercely like a furnace in winter.

His only relief was that he received the rights to Vargo Fortress and temporarily gained the Church of Lugh's holy sword.

"Identify!"

Sword of Lugh: Durability 140/140, Attack 165~317.

Sword sent from the god for the humans.

The sword has been impaled inside the Lich Balkan for a long time, suppressing his dark magic.

If the sword restores its Sun Power, the Church of Lugh will be able to recover a weapon of god.

Restriction: Church of Lugh's Paladin.

Faith: 1,350.

Can only be used with the permission from the Church.

Option: Suppresses dark mana.

During a crusade it can create a miracle.

Cannot be destroyed.

Dominates monsters lower than intermediate level.

\*Remaining options impossible to check.

This was an item that had to be returned to the Church of Lugh.

"There is a Church of Lugh in Morata, I can return it there."

Weed received it from Geomchi121 who landed the last attack on Balkan and was keeping it for a short while.

"If there is an item to grab and run, this is it..."

Greed churned vigorously in Weed again; but this type of weapon could

only be used by a paladin or with the approval of the church. Stealing and using this would instantly turn him into the Lugh Church's public enemy, the sword could even become cursed because of it.

“Anyway, I need to return it!”

Inscribing this magnanimous act into his heart, he decided to return Lugh's sword! Weed decided that he would go to the Church of Lugh in Morata personally to return it. Once he returned the sword, even the players who participated in the battle would receive contribution points.

“For the time being I don't think there is any pressing work in Morata.”

The drops from Balkan's death were mostly Necromancer exclusive items. Balkan's skull, boots, cloak, robe, ring and necklace that formed a complete set of Balkan's items! These truly were items that had an unfathomable price.

These were things that Geomchi121 did not need. Combining with the magic book Weed had, it completed Balkan's full set.

A complete set of Balkan's items have been gathered in one place.

If you are a Necromancer, a special skill, Lich's Power can be used.

These were items that allowed one to succeed Lich Balkan's legacy. By becoming a Lich in Vargo Fortress and using Balkan's skull it was possible to use his 3 Great Magics. They were frightful items that had no equal!

But due to the items having adverse side effects, it would be difficult to change back into human form after he used them. Of course only by agreeing to provide Geomchi121 a lifetime supply of free meat, weapons, armour and 2000 oak barrels of alcohol, did he receive them from him.

But wearing the Necromancer exclusive gear constantly permeated bad feelings so he could not use it. Weed decided to just keep it for now.

“There are more than one kind of people in the world. There is definitely someone out there who wants to be like Balkan. The Necromancers will not always be peaceful, when that moment comes I can sell it off.”

When a person dreaming of becoming an evil Lich appears, Weed would be the first in line to bargain off the items rather than restricting them from it. However Balkan's equipment was restricted to high level and skill so there would be no chance to sell it to someone for some time.

Those who did not have the blacksmith skill like Weed had to be at the minimum level of 460 to use Balkan's items. The boots at least were on the low side of the level restriction, however with the robe, ring and necklace they had to be over level 520.

Since these was equipment that Necromancers desired, they would have to curry favor with Weed. They were firmly trapped by their own desires.

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The goods brought by the merchants to Vargo Fortress were all sold out. It was thanks to the share of the gold, silver and treasure that the players received and they were spending freely. Vargo Fortress became more active as the elves, barbarians, dwarves, and fairies came causing more people and players to gather there.

With a swift decision Mapan set up an exchange station, exchanging ancient gold coins and charging commission.

“Ah, I have so much money how can I spend it all?”

“Should we change swords?”

“Could hunting become easier then? In the morning I am going to try changing most of my gear to dwarf equipment.”

Vargo Fortress was bustling with players wanting to spend money. The vicinity was filled with hunting grounds no one found yet. Mountains, hills, forests and valleys, the local area had many hunting areas. The reason for many different tribes of barbarians living near Vargo Fortress was for the battles and hunting.

Weed conversed with the elders and the chieftains with his high fame and intimacy, acquiring information about the nearby dungeons.

“According to the dwarven tribe of the Hardened Earth there is a

dungeon nearby...”

“Go a bit further. It’s what the dwarves said so it’s certainly there.”

Weed with Pale, Irene, Romuna, Hwaryeong and Surka searched for the dungeons in the vicinity.

“They were not drinking beer that time so I am certain the information is right.”

In between the boulders they found the entrance to the dungeon.

Dungeon, you are the first discoverer of, ‘The Hidden Pit’.

Privileges: Fame increases by 415.

Double experience and item drop rate for one week.

Very first monster type you hunt will drop the best possible item.

The search for the dungeon near Vargo Fortress! If the hunting ground was doable with their levels, they swept through it. Recklessly exploring an unknown dungeon was truly dangerous. Traps were installed, with some areas that had an abnormal standard or quantity of monsters.

Of course during those occasions Hwaryeong with her dance could put them to sleep, and with Balkan dead, Weed could summon Death Knight and Vampire Lord without any trouble.

“Van Hawk, Torido, to the front!”

Their long holiday was finished.

“Thank you for calling me after a long time, master.”

“I was longing for hot blood.”

It was time for Van Hawk and Torido to do their part.

“Wipe them out completely.”

Those two were teammates who have been synchronizing their fights for so long that their hunting speed was very fast.

Weed also alternated his hunting party and went with the Geomchis, levelling up with them.

Barbarians or dwarves, they wanted to talk to Weed so it was easy to find hunting grounds.

“I want to fight monsters.”

“For a long time these guys were bothering us. Their tracks are somewhere in the north... Our warriors followed the tracks but they disappeared by the tree in the groves. If you can find it please help us.”

“Don't we need beer?”

“If it is for beer I will do it anytime”

“There is no difference between us brothers and the dwarves who fought against the Undead. I want to know more about what's troubling you.”

“Hmm, recently good iron ores are hard to find. If you have good iron ore at this time the price would not be a problem. In the old days when the fortress was normal the mountain behind it had a mine that we extracted a lot of iron ores from... If the humans could help us dwarves we would like to mine those iron ores.”

“Of course we'll cooperate. With a lot of iron ores you dwarves can make weapons and armor and market them at Vargo Fortress while paying heavy taxes... I mean, it would be good if you took back lots of beer.”

At Vargo Fortress there was much work to do as well.

“Excuse me, I know you are busy but I brought materials. Is it possible you could make a sculpture for me?”

“This is gold with many impurities. If it isn't pure gold the sculpture is not easy to make... Well, I will do it specially for you.”

“Thank you very much for considering my order. When will the sculpture be done?”

“There is a backlog of orders... please wait a while.”

The precious jewels of Vargo Fortress were Weed's share. Selling sculptures he made, the leftover materials went into his pack! It was a method of bringing 3 rabbits into a restaurant and getting 3 rabbit soups but with another big pot left over!

“It’s definitely faster to become rich by embezzling materials than by making money by selling sculptures!”

Weed’s fame as a sculptor was so great that they gave him expensive materials to make sculptures without hesitation. Usually he made sculptures out of wood in between hunting, now they brought the best gold or silver, sometimes mythril to sculpt as well.

He had to make a sculpture that fit the person’s taste so he could not attempt any daring pieces. But doing this still increased a small amount of mastery in the sculpting skill. Once or twice a masterpiece with high artistic value did come out. But as his sculpting skill was at advance level 8 the mastery rose slowly.

“It’s fine. There are only two more levels left. I don’t need to rush.”

They even celebrated the New Year during their hunting. Hwaryeong, Bellot and Maylon had work so they missed it, the people that left prepared a small cosy amount of food as they watched the sun come up making their wishes.

‘I wish to earn a scholarship so I can travel with Maylon.’

‘My hands became better at hitting monsters. I am going to hit them many, many times.’

‘Should I change to a Necromancer? But I also want to see the final flame magic...’

‘This year I am going to wish for no one to die from a botched surgery.’

‘Please help me date Yurin in this New Year.’

‘To rake in money following Weed-nim...’

They all had a variety of wishes, but compared to them Weed had a simple wish.

‘Let’s stay healthy. Or else there will be hospital bills.’

Being healthy is best.

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The Sculpture Lifeforms arrived at Vargo Fortress after being called from Morata.

Moouooo.

Yellowy dragged his feet as he forced himself to come closer. It was plain to see he did not want to come!

“I am pleased to see you as well. If you really missed me, let's never part ways again.”

Moouoooooooo!

Bingryong and Phoenix had large bodies so they could not hunt in dungeons. But Gold Man, Golden Bird and Silver Bird fought together through the dangerous dungeons and nimbly broke through them. Level 440 dungeons had particular themes or put out an ominous odour in their vicinity.

Nest on Kildeke Mountain!

The whole area was a hunting ground. The large area had a scenery filled with mountain peaks and flying monsters.

Compared to his other party members, his connection time was longer. During the time Pale and his friends did not come he hunted with the Geomchis or partook in aerial battles at the Kildeke Mountain ranges with Phoenix, Wyverns and Bingryong,

KUNNNNG!

There was a sound of lightning far away with the sky flashing brightly for a moment. Even when the rain was about to pour from the sky, Weed was flying on Wy-Three.

“Master, at this rate aren't we going to get hit by lightning?”

“It's going to be okay.”

“But getting hit still hurts...”

“If we want to make a living we can't afford to take a break even when the weather is bad.”

Weed and the Wyverns were not the only ones flying in the sky, it was also filled with monsters protecting their domain on the Kildeke Mountain. While Weed could not see properly, he still brandished his sword about.

“Moonlight Sculpting Blade!”

Coordinating with Wy-Three the monster’s wings were sliced off. Slightly higher up was Phoenix and lower down was Bingryong, who was fighting carefully without risking himself.

Van Hawk was also summoned, riding around on his phantom steed. Vampire Lord Torido was there fighting with a swarm of bats.

“They are all fighting well.”

Weed collected many Sculpture Lifeforms as underlings in Jigolaths, but he felt greater sentiment towards the sculptures he carved as they had been doing things together for a long time.

“Give treats to the bastard and order the docile ones to hunt a hundred more times.”

So forgetting about everything and focusing solely on hunting, his level went up 3 times. Weed’s current level was 403. Players with level 400 were overall few in number and were recognized by everyone for their strength.

It was an accomplishment that got delayed by giving life to the sculptures, but with manufacturing skills and making even more sculptures, he reached the level with an enormous stat boost.

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1 month passed in real time and during that period Vargo Fortress saw a tremendous amount of development. The population reached 30 thousand and the collapsed walls were gradually built up. But the Fortress did not earn enough money to maintain its walls or operate, so Weed’s recent windfall went into the fortress without leaving him with any spare change.

Along the twisted roads where the walls were repaired, houses were

built. Following the cleanup of the Fortress it was found that the knight's drill hall, basic training centre and warrior guilds could be rebuilt where they originally were.

Although only half the place where the Bone Dragon rampaged was cleaned up, more players came and now there were tens of thousands of them.

“It's night already?”

The players in the central square looked up at the sky. In no time at all the sun settled down and became dark and the moon and the stars appeared.

“It's about time, they are starting to come.”

The person resting and checking on his weapons stood up. The soldiers eating something in the restaurant came outside in full armour. Knights and soldier's equipment were quite heavy so when there was no battle they hardly wore it.

People changed their tune when they searched for people to party with.

“Looking for people to protect the west wall together.”

“Fighting monsters climbing over the north gate. Specially looking for someone with intermediate level 6 Shield Bash.”

“The collapsed wall south east from here needs a priest. Priests please come with me.”

At the Square combatants were recruited in large numbers. Magicians' lit lamps, where the lines of torches were erected.

Swarms of monsters are approaching to plunder the provisions.

Monsters advanced every night! Monsters that the Necromancers fought before in the Undead Legion quest were now invading Vargo Fortress.

Although now, with the wall as defensive support it was easier to hunt. The players joined forces, the residents shot arrows and stones against the enemy.

Battle erupted every night in Vargo Fortress. No where else in the continent did the monsters so frequently swarm together to siege a fortress. Because Vargo Fortress was quite far from Morata and with the mountain ranges in the west and north that provided breeding grounds, the monsters attacked in quite large numbers.

When the Undead Legion existed Balkan turned them all into Undead. Now that the Undead Legion was gone the players had to defend the fortress. And if the monsters broke through Vargo Fortress, they would pass this area and spread all over the north.

To defend the fortress and prevent mass breeding of the monsters Weed had to continually invest the taxes into repairing the fortress and its walls as the destruction from the monster's attacks were endless.

It was the lord's duty to provide help to the players by repairing the walls. It was only due to Weed's fame and his position as lord of Morata that the players were flocking to Vargo Fortress.

If he left the crumbling fortress because of the monster attacks it would leave the players exposed to danger that would grow exponentially. The whole Northern continent would be affected if people left Vargo Fortress as the monsters would spread out unchecked and create turmoil.

Weed cried blood while standing on top of the central tower in Vargo Fortress.

“Residents increase and hunting happens but no tax is left.”

Income tax disappeared scarily fast. Holding on to the taxes for even a moment was difficult as the fortress' extensive network of walls was being repaired without stop. His precious money was being scattered to the wind and all of it went into military spendings.

Vargo Fortress Military Power

Novice Knights: 58

Average Level: 196

Soldiers without battle experience: 4,312

Average Level: 52

Loyalty: 91%

Training: 46%

An army has been created with immigrants from Morata.

Army's recruitment was focused on hunters or sturdy young men.

The knights are becoming stronger in order to survive.

Soldiers respect their lord and are honest in their service. But they are worried as they are thrown into battle without proper training. But as they are fighting defensively behind the fortress wall, they have some confidence.

They do not provide public order, but the situation is dire without them.

The fortress wall has to be fixed as fast as the frequency of the monster invasions. Putting one eye on another work could turn the whole Vargo Fortress into a monster village.

An army had to be created as the Church of Freya did not provide protection as it did with Morata. Weed's method of growing the armed forces was, if they live they become stronger!

All soldiers were archers and to make them learn how to use the bow they were all deployed on top of the fortress wall.

In the future as detachments of archers were settled in, there was a plan for a large scale enlistment of infantry for an expedition to the monster's habitat. If the army could subjugate the monster's den they could earn treasure and also the frequency of dangerous monsters coming near the fortress would be reduced.

While shops and guilds were necessary, public order was also an important factor for beginners to start at Vargo Fortress.

"If they come we can exploit them to our heart's content."

There was much work to be done in Vargo Fortress and it required a lot of manual labour forces. He was eager to start the exploitation so his main

priority was increasing public order.

There were fights that erupted in between the fortress wall and occasionally the situation was almost perilous. As many players left for dungeons or for adventures, there were many occasions where the defending forces were too few in numbers. But the players fought hard and resiliently.

Fortresses in the central continent were well prepared against monsters with strong walls, they even had moats dug up in case of sieges. The mere thought of monsters invading a village was not even considered.

There was never a dull moment in Vargo Fortress as small to big swarms of monsters came to attack it constantly. In the worst case, it could be said that Vargo Fortress itself was a hunting ground.

“Where do I hunt here?”

“One good bow, also pack many arrows and go up the fortress wall.”

For swordsmen and knights different advice was given.

“If you want to fight as much as you want go outside the fortress wall and wait for a while. Death or fame, at the end it will be one of the two!”

That many monsters came flocking toward the fortress.

If seen this way, the Undead Legion could not be mocked. They had no stockpile of provisions to steal from and just by coming close would turn the monsters into Undead. Just the news of human occupation of the fortress spreading to the monsters energized them into attacking, as they could steal the mass provisions that were being transported to the fortress.

Weed could bring Morata’s army here, or otherwise as lord withdrawing massive funds to invest into Vargo Fortress.

“I don’t know if this might just become a bottomless hole... Still its too early to decide.”

Morata was the more impressive city and it lacked for nothing. So the residents and players crossed over to the fortress and helped with the

development. There were even skilled personnel that came from Morata and helped accelerate the development of commerce on an incomparable scale. If only the development rate was compared, excluding Morata, Vargo Fortress was the next best place in the whole of the Northern continent.

The daily battle in Vargo Fortress was at such a degree that it popped up on the message boards.

Title: For the best place to level up, don't hesitate and hurry over here.

Increase your level and also take advantage of this chance to increase skill mastery.

Come and see! It's everywhere. It's even stacked up.

Make friends and hunt together.

Title: Today was really dangerous

Hello. This is Liz once again uploading the daily battle against the monster invasion in Vargo Fortress.

The video uploaded today was 2 hours of dizziness. During today's battle, the east wall that was built several days ago collapsed.

The speed in which the walls are constructed has sped up these days, could it be the foundation that was weak? Or the lord using cheap construction methods? However I was suspicious about the possibility of the wall collapsing for a long time so I was able to avoid it without any danger to my life.

But monsters entered through the breach and the battle erupted inside the fortress... It was frantic.

I am sure you are asking, why should we struggle so much? Why not just go to a dungeon or a hunting ground?

Well, when the morning comes and the monsters are repelled, people are hugging and are filled with so much joy. It's happiness that only people who were in the battle can know.

Videos related to Vargo Fortress pull in a lot of interest as it was the

Undead Legion's previous base and presently Weed was the lord.

At first, even if it was Weed, the people thought that he would give up on the region because of its dangers. But as they watched on, they could not help but feel admiration from the constant videos of the players and residents coming together and defending the fortress.

There were no safe days, they had to continuously fight and defend the fortress. It was a region where their survival was a daily battle. It was a fortress and a hunting ground.

Regardless of Vargo Fortress's development it was a place that drew in popularity. It was the forefront where warriors from the Northern continent gathered to fight perilous battles with the monsters.

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Baran village was located south of Rosenheim Kingdom. It was a famous city where a player could gain a seed for doing the elder Ghandilva's request and use it to ascend to the City of Heaven Lavias. There was also the statue of goddess Freya that Weed made in his earlier days with immature workmanship, but the piece he sculpted in Seo Yoon's image made the village widely known!

"Really, it's a well-made sculpture."

"If this woman really existed, it would be great. Just seeing her face I could live happily forever."

"Perish the thought. This kind of woman does not exist in this world. It's Weed's sculpting skill that is unbelievably advanced."

The visitors' went to sightsee the sculpture once before leaving to hunt or they conversed with the residents. Meeting the residents allowed them to hear stories about quests, hunting grounds or talks of new dungeons.

There were pre-established dungeons but monsters could, later on, gather together and create a new one. The residents or the hunters could spot such signs beforehand and if the players built up intimacy with them, they could hear about such stories.

However one day the village people started becoming slightly strange.

“I will serve wholeheartedly.”

“Yes?”

“Listen to the teachings of the great god that will protect this worthless continent.”

“.....”

Some residents were looking at the sky blankly. When the players got closer and engaged them in a conversation, they told a story.

“I have to offer my money to the church. To create a bigger army! Half of my income is no great loss.”

“What...”

“That army is going to save us.”

“Which army is going to save you?”

“Ack! I cannot tell you anymore. If you don’t have a holy heart then leave the village now. Only Embinyu god can clean this sinful world...”

The players coming to Baran village seeking its quest were amazed by the unfamiliar response from the residents. Wasn’t the Church of Embinyu the ones plunging the Central continent into disarray?

And one day the village elder Ghandilva no longer gave quests.

“The people who believe in the Church of Embinyu will receive the seeds for free.”

It was a difficult choice for the players to make. But there was an undercurrent that suggested many changes were coming.

And one day, the sculpture of goddess Freya that Weed carved was destroyed.

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Bardray prepared for battle.

“It’s been a long time since I went out to the battlefield.”

After establishing their foundation, Hermes guild no longer needed to fight obstinately.

Hunting monsters, or receiving recognition from the Tower of Warriors, they were ahead of the pack. They did not lack any military subjects in Royal Road.

But the reason for them to start this war, this fight would define Hermes guild.

“We have to show our strength to everyone. We must achieve victory.”

In the fort by the border, Bardray prepared his weapon and went outside. The infantry and knights, mages with siege instrument prepared to march. Their target was Kallamore Kingdom!

With the Haven Kingdom secured, Hermes guild gathered their military forces to occupy the Kallamore Kingdom, initiating a war to conquer them.

The shape of the Black Knight Bardray appeared. The players and the soldiers welcomed him with silence.

He was the one that represented Hermes guild's absolute and ruthless power. They showed their respect to the person who climbed to the Versailles continent's strongest position. Without saying anything to them Bardray climbed the horse that was prepared for him.

“Advance.”

Following their commander's words the fort gate opened and Haven Kingdom's army advanced toward the Kallamore Kingdom.

“Haven Kingdom's army is approaching.”

“Ring the emergency alarm!”

The Kallamore Kingdom's border garrison responded immediately. To repel the enemy invasion, the fortress gate opened and the defense force came out.

“Attack! Attack!”

Bardray on his horse, ran ahead.

“Bardray is participating in the battle!”

The soldiers and players affiliated with the Hermes guild were focused on Bardray who was at the forefront. The mere fact that he was participating in the war was enough to boost morale to the friendly forces.

“The Black Knight Bardray is at the Haven Kingdom’s side, fighting against us?”

“How can we fight? Should we just surrender?”

At the Kallamore Kingdom’s castle, the mere fact that Bardray was approaching Kallamore Kingdom was enough to instill fear. Bardray’s valor in battle, his achievement of becoming the top player was so great that it struck fear into the soldier’s hearts.

“Unblockable Assault!”

Bardray and his Black Knight guards rode together.

A Knight skill that could only be learned together! Currently in Versailles continent, it was known as the best assault skill. Not only did it increase the horse’s speed, it was an assault that pierced in a straight line, smashing through any enemy obstructing their path.

Bardray and the Black Knight guards pierced through the crumbling enemy defense line and established a breach. Like people possessed, the Haven Kingdom soldiers gave a loud war cry.

“Everyone attack!”

“Occupy Vatten Castle! Let’s push on toward the Kallamore Kingdom’s capital and trash it!”

The players and soldiers of the Hermes guild raised their swords and shields and charged. As the siege weaponry broke down the castle wall and gate, Bardray was the first to go in.

“Kill Bardray.”

“To protect Kallamore Kingdom Bardray must be killed. Attack!”

Enemies lunging at Bardray were felled by 10, 20 people every time

Bardray swung his sword. This was strength that no broadcast or video ever showed!

Bardray displayed a force of arm in a different dimension compared to the other rankers on the Versailles continent, conquering Vatten Castle on the Kallamore Kingdom's border.

Afterwards the Hermes guild followed their set battle plan, leaving behind a supply train and repair corps and advanced onward.

# Chapter 2: Grapass

“The feeling of isolation while travelling alone... roaming freely and clearing out monsters, it’s the best feeling!”

Wyverns, Bingryong, Phoenix, Gold Man and Yellowy followed after Weed.

“There, don’t drop it! Pick up the japtem properly!”

Wyverns had to use their claws and beaks to pick up japtem. Every time there was a battle, it created new and pointless agony for them.

‘Isolation?’

‘To be exploiting us like this...’

While they were by themselves they hunted lazily, but as they followed after Weed the amount of work they had to do increased. Hunting, picking up japtem, doing chores, helping with cooking and being a flying transport.

“KIIIIINNG!”

The Silver Bird sitting on top of Yellowy made a groaning sound, flapped its wings and suddenly collapsed. This did not work on Weed.

“You can’t die of exhaustion after this much. Get up quickly.”

Weed had experienced cold fatigue through overwork so many times that he was tired of it, pretending to be ill would never fool him.

Near Vargo Fortress there were plenty of dungeons around that no one dared to enter. There were also many monster dens, villages and hideouts.

On occasions other parties were the first to come and hunt but as the area around Vargo Fortress was in an establishing phase, it was more common for Weed with his companions or with the Sculpture Lifeforms to be the ones to take the first step.

What was good about having fixed party members or hunting with the Sculpture Lifeforms was that he did not need to waste time looking for trustworthy people or spend time trying to coordinate in a new party.

Usually conflict occurred when hunting with new party members due to different opinions and methods to use, but Weed never experienced such occasions.

“Everyone sleep.”

Until Weed spoke to finish up the hunting in the dungeon, Yellowy was in such a constant state of alert that he was unable to lower his tail. As each of them had their roles to play out in the dungeons filled with strong monsters, there was no time to be careless.

Even when a number of weak monsters appeared, they increased their speed so that they could hunt just one more in an hour.

“Today’s weather is cloudy and rain could come, so let’s spend the whole day hunting inside a dungeon.”

Only Weed had the power to make the absolute decisions regarding hunting or taking breaks.

“The sunlight is really warm. In this weather let’s pack some lunch and go hunting in a dungeon!”

He was a complete tyrant of hunts.

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“Found a new dungeon two days ago and looking for people to party up with. People who can dedicate the whole day, people who are already prepared and can leave now.”

“Hunting for treasure, looking for someone with a combat class. I am an adventurer. I have the first clue about the treasure but it’s not so trustworthy. Even then I would like to find people who can share the hardship with me.”

“Any explorers looking to go west? A party of 6 with an average level of 330. Looking for someone to draw a map while exploring.”

Not only was the repair work done in earnest at Vargo Fortress, the current situation attracted many players who wanted to hunt and have adventures near the frontier. As the monster attacks were so frequent, the

standards of the players were also high.

“If you are not busy can we go hunt together?”

“Cough, I am not really that busy...”

The Geomchis were constantly popular. Seeing their brilliance in battle, the knights and swordsmen learned something from them. They, the Geomchis, fought fiercely so that the efficiency of the hunting was maximized. Always being at the forefront on the dangerous dungeon paths.

Thanks to them the adventurers were having fun.

“Together with them we can go anywhere.”

“Even if bad things happen they don’t despair.”

During adventures death occurred frequently. The Geomchis lost their lives to monsters or by falling into traps, but their disappointment lied in the fact that they could not protect their party members to the end. They were true men!

Mapan thought of how to level up fast as a merchant.

“Hyeong-nim, I brought wine and meat.”

“Oh!”

“If you are bored can we go hunting? I improved my cooking skill, and I brought two carriages worth of alcohol and I don’t plan on returning till all my stock is finished!”

“Let’s go!”

For merchants they had a rule, to use any methods possible. As Mapan partied up with the Geomchis his level rose up easily.

“That fruit, it’s a herb!”

“We refine steel and strengthen blades. Anyone who needs it, please come!”

The residents and players had confidence in Weed, who after conquering the fortress had become its lord, and migrated to the fortress. Repair work

was constantly underway inside the fortress as businesses were restored, the elves and dwarves nearby came daily to trade their goods.

Looking from afar the fortress was constructed using eerie, black, contaminated rocks that made the place feel like an Undead would pop out any second. But the vitality and life within the fortress was coming back.

Once the crumbling fortress was fully repaired, construction of new buildings would take place.

Starting with Parvo, other architects who polished their skill in Morata now flocked towards Vargo Fortress.

“I think residential buildings can be built later.”

“Yes, I think so as well.”

The residential buildings were not a problem as many shacks could be built on the hills leading up to Vargo Fortress. Of course, later on more luxurious homes would be necessary but right now the priority was on repairing the fortress.

The builders who lacked skill were stuck being safety officers on the work related to repairing the wall. The 1st class builders who were involved in building Parvo’s Art Center and Morata’s business districts were the ones responsible for repairing the buildings inside the fortress.

“Let’s restore this building to its original image.”

“A lot of black stone will be needed.”

“The lord invested such enormous funds into repairing the fortress that it generated quests to gather building materials here. The residents and the amateur merchants are constantly bringing the materials so we have enough to use right now.”

Weed had invested an immense amount of funds into the repairs of Vargo Fortress. In Morata when immense funds were invested it resulted in a festival, here the corruption among soldiers rose and any random residents came to do repair work.

“The place the Bone Dragon rampaged is really problematic... upto how much could we renovate it?”

“As much as we can. We should try our best. The area was melted by the Breath attack and a lot of the support columns are broken, so half of the whole area has to be rebuilt.”

“Hmm, if the scale is that big then this will become a real construction project.”

For the builders, the work of restoring Vargo Fortress was a large project that would leave a mark. Their excitement was growing as funds from the lord and taxes were appropriated for the repair works.

“The tower that the Bone Dragons were in, looking at it, it’s tilted a lot.”

The central tower that was the main attraction of Vargo Fortress! Looking at it from afar or even close up, it was so tilted that it created a strange feeling nearby. It was amazing that it did not collapse or fall yet.

The builders explored the ground and found that due to the firm ground with well-constructed foundations, there was no danger of the tower collapsing.

“Weed-nim instructed us to leave the tower as it is for now.”

For Weed, restoring Vargo Fortress completely to how it was before would cost too much money.

“Doing the interior or any construction, once the money starts going in, unimaginable things will happen that will leave me penniless.”

Not only did the central tower pull people’s gazes, it was a historic place that protected Lich Balkan’s Life Vessel. The tall and enormous construct was too precious to demolish and rebuild.

“Let’s just leave it.”

The best method to preserve the historic building was to leave it without spending any money!

Like the leaning tower of Pisa, the slanted central tower could become Vargo Fortress’ new attraction.

The magicians with high levels and those who became affluent, built their own towers. But compared to those, the height and slant of the central tower was incomparable.

“The feeling of imminent collapse like that of the central tower cannot be found in Versailles continent!”

Presently, most of Vargo Fortress was destroyed and it looked void. The monster invasions, while facilitating easy hunting, were hampering the development of the area.

If there was a method to soothe the depressing atmosphere, it was a sculpture!

Weed made his Wyverns carefully transport boulders to the top of the slanted central tower.

“If I make a sculpture here, then everyone in the fortress will be able to see it.”

It was without a doubt, the best place to exhibit a sculpture. As it was a place that a sculpture would have to withstand rain and wind, a fragile and delicate piece would not suit it very well.

“I have to make a piece that suits the feeling of Vargo Fortress.”

As always, Weed did not think long on the piece he wanted to make.

“There is a piece that has to be made in this place.”

He started to carve the firm boulder into a sculpture. The residents and players who were coming back from their work or hunting were able to see Weed making a new piece.

“He’s also making a sculpture here. I am really curious to see what it will turn out as.”

Whenever Weed started making a new sculpture, there was always a great interest from the people. If he created a good sculpture like in Morata it would help in many ways so they counted the days on their hands for the completion of the sculpture.

But as Weed came and went from hunting in dungeons, the progress on

the sculpture was slow.

“It must be because the sculpture is made with blood, sweat and toil that it’s taking such a long time. ”

“A work of art is not something that you can just make easily.”

The players waited happily!

Weed made a 6 meter high sculpture that could be seen from anywhere. As the time Weed invested into the sculpture increased, the sculpture was becoming more and more distinct with completion in sight.

And finally a clear figure of the Lich turned Weed, wearing Balkan’s items as ornaments took shape.

In the past he played as a Lich in Jigolaths, but he wondered if he could also have become Balkan’s heir, inheriting and leading the Undead Legion. With his greed, he would have earnestly followed Balkan’s command and in the blink of an eye, betray him and take the Undead Legion for himself.

It was an unknown future that could have happened! If he did not walk the path of a sculptor for such a long time, it was an almost certain future for him.

“I don’t know what effect this sculpture will have, but it will definitely come out as a Historic.”

Sometimes sculpting created great events. As he completed the Lich sculpture, the negative thoughts of a failed sculpture or even the Undead in the vicinity rising up again were in his mind.

The Lich on the slanted tower was telling of Weed’s sculpting skills as it lacked nothing in its details. Looking at the central tower from afar, it was difficult to tell if the Lich was real or not.

“Still, it’s missing something.”

Seeing that he already made the sculpture, Weed decided to continue it and try to grow the work a bit more.

“A Lich cannot be without a single bodyguard.”

Having made the big Lich sculpture, he sculpted additional 2 meter tall Doom Knights and Death Knights. Even then the Lich was lacking in splendour. Comparing the sculpture to Balkan's Undead Legion, the Lich was too isolated and lonely.

“It needs something more special.”

Weed pulled out usable sculpting material from his backpack.

The rotten dragon bones!

If it was real dragon bone it would be more precious than gold or mythril, but as it turned into an Undead if it was used as a smithing material its ability and durability as an item fell dramatically. And as the Bone Dragon of the Undead Legion was resurrected long ago, the bone's durability was so low that it was no longer usable for anything.

The item drops from the Bone Dragon were shared among the players, but the bones did not look like they could be made into anything good so they were not popular.

The Geomchis in the past used equipment made from a Bone Dragon crafted by Weed, but the paladins and priests could not equip anything made from bones of the Undead. That's why Weed could claim two sets of dragon bones that the players avoided.

“I have to use these precious materials.”

Weed used the same method as melting steel to connected the dragon bones. There were three sets of head parts, but some players wanting souvenirs kept small bones from the body. By melting brass and supplementing those parts, only 3 Bone Dragons could be completed on the central tower.

“Now it looks like something.”

Like ramen with kimchi, soondae with tteokbooki, and jajangmyeon with tangsuyuk, it was a fantastic chemistry.

DING!

Please set a name for your sculpture.

“Well, Serious, Cool, Handsome, Rich, Tall, Lich Weed with many Undead underlings!”

Is ‘Serious, Cool, Handsome, Rich, Tall, Lich Weed with many Undead underlings’ correct?

“Wait, it’s too long so calling it out will be difficult...”

The sculpture was more than a Lich, as Doom Knights, Death Knights, ghosts and other Undead from the Undead Legion were sculpted and placed with the Lich. As Weed was personally part of the Undead Legion’s chain quests he could reproduce the Undead’s image with amazing skill

“No. The sculpture’s name will be ‘The Lich who commands the Undead.’”

Is ‘The Lich who Commands the Undead’ correct?

“Yes.”

Magnum Opus! Sculpture, ‘The Lich who Commands the Undead’ has been complete.

The resting place of the Undead Legion, the Lich sculpture created on the eternal resting place of the legendary monster Balkan!

Balkan was the one that committed many atrocities in the Versailles continent. But without a doubt, he has influenced the flow of history.

Amidst the barren wilderness of the Necromantic skills, he is recognized for the great magical achievement of developing said magic.

Highly respected for his towering artistry and fame there is no one who can criticise Weed, who brought eternal rest to Balkan, for the sculpture he created.

Artistic Value: 8,980.

Special Options: Anyone who sees the sculpture of, ‘The Lich who Commands the Undead’ will regenerate health and mana 32% faster.

All stats increase by 16.

Intelligence and Wisdom increase by 3 permanently.

In the neighbouring area, Necromancers enjoy a +2 increase in their skill level.

Undead gain a bit more intellect.

Prevents attacks from stray Undead.

Reduces mana consumption by 6%.

Power of dark magic becomes 2% stronger.

When health is lower than 50%, the feeling of being indomitable will rise and attack power increases by 14%.

Effect does not stack with other sculptures.

Number of Magnum Opus created till now: 9.

Mastery of Sculpting skill increased.

Mastery of Handicraft skill increased.

Sculptural Comprehension skill increased by 1 level.

Fame increased by 875.

Art stat increased by 33.

Charisma increased by 3.

Wisdom increased by 2.

For the completion of a Magnum Opus, all stats increased by 3.

Weed's advance level 8 sculpting skill mastery increased and it inched up slowly from 6% to 14.6%.

The players watching below, as they waited from the beginning till now, as the sculpture began to take form yelled out shouts of joy.

“It's a Magnum Opus!”

The Necromancers who usually pressed for better privileges were the happiest amongst the players. Necromancer's were destined never to stray far from Vargo Fortress.

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The battle against Balkan Demoph, had a record 24.3% rating on its reruns. Weed's fame could pierce the sky, he was Versailles continent's number 1 most popular player.

Weed, the wise lord of the Northern continent.

Game broadcasts continuously showed special programs on Weed. They had a stable rating and the viewer's response was good.

There was news coverage of the daily change in Vargo Fortress as well. The players of the Northern continent had massive interest at the sight of the fortress, once occupied by the Undead Legions, changing into a human dwelling,

Compared to the many regions in the continent, the amount of players in the North was still small. But compared to the beginning, its expansion was nothing to sneeze at, with the players from the Central and Eastern continent having great interest in the north as well.

Also, as it was the region that War God Weed ruled, even if nothing happened it still remained in the spotlight. It was because of the self cultivation and development of the barren castle and villages that pulled endless inspiration for adventure.

And so the number of players visiting from the Central continent increased daily.

"People going to Leserite Mountain, please come quickly. We're leaving right now."

"Organizing for Tanroa mine hunting. Estimating about 200 people to come. It's a request from the dwarves to clear out the monsters in the mine."

It was a much better environment than what was expected so the people coming for the first time to Morata found it hard to adapt and were often left bewildered. They came knowing about the Great Cathedral and the Library and similar historic buildings. They heard many stories about the Statue of Goddess Freya and the Tower of Light. Looking at them for themselves, the sculptures and artworks were exactly as they had heard,

with so much artwork lying about.

Compared to other regions, art and culture was given preferential treatment in Morata and plays happened frequently. There were sights to see with the paths filled with entertainment. As the region was under the blessing of abundance from the Church of Freya, there was an endless amount to eat.

Festivals erupted regularly and when the merry and playful atmosphere struck, the players flocked to the squares early in the morning for hunting quests. Merchants who did not even know the proper price for japtems were selling their wares on the streets and the beginners were playing gleefully among themselves.

It was loud, bustling, and filled with a pleasant atmosphere. It made for a splendid city.

When an expedition called for a hunting quest, 100 people gathered in no time. The players had joyful expressions as they headed out to hunt.

“I understand why people say Morata is like heaven. There is so much hunting occurring.”

“The prices are so low compared to other places. There are so many places to visit and with business booming, you will lack for nothing here. I should have come to Morata earlier.”

No matter where one went on the continent, the other regions were filled with the slight feeling of oppression and exclusivity. In the square they had to be conscientious of the ruling guilds, always minding what they did as not to go against them.

In comparison, Morata was free spirited and actively encouraged adventure. Weed not only focused on artists but also provided equal treatment for the adventurers.

Development related to adventure and compensation for commissions took 16% of the fiscus. Searching the other regions inside out, this was incomparable and overwhelmingly the best figure. Other villages were at a level where their best was only at about 2%, 3%. There were cases in some

cities where other players ruled that did not even provide compensation.

The regretful thing was that the lords did not feel the need for adventurers and spent their funds stingily. But Weed thought otherwise.

By bringing back the buried equipment, treasures, discoveries, artifacts, and books of the Northern continent the city would develop faster. Developing the city allowed for more taxes in the future so this path was seen as a shortcut. Even after Morata had become big, money was spent without spare for the adventurers.

Quests in Morata appeared as if a dam had burst, many people received quests and left.

“There is no need to dissuade people who are willing to take the risk of death and suffering.”

It was a development oriented taxation!

Weed, Morata, and Vargo Fortress were changing in the blink of an eye even under monster invasions and the game broadcasters reported a lot of news about it. But recently there was an event that engulfed the Versailles continent in a greater shock.

Hermes guild's blitz of Kallamore Kingdom!

Local wars happened frequently, but they conquered forts and castles and absorbed them into their territory.

“Hermes Guild is charging again.”

“The current situation is amazing. Hermes Guild's army overwhelmingly crushed the Kallamore Kingdoms border defense garrison.”

“Bardray can be seen with the vanguard. He is participating personally in the war.”

“The Black Knights forces, their inestimable strength! Watch Bardray's action yourselves.”

“Around 100 thousand Hermes Guild players are part of the charge. The magician's spells are spreading and pouring on the enemy's position!”

Hermes Guild's giant strength was being broadcasted. Due to the Haven Kingdom's hostility towards the Kallamore Kingdom, they tried to fold the whole region into their territory. By getting the vast breadbasket and technology from the Kallamore Kingdom, Haven Kingdom would become the strongest nation on the Central continent.

Hermes guild started a war to recreate themselves as a nation that no one could stand up against. Imagining the future strength of their armies, no player could hide their astonishment.

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Weed heard the news of Hermes guild's conquest and triumph over the Kallamore Kingdom in Vargo Fortress.

"Here, it's complete. 34 gold."

"Thank you. I will use it with utmost care."

For Weed, it was business as usual as he made use of his blacksmith and sewing skills. If he did not practice the blacksmith or sewing skill for a long time, it could reduce his skill level.

While making a sculpture, he heard the voices of the chattering merchants from nearby.

"Hermes guild really has a massive army, their fire power leaves your jaw gaping and they are taking over all of Kallamore Kingdom!"

Weed, right at this moment, was using a special wood to sculpt an eagle. He was trying to capture the feeling of life in the eagle, requiring delicate carving to express its exclusivity of the sky and its freedom. While he focused his ears on the conversation of the merchants, his hand was completely tense.

"How long can the Kallamore Kingdom hold out?"

"They can't. I really didn't know Hermes guild was hiding such massive strength. Presently the Kallamore Kingdom's border garrison was completely wiped out. Among 60 thousand people, not many survived."

Creek!

Weed made a mistake with the carving knife making a long scratch on the side of the sculpture.

“The level 400 powerhouses of Hermes guild went forward, they destroyed and occupied Hosran fort in less than 2 hours. Even the media did not know that Hermes guild’s army was this strong.”

“Do you think they are really that strong?”

“It won’t be an exaggeration to say they have the strongest infantry, even the number that participated in the war... sigh, words just won’t come out. Just hearing the names of the participants you will recognize the rankers, they are lined with strong players.”

“But against Weed-nim?”

“Well... even Weed-nim would have to fold at least once against Hermes guild.”

“Weed-nim is the War God, he already defeated Hermes guild twice.”

Weed just made his sculpture in silence. The sculpture that was created during this confused moment was a downcast bald eagle!

As a famous sculptor, a disappoint piece was created.

Fame decreased by 15.

It was a relief that he was making the sculpture in a corner away from the prying eyes of the merchants.

Vargo Fortress still did not have a tavern so the video of the broadcast could not be seen. But the grand appearance of the Hermes guild could be felt.

The finances necessary to fund the troops to occupy just a castle or a city was enormous. Even for Weed, the monthly income tax was tremendous only after the huge development of Morata. And Haven Kingdom is said to be the yolk of the Central continent and just conquering it whole spoke volumes about their strength.

As Hermes guild became bigger, Weed’s influence could only become smaller. It was a situation where he could no longer roam around the

Central continent freely, but to just imagine if Hermes Guild completely conquers the Central continent!

‘It will only be a matter of time till the underdeveloped north, east, west and south will be seized.’

Then Weed would only be able to hunt in isolation. Even now an assassin could come at any moment for him. As Vargo Fortress was filled with players who would side with Weed, the assassin’s activity was limited. But in other regions, they would smell his bounty and cause an uproar.

‘The only thing left for me is the Sculpture Mastery quest and the final secret sculpting legacy! If Hermes guild or other famous guilds become bigger than now, peace will be impossible. Then the only thing I could do is roam the continent, hiding my identity through Sculpture Transformation and changing my appearance often.’

So Weed prepared to leave for a trip. To master the sculpting skill he still needed a bit more time. Retrieving the final secret legacy would be good, but mastering sculpting was becoming a priority so he planned to meet the master sculptor Zahab.

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The Red Reed Forest.

At the quest area the queen of fairies Teneidon spoke about, the assassins waited and prepared for an ambush.

As a rule they did not talk aloud but only in whispers.

When do you think Weed will come here?

If you wait he will come.

The assassins deployed themselves in the grass and above the trees. They were used to the boring waits. High level assassins preferred killing stronger people rather than doing normal hunts as it gave them more experience and mastery in skill went up a lot more.

To kill Weed they went ahead to the quest starting area and waited for

him.

“They said Weed would come here, right?”

“If we just catch him we can definitely receive a reward from Hermes guild. I am going to change all my equipment and also ask for a skill book.”

“It’s the War God Weed. When he appears we must attack him together.”

“There is no need for honour. When we kill him we will share the reward equally.”

Even bounty hunters, trying to make a fortune through the bounty, were roaming around the Red Reed Forest.

Truthfully there were not many righteous people among the bounty hunters. They usually laughed as they betrayed or deceived their partners without feeling a smidgen of guilt. They knew the cynical nature of the job but for now they decided to join their strength.

“If he just comes...”

“He’s already dead!”

“Kuhuhu, let's receive our bounty and sign up with Hermes guild.”

“Will they accept us?”

“They say Hermes guild accepts anyone if you have the strength.”

“Then we have to get in. Just by signing up we can live in a grand style.”

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Lee Hyun logged into the Dark Gamer information board. He was trying to gather information on Grapass, one of the 10 forbidden regions of the continent, which was the place Zahab went.

“Will there be any good information here?”

It had been a long time since he received the quest from the old handmaiden. He expected that more people would have explored the region and more information had built up since then.

But in reality, many players actually challenged the forbidden regions in the early days. As they were level 100 and 200s, he nimbly skipped their stories. Just from skimming them, there were many stories about being completely wiped out by the strong monsters and that they would try again later.

I regret coming here. The morning hunt is okay but at night, it's really scary.

Adventurer level 351. Came with a party of 7 with similar levels.

There are big larvae in the wasteland.

When you try get close, large worms pop up and try to eat you, so do not go near it.

Adventurer level 369.

The Grapass region is not well known, so we planned a party to level up where we would not be crowded with others. We were 7 Dark Gamer veterans.

The plain where stone piles are, the hunt is doable. At night the evil hands swarm about, so to hunt here you need exceptional senses. If you win, they drop magic seals and jewels.

Adventurer level 382. 7 party members.

It looks like there was still occasional hunting in the Grapass region.

There comes a point in time, after rising to a certain level, where it became crucial to find a new hunting ground. This was especially true for Dark Gamers, where both their personal growth and monster drops were important. So there seemed to be many tries at adventuring in the Grapass region

In the early days the level 100 or 200 players entered the region fearlessly and were cleanly wiped out. Presently, a level 300 could handle the region with some difficulty.

Among the Dark Gamers there were many players who were above level 400, but they did not post information on these boards. At their level, the

information on hunting methods or hunting grounds was too important so they did not share much. As it wasn't difficult to maintain their Dark Gamer Union's ranking by providing simple quest or dungeon information, it wasn't a problem for them.

“At level 400... seems it's manageable at that point.”

In the Grapass region, the magic seals and jewels that could be acquired through monster drops were as expensive as mythril. It was said there were several specialized hunting parties that searched Grapass for these jewels that granted magic.

Saying these specialized hunting parties were the best Dark Gamers and warriors was not an exaggeration. The opportunity to meet them was rare as they only stayed near the area where the monsters frequently appeared.

“There still seems to be no information about the master sculptor Zahab...”

Someone who met Zahab, or even knowing the address of the house he's living in would be conclusive information! He could then finish the quest easily, but even without such luck it did not feel like finding Zahab would be all that difficult.

“A human staying among monsters in the Grapass region would be quite noticeable. I could ride on a Wyvern's back and scout out the region... or if the sky is filled with monsters I could change into a crow and search like that.”

Lee Hyun praised himself. Since he accomplished impossible quests from the beginning, he was no longer hesitant or fearful about going to Grapass, one of the 10 forbidden regions.

“It's closer and much better than sailing to Jigolaths.”

In the face of any adversity, whether the sky fell or the ground collapsed, he had the amazing self-confidence he could survive!

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Weed called the Sculpture Lifeforms. Due to the recent hunting

Bingryong, the Wyverns, Phoenix, Gold Man, Yellowy, Golden Bird and Silver Bird were all exhausted. Bingryong's level was 470, excluding the Wyverns, the other Lifeforms were all around mid to late 400's through their continuous effort.

"I want to tell you some good news."

Weed wanted to raise the morale of the tired Sculpture Lifeforms.

"For the time being let's rest from hunting."

"Gol Gol!"

Gold Man, although extremely happy with the news, could not show it. If he showed any signs of happiness, it could be seen as some fault or another that would cause more agony in the future.

"Moooo. If this is master's order then I have to obey."

Disciplined by a foul natured master, they had learnt basic pretence and treachery. Yellowy pretended to be disinterested as he ate some grass nearby, but his ears were flapped up to listen for any lies.

"Don't worry. This is not a joke or an empty promise."

Up to now Weed scammed, embezzled and exploited them hard but he was not one to lie.

"Rather, let's go on a trip."

A trip!

Leaving the road and meeting new people, the joy of leaving the daily routine. Phoenix spouted fire from its beak in joy.

"Kurarara. Are we really going?"

Having not travelled much with the master and other Lifeforms, Bingryong was also happy.

"It would be good if the place had fresh grass."

For Yellowy if his back was warm and belly was full, anywhere was heaven. It did not seem like a bad idea. Travelling around and eating delicious food while resting.

Golden Bird and Silver Bird, as they had the nature of birds were also happy that they could roam around freely.

Weed continued to speak.

“Where we are going, it’s Grapass... one of the 10 forbidden regions on the continent. So let’s all go together!”

It was not a trip, the phrase ‘leaving home is suffering’ was proven right. The Sculpture Lifeforms suddenly lost all desire to go.

“I will become strong by diligently hunting here. So master, why not go alone?”

Bingryong spoke while he blinked his eyes innocently. But to Weed it was useless.

“We have to go together. You can’t possibly skip this fun trip.”

“There are many monsters here. I think I have to protect the new land the master earned. I, Bingryong will thoroughly defend this land against the monsters.”

“You don’t need to do that. The monsters also need to eat and live. They are doing this to survive, so don’t look down on them.”

Sudden benevolence towards monsters appeared.

“Morata is well protected by the Black Imugi and the King Hydra, so I am going to call other Sculpture Lifeforms to this place.”

The Black Imugi and King Hydra were sculpted in the past to fight against the Northern coalition.

After that they cleared the monsters near Morata and silently contributed to the public order.

They quietly raised their levels by a lot and also became rich.

The Black Imugi had a side of cunning and shrewdness. Silver Bird tattled everything about how the Black Imugi was using his status as a rare monster, he took over a cave and started to pile up his own treasure.

“It’s a pure, evil black snake with wings. If it was small I would swallow

it whole like a worm. Cheep cheep! I thought I would gain weight so I stopped myself. When I ask him to give me some of his premium meat, he doesn't. When I try to build a nest in his lair, he doesn't let me in. I think he's hiding something."

"Right, right. Golden Bird how is it?"

"I don't really pay attention but! He treats me very well. I think he hunts monsters. Also I think Yellowy's gotten lazy."

"Keep me posted on your friend's activity."

To prevent the public order from becoming worse, it would be good to have the Sculpture Lifeforms defending Vargo Fortress. And there was no need to make new ones as he could leave it to the Sculpture Lifeforms brought from Jigolaths.

It could be permissible for them to join the residents defending on the fortress wall, rather than having them hide in isolated forests or search and destroy monster habitats.

Weed glanced at Vargo Fortress.

The fortress walls were slowly becoming firmer and thicker, with more military facilities built to protect it from siege. The soldiers were being trained to protect the fortress and drive out the monsters. Rather than developing the economy, safety was the priority right now.

The players also received hunting quests so the monsters flocking nearby would be reduced slightly. They would level up and start stacking up the drops from their adventures. And as the army readied their strength, the wastelands and mines could be conquered and developed.

At that moment Wy-Three grumbled in a defiant way. It was purposefully done so Weed could hear.

"We have a desire to live freely. For how long must we follow master?"

Wy-Three spoke of his hope of wanting complete independence.

"Let's all live happily together. Hunting and even going on a trip like this... It will be lifelong happiness. And don't you think we should go to

one of the 10 forbidden regions at least once?”

“ ... ”

Weed was daring the Sculpture Lifeform to decline his scam.

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“I heard Weed-nim was staying here these days.”

“I need to ask him to make me a sword... Other blacksmiths in Morata can do it, but if Weed-nim makes it, it will come out better.”

Players deliberately came from Morata to Vargo Fortress to improve their equipment. The equipment Weed made had a subtle sense of aesthetic decoration. Using sculpting skills the swords, armour, and boots Weed made were carved with special patterns.

Of course the labour fee was more expensive than other blacksmiths. But with advance level 8 handicraft skill, there were no flaws and the durability was high. They could also flaunt that their equipment was made by Weed so they spared no effort to come here.

When the smiths or tailors had basic skill and became famous they did not need to worry about getting additional work afterwards. But as this was tedious labour the chance of being fed up with it was high.

“What? Weed-nim left?”

“We came all the way from Morata... Did he leave for the quest in Red Reed Forest already?”

Weed had disappeared from Vargo Fortress.

But according to the builders the repair work was still continuing and the paladins, priests, Geomchis and new players were all busy doing quests or hunting together.

For the residents who came over from Morata, their simple needs were met by the merchants. But with elves, barbarians, dwarves, and fairies visiting Vargo Fortress often, there was a variety of quests that were created. And as adventurers completed many battles, the merchants started to cater a general store, weapon store, armoury, herbalist and a

jeweller.

“It’s Weed-nim’s land, we have to spread faith to the migrating residents of Morata.”

The Church of Freya began construction of their new shrine.

Players did not have exact information on Weed so they could only speculate.

“I think he went for the Red Reed Forest quest.”

“He has no fear of Hermes guild.”

“Weed-nim really is different.”

This rumour spread and the bounty hunters waited in greater suspense. Hermes guild, who prepared for all situations, sent an attack force to the Red Reed Forest as well, thinking a third defeat was impossible.

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Seo Yoon was hunting and wandering deep in the north. She felt her strength was lacking when she was following Weed in Jigolaths.

‘I have to become stronger.’

She experienced the difficulty of hunting alone while exploring dungeons. As a Berserker she was alone most of the time so it was nothing special. Falling into traps, raided by monsters, and intoxicated by poison. The Berserker class had to surpass the fear of death, fighting stronger monsters to grow.

Seo Yoon went into places full of monsters, battling them and coming out alive.

‘I must return.’

With these feelings Seo Yoon increased her level while also perfecting her attack skills. It was all to protect Weed when something dangerous happened. She was also thinking of following him on the quest from the Fairy Queen Teneidon.

Sometimes she sent off whispers to Weed.

I found a new dungeon. There are many monsters. Their levels are high so it is a really good place to hunt.

When Weed was not busy, he responded quickly.

Congratulations.

And at that night's dinner.

While hunting monsters I found a short sword. It is much better than what I used previously.

Glad to hear it.

And at next morning's breakfast.

I hunted a boss monster,

Sa, safely?

It was difficult, after taking care of the rear guard monsters I succeeded.

Facing indescribable hardship, Seo Yoon attracted monsters and risked dangers until her body was covered in bandages to achieve victory. If she did not have thoughts about Weed, then it would have been impossible for her to give her all in the hunting.

Items?

Sharp Shooter Helmet... I got something I don't need. I am going to throw it away when I arrive in Morata.

Sharp Shooter Helmet! It was an item that all archers searched for with passion. It increased accuracy, range, and penetration, there was no better item for an archer than this. It was said the high level players who were over level 400 would even sell their own bows to buy this.

There was no need to say twice how expensive it was. If it was sold in Morata all the merchants would jump at it.

Ri, right.

Besides this daily routine, whenever something good happened Seo Yoon told Weed.

My level rose.

Already?

I picked up an item a short while ago.

Again?

My 'Dance of the Insane Warrior' skill level increased.

This fast?

Congratulate me. I just completed a quest.

.....

Seo Yoon enjoyed conversing with Weed so she went on even more hunts. The dungeons she visited were one or two tiers higher than what Weed could handle. It was not an exaggeration to say Weed's hunting speed was the highest in the Versailles continent. But Seo Yoon was not far behind.

Starting from the entrance of the dungeon, skills were used to rampage till the end and break through the dungeon. There was no class that was as tenacious as a Berserker.

But fighting arduous battle alone, the chance of dying was high. The only way to maintain attack power was to fill up on health and fight without rest. Words could not describe how difficult this was. Finishing a dungeon sapped all the strength from the body and it took time to recover.

During this recovery time, Seo Yoon searched for other dungeons or did simple quests.

What is the jewel of Jukbora? It's constantly dropping here.

W, well you picked up another one? It's a jewel you can sell to the enchanter.

Weed knew almost everything and when they talked, it was a great help to Seo Yoon.

After finishing up a dungeon Seo Yoon leaned on a tree for a rest and asked.

Are you going to stay in Vargo Fortress?

No, I finished my sculpture so it's time to leave.

To the Red Reed Forest?

If he said he was going to the forest, Seo Yoon would have went ahead and wiped out all the bounty hunters and assassins. The chance of success in the huge battle that would occur was not in the equation for her.

I already left for Grapass, one of the 10 forbidden regions. I have a quest there that I need to finish.

As soon as she heard the destination Seo Yoon took out a map from her backpack and headed for Grapass. As Weed was heading there, she had to go as well.

The Undead Legion chain quests were done by the Undead and at the same time, she was too busy levelling up and trying to earn money for their trip so she could not join him then. But now, Seo Yoon headed towards the Grapass region to meet Weed.

I am heading to the Grapass region. Let's hunt together later on. I will prepare delicious hot shark soup then.

Through whispers Weed also told Pale and his party.

Hwaryeong changed her high heels to boots.

"I have to go to the Grapass region as well."

"Unni, really? That place is really dangerous..."

Bellot tried to persuade her otherwise, but Hwaryeong was tenacious.

"Eating with Weed-nim after hard labour... We need that kind of moment."

Her plan of getting Weed infatuated with her, using a seductive dance every night was complete. She also wanted to show him first the dance she created with her choreographer during the preparation for her new album.

For this, Hwaryeong hoarded the most beautiful dresses and accessories across the Central continent through the merchant channels.

“Then we should go as well.”

Pale thought to go with her for her safety, but Hwaryeong shook her head.

“You must never come!”

“What?”

“It will become a nuisance to our quality time.”

“...”

Even after saying it's one of the 10 forbidden regions, in front of Hwaryeong's passion it was little more than a dating area.

Riding a horse Hwaryeong left for Grapass.

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Geomchi's path was one of loneliness. He was currently wasting his time by going back and forth between Rosenheim Kingdom and the Plains of Despair.

“Currently there is nothing to do.”

He built up a lot of sentiment with the family of the female player he was friendly with.

But not long ago she left to study abroad for 3 month, so they could not hunt together.

“Second is also busy...”

Geomchi2 was with orc Seechwi up in the north playing to his heart's content.

Orc Lord!

Accompanying Seechwi with her quest, mingling with the Orcs, he was frolicking at the Plains of Despair and Yurokina Mountains.

If 3 Orcs were fed and grown up, after 1 month it became 20. After another month it expanded to almost a hundred. But with Seechwi's low leadership, there were many orcs who wanted freedom and left.

But most who stayed in the North fought together and their territory grew. These orcs hunted together with Geomchi2 and Seechwi, and sometimes they did get killed. But those who survived got stronger and became Orc fighters and Orc warriors.

There was no race that grew as quickly and as large as the Orcs.

“I am kind of jealous that they are having fun.”

In the Northern continent of Versailles, his disciples participated in famous battles and appeared on television. Geomchi felt a bit bitter. It was a mistake to think that old people wanted to spend their time silently and alone!

“Moving your body and using your strength to break things is the best.”

- Discipline of the heart was important.

- Rule over the strength stored in the blade.

It was something he taught to the disciples constantly. But acquiring the strength and not using it was the true path.

“I should take advantage of the free time I have right now.”

Geomchi went to the capital of Rosenheim Kingdom to prepare for his trip. Many people gather there to go to hunting grounds, dungeons, or even to travel to nearby kingdoms.

And in one corner someone was crying out.

“Anyone looking for adventure in the North, let’s go together! Let’s settle together in the North under the leadership of Weed, the War God. First we go to Morata, then people willing to go will head to Vargo Fortress”

The merchant was trying to win over the players. It was a route consisting of travelling to Rosenheim Kingdom by carriage, then riding a boat to the North. They could earn extra travel fees and be protected from monsters if they brought along players interested in Morata while shipping goods to the North.

During the travel it was possible to talk with them or even convert them into loyal customers, so they searched proactively for travellers heading

for the North.

“Should I go have some fun?”

In addition, Geomchi could also go meet his disciples so he agreed to go with the merchant.

# Chapter 3: Zahab's Artwork

“Kuuuaak!”

The flock of Wyverns flew on their stretched wings. Bingryong, Phoenix, Golden Bird, and Silver Bird followed behind them. While their flights looked free and lighthearted, their level was anything but.

Flying above the white clouds, they often passed by large birds. Weed rode on Wy-Three, with Yellowy and Goldman on Wy-One and Wy-Two respectively.

“Can't we stop to eat for a bit?”

“It looks delicious!”

Wy-Five, Wy-Six, and Wy-Seven who were flying without any burden could chase and snack on these birds before coming back.

“Yum yum, it's really good.”

“These don't have any fishy smell.”

Wy-Three's accumulated grievance was beyond its threshold.

“Master.”

“Yes?”

“There are other Wyverns but why do you always ride on my back?”

“Do you hate it that much?”

“It's not that, having a person ride is heavy and takes a lot of effort. It also feels unfair...”

Weed was speaking while lying on the Wyvern's flat back.

“When I was making you it was annoying so I just made the back flat.”

“Keeaaak.”

“It is as comfortable as lying on a mat so it's impossible to ride the other Wyverns. You are the best.”

Learning the secret of its creation, Wy-Three became more miserable.

Grapass was located within Aidern Kingdom on the Central continent. It was an area swarming with monsters. Due to the large distance away from Vargo Fortress, Weed decided to fly on the Sculpture Lifeforms and was able to arrive in a short amount of time.

“Thinking about it... 20 days should be enough to find him.”

Reflecting on his miserable time at Jigolaths, one of the other 10 forbidden regions, Grapass was not as large. He had not heard any rumors of the stifling maze like underground dungeons found in Jigolaths, so Weed thought that it would not be difficult to meet Zahab.

Weed pulled out the mission item he received long ago. The old handmaiden said the mission item would guide him to Zahab’s haven. And on the mission item was a drawing of a water spirit.

“I should start my search near a body of water. But this area is extremely dangerous with these monsters around, so Zahab might not even be alive!”

The original residents, who were not players of Royal Road could die. While the players revived after suffering a penalty, NPC deaths were permanent! If Zahab was already dead, the quest would have to be abandoned early.

When certain masters of the class died or went missing, the quest and its related skills disappeared. Of course other skilled people could become masters, create new secret skills, and depending on the situation, new quests could be created. But this was not a certainty.

Truthfully, it was dangerous for Weed to have prolonged the old handmaiden’s quest for so long.

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“Let's get started. You all had a nice, long rest right?”

At Weed’s words Yellowy’s stomach trembled.

“Mooo, everyday hunting and adventuring... what have you done for us till now!”

The Sculpture Lifeform’s reasonable protest. Was it right to endow life

just for the child to labour through a hard life? Yellowy, who toiled endlessly since he was given life had the right to protest.

Weed began to think on it seriously.

Till now, he had not done anything special for Yellowy. Dragging him to the dangerous Jigolaths, forcing him to participate in battle, always making him carry burdens, he must have felt neglected.

“When you are young it’s normal to experience hardship. Eating and playing are not the things you should strive for. Regardless, I’ll start planning for your retirement now. As you become older you need to live more comfortably right? Is it fine if I can prepare for you a palace with fresh grass for you and your family to eat?”

Yellowy was persuaded immediately due to his high loyalty.

“I was not expecting that much... but I am satisfied.”

“From now on pay 200 gold every day. I will take that and add the remainder with my own money so later on you will have a large retirement fund to draw on. Oh, right! I also have to add the marriage expenses with the heifer you like so much.”

“Thank you master. I will work and fight harder.”

Yellowy liked the idea of living comfortably when old and Weed was immensely satisfied with the 200 gold windfall.

“Phoenix, Bingryong. You attract too much attention, wait someplace where you can come to our aid immediately.”

“I understand, master.”

Bingryong and Phoenix were large lifeforms, if they came close to the ground they provoked the monsters nearby. That’s why the search had to be done by Weed, Wyverns, Yellowy, and Gold Man.

“Golden Bird, Silver Bird.”

“Yes.”

“Father, talk to us.”

“Are you safe here?”

Golden Bird and Silver bird nodded their small heads. The birds were not affected by the monsters in the forest. No matter how famished the monsters were, the birds did not even constitute as a nibble.

Even if they were attacked, they could immediately fly between the trees and escape. Or they could turn into Avian Humanoids and the situation would reverse, where the hunter became the hunted.

“Finding Zahab is the priority. You two move independently, search inside the forest.”

“If it is a request.”

“I will do as father ordered me to. I might return a bit late, eating all the delicious bugs in the forest.”

Golden Bird and Silver Bird flew into the forest. The mission item signified water, but as Zahab’s trail could be anywhere, those two were deployed separately to find that trail.

“Then shall we be off?”

Weed with Torido, Van Hawk, Yellowy, Gold Man and the Wyverns planned to start from downstream.

In case of emergency, Phoenix and Bingryong could be called to fight against the monsters in Grapass. But, while the river and its vicinity had a variety of monsters, not many of them were a threat for Weed and the Sculpture Lifeforms.

The monster Kellkog flocked to the river for water.

“Yuga. Yuga!”

Kellkog were reptilian in nature and their habitat was close to the water. They walked like humans using spear like weapons while submerged or on the ground. They had the ability to jump frighteningly high, had sharp movements and usually moved in a herd. With their average level of 400, it was no laughing matter!

To hunt steadily in the Grapass region, it was absolutely necessary be

above level 400. Of course, maximizing the party's strong points could also overcome the disadvantage in strength.

“Wyverns circle around us and fight. When the Kellkog appears, hold it down.”

“I understand.”

The Wyverns who had to totter on the ground could finally take to the skies.

“Summon Death Knight Van Hawk, Summon Vampire Lord Torido!”

“Did you call, master?”

The frequent battles trained Van Hawk and Torido to be aware of their surroundings immediately as they were called.

“Go and fight!”

“Yes.”

“The smell is pungent. I don't think the blood will taste very well.”

As Torido was nobility, he was slightly reluctant to feed on the reptiles.

“You can't always eat tasty food. I will cook some sunjihejang soup for you later.”

“If so then I will fight.”

The charge of Death Knight and Vampire Lord! Van Hawk attacked riding on his Phantom Horse and Torido flew with his cloak spread out.

“Kiyaho!”

Noticing Van Hawk and Torido, a group of over 20 Kellkog prepared to fight. They waddled like chickens while holding their spears, the best possible posture for a throw!

‘It could be dangerous.’

Van Hawk and Torido could receive critical hits from those spears.

“Summon Dirtman! Build a wall out of mud.”

The moment the Kellkog threw their spears, the Earth elemental

Dirtman was summoned. Opening his bleary eyes, Dirtman thrust his hand forward and from the ground a wall rose up.

A large wall to protect Van Hawk and Torido.

The spears momentum was reduced as it pierced the earth wall. But it continued to fly, emitting silver light. Van Hawk and Torido were fortunate enough to dodge it quickly, but the spears continued to fly and pierce through the trees and exploded when they struck the ground.

“Getting hit would hurt.”

These packed a punch! If not for the high defense of their armor, the attacks could kill them in a moment! Feeling the high level threat of the enemy, Van Hawk and Torido attacked more furiously.

Weed followed after them, jumping into the Kellkog’s line.

“Heriam Fencing!”

With a tube that stored 12 spears on their backs, a Kellkog could attack multiple times. By fighting up close, Weed could prevent the Kellkog from maximizing their throw. Weed brandished his sword, weaving through the Kellkog line crazily without stopping.

“Kakaho!”

But Kellkogs were good at slashing and piercing with their spears.

A spear has grazed your shoulder.

The injury has reduce your strength.

Your high endurance has cancelled the reduction in attack points.

Health reduced by 2,980.

Over 7 Kellkogs aimed for Weed, Van Hawk and Torido! As Van Hawk was attacking on top of his Phantom Horse, most of the spears flew towards him.

“Gol gol gol. It’s our turn!”

Gold Man riding on Yellowy attacked like the wind. Sculpture Lifeforms were too valuable to lose so only after the frontal assault did they join in!

Circling above in the air, the Wyverns disrupted the Kellkogs attacks.

“Dark Energy.”

“Tornado Blade!”

Van Hawk and Torido used their special attacks unsparingly!

After some time they managed to win the battle, but barely. Weed’s whole body was covered in wounds with three short spears sticking out of his back.

“It’s more doable than I thought.”

After the battle Weed had over 19,000 health left. But the Wyverns injuries were extensive and Yellowy was limping on his forelegs.

“It could be more dangerous from now on.”

It was not dangerous like the natural disasters in Jigolaths but the monster standards were definitely higher.

“If it becomes difficult I can stop Golden Bird and Silver Birds search and call in Bingryong and Phoenix as well. There is no need to stop here.”

Fortunately, right now when Yellowy and Gold Man were in danger they could escape the battle field on the Wyverns. But if they entered a dungeon in Grapass, even that option would be barred from them.

“Right now let’s just continue. Bandaging!”

With no priests to support the Lifeforms, Weed wrapped bandages on the Wyverns, Yellowy and on himself.

Acquired 2 blue gems.

Acquired 3 black gems.

Weed picked up the gems that granted magic. Hard battles equalled rewarding items! He could sell the gems to the enchanter but if he made a sculpture out of these gems, the sculpture would emanate a brilliant lustre depending on the magic held within.

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Watchful of any monster movements, Weed was heedful in his exploration of Grapass. Though Kellkogs were dangerous, the fight was manageable. But if even 1 escaped it would come back with a flock of over 200, 300.

To prevent such situations, he rode on the Wyverns and hunted them down till the last member. Poisonous insects and savage beasts also lunged at them in single numbers, and they could only win through combining all their strength.

“Every time, if you adapt then everything will be alright.”

Weed’s skill and level was enough to explore Grapass. Of course the Sculpture Lifeforms took most of the burdens, but they could level up as much in return. By fighting in Grapass, Weed was able to raise his proficiency in sword mastery, perseverance and resilience stats. His bandaging skill was already mastered making Weed frustrated that he could not raise it up higher.

“Keeping this course I am sure something will pop up.”

Following the course of the river, Weed searched the vicinity as he went further upstream. Golden Bird and Silver Bird were tasked with exploring deep within the dangerous forest.

At the point where the forest and the marsh blended together, was where all the top predators of Grapass were located. Compared to these monsters, Kellkogs were scavengers trying to survive near the river bed.

“Bingryong, go left and stir things up a bit.”

“Yes, master.”

Bingryong and Phoenix supported the battle in between. When too many Kellkogs bunched up Bingryong’s breath or Phoenix’s flames spewed out before they fought.

“There is a house further up, master.”

Wyvern reported his aerial surveillance.

There were three rivers flowing through Grapass. There was no definite

rule that Zahab was still living in Grapass, so he had to go and check personally.

Advancing carefully ahead with his Sculpture Lifeforms, a wide lake appeared at the upper reach of the river. The lake was beautiful, with clear water reflecting the trees and the evening sun. And near the lake was a picturesque log cabin.

“Somehow, it feels like Zahab might just be there...”

Weed looked at the quality of the logs and their cuts. It was beyond normal workmanship.

“Now the standard present before visiting...”

Weed took out the gift plate prepared for him by Mapan from his backpack. Even if it was someone other than Zahab, the item could still raise intimacy! Any residents of Grapass would be beyond ordinary, so it was necessary to build favour beforehand.

Time to time, when out adventuring it was possible to meet the original inhabitants. Certain tribes could be hostile. The elves, dwarves, and barbarians were usually on the friendly side while the humans were aggressive. At that time by showing shiny marbles or a set of plates as gifts, it was enough to placate them.

“Is there anyone here?”

Weed called out loudly in front of the house and after a moment the door opened. Without a doubt, 100%, the person coming out was elderly.

“It’s the first time anyone visited my house. Yes, what is the purpose of your visit?”

Weed thinking it might be Zahab, continued.

“I came here to find a person.”

“I have been living here for some time now and I have never met any other humans. The forest over there has 1 hunter, and two sinners that ran from the law... but who did you come looking for? ”

The whiff of poverty could be felt from the eyes and below.

“I came here looking for Zahab of Rosenheim Kingdom.”

The old man stroked his beard while nodding his head.

“My name is Zahab. You found him correctly.”

Even with Golden Bird and Silver Bird, Weed felt that he would waste around 20 days searching for him. But fortunately he was able to find Zahab early.

‘This quest is not as difficult as I thought.’

His level was considerably higher since the time he received the quest from the old handmaiden and with the Sculpture Lifeforms, Zahab was conveniently found.

If Weed was alone it would have been unfathomable hardship and defeating a Kellkog would not even be possible.

‘But at least I found him now.’

Weed’s heart became restless as he finally met a Master Sculpture. With the title of a Moonlight Sculptor and distinguished as one of the central figures in early history, it was a historic meeting.

A boy and a girl.

A sculptor who kept his promise to the girl who became queen, to show her the most beautiful sculpture on earth.

Weed only needed to learn the song he sang back then.

“I came here with a request from a fellow sculptor. But coming this far, I am quite famished. Could I trouble you for some food?”

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“Oh, I finally reached civilization!”

Petrov walked around the market in Cotten village. He waited for a long time to see Yurin again at St. George Castle. However he came to a painful realization that she was not coming back.

Petrov is an idiot. A mongrel.

The graffiti was just painful.

“I will definitely meet her again if I roam around the continent. I will go anywhere where there are signs of her.”

Petrov’s world was filled with weird ambition.

“If I make everyone in the continent know my name, then won’t Yurin come to see me?”

Drawing could make you instantly famous. Having basic painting skills allowed one to receive commissions from the painting guild. Painting nobles and kings, making new brushing techniques was an easy way to get fame.

But Petrov decided on a more proactive method.

“Morata is known as a famous art city.”

Weed, through his sculptures, developed Morata to an amazing height. The artists there were happy with it as if it was their own works and stood proud of it.

“Then I could do the same with my paintings.”

Petrov watched the broadcast of his fated enemy, Weed, acquiring the territory of Vargo Fortress.

“I have to start there.”

Vargo Fortress was a region that lacked sculptures made by Weed. If he showed his paintings there, could he not surpass the Lord’s influence in the region?

“Through my paintings, I will take Vargo Fortress from Weed. There won’t be greater fame than this.”

It was also a good opportunity to show that painters were superior to sculptors. There was no organization in the North that could take Weed’s territory. But this was a declaration of winning the territory through art!

“I must go to Vargo Fortress.”

Petrov packed his painting supplies and walked briskly toward an area

bereft of human presence. It was to use Picture Teleportation to go to Vargo Fortress in an instant.

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Gulp, gulp.

“The baked potatoes are really tasty.”

Weed ate some of the potatoes Zahab placed in a basket. His intermediate level 9 cooking skill allowed him to taste many luxurious foods but the most tastiest was free food.

“Mooooo. Eating only grass since yesterday has left me hungry.”

“Me too, give me some too. Gol gol!”

Zahab shared some potatoes with Yellowy and Gold Man.

Wyverns were fighting among themselves outside.

“I am the tallest.”

“My beak looks the best.”

“Whose wing is the widest?”

“My back is flat.”

A display of childish quarrel!

Zahab stroked the Wyvern’s angled shoulders.

“Eat plenty. The sculpting knife and the wooden statue I left behind with the maid has been passed on to you.”

“Yes, it is as you say.”

“However I have never heard of lifeforms like these... Their forms are not well defined but their proportion are relatively right. Could they possibly be lifeforms made out of sculptures?”

It was the first time that anyone could figure out they were lifeforms made out of sculpture at a glance. Weed threw another potato in his mouth as he answered.

“Yes you are right.”

“The legendary skill of Emperor Geihar has appeared once again in this world. What an amazing occurrence. To see the sculpting skill passing through generations without disappearing, this is truly a fortunate event.”

“It has been hard. However, as I take care of the Sculpture Lifeforms and cherish them, there is a feeling of satisfaction that swells from my heart. I think Emperor Geihar’s sculpting skill is really amazing. Of course your Moonlight Sculpting Blade is one of the most beautiful sculpting skills in the world.”

This is what you call indiscriminating flattery!

“To have learnt Emperor Geihar’s and my sculpting skill, your talent is outstanding.”

“I have a great love for sculpting. Through my adventures I have also learnt other sculpting skills.”

Weed was a person who had already learnt the five secret sculpting skills. Zahab showed admiration as he listened to the various stories of how Weed acquired his skills.

“Having inherited my sculpting skills and learning Daron’s sculpture transformation, creating spirits and even able to call disasters, amazing!”

By telling recollections of sculpting skills, fame increased by 469.

“To collect all 5 sculpting legacies that were created after the existence of the first sculpture, it’s truly a miracle.”

Weed ate the potatoes till he was full and packed the rest into his backpack.

“But more importantly, the handmaiden in Rosenheim Kingdom wants to listen to the song you sang when you sculpted the moonlight before she departs.”

The most important business that called him to Grapass! To learn the song from Zahab and singing it to the old handmaiden in Serabourg Citadel.

“Did such a thing occur? I was making sculptures here and never did go

back to Rosenheim Kingdom... Well, since we are talking about sculptures, do you want to see mine?"

"Absolutely. I absolutely want to see them."

Weed as a sculptor obviously wanted to see Zahab's masterpieces.

Perhaps there would be greater rewards here than the reward that the old handmaiden would give for completing the quest.

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Zahab led him to a cave behind the lake.

"This is my workshop. Go in and take your time."

Inside the cave, the trees, boulders and walls had sculptures on them. Flowers and moss grew, widely disfiguring some of them. Weed observed the biggest and the most stylish sculptures first.

You have observed, 'Mankind's Last Moment'

A piece made by the Master Sculptor Zahab.

A scene of humans making a last stand as they fight against the monsters was sculpted.

A sculpture that is extremely elaborate and minute in details, without high comprehension of sword skill it's impossible to fully understand the piece.

Regenerate health and mana 35% faster for one day.

Stats related to battle increase by 12.

Warrior related skills improve by 2 levels.

Fighting Spirit increased by 2 permanently.

For 1 month, health increased by 450.

Art stat increased by 4.

By observing the sculpture with great discerning eyes, mastery of sculpting skill increased slightly.

Masterpiece sculpted near the entrance wall! The scene of 10 soldiers

crumbling while fighting against the monsters in Grapass was vividly sculpted.

‘A Masterpiece... and that one is a fine piece.’

Weed walked swiftly. Every time he observed a piece, his art stat and mastery in sculpting skill increased.

The workshop had over 70 different works ranging from Fine pieces, Masterpieces and Magnum Opus.

You have observed, ‘The Moon, the Stars and the Wild Flowers.’

A piece made by Master Sculptor Zahab.

This piece has been engraved on the ceiling and the floor of the cave.

Animation of nature has been realistically portrayed.

After completion, not much care has been given.

Art stat increased by 1.

By observing the sculpture with great discerning eyes, Affinity to Nature increased by 5.

There were nature sculptures as well.

“Seeing that you can’t take your eyes off that piece you must really like nature.”

“Yes. I really love nature.”

Weed was grinning evilly as he saw that the majority of the sculptures in the workshop were works that expressed nature. By increasing Affinity to Nature, the power of natural disaster sculpting became much stronger.

As Weed’s standards were high, even if these were sculpted by Zahab, his mastery in sculpting skill barely rose by 4.9%. Currently his skill was at advance level 8, 19.8%. Art stat increased by 137, with a variety of others skill also increasing by a bit.

The completed Masterpieces, Magnum Opus in the workshop of a master was much better than the ones found in Morata’s Art Center.

Sublime sculptures, delicate sculptures, graceful and elegant sculptures, and sculptures made from light that were shining brightly to great heights!

Zahab created things freely without a set theme or form.

“How is my sculpting testimony?”

“It’s admirable. It feels like all the outstanding sculptures of Versailles continent have gathered here.”

The sculptures would all get a hundred points. It was not like the mass produced rabbits or foxes that Weed used to make to polish his skills. Every single one of these art works was created with heart and soul.

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“Ahem, wandering around like this is really great.”

Geomchi stood on the fore of the ship. It was a fast boat that was currently heading toward the Northern continent.

The wind pushed against the wide open sails. As the ship was orientated for passengers, it did not have heavy cargo, so sailing speed was very fast.

“Getting fresh air from a different place is nice.”

Sitting behind Geomchi were 5 early 20 year olds that were getting along with each other.

“The wind is really refreshing.”

“This is the benefit of coming out to the sea.”

“I heard that the number of passenger, freighter and adventure ships increased after Weed’s adventure. Looks like it was true.”

While on the voyage, many other sailing ships could be seen. Even a romanticist was sailing with a sail full of holes!

The newcomers to the sea might not know, but the experienced seaman could feel the increased interest in the sea on their fingertips.

The harbour was crowded with noob captains and sailors. The sea was filled with the sight of sinking dinghies as they struck the reef. Weed gave

them a simple taste of sailing, but it became a chance for the seasoned sailors to spread the charm of the sea to many.

Even if they weren't fishermen or sailors, Royal Road allowed them to come to the sea whenever they wanted!

“Did you hear what happened to the 3 Mad Sharks of Becky Ninh that sailed with Weed? That Heint, Fractal and Bodomir?”

“What happened?”

“I heard Becky Ninh returned and is now operating a large pirate force. They are accepting every pirate and plundering every trade line without care...”

“They are truly evil.”

“Yes. They are unspeakably evil people.”

They applied Weed's teachings imparted on them in their partings and became remorselessly evil.

But, pirating was a very poor profession. They could not step onto any harbour if their notoriety with that nation was high. When sighted by naval forces, they had to escape till their tails fell off, and on top of that, they only earned the ire of all the players.

They could not sell their loot at market price and more often than not were disposed of. They had to be aware all the time so it was hard and fatiguing work.

But the sea was wide and free. There was joy in adventures that only pirates could do.

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“Because of the war a lot of people are dying these days.”

“Save yourself. Don't join carelessly, the situation is about to explode.”

“Just shut yourself quietly to a hunting ground. Levelling up is more beneficial right now.”

The tavern Dark Gamers gathered at! They were resting with cider or

beer in hand. As once they entered a hunting ground, they did not come out for a month and ten days. So taking the chance to enjoy themselves in the city was important.

Cooking skill was a necessity for Dark Gamers, but unlike Weed they did not learn it properly. They could only do simple grilling or boil meat. So for them, if they had access to beer and appetizers it was enough for them to unwind.

“When I entered the second dungeon...”

“The secret entrance is to the left of the fireplace and leads outside...”

They also shared high-end information.

The tavern’s location was the Brent Kingdoms capital Nehalles. The most active Dark Gamers gathered there so it was always crowded.

Clunk!

The tavern door opened and a player wearing a dazzling purple dress entered.

“When I was hunting then...”

“Next time I am thinking of crossing the Rozend route...”

The player’s conversation suddenly died down. The player that just entered was a dancer.

The dancer class that always needed dazzling clothes and accessories. Dancer was a hard class for Dark Gamers to choose as there was always a greater demand for battle optimized classes such as swordsman, warriors, mercenaries or magicians.

‘Must be a requestor.’

She was beautiful, and looking at her equipment, she was high level as well. If so, the number of Dark Gamers that could receive a contract from her were few.

The dancer moved around each table and spoke softly in a voice that other players could not hear.

“My request...”

Before the content is known, the level, reliability of mercenary, the time required to complete the request was thoroughly checked.

And as the dancer was leaving, Bade, Pason, Yumero, April, Volk and Daerin followed after her. The best and the most active Dark Gamers of Bretten Kingdom went with her. As they left, the Dark Gamers resumed their conversation. Seeing as it was none of their business, no one really cared.

# Chapter 4: The Sculptures Zahab Wants To Leave Behind

Weed was in Zahab's storage, observing for a long time.

"If only I could secretly hoard them all somewhere..."

And store them at Morata's Art Center. Then he could charge way more for the entrance fee.

'If I create a special Zahab sculpture gallery, I could charge 10 times more and everyone would still pay to come.'

Weed's eyes burned with passion as he looked at the sculptures.

"You must really love sculptures."

"Of course. Selling these amazing sculptures... I mean, they are precious treasures whose value cannot be estimated."

Weed glanced at Zahab.

'If only a monster would appear...'

As a sculptor, Zahab could not be weak. According to the rumours from the old handmaiden, he defeated the assassins while he was sculpting moonlight.

The Moonlight Sculpting Blade!

It was still Weed's first choice as an attack skill in battle. Seeing how Zahab built a house and was living in the middle of the Grapass region, his strength was not impossible to imagine. At the minimum, his strength must be superior to the knights who guard the king.

'A freeform sculpture. It has to be made through imagination, so the usual sculpting method's impossible. But nothing is impossible to make with the sculpting skill.'

Weed was an old hand in sculpting sculptures based on symmetry and precision. As he travelled around Versailles continent, he sculpted anything that caught his fancy so he was proficient in both observational

and sculpting skills.

But Zahab's sculptures excelled even at expressing common emotions.

A shy youth, stammering his confession to a woman. The sculpture body was well proportioned, hands and feet were ordinary. But the fretful and happy emotions were captured thoroughly by the expression and the posture of the sculpture alone.

A fawn looking around a field of flowers, expecting someone. The image of the small and cute fawn waiting, anticipating, for its mother could be imagined naturally just by looking at the expression on the sculpture.

With passion, the sculptor could express the subtle emotion to the finest point!

"These are really expensive... I mean, excellent sculptures."

"For you think like that, then I am really grateful. If you are not busy then could you help me with some of my own sculptures?"

"What kind of sculptures are you still making?"

"There are two pieces of work I wanted to do for a long time. I must make them before I die... I just cannot leave this place until I can complete them. With your skill, it will be a big help. So do you want to work together with me?"

Zahab's Assistant

There are sculptures that Zahab was longing to make for some time.

Help him complete those sculptures!

There is no greater honor as a sculptor than this.

Difficulty: Class Quest

Quest Restriction: Limited to sculptors. Must be in the process of mastering advanced sculpting technique. Until this quest is complete, Zahab cannot leave Grapass.

If you refuse this quest, you cannot receive it again.

There was no reason for Weed to refuse this quest. It wasn't his

sculpture so he wouldn't even care if he ruined it!

“Yes, I will do it.”

You have accepted the quest.

“But where is this sculpture you want to make?”

Zahab pulled the sheet off covering something inside his workshop.

A white marble sculpture with a basic outline of woman!

“I am sure it's the same for every other sculptor, but I lived under the captivation of beauty found only in sculptures. One of these days, I want to make a sculpture that expresses flesh and life, with the best proportions and ratio. It's my dream to express a woman who has divine beauty.”

In art, women were the dominant theme for the majority of works.

“But staying in Grapass for so long I seem to have completely forgot about womanly beauty. Presently, this sculpture is the most difficult work I have undertaken so I was hoping you could help me with it.

“What about the other one?”

“I have chosen a topic for it, but did not start on it yet. We should do one at a time, so after completing the first one, I will tell you about it.”

Zahab prepared his tools and material from his workshop for Weed's use. All of it was premium material, when used sparingly, you could produce 16 to 17 sculptures from it.

Though it was Zahab who originally asked for help, in reality, Zahab was the one assisting Weed who was sculpting the outline and the subject matter. Even then, this was a great opportunity as Zahab was aiding in the creation of a sculpture designed by Weed.

‘What can I make that will satisfy Zahab?’

Creating an average sculpture would only create trouble. Zahab's standard of beauty would be high, as his first love, was Queen Evane. While Weed was deep in thought, Zahab grabbed the sword hanging on the wall of his workshop.

Weed had seen the sword while he was observing the sculptures. There was nothing special about it, the sword was just ordinary with average attack.

“I will be out for a short while.”

“Where are you going?”

“Going out to get some air, acquire some sculpting materials and catch some monsters.”

Weed could almost scream in delight!

‘Now if he could just get himself killed...’

Weed couldn’t wait around forever. But on the other hand, he was curious to see how Zahab fought.

“Could I come with you?”

“There is nothing urgent to be done, so you can come.”

Weed hurried after him, filled with the expectation of seeing how Zahab fought. As it could be dangerous, Gold Man, Yellowy and other sculpture lifeforms were left behind to rest in the cabin.

‘If possible, the more dangerous the better. It would be nice for the boss monsters in Grapass to appear regularly...’

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Zahab passed through the forest and entered a hidden cavity.

It was an entrance to a dungeon! A dungeon in Grapass that Weed would have never dared to enter.

“You will have to follow after me carefully.”

Dungeon, you have entered the Karajak’s habitat.

“Kueh!”

Weed screamed like Orc Karichwi. Karajaks were monsters that had long, thin legs like an ostrich. It was a monster that could kill someone before they had the chance to laugh at its comical appearance!

It's amazing attack strength was compounded by its high hostility against humans, it had lightning fast speed and the ability to change directions in split seconds. Karajaks travelled in herds so no guilds as of yet hunted these monsters as their primary quarry.

There was occasional success hunting 1~2 that were isolated, but even then the casualties were too high. And no one could find the dungeon where Karajak appeared so it all blew over.

'Of all things it had to be a Karajak's habitat, there won't be 3~4. No, there will be an awful lot more than that.

Looking at the dungeon name, it was obvious that a lot of Karajak's lived there.

Baby Karajak, grown up Karajak, mother Karajak, father Karajak, uncle Karajak, grandpa Karajak, the Karajaks next door and all other sorts of Karajak! Two humans were just delivered as food to a family of Karajaks!

Weed did not know if he should be happy or upset, there was too much ambiguity with the situation.

Then far away, some Karajaks appeared and ran toward them in an instant.

"Sculpting Blade!"

But as Zahab brandished his sword they collapsed easily. It felt like the Karajaks passed them by, but somehow they just disappeared in a flash of grey light.

SCREECH!

As the Karajaks discovered the scene, they cried louder and more of the herd gathered. Zahab slashed his sword that was covered in a sheen of light and they collapsed like scarecrows.

Zahab was effortlessly slaying the lightning fast Karajaks.

'Are these monsters weaker than I thought? Then again I never did fight against Karajak before. After all, not all the information on the message boards is correct anyways.'

Weed was curious and walked a few steps away from Zahab.

BATABATABA!

He was kicked by Karajaks all over. They came running and hit his head as well.

You received a critical hit.

Dyspnoeic condition emerged.

Not even a few seconds later his health dropped 20%. If he stayed like this, with his laughable defense, he could die any moment. After a sufficient beating, he returned to Zahab's side.

Zahab's sword was slaying Karajaks without mercy.

'His swordsmanship is as impressive as his sculpting skill.'

The incident with the assassins was not a coincidence.

'To be this strong...'

Weed was waiting to scrap for any chance, but Zahab's hunting speed was so fast that it was impossible to squeeze in. As Zahab defeated the Karajaks he picked up rare leather, meat and jewels.

Following the hunt like this, Weed made a decision.

'I need to be more friendly with him from now on.'

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After coming back from the observational hunting, Weed picked up his sculpting knife.

"The shape of a woman possessing divine beauty..."

It was a theme artists, in ancient and modern times, sweated efforts and debated fiercely about without any results.

Even if it was one person, the judgment of womanly beauty changed as the person got older. To say one woman possessed every aspect of beauty was an impossibility. There were infinite varieties of preference by a host of different people. How could he shape a woman who possessed divine

beauty?

But there was an evil grin on Weed's face.

'There is Seo Yoon.'

In outward appearance, there is no one perfect like her. There was even a time he used her representation to improve his sculpting skills. The harmony created by Seo Yoon's eyes, nose, lips and skin, it was enough to make his heart beat faster when sculpting her!

Even if it was a sculpture of her, it was so beautiful he kept wanting to see it. Other people who actually saw Seo Yoon, couldn't believe if what they saw was real or a dream and couldn't keep their eyes off her.

He could never fail a sculpture of Seo Yoon and she would be the perfect subject matter.

"Right, this will do."

Overflowing confidence as a sculptor!

'Considering Zahab's standards, the theme and pose of the sculpture will be really important.'

If he took a real life object as the background subject matter, there wouldn't be any problem.

"For now, let's get my hands warmed up..."

Using Zahab's sculpting material, he made sculptures.

Karajak, Kellkog.

They were sculptures of monsters he met in Grapass.

In this, he was making use of Zahab's method. Rather than sculpting a singular piece, he created many.

He first sculpted a small boy then surrounded him with Kellkogs and Karajaks. The menacing scene was expressed like a fairy tale. In the scene, the boy did not give into his fears as he stretched out his hands to touch the monsters.

He created a Fine piece named, 'Tiny morsel for the Karajaks and

Kellkogs.’

This was merely practice.

After that Weed decided to start on Zahab’s request.

“Wouldn’t it be better to loosen your hands a bit more? I will also give you sufficient time to imagine a theme. I think you can start after 1~2 month of thinking.”

“It’s okay, I can start now.”

He began to make a sculpture in collaboration with Zahab.

“The forearm must be smooth like this... the jaw line is difficult so I will do it.”

While Weed was proposing the precise shape of the overall sculpture, he was also leading Zahab expertly.

The beauty of the woman was not only on the outward appearance, the personal appeal was more precious and could achieve far more. Weed stealthily revealed the hidden charm found in Seo Yoon, even he couldn’t help but think it was beautiful.

These days, he was with Seo Yoon often so there were times when he thought she was just pretty. But as he meandered while shaping the sculpture, she was significantly more beautiful than before.

‘She’s getting prettier.’

He felt he could understand why Master Daron continued to sculpt only one woman. Now as he sculpted Seo Yoon, a variety of emotions surfaced within and he wanted to capture Seo Yoon’s precious expressions.

He thought he found the joy of being able to sculpt a person.

‘But for now, let’s finish the quest...’

While regretful, his meeting with Zahab could not be broadcast to the media. Hermes guild could give him trouble by watching it and coming after him, but more importantly, sculpting was Weed’s money maker. He needed to protect this secret.

Of course he also had no desire to broadcast a sculpture of Seo Yoon.

Every life was precious!

“Oh, this beautiful woman... this truly is a divine beauty!”

Sculpting the piece, Zahab was falling enamored with the unimaginable beauty.

The sculpture of Seo Yoon was portrayed in a stately dress. It was an attire that reflected Weed’s impression of her.

‘Seo Yoon looks really good in a dress.’

If she wore different cloth, her personal beauty could not be hidden even if she wore dirty armour. But if Seo Yoon wore an exquisite dress that not just anyone could wear, it would flaunt her beauty completely.

Using his background skills in sewing, Weed idealized the shape of a smart dress and with Zahab’s near transcendent sculpting skills, the fluttering of the fabric was perfectly sculpted!

She was stepping on a high pedestal, her gaze somewhere far away. The light in her eyes, longing for warmth!

It was a sculpture that made the observer spin endless imaginations. But Weed knew the secret behind it.

‘It’s the expression of befuddlement she made at breakfast while travelling together.’

It was a meaning only the creator would know.

“Let’s name it, ‘Sculpture that Expresses Beauty.’”

Zahab and Weed combined their thoughts and named the sculpture.

Magnum Opus! ‘Sculpture that Expresses Beauty’ has been completed.

A collaboration between the great sculptor Weed and Zahab, who is sitting at the summit of sculpting skill.

They managed to express a woman’s beauty.

Comparative to their fame, the completion of this supreme piece is

enough to be considered as one of the top aesthetic works in Versailles continent.

Artistic Value: 16,290.

Special Option: Anyone who sees the, 'Sculpture that Expresses Beauty' will regenerate health and mana 40% faster for one day.

All stats increase by 35.

Magic resistance increase by 37%.

Maximum health increase by 14%.

Intelligence, Wisdom and Charm increase by 15.

Increases the morale of soldiers.

Grants additional mastery to adventurer's Appreciation of Artwork skill.

Sculptors, painters, dancers and scholars Charm increases by 14 permanently.

Birth rate of the city near the sculpture will increase by 80%.

The sculpture has been blessed by goddess Freya for portraying aspects of beauty.

Effect does not stack with other sculptures.

Number of Magnum Opus created till now: 10.

Mastery of sculpting skill increased.

Mastery of handicraft skill increased.

Sculpture Comprehension skill increased by 1 level.

Fame increased by 968.

Art stat increased by 48.

Intelligence increased by 12.

Wisdom increased by 6.

Charm increased by 25.

Goddess Freya has granted a blessing upon the sculpture for portraying

aspects of beauty. Paladins and priests from the Freya denomination will receive special strength and courage when they see the sculpture.

By making a sculpture recognized by goddess Freya, faith increased by 19.

For the completion of a Magnum Opus, all stats increased by 3.

Weed's achievement was great, but this sculpture would have been impossible to make without Zahab. Discounting his 'Torch Left by Sculptors', his 8th Magnum Opus sculpted using helium, this would count as his greatest work yet.

While a variety of stats increased generously, none of them were directly related to combat stats. Strength and agility hardly increased, while intelligence and wisdom rose rather highly. Weed was similar to the Geomchis that he did not distribute his stats on intelligence and wisdom, but increased them purely by making sculptures.

Regardless, the quest of being Zahab's assistant was halfway complete.

"You have exemplary skill. I did not expect that you would be able to do this well... The one other sculpture I want to make is something that represents myself."

The sculpture Zahab wanted to leave behind was of himself.

"Some day, after a very long time has passed, this county and even the Versailles continent would be forgotten. But I want to leave behind a vestige of myself within a sculpture. Your skills are great enough to create a sculpture of myself."

Now Weed had to sculpt personally with Zahab as the subject matter.

'Even this won't be that hard.'

By creating the sculpture of Seo Yoon, he raised Zahab's satisfaction level to the highest. And having experienced and observed Zahab live, it was just a matter of making the sculpture! It was like taking candy from a child, and their gum, and their lunch money, and drinking their milk on top of it.

Zahab wanted him to make seven different sculptures of him.

“My life cannot be defined by one sculpture. There are poses of sculptures I already thought of.”

Zahab directed the pose for the sculpture. While he had to make several sculptures, Weed had nothing to complain about as he could just sculpt as directed.

The first pose was Zahab working on a sculpture! It was pretty obvious that a sculptor would want to leave behind a scene of his main profession.

“I should make it as good as possible for the reward I can get after I complete the quest.”

As the model was an old man, his hands were very wrinkly.

Sak Sak.

There was no need to have detail like details on a sculpture.

‘This is not a work of art, rather, the person needs to love it on first sight.’

Color control was done on Zahab’s face to make it look like it had a touch of make up. The numerous wrinkles were adjusted, the disheveled hair style was fixed to give a natural feeling.

“Your skills are really not so bad.”

“I just needed to represent the good model in front of me.”

“Then I shall anticipate your best for the other sculptures as well.”

Next, he had to sculpt Zahab strolling through a forest. There was nothing especially difficult about it, but as he took care of the minute details he needed a minimum of two-three days.

Zahab in the evenings, usually hunted within the dungeons in the vicinity.

“Later, one of the sculptures you will need to make is about me battling. So I hope you observe me carefully.”

“I understand.”

As it was impossible to make Zahab hold a stance during battle, Weed had to follow him around and observe. Much could be learned by watching a battle. Weed could fully comprehend the unreachable strength Zahab had with his sword.

“Moonlight Sculpting Blade!”

Weed, using his tact, hunted only when the monsters were being meek. Putting faith in that Zahab will dispose of all the monsters swarming them, he explored the dungeons with him.

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‘It might be this way.’

Seo Yoon was searching for Weed in Grapass. She wandered alone, killing any monsters that attacked her.

‘I will finally be able to meet him here.’

Even within one of the 10 forbidden regions, Seo Yoon had very little problem as she normally fought high level monsters. She only hid from large groups of monsters, but most of the time she kept moving in order to find Weed.

She entered the main forest in Grapass and fought her way through. Her hopes of meeting Weed allowed her to forget all hardship and forge ahead!

Under the moonlit night, the roar of a large flying monster could be heard from far away.

“ROOOAAR.”

Dragon Fear!

The large silhouette shining under the moonlight was Bingryong! He was hunting with the other flight capable Sculpture Lifeforms.

“Bingryong...”

Seo Yoon called out but as Bingryong was flying high above, he passed her by. The tree tops hid her from Bingryong.

A wasted opportunity!

She picked up a stone and threw it.

“Kek! Who dares!”

As soon as the stone left Seo Yoon’s hand, it flew at top speed and hit Bingryong’s head. Reacting to the hostile action, Bingryong returned and scouted the ground. And then he found Seo Yoon.

“It’s Master’s friend...”

He remembered the time he travelled with Seo Yoon.

“Did you come here to meet master?”

Seo Yoon nodded her head.

“Then hop on. I will bring you to Master.”

Bingryong started his landing. With his large body, he crushed and felled many trees on his descent. As he lowered his head and took utmost care for her to hop on, Seo Yoon spoke in a quiet voice.

“Could you please call Wy-Three?”

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“Caw Caak!”

Riding on the rebellious Wy-Three, Seo Yoon arrived at Zahab’s cabin.

“What brings you here?”

To meet her like this in Grapass, Weed was really surprised.

Seo Yoon’s face reddened as she could not bring herself to say she wanted to see him, or be next to him. For the first time since she was able to speak, she did not talk and avoided all eye contact.

Weed only nodded.

“Well, it’s good that you came. It’s nice to see you like this.”

Greeting confidently but hiding his suspicion!

‘To come all the way here, what treasure did she think I was mining in

Grapass? At least she has some sense of shame, with her red face and all.'

Seo Yoon came when he was having good time with Zahab, but her presence was not much of a disturbance.

"A woman possessing a similar appearance to the goddess of beauty."

Zahab already had the best, first impression of her. Sculptors, painters, fundamentally all artist as one favored beautiful woman, so Seo Yoon received high intimacy with Zahab easily.

"Before I die, please allow me to sculpt your image. Will you let me?"

Zahab asked Seo Yoon to become the model for his sculpture.

A Quest!

The reward was unknown, but as it was a request from a Master Sculptor, it had to be something good. But Seo Yoon shook her head and showed clear rejection.

"I can't do it."

"I will give you any jewels or sculptures you ask for."

"I don't want to do it."

Seo Yoon rejected the quest till the end. For her it was a thorny issue as Weed sculpted her often.

"Truthfully, I made a sculpture of you here..."

Weed confessed that he made a sculpture based on her. The sculpture of her was stored in Zahab's workshop, so later if she found out about it, it was much easier to tell the truth now rather than making a scene later.

"Thank you."

"Huh?"

"For sculpting me."

"..."

Weed thought women were existences that could never be understood. His grandma said she did not want to eat cutlets or sweet and sour pork as

they were oily food. Later, when he earned a lot of money and brought her to her favorite diner, she complained about not ordering cutlets and showed disappointment!

His little sister, when she was feeling immense dissatisfaction with how her hairdresser styled her hair. He tried to console her by pointing out how bad they were at styling her hair. Afterwards she shut herself in her room and did not come out even for dinner.

“One must never trust or believe a woman’s words.”

Zahab’s hunting trip now included Seo Yoon as well. After coming back from Jigolaths, Weed leveled up and became strong. He experienced a lot of battles, but Seo Yoon was way stronger than she was at Jigolaths. It still could not be compared to Zahab, but the Karajaks Weed was having such difficulties with, Seo Yoon could hunt them easily.

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The second sculptures of Zahab , of him strolling through the forest was completed.

“There are times I enjoy exploration. Going to uncharted territories, have you ever went to a place where no one had set foot yet?”

He sculpted Zahab exploring a dungeon.

“When you are enjoying a solitary lifestyle, you become enamored to create something endlessly.”

A sculpture of Zahab deep in thought was completed.

“Battle against monsters, it has been a part of my life.”

Zahab was a white haired senior, but he was overflowing with energy and his battle skill was outstanding.

Weed sculpted Zahab fighting against monsters. He already sculpted 5 pieces and only two were left.

“One... I want at least one sculpture from that moment long ago. Even for you, it will not be easy to make... It must have been fate that you,who knows about the incident back then, came to find me.”

The sculpture Zahab wanted was the scene of him repelling the assassins that tried to kill Queen Evane. For Zahab, it must have been an unforgettable memory when Queen Evane was moved by his promise of making the most beautiful sculpture on earth for her.

“I will try.”

Weed had the opportunity to enter Rosenheim Kingdom's castle. So he first sculpted a scaled down castle. It was not a job that required meticulous handwork but he put his best effort into the piece. A quest given by Zahab was not something that he could do halfheartedly, “Make the assassins look villainous... I can probably choose some Sahyungs for this, the expressions Sahyungs make when they see a guy holding hands with their pretty girlfriend.”

Sak Sak.

“The viciousness of the assassins were really well expressed. This is the exact expression of evil villains.”

The knights in the castle weren't important so he sculpted them lying about.

Weed had seen Queen Evane in a video that showed a recollection about the past. But he also took the time to observe the portrait of her in the Rosenheim Kingdom's castle. Walking in the passage, it was just another portrait he could have ignored. But as it was related to Zahab, he took note of it and it was becoming a great help now.

‘Elegant and noble... but with a charming side. Not sure if it is befitting for a queen but it gave off a good impression.’

Then, it was time to sculpt Zahab.

“Moonlight Sculpting!”

Using the moonlight sculpting technique, Weed sculpted young Zahab. Wearing cloth that wouldn't impress any royalty, Zahab defeated the assassins and sculpted moonlight using his blade.

Without a doubt, one of the best settings!

‘Kind of romantic as well.’

Weed looked furtively at Seo Yoon. While not family, if she was threatened by assassins...

‘I won’t waste any time killing them all!’

When the sculpture was almost finished, Zahab who was observing him began to sing.

I am here

But wherever I go

My heart will always remain with you

I will make you a beautiful sculpture as I promised in my youth

But how can I?

When you are more beautiful than any sculpture I can make

I cannot forget the time I spent with you

I want to leave my heart here, like my sculpture

So I will put my heart into this moonlight, and sculpt

As the song that could give goosebumps resounded, the sculptures began to move.

The sculpture of Zahab, Queen Evane, the royal knights, and assassins moved and fought as if they were alive. As young Zahab slashed, his sword moonlight descended, broke apart, and gathered in a resplendent dance.

A Fine sculpture was completed.

Level increased for Moonlight Sculpting skill. Skill is intermediate level 3. Sculptures made of light will have greater effects.

Moonlight Sculpting Blade skill increased by 1 level.

Moonlight Sculpting Blade skill increased by 1 level.

Sword Mastery increased.

You have gained the required information for the quest, ‘Continue

Zahab's Legacy.'

Zahab's song while touching was also cheesy. But finally, the chain quest accompanying him from the beginning was about to pay off.

'Just need to go to the handmaiden and sing the song.'

And make the last sculpture Zahab wanted.

Zahab was silent as if he was reminiscing about the past. Weed did not know if it was about Queen Evane or if he was missing his bygone youth.

"Then the final sculpture that's left..."

Weed estimated that the final sculpture would not be something simple.

'Regardless, I can make any sculpture.'

He just needed to make the sculpture as Zahab described.

"The things I am good at are sculpting and the sword."

As a sculptor, Zahab was peculiar as he was also good with the sword.

"After leaving Evane and settling here, I needed to use my sword as much as my sculpting skills. The sword became as important as sculpting to me."

Zahab must have needed to battle a lot to protect his life from the monsters.

"Your sword still does not look strong."

"Many aspects are still lacking."

Weed's Swordsmanship was currently on intermediate level 9.

Attack skills did not allow sword mastery to increase much. As attack skill wasted a lot of mana, when Weed was out hunting alone he tried to minimize the skill usage. But even than, his mastery increased slower than a swordsman or knights.

A Swordsman's 1st and second class change, they could awaken the potential within the sword. Their sword attack strength doubled so they could increase their skill mastery comfortably.

Through the enormous amount of stats he stacked up, he complemented his attack strength. But compared to the classes that used the blade professionally, the skill mastery did not increase as fast.

He was constantly polishing his sword skill, but the reality was that the skill was stuck at intermediate level 9.

“If you sculpt my stances, you might just realize something.”

# Chapter 5: Secret Sword Skill

Weed was making sculptures of Zahab's swordsmanship. The final theme was to sculpt several individual sculptures to create an image of the consecutive movements of a specific swordplay sequence.

Sword Mastery increased.

Sculptures showing swordplay. They were also based on Zahab's swordsmanship so while making the sculpture, his mastery of the sword skill increased easily. As Weed could possibly receive a one of a kind sword skill from Zahab, he sculpted day and night without stopping.

"Sculpting requires physical labor compared to all the other art forms. But Zahab also dedicated himself to the sword, so maybe among painters someone might have similarly dedicated himself to magic."

He pondered on these baseless speculations.

Sculptors had endurance and fitness, painters had high wisdom and intelligence. There was nothing that prevented the Art class from such happenstance.

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"Sigh. Just when I was finally getting to live life."

The chilly and windy month of March!

Lee Hyun saddled his bag like a turtle and slowly waddled to the bus taking him to university.

"To go back to university, can there be anything more terrible than this?"

There was no tingle of excitement and the cold weather only added to the misery of going to university.

"I heard they only gathered prodigies for this year's freshmen."

"Especially the virtual reality department, they said the competition for entrance was insane."

"Well, it is the most famous industry right now."

Gossip about the freshmen floated around the bus. Lee Hyun believed that it was good manners for a university student to be absent for the first week, when all entrance ceremonies were occurring.

With the new students, a gentle spring breeze blew through the campus.

‘This has absolutely nothing to do with me.’

Even though the fresh juniors with their awkward makeup and mini skirts entered, Lee Hyun gave them no mind and continued on his way.

“Ah, hyung you came?”

Coming into the lecture hall Choi Sang Jun pretended to be friendly.

“Hello, Sunbae-nim!”

“It’s a pleasure to meet you for the first time.”

Beside him there were two well mannered female students sitting together. With their sophisticated looks and charm these two who could be picked as the most popular freshmen were currently talking with Choi Sang Jun.

“This guy is my peer, but he's a hyung who’s a bit older.”

To the freshmen, Lee Hyun did not look easy to approach.

‘They pretty themselves up like that and pretend they did not eat anything and beg the Sunbae to treat them. First they would be satisfied by the university’s cafeteria, then at the end they would ask for a shot of alcohol and drag you off to a spicy stir fried chicken restaurant. They are not some malnourished college women... therefore I must never buy food for the freshmen.’

“Ah, yeah that’s right.”

Lee Hyun just nodded and sat in the empty seat nearby . But their chattering could be heard clearly.

“Sunbae-nim, I watched the scene of Black Lion’s guild capturing Bison.”

“Yeah, I was very active in that war. Did you see the knight that destroyed the castle gate with his spear?”

“Yes. It was so cool. The knight was riding on his horse and the spear just destroyed it. Oh, could it possibly be Sunbae-nim?”

“No, he's my hyung, one of the founding members of the Black Lion's guild. My horse died recently, so I had to climb the siege ladder.”

Choi Sang Jun had a lot of pride when he was talking about the achievements of the Black Lion's guild. In Versailles continent, if one had the symbol of the Black Lion's guild on their armor, they received preferential treatment. Even murderers who were part of a great guild were overlooked.

That's why a lot of merchants joined famous guilds, paying portion of their income willingly for the benefits they receive. Guilds operated castles, villages, mines and through the activities of the merchants earned income to grow their strength and influence.

In truth, Royal Road had every different kind of method to survive and there were many players that enjoyed playing it casually. They could level up through hunting and become known for their bravery, or just wander through the tourist spots and make enough money to live by.

Royal Road was full of things to enjoy and many players did not try to stray far from the city. Hunting in a dungeon for several days was difficult and did not fit the aptitude of many players. After struggling with their studies in reality, they connect to Royal Road and stayed in a vacation spot with many alluring women, what more could they hope for?

But there was something about fighting monsters and increasing territory in Versailles continent that made the heart beat faster.

“Hyung, you are here?”

Park Soon Jo came into the lecture hall and rested his head tiredly on his table on Lee Hyun's left side. As there was some time left before the lecture started, Lee Hyun also laid his head on the table.

“Ah. These days it's really, really hard.”

It was not easy as he needed to pick an exact stance from the swordplay sequence for Zahab's requested sculptures. He also needed to pick and

sculpt the moment the stance changed and the transitional phase of the sword swing. If he had never learnt swordsmanship, trying to emulate Zahab would have been extremely hard.

Park Soon Jo grumbled with him.

“Hyung, it’s also hard for me.”

“What are you doing these days?”

“Since winter, I am struggling with explorations and quests...”

“It’s not working out?”

“It’s a chain quest so I have to meet lots of people and have to gather tons of materials. But slowly, it's progressing.”

Park Soon Jo’s character was a thief with quite a high level. His current chain quest would even keep Lee Hyun interested. But Lee Hyun’s fame was already at a level that he could do any king’s quest in Royal Road.

“Yeah, keep trying hard. If nothing works out, just leave it alone for some time and do it later.”

“I think I am almost there. I want finish it to the end.”

“Have faith. If it doesn’t work, give it up early before it’s too late.”

“Yes hyung.”

The two sharing a quiet conversation could hear Choi Sang Jun’s loud voice from the back.

“The Black Lion guild will hunt the Elemental Lavastorm this weekend. The IBC network will broadcast it so please watch it live.”

“Really?”

“Will Sunbae-nim also be there this time?”

Choi Sang Jun stuttered hesitantly.

“My qualification is still not...”

“...”

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Morata's development rate could amaze anyone.

PABABABAT!

Residential houses were built several months ago. Shacks and mud houses were sprouting up fast, symbolizing overdevelopment!

"I came here to join the Grass Porridge cult."

"We finish up the registration process on the same day, your application number is 18639."

"Is there that many new applications today?"

"It's Monday so the number is on the low side."

Through Morata's main gates, the beginners slung their bags and went to hunt in the nearby dungeons. They gathered by themselves and chummed up with each other before they left for hunting.

"Maybe we should start considering moving on to Vargo Fortress?"

"I heard that that place is well established so there is plenty of information about the hunting grounds."

"If we go together, there shouldn't be any problems."

"Let's go before it's too late. I want to spend my time in the regions lord Weed reigns rather than any other villages in the North."

Many people moved to Vargo Fortress, but the effect of players migrating away from Morata could not be felt. After a day or two, new players appeared. The number of merchants doing business continued to increase.

In addition to the large, central business district in Morata, people gathered in pioneering villages to explore and hunt. Morata's influence continued to grow and merchants from all over the North came to trade. With Morata's influence, Vargo Fortress's transitional development phase was shortened.

In no time, the non-existent population was expanded through the influx of residents and players, allowing for more commodities to be

created. Warriors gathered for hunts and adventures, bringing item drops. Many merchants traded with the elves, dwarves, and barbarians, while they lacked technology and production capacity, the volume of goods that were traded wasn't so insignificant.

The merchants who manage to trade successfully with these tribes could bring in lots of profit. The merchants became more ambitious and brought in goods these tribes needed to trade with them. With Mapan and the other big merchants in the North, after their initial success in their trades they established stores in Vargo Fortress.

“One month. After one month there will be fully developed commerce here.”

There was the danger that monsters could completely destroy everything, but they pinned their hopes and dreams and invested in Vargo Fortress. Weed had invested an enormous amount but even if he hadn't the people believed in the potential for growth and began to settle in Vargo Fortress.

It was a place for strong warriors to display their strength. When monsters came, they could rely on the sturdy wall and fight together. After claiming their victory, the warriors could have a beer fest.

The indispensable components were built fast and were taking their places.

“This is the place. It's huge size is making me doubt if I came to the right place.”

Geomchi crossed the sea and arrived in Morata. He had seen it in the past, on the way to the Vampire Kingdom of Todeum, where he had come to help with it's subjugation. At that time it was a rural village that adventurers avoided, but now it could be said to be the capital of the entire Northern continent.

“This is really amazing.”

While Geomchi was standing in front of the entrance, merchants were busily dragging their carts this way and that.

“Excuse me, it looks like your level is a bit high. Would you like to hunt with us?”

Geomchi spun his head, a party of 6 adventurers were calling for him.

“Me?”

“Yes. Our party needs one more swordsman. Trying to find someone in the Square is inconvenient... So perhaps if you don't have a party let's hunt together.”

The rumours of Geomchi couldn't have spread here.

The great warrior of Yurokina Mountains. Although he only partied with few people, he cleared out the most diabolical and dangerous monsters in dungeons. The people who saw Geomchi's achievements were few, but the Orcs and Dark Elves spread the rumour in secrete.

“A hulking man. Orc, queek! He's not an orc. Human! Too strong. Checheek!”

“As a human he's proficient in multiple weapons. The day he appeared, the monsters couldn't even leave their nest.”

“He is the best warrior in the Yurokina Mountain range. We acknowledge Orc Karichwi's leadership, but no one can match his valour.”

Geomchi fought in the Yurokina Mountains because he was bored, but he became a legend and myth amongst the Dark Elves and Orcs.

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“It would be nice to have various artworks here like Morata...”

“We can see the Advent of Seven Angel sculpture but it's only here temporarily. They are moving it back to the Art Center. It would be awesome to have something like the Tower of Light or the statue of goddess Freya.”

The players in Vargo Fortress had access to the necessities but they were feeling the inconvenience when culture was sterile.

Morata was fresh and new everyday. People could take a break with their

friends or lover while observing the artworks. The happy and joyful atmosphere could be felt from the highest attraction point where all of Morata could be seen.

In life, money, fame, and power were important. But on the other hand satisfaction could be found through poetry, novels, or songs! Culture and art made one conscience of life. It was a necessity that made people happy and quenched spiritual thirst.

“Nothing much we can do. This place is still dangerous. The artists will probably move here when it becomes safer and richer.”

“I need a sculpture that increases magic. Isn't there any other Magnum Opus?”

“Also a sculpture that can boosts a warrior's defense skill. I wonder when he will make it.”

Players were hoping for Weed to come back and make more sculptures. In Morata's Art Center, Weed's works were the best but there were many other good sculptures and the players were hoping for some of them to be moved to Vargo Fortress. Then another Art Center could be constructed In Vargo Fortress as well.

“I need to work harder and make more money. I am going to hunt here for a long time and I don't believe my tax money will go to waste.”

“I heard bards will come tomorrow for a performance. Let's go watch.”

There were many players in Vargo Fortress feeling the loss of culture. But at the entrance of the fortress a man wearing a green hat appeared.

“Who is that guy.”

“Check out his crazy cloth.”

Players were jeering at him. As he was wearing a green hat and yellow travel wear, it was easy to think he was a complete nutcase.

“My legend shall start from here.”

The person coming to Vargo Fortress with the painting equipment was none other than Petrov. Taking out his brush and paint, he began to draw

on the wall. Without any sketches, he started the coloring immediately. He drew over the broken and discolored castle wall.

“I never saw something like that before.”

“The painting looks so real.”

“There are varieties of sprites playing with the fairies.”

On the castle wall, Petrov completed his specialty ‘of Sprites’ artwork! Petrov was talented when it came to painting fairies, sprites, elves and monsters. He was also close to the races in his artwork so the value of the pieces were even higher.

‘Huhu, be amazed. This is only the beginning.’

It was only the first step in filling up Vargo Fortress with his painting. Next, Petrov drew pictures of food on the wall. Basing it on a most scrumptious feast, he drew vivid pictures of whole roast barbecue that monsters liked.

‘When the monsters come, even they will know the greatness of my paintings...’

A picture of temptation!

Battles could erupt anytime in Vargo Fortress. But now they could attack the instinct driven monsters as they tried to eat the food. And so everyone in Vargo Fortress began to know Petrov as the amazing painter “I want to eat. The color of the painting looks much better than the real thing.”

“But his attire is barmy.”

“Yeah, can’t argue with that.”

Even when the monsters were trying to come over the wall, Petrov stayed to paint till the last second. He quickly became one of the most famous persons in Vargo Fortress.

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Sword Mastery increased.

Everytime he made a new sculpture, his mastery in the swordsmanship

skill increased. He was on the later half of the sword play that Zahab showed him when Intermediate Swordsmanship reached level 10 and changed to Advanced Swordsmanship.

Attack power using a sword increased by 25%.

Each time Advance Swordsmanship skill increases by 1 level, attack power increases by 9%.

Destructive power of mana consuming attacks improved by 45%.

All stats have been given an additional 7 points.

Weed's swordsmanship finally reached the advanced level. The difference between intermediate and advance was like heaven and earth.

"Looks like Zahab's sword mastery is on a quite a high level."

While Weed was making the sculptures he was in a trance, mulling over vague memories. Zahab was a considerably powerful person, he remembered Zahab's continuous movements or swatting of the monsters. And so he completed the sculpture Zahab wanted.

Please set a name for your sculpture.

Weed set a simple name. It was not a sculpture made with a theme, it was only a representation of Zahab's swordsmanship.

"Zahab wielding his sword."

Is 'Zahab Wielding his Sword' correct?

"Yes."

Masterpiece! The sculpture, 'Zahab Wielding his Sword' has been completed.

Sculptures of Master Sculptor Zahab made from white marble.

A special sword skill is hidden within, those with potential can realize its secret.

Artistic Value: 2,472.

Special Option: Anyone who sees the sculpture of, 'Zahab Wielding his

Sword' will regenerate health and man 26% faster for a day.

All stats increase by 11.

Swordsmanship power increases by 15%.

By observing the sculpture, mastery of swordsmanship increases slightly.

A sword skill is hidden within the sculpture.

Effect does not stack with other sculptures.

Number of Masterpieces created till now: 16.

Mastery of Sculpting skill increased.

Mastery of Handicraft skill increased.

Strength increased by 1.

Agility increased by 2.

Charisma increased by 2.

For the completion of a Masterpiece, all stats increased by 1.

With this final masterpiece, he completed Zahab's request successfully.

Zahab's Assistant Quest Completed

You have completed the sculptures Master Sculptor Zahab wanted to make.

You have actualized Zahab's long cherished desires.

As a quest reward, your friendship with Zahab is now 81.

'Zahab's sword skill within the Masterpiece.'

Weed was in the process of mastering the sword, but through the use of normal sword skill, sculpting blade and heriam fencing the skill level did not increase much. But learning one more wouldn't hurt.

After the completion of the sculptures, Zahab spoke as if some burden had lifted.

"These are nice works. Now I can finally leave Grapass."

"Are you going to some other regions?"

Weed asked so he could gain any more information about the Master Sculptor Zahab.

“I should do so. I want to wander the continent with the little life I have left.”

“What are you going to do about the sculptures in your workshop?”

“I am going to sell them to fund my travels. Or if some of my friends are still alive, I will give it to them as gifts.”

The sculptures of Master Sculptor Zahab would now be spread out throughout the continent. This change in fate occurred only because Weed came and completed Zahab’s quest.

“Can I ask how far you have mastered your sword?”

Usually he would not ask such a question, but Weed had to asked as he felt something was off when he was sculpting. No matter how much he thought about it, this could not have been an ordinary sword skill so he asked the question.

“One late night, I saw the finality of sword mastery.”

“Yes, if you saw the final then...”

Weed was dumbfounded. That meant Zahab mastered not only sculpting but swordsmanship as well. If one observed any traces left by Master Sculptors, they were not ordinary people.

“I reached a state where I can no longer become any stronger with the blade.”

Zahab confirmed it clearly that he was a Sword Master. This was shocking news that could cause a raucous all over Royal Road!

‘What is this...’

Weed’s brain spurned quickly like the times he tried to get a free meal.

‘That means that the hidden sword skill within the sculptures is one of the secrets sword skills?’

Zahab’s swordsmanship was displayed by the sculptures so it did feel

like something was hidden within. Weed shook his head excitedly and began to flatter him.

“That is amazing. Seeing that you have mastered the sculpting skill, something like mastering the sword can’t have been difficult.”

His voice became more coquettish than usual. Speaking in a charming, flattering manner while hiding his greed.

“You possess many talents and skills so if you had the opportunity I believe you can reach it. The sculptures of me, please cherish them.”

“Of course. These expensive admission fee... I mean, I will cherish them and keep them safe.”

“Then if our fates cross, we might meet again.”

After Zahab finished speaking, he prepared to leave. But Weed did not want to part in such a hollow manner.

“Please wait a moment.”

“Do you have something left to say?”

After completing the quest he received friendship points. If he were to leave now, there was no guarantee he would meet him ever again in Versaille continent.

“I was wondering if you could help me more with my hunting.”

There was no such thing as free sculpture. If he could receive something from a Master Sculptor, then he would get it.

“I know you went through hardships to complete the sculptures. I, as a sculptor understand your efforts and struggle, so that much I can at least do.”

Zahab joined as a free mercenary.

Weed could now wander around Grapass with a Master Sculptor and Sword Master Zahab.

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“Are you sure this is the right path?”

“I think it might have been the one we passed by...”

“Pay close attention to the monsters, remember we lost our way yesterday when we were running away.”

“I am keeping a close eye on them this time.”

Hwaryeong with Bade, Pason, Yumero, April, Volk and Daerin entered Grapass together. Hwaryeong wanted to surprise Weed by appearing suddenly, so she hired Dark Gamers to come here.

After the Dark Gamers received a request, they kept strict confidentiality. The Dark Gamers Hwaryeong picked were so good that even a country boasted about them, there was no chance that they would divulge the content of the contract.

But they were lost in Grapass without even being told that the reason for coming here was to meet Weed.

“If he sees me unexpectedly I am sure he would be happy.”

Just to surprise Weed, Hwaryeong was going through unnecessary torment. Pason had the tracking skill so they followed after the tracks Weed left behind.

“There is a deep depression of a cow’s footprint. Seeing the markings it looks like it was moving energetically, I don’t think it suffered any injury but the footprints are quite deeply pressed in. It seems like it was carrying a heavy burden.”

“This is definitely the cow of the person I am trying to meet!”

Grapass was dangerous, but tracking was easy. The Dark Gamers avoided the strong monsters through the shared information on Grapass and took maximum care as they progressed forward. They finally reached the lake where they discovered Weed, Yellowy, Wyverns and Gold Man.

“Weed-nim!”

Hwaryeong yelled energetically, running toward him while fluttering her dress. And just for this moment, she had a sense to wear a long straight wig.

“Ah!”

“It’s that sculptor.”

Volk and Daerin recognized Weed. He was the one to sculpt the bouquet for Volk and Daerin’s marriage proposal, and there was also the time they hunted together during the Northern continent expedition.

“That Weed-nim... It’s that War God Weed!”

Many in Versailles continent were anticipating the clash between Weed and the Hermes guild. But to meet Weed in the Grapass region was a surprising and welcome event.

“Hello.”

“A pleasure. I am Yumero.”

They exchanged simple greetings. When Seo Yoon guessed there were people around she immediately wore her mask again.

“This side, he’s Gold Man. And here is Yellowy.”

Dark Gamers looked in amazement when the Wyverns were introduced, when Gold Man and Yellowy were presented they were filled with deep seated interest.

“This guys weight...”

“I think it’s pure gold.”

“Ribs are expensive these days.”

But their pure astonishment came later when Weed introduced Zahab nonchalantly.

“This person can be called my Sunbae in sculpting, but he is also the one who reached the final stages of swordsmanship.”

A Sword Master!

This was a secret among secrets, but Weed acknowledge the abilities of the Dark Gamers. For Dark Gamers to come here, they had to have curiosity and inquisitiveness beyond ordinary people. It would not take them long to figure out Zahab was a Sword Master. And these people had

good reputations.

“A person who reached the final stages of swordsmanship...”

They were drooling already.

# Chapter 6: Radiant Sword left behind the Sculptures

“Let’s hurry.”

Weed did not feel that there was a need to give special treatment to the Sword Master. Friendship declined whenever he ordered Zahab around and points fell slowly the more they were together anyway. It was only right to use up the friendship points he raised and exploit Zahab as much as possible.

Clearing the Penfils Dungeon.

Hunting the great monsters in the Dark Wood Forest.

Completely annihilating the monsters in Geithner Dungeon.

Completing their search for treasure in the Carmel Lair.

These were the accomplishments Weed achieved with Zahab. Of course, Yellowy and Gold Man were always next to him and the Wyverns followed him to the hunting grounds.

“There is the enemy. Fight.”

When Zahab was wielding his sword, Weed could relax and attack as much as he wanted. Grapass boasted a ghastly level of difficulty. When he judged it was dangerous due to the monster’s high levels or attack power, he hid far away and shot with his high elf bow. When he thought he would get by, he fought next to Zahab.

‘He fights really well.’

There was no better method than fighting with a Sword Master. Even though he was Zahab, he was not invincible and suffered injuries.

“Oh dear! There are so many wounds. Let me wrap some bandages around them. I will apply plenty of herbs as well.”

The Master Bandaging skill!

Weed tried his best to slow down the declining friendship through

cooking and treatment. The Dark Gamers continued to watch on in astonishment.

‘That stingy bastard...’

‘This is typical conditioning, giving medicine after exploitation.’

‘If I get ensnared, he’s going to bleed me dry.’

Weed chased for the most optimal efficiency. He searched around for boss monsters and led Zahab into dungeons overflowing with monsters.

Zahab could only miss the days of living in Grapass, devoid of human contact. Seo Yoon and Hwaryeong knew Weed’s tendencies and were more accepting.

‘Weed-nim must not get hurt.’

Seo Yoon was not inferior to Zahab and fought the monsters directly. Her Berserker battle potential was active so the monster lairs that Weed was leading them to were the ideal hunting grounds. Hwaryeong danced captivatingly, luring the monsters and causing disarray. But the dance had a lower effect on monsters with minimal human contacts.

The Dark Gamers also got involved and did their part to increase the efficiency of the hunt. The tasks they undertook suited their class and they earned acceptable gains.

‘I can’t help but be envious. Leaving no stone unturned in Grapass with a Sword Master... ’

‘This is such an awesome hunt, my level is going to go up easily here. It’s fortunate he’s allowing us to join in.’

‘Monopolizing all the items and treasures in the dungeon. Ah, there is a reason why Weed is known as the War God.’

The Dark Gamers had to pay a daily hunting tribute to Weed.

“We did a lot of hunting yesterday, I plan to do the same today. I also want to enter a new dungeon today.”

Dowry, cost for food, bandages, herbs, Yellowy’s birthday, repairing

weapons and armour, they had to pay it all. Weed was sucking up everything like a flea! And so, together with Zahab, they wandered the whole of Grapass aimlessly hunting and exploring.

Friendship with Zahab has fallen to 25.

Zahab sheathed his sword.

“I will leave to roam the continent now. I will not forget the time we have spent together.”

Zahab’s contract as a free mercenary has been terminated.

Zahab said his farewell. Friendship was low so Weed could not hold Zahab for much longer.

“It’s sad that you have to leave like this. It would be nice if we could learn more about each other .”

He tried to offer food and simple gifts again but Zahab did not accept them.

“I am exhausted and want to rest for now so let’s keep our farewell short.”

Weed had no choice but to send him off and asked some last minute questions.

“I think it’s tragic that we might not be able to meet again on the continent. Where will you go from here?”

“For now, I shall depart for the Bryce Highlands. I do not know how long I shall stay there for, but if you need to find me search for me there.”

“Yes, I shall do so. Then please take care.”

Zahab was limping on his left leg due to an injury and departed using his sword as a cane. Weed truly regretted this separation.

‘It would be nice to use him again. I am sure we will meet again.’

His level increased twice while hunting with Zahab and his sword mastery reached advanced level 2. This was all thanks to hunting together with a Sword Master. Moonlight sculpting blade also reached intermediate

level 9.

Hwaryeong asked Weed.

“Where will you go now?”

She wanted more time to spend comfortably with just the two of them.

“I have to return to Zahab’s house right now.”

He had to report to the old handmaiden in the Rosenheim Kingdom. Grapass was a difficult region to return to so he was going to make sure he saw all Zahab’s sculptures before leaving. Zahab used a special magic bag to store about 80% of all his sculptures but there were still some left.

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The contract that the Dark Gamers and Hwaryeong agreed on was to help and protect her while she looked for Weed in the Grapass region. After concluding the contract Hwaryeong told them they could go but no one tried to leave.

“There was no other work and it was a boring period...”

“The world is a dangerous place where anything can happen, we will keep protecting you.”

“I am going to make sure you’re safe till the end. How can I, in good conscience, leave a beautiful lady alone?”

The Dark Gamers made excuses and tried to stay longer. Hunting in Grapass was not bad and they felt that if they stuck around Weed they might gain something.

“Oho, a Sword Master’s storehouse looks like this. There are a lot of sculptures.”

“The quality of the sculptures is extremely high.”

“Huk! Look at how many stats it gives. My Art stat just got created.”

The Dark Gamers received a once in a lifetime opportunity in Zahab’s workshop. Weed carefully observed the sculptures Zahab made with all his being.

“Identify!”

Hunter Aiming his Bow.

Retired Master Sculptor Zahab’s piece.

The bow is aimed at a snake preying on a deer.

Artistic Value: 871.

Special Option: Increased population growth of deer.

He could read the memories held within the sculpture.

“This is a good piece.”

Weed observed other sculpture.

Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter.

He could feel the seasons changing during the construction of the sculpture.

There was a video embedded into a special mud sculpture.

A village created from baked mud.

A village established on a highland, people were coming and going restlessly.

A scene never seen in this day and age.

You have acquired the first clue to the lost traveler.

While the quest is active, clues obtained earlier cannot be used.

“Which quest video is this?”

The chance that it could be a sculpting related quest was high. Still, there were still a lot of sculpting quests, he did not know if he should do it or not. Even after that, several sculptures showed videos of Zahab’s hidden sculptures around Grapass.

“It will take way too long to find all of these and the monsters are troublesome.”

The sculptures could have been engraved onto a dungeon wall or kept as

treasures by monsters.

“More importantly, the sculptures I made are the problem.”

Weed took out the sculptures he made and observed them. The sculpture of ‘Zahab Wielding his Sword’. It was almost a certainty that there was a Sword Master’s secret sword skill hidden within them. If Weed’s guess was right, this sculpture would become a treasure to all swordsmen.

But no matter how much he examined it, it was only a well sculpted piece. As he sculpted it personally, he knew the piece extremely well, even reading the tangled memories of the sculptures did not reveal anything special.

“I have to solve the sculpture’s secret.”

While other people would be left bewildered unable to do anything, Weed tried to tackle the serious problem.

“Hm.”

Weed searched every nook and cranny of the sculpture.

“Could it be that I failed to reproduce Zahab’s sword skill perfectly?”

He matched each body size, ratio, and even the angle of the sword’s motions perfectly. It was difficult to portray each complicated motion on the sculpture but, with his many experiences and observational skills, Weed managed it.

He could make sculptures while imagining the product, to fail while actually seeing the subject matter was an impossibility. It would be utterly deplorable if there was a small mistake preventing him from learning Zahab’s sword skill.

“Should I just smash it?”

He was even contemplating extreme methods like using Sculpture Destruction. But he stayed his hand as it was too valuable.

“Solution, there must be a solution somewhere.”

If Zahab showed him the secret sword skill during battle, it would help identifying the skill. But such a thing did not happen and he could only rely on the sculpture to gain enlightenment.

Weed stopped all of his hunting and focused on the sculpture. He thought he might need more sculpting skill so he started making sculptures of the monsters in Grapass and of Hwaryeong to increase his Sculpting Mastery.

He wasted 3 hours with no clear solution in sight. The Dark Gamers and the Sculpture Lifeforms were hunting in separate groups nearby, Hwaryeong was offline as it was night. It was only Weed and Seo Yoon.

“Sword skill. I need to understand the sword skill... I am close to mastering the sculpting skill so I can continue as is. But if I can't learn it because my sword mastery is low, then I might lose my chance to learn this sword skill.”

While Weed was puzzling his head over it, he heard a noise that sent shivers up his spine.

SHEEK.

The sound of a sword coming out of its sheath.

Weed turned around to look and saw it was Seo Yoon holding the sword with a cold expression.

“Wh, what's up with the sword?”

With no Sculpture Lifeforms around, could it be that Seo Yoon was getting ready to attack?! It was an old misconception but there were times when Seo Yoon was really scary. Her voice, due to lack of speaking for so long, was devoid of intonation and she acted without explaining herself most of the time.

Like right now!

Seo Yoon twirled her sword. She was aiming at the sky rather than Weed. Before they knew it, it was the middle of the night with the moon out already.

Seo Yoon's sword lit up under the moonlight and scattered. She began to move lightly, swirling her sword in movements that were familiar to Weed.

"The movements from the sculpture!"

CHARARARA.

Seo Yoon softly enacted the sword skill. She followed the sculptures' motions like a dance. Weed analyzed the sculptures' movement deeply and emulated them as well, but the flow was halted in between.

But Seo Yoon did not follow the order of the sculptures, she followed the motion of the sculpture lit by the moonlight.

HUWOOONG!

Seo Yoon's blade scattered an intense light. It was like holding a light sword!

You have grasped the secret sword skill, Radiant Sword.

Seo Yoon learned the secret sword skill first. Her body was wrapped in light as if she was under a special blessing. Weed questioned her as soon as it stopped.

"Did you perhaps learned the secret sword skill?"

Nod, nod.

Weed smile exuberantly as he saw Seo Yoon's head move up and down.

"Great."

But the pain that was slowly creeping within!

"Hmhm, well, it's manners for ladies to go first. It's my turn to learn it now."

After seeing Seo Yoon's actions, Weed followed the same movements of the sculptures. With his sword mastery he was able to follow the movements much better. Following the intention of each individual motion, sometimes he put all his weight behind a swing or softly like a gentle wind. Weed felt this was a true sword skill as he emulated the

movements.

‘Rather than a specific skill, the sword skill is more like a set of fixed, consecutive movements.’

He was puzzled by how this sword skill would be used in actual battle. Battle situations were completely different when fighting against monsters, flying creatures, shamans, summoners or magicians.

You have grasped the secret sword skill, Radiant Sword.

Radiant Sword: A sword skill created by the sculptor and swordsman Zahab.

A sword skill that is used by gathering light.

Depending on the skill level, it forms light sculptures in the form of animals or monsters.

Monsters captured by the light, fall under an illusion and cannot move.

If the sword skill is halted, the effect disappears.

Moonlight sculpting skill increases the power of the skill.

Class and other skill traits will have more power at night than in the morning.

It's effective against monsters of a dark nature.

Sword Mastery increased.

“Let's try hunting.”

Weed, with Seo Yoon, went to the place where the Kellkogs appeared.

“Radiant Sword!”

This was not a sword skill that was instantly activated by consuming mana so the exact movements had to be followed.

“Keeek?”

The Kellkogs threw their spears but the bright light blinded their eyes and their accuracy fell by a large margin .

A short distance away, Weed finished performing the sword skill. He felt

ridiculous moving alone rather than fighting the monsters up front, but looking from the outside it was anything but. Weed swung his sword twice, jumped to gather power and performed a downward strike.

As he struck, sparrows made of light appeared. The sparrows circled Weed, then, beating their wings, they flew toward the monsters and exploded.

KABOOOM!

Threads of light split heaven and earth!

Every time Weed flourished his sword, birds of light flew toward the monsters. The Kellkogs became confused under the illusions and spun around trying to catch the birds. As the sword skill fully unfolded, only item drops remained where the monsters were.

Mastery of Radiant Sword increased.

It drained over 8,000 of Weed's mana, but equipping various mana recovery items supplemented some of the drain.

“There was this kind of sword skill.”

Weed's lips trembled. Till now, it was difficult to contend with monsters that shot arrows at long range. It was very frustrating for him to deal with monsters that attacked from long range and escaped quickly. Even if he took out his high elf bow to attack, it was not enough to attack with just one bow.

“I am going to kill all the monsters!”

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Kolderim, the knight of the Kallamore Kingdom!

Hermes guild prepared several contingencies to deal with him. One time, Kolderim led his army and pushed on toward the Sistar Fortress in Haven Kingdom. Of course, it was a battle that the Hermes guild was not part of. Rather, it made it easier for the Hermes guild to utterly crush and seize the regional kingdom.

“Even then the knights Kolderim commands are fearsome. We will

continue to invest in military power and annihilate them completely.”

The Hermes guild destroyed the Kallamore Kingdom's border force and seized 6 castles, 2 fortresses, and 14 villages. After they heard that Kallamore Kingdom's Kolderim became the supreme commander of the war, Hermes guild split their main force in two.

“A detachment will turn around and occupy the Yorun Fortress, the main force will meet Kolderim's army here.”

The army Kolderim was leading was composed of the elite forces of the Kallamore Kingdom. It included 7 contingents of knight orders and over 10 thousand cavalrymen. On the Hermes guild's side, their main forces dug in and laid traps to make it difficult for the horses to move. They brought in massive numbers of magicians, archers and even catapults to disrupt the knights' charges.

On the day battle erupted between Kolderim of Kallamore Kingdom and the Hermes guild, all of the stations did a live broadcast and all of the players' interest was focused there. Depending on the outcome of the battle, the territory between Kallamore Kingdom and Haven Kingdom would shift on the Central continent.

With the various traps that the Hermes guild planted on the plain, the confrontation between the two armies was monotonous. In between, the detachment of the Hermes guild's army penetrated deeply into the interior of the Kallamore Kingdom. Made up of a large number of cavalrymen, a contingent of gryphons, rangers, and magicians, the force was great enough to easily occupy any moderate castle.

Kolderim had to make a difficult choice. He could not leave the main force of Hermes guild alone and chase after the detachment. To do so allowed the enemy to seize Kallamore Kingdom's third biggest city.

“We are attacking the Haven Kingdom.”

Kallamore Kingdoms great charge! the Hermes guild responded with their magicians and catapults, starting the large scale battle. The fate of the two Kingdoms was hanging in the balance.

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Geomchi joined Pale's party late.

"I hope this won't needlessly indebt yourself to me."

"That's not true. We needed someone to take care of close combat."

Pale spoke courteously. He briefly stopped in Morata to peruse the stores and receive quests and met Geomchi.

"Did you try hunting in this area?"

"Some people did take me to several places called dungeons."

Geomchi gave a yawn as if it was nothing but a trifle.

"There was nothing that could give me a good fight."

"Well, it should be like that. The dungeons near Morata has been wiped clean by paladin order of Freya church, and many players are hunting there as well."

As a dungeon became well known, many people flocked to it. Even after the experience and good item drop rates declined, the players still went. This caused some difficulty in hunting for decent monsters.

"It's as you said."

Surka spoke as she pulled on steel tipped gloves.

"We will provide as much help as we can."

"Right. Then let's go."

Geomchi joined the group and Pale's party left through Morata's gate. As they left, the merchants doing business in the Square began to whisper.

"Was that the guy that completely cleaned out the exhausted dungeon?"

"Apparently he attached himself to a party and hunted all the monsters by himself. "

\*\*\*\*\*

They arrived at the dungeon and Geomchi lightly stepped forward.

“Ey... the old should die.”

All the monsters that were struck by Geomchi’s sword disappeared in a grey light. Critical hits happened as if they were a regular occurrence and he slashed the weak points that appeared when the monsters attacked like it was a joke.

“With my age, I can’t seem to move as easily as I did when I was younger.”

PAK! WACHANG!

PABABABAK!

Geomchi’s weapon skill was Advanced level 7. It was a state that was impossible to reach by facing only monsters. After Advanced level 5 of a martial artist’s weapon skill, one had to overcome the barrier to their own limits.

Every time Geomchi advanced one level of his weapon skill, he realized the subtle changes to his mastery and chose the most optimal path for his development. This was the reason why his skill developed faster while hunting less than the others.

Pale and his party had to hurry before Geomchi killed off all the monsters.

I have a new opinion of how strong Geomchi-nim really is.

That strength and weight all focused on the tip of the sword for the keen attacks. He makes it look so easy but I don’t know how he attacks so accurately.

And there were over 500 of them.

.....

Surka could pummel a level 350 monster into paste. Zephyr whirled his fishing pole and threw himself in the thickest part of the battle.

But looking at Geomchi, they could only stand in awe.

“It’s annoying to use the sword.”

He picked up the spears and axes the monsters dropped and attacked. Weapon skill allowed any weapon to be used proficiently and maximized the damage. Whatever weapon he handled, there was no hindrance in killing monsters.

Sometimes he looked like a warrior and other times, a soldier from a savage tribe. Seeing Geomchi changing weapons frequently Pale asked a question.

“Are you okay with the difference in handling different weapons?”

Pale asked as he was amazed by what he was seeing. Even with the weapon skill, every weapon had different centers of gravity and their application in battle was vastly different “Whatever the weapon, battles are fought by personal taste .”

The personal preference of pummeling monsters! Such as the Orcs, the blight of the Yurokina Mountain range, when equipped with glaives they immediately started breaking things for fun, even their armor.

Zephyr asked in disbelief.

“Isn’t the sword suited toward your taste?”

Geomchi lived practicing the sword. He might have practiced other weapons, but he did not reach the state with his sword by catering to other people’s approval. Surely he would admire the way of the sword.

“My greatest preference is not the sword...”

Geomchi stealthily observed the others. It was a story that could negatively affect the emotions of minors and young school children.

“It’s rare for weapons to measure up to the steel pipes and poles I used when I was young.”

“ ... ”

“The sword is a method for one to temper the heart. A great swordsman has a heart that is polished like a mirror and as still as water, whatever may come he will not fear or tremble.”

At the moment, a swarm of monsters flocked towards them from the

dungeon passage.

“Humans have invaded.”

“Kill the tall, bulky, and ugly human first.”

“Captain, what do you mean. Is it the old looking guy?”

“Yes.”

“Kekekekel!”

Before the other members of the party could react, Geomchi was running towards the monsters.

“Your death will not be merciful. Hahahaha!”

# Chapter 7: Old Handmaiden of Rosenheim Kingdom

Hwaryeong came online and the Dark Gamers joined in as Weed gathered the Sculpture Lifeforms to continue hunting.

“This is the dungeon I frequented with Zahab-nim.”

The Dark Gamers hesitated in front of the Geithner Dungeon entrance. Zahab, alone, had brought enormous firepower, using his sword he blocked the enemy’s assault and attacked with significant force. With him gone, the whole group’s fighting potential had substantially declined.

“It’s okay to enter.”

After Weed and Seo Yoon entered first, Hwaryeong followed after them.

“Weed-nim must have some idea of what to do.”

The Dark Gamers briefly discussed it amongst themselves.

“Will it be alright to enter the dungeon? Considering his character until now, he does not seem to be a deceitful person.”

“I think so too. The War God Weed wouldn’t die so carelessly while hunting.”

“Even without Zahab I don’t think this place will be so dangerous that we will get annihilated. Shall we go?”

For Dark Gamers, their bodies were their income so they took great care of them.

“It’s meaningless to abandon them and return to the city like this. I have never once left a hunt so treacherously.”

“I am going to enter.”

Volk and Daerin entered the dungeon first and the rest of the Dark Gamers followed.

Weed used his sword skill against the flying monster Pekoils.

“Radiant Sword!”

A sword skill that made light gush out from Weed’s body! The light birds with a rapturous beauty flew toward the Pekoils. Seo Yoon also used the secret sword skill and attacked with light swords.

“Where did they get this skill... I’ve never heard of such a technique.”

The Dark Gamers’ eyes popped out. They had experienced all sorts of battles but this was the first time they had seen such technique.

“Radiant Sword!”

Whenever Weed used his skill, the Dark Gamers observed it closely, even in the middle of their battle.

‘Hm, it’s strong.’

‘The lights split into several strands and slaughtered the monsters. It was really cool.’

The difficult hunt they expected against the Pekoils was made possible with Weed and Seo Yoon using their sword skill.

It was a secret sword skill that used an unbelievable amount of mana and stamina but the monsters here were exceptionally strong so they had no choice but to use it. They could earn plenty of drops and a lot of experience points by beating these monsters. It was life or death difficulty hunting, but, with the mystical light shining inside the dungeon, it was also beautiful.

Weed and Seo Yoon used their Radiant Sword to reduce the monsters health and then finished them off at close range.

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Real time: 4 o'clock early in the morning.

Weed had connected earlier compared to his usual routine because there was no need to go to the market and he planned for a simple fried rice for breakfast. But it would be awkward to hunt with just the Sculpture Lifeforms so he planned to rest while making sculptures.

“It’s master.”

Yellowy, who was slumped and sleeping gave off a yawn. Unlike Van Hawk and Torido, the Sculpture Lifeforms needed sufficient sleep.

“It’s alright. Here, eat all you want.”

Weed gave some boiled fodder and sat.

He was in deep thought, wondering what kind of sculptures he had to make to become a Master Sculptor.

‘Sculpting takes a whole room... Should I scrape together all my money and try making a proper, expensive, and fancy sculpture?’

With his authority as the Lord of Morata and Vargo Fortress, he could withdraw the taxes and make a gigantic sculpture made out of precious metal. Of course there was no guarantee a good sculpture would be created by throwing money at it, but using good materials did produce results.

Hwaryeong logged in while Weed was taking out materials for sculpting. She wanted quality time for just the two of them so she planned to connect early in the morning and wait. Fortunately for her, Weed was already here. Hwaryeong laughed softly that her dimples could be seen.

‘Nothing can withstand fate.’

AWOOOOO!

From far away, the howling of a wolf could be heard.

“Ah, why is today so scary? ”

Hwaryeong jumped closed to Weed. She, who could hunt over 5,000 wolves simultaneously pretended to be weak and took the chance to move closer so she could get a clearer look at Weed’s sculpting.

Weed’s eye quickly glanced over her body. Hwaryeong, who had experienced countless gazes from men, did not miss it.

‘Weed-nim is still a man.’

She became happy after seeing Weed’s pupils becoming large.

‘She’s wearing a different dress again today.’

The price of the jewel dress was no less than seventy thousand gold! Not only that, she matched it with boots, necklace, and bracelets. Looking at the items Hwaryeong was wearing, Weed was extremely envious.

‘She really has a lot of expensive clothes.’

‘He’s infatuated with my body.’

Hwaryeong felt that something was amiss.

‘I haven’t put a lot of effort into my make up today... should I have worn a less appealing and more revealing dress? No, Weed-nim would prefer a more pure look.’

As a Dancer, rather than a tight dress with a lot of options, if it felt good it was alright. She still had the dress from back when she was a novice and had separate bags for clothes and accessories.

“Um, I want to try a new dress I bought. Can you check it out for me?”

Weed had no reason to refuse Hwaryeong for saying she was going to wear her own clothing.

“Yes.”

After 30 minutes Hwaryeong felt the complete, pure glamour had returned. She gave off a pure look with her long hair and white, one piece dress.

“How is this?”

“It’s pretty, it draws attention naturally.”

After a short while, she changed into a different dress. Showing off a lively female traveler!

“What about this outfit?”

“It looks comfortable and beautiful.”

Hwaryeong continued to change her dress and showed off to Weed.

“The bag is quite fashionable. It looks like it used premium leather.”

Weed also made sculptures of her. Spending quality time together, Hwaryeong asked.

“Do you like the mountains?”

“Mountains? Well, I don’t dislike them.”

It wasn’t like Weed lived in the mountain town for a day or two, there was nothing to like or hate.

“My birthday is in spring, when the weather is good do you want to go hiking together?”

Hwaryeong bravely asked for a date. If they met up in reality, it would be difficult to avoid a scandal. But she wanted to be with Weed in reality as well. It would be especially great if they could go to the mountain where she felt freedom and comfort.

“If it’s your birthday, then okay.”

In a party, Hwaryeong put Weed first and always tried to be of help to him.

“Yes. Well, let’s buy some pajeon and makgeolli and go have some fun.”

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Hunting with Seo Yoon, Dark Gamers and Sculpture Lifeforms was productive, but every night a loud cry could be heard from someplace. Every time this happened, a flock of birds flew off from the forest and the tribes living in Grapass moved their habitats.

“Master, this place looks dangerous.”

Bingryong sensed something was off.

‘That might be the boss monster of Grapass.’

In Jigolaths he suffered all kinds of toil and wrapped it up killing Kubicha, the Great Warrior of Chaos, by playing both sides. Weed set himself a rule to avoid such a situation and so when he reached level 406, he decided to leave the Grapass region. While it was regretful that he could not continue to hunt ceaselessly, meeting Zahab and surviving the

forbidden region was still a great success.

“For now I need to send off the items to Morata.”

Weed instructed the Wyverns to carry the sculptures to the lord’s manor in Morata.

“Wy-One.”

“Keewk. Kaawak.”

“Don’t try to fly off to eat something, this needs to go immediately to the lord’s manor.”

“Kakakaw. As master commands, I won’t eat any fish and go straight away.”

“If I see any bones between your teeth, you're dead.”

“I will go straight to Morata.”

He appointed Bingryong and Phoenix to support the Wyverns while they were moving. With this many Sculpture Lifeforms, they should not encounter any trouble on their way to Morata. And it was a given that they had to handle the cargo preciousy as it was the sculptures containing the secret sword skill.

The Dark Gamers and Hwaryeong agreed to meet in Morata later on.

“Then let’s meet again later. Please contact me when you come back!”

“Yes. Hwaryeong-nim please go safely.”

They decided to ride on the Wyverns who were bereft of any load. While it was obvious Hwaryeong would return to Morata where the rest of her party was, it came as a great surprise that the Dark Gamers would abandon Brent Kingdom, their original gathering point.

‘That sword skill, it looks formidable.’

‘It’s truly magnificent. It would be a great help when fighting against monsters and our opponent will be confounded when they see it for the first time.’

Whenever Weed and Seo Yoon used the Radiant Sword, the Dark

Gamers' eyes became covetous. Of all the sword skill they knew, it was a technique that was not known at all!

'They said Zahab was a Sword Master so they must have learnt it from him.'

'There is a high chance it's one of the secret sword skills.'

The Dark Gamers became overly friendly.

"I am out of bandages."

"Weed-nim, here use these bandages."

"This is a bandage set I have never used before, please have it."

"I also don't have any arrows left."

"Here, please take my quiver. It's an enchanted quiver so it can store up to five hundred arrows. Please don't feel any obligations and use it as you will. You don't have to return it. "

When Weed spoke of his needs, they offered it to him immediately. It was because they had hope that maybe, Weed would teach them the secret sword skill. Of course, due to Weed's greed he wanted to keep Zahab's secret sword skill to himself.

The sculptures he made, that allowed the secret sword skill to be grasped, were a treasure that he was only going to allow the Geomchis to know of. No matter who else asked, he could not expose the secret sword skill to anyone. But the possibility of someone else appearing, knowing the Radiant Sword was high as Zahab was out in the world. When that time came, he could bargain a good deal with the Dark Gamers.

In the case of Seo Yoon, she said she had something to do in Rosenheim Kingdom and decided to go with Weed. It was time for Wy-Three to lift his heavy buttocks to fly, so he was tottering unsteadily as he got into position.

"Wy-Three."

"Gyaruk?"

“I am going to go with you.”

“Gagagak!”

Wy-Three prostrated while crying. And so Weed, Seo Yoon and Wy-Three flew toward Rosenheim Kingdom.

“Wy-Three, should I make you a set of clothes?”

The third Wyvern, Wy-Three’s beak stretched to the breaking point as he nodded his head.

‘The master puts me under a lot of hardship but I am the one he takes care of the most.’

“I will make it out of thick fabric as the weather is cold.”

“Master, I am grateful that you even considered making me cloth.”

“I found your back cold and hard while riding on it for a long time. At least it should have a cosy blanket on top. Ah, I should make pillows as well.”

“.....”

Wy-Three was getting concerned that if there was sufficient space on his back, he would be forced to fly while carrying tables and chairs!

While flying to Rosenheim Kingdom, Weed made moonlight sculptures. Seo Yoon’s hair fluttered in the wind while she watched him work. There were moments when men who were absorbed in their work were attractive.

But Seo Yoon was as beautiful as a goddess even when she was absentminded. She was sitting there with the stars and the moon shining high in the sky as her background. Her hair fluttering in the wind. Whenever Weed used the moonlight sculpting skill, it even added unnecessary light effects. It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say it transformed her already beautiful face into a precious treasure!

“As I explore the breadth and depth of sculpting I feel as if it has endless potential.”

While Weed used his sculpting knife, he was deeply moved by the originality of Zahab's sculptures.

"The world where sculptures can be sold expensively is coming."

For sculptors it was a future where they truly could not hope for more. If they could eat and live on sculptures, if they could hang all their hopes and dreams on their path as sculptors, it would be true happiness.

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Rosenheim Kingdom!

Compared to the past when Weed started, there were many changes. High-end stores were established and the general attire of the beginners was of high quality.

"Rosenheim Kingdom has grown quite big."

Weed and Seo Yoon, riding on the Wyvern, landed on the mountain some distance away and walked the rest of the distance to the kingdom's capital, Serabourg Citadel.

There were even some merchants and adventurers passing by that could recognize Weed.

"I am back in my true hometown. "

The time he sold off a considerable amount of sheep sculptures and the equally enormous number of victims who bought his pieces at exorbitant prices. And the players who suffered carrying heavy boulders for the sake of building the pyramid! If he looked back and recalled the good memories, they were a very welcoming people.

Weed and Seo Yoon hurried their pace.

"There is so much I have to do in the city."

The item drops from Grapass filled four bags to the brim. He had to dispose of the needless items and meet up with the old handmaiden.

"Finally, I get to sing that song."

Seo Yoon had a somewhat worried look on her face. The reason she had

such a look was that she had heard Weed practising that song. Compared to Zahab's euphonious, dulcet voice Weed's talent was a thousand light years away! It was an odd sound like a rooster crowing timidly in the morning.

'Will it be alright? I hope nothing bad happens.'

Seo Yoon worriedly followed after him.

Weed had just entered the castle gate of Serabourg and was about to go to the Square when the knights and soldiers guarding Rosenheim Kingdom's gates came and surrounded him. The players nearby started pointing fingers and became rowdy.

"Ara, what's happening with that guy?"

"Did he commit some crime and is trying to come back into the city?"

"Alright. There's finally something to see. He's going to be beaten to death by the soldiers."

"Looking at his equipment, he's not a complete novice but could he stand up to the soldiers?"

"So what. Then he would become a public enemy of the Rosenheim Kingdom and they will dispatch the army to kill him."

Weed felt the situation was completely unfair.

"What crime did I commit..."

He could only recall a miniscule evil he committed recently.

'There is only the small amount of time I played as Undead, conspired with pirates and fought Hermes guild's Polon with the Undead Legion but...'

They were actions that reduced reputation. But if he wanted to work and eat, this much was necessary!

The knights and soldiers did not draw their weapon and threaten Weed, rather they raised their hands to their chests and greeted him respectfully.

"Welcome travelers."

The players who were expecting an enjoyable spectacle were perplexed by the soldiers actions.

“Huk.”

“I have been doing business here for over 2 years and it’s the first time seeing the soldiers acting like that. Even the knights are bowing their heads!”

“Who is that person?”

“Do you think rankers from the central continent came here to play? But seeing the response from the soldiers their fame must be...”

The gazes of people coming and going from the castle gates were on Weed and Seo Yoon. Weed tried to ignore them and enter but at that moment the knight spoke.

“His majesty wanted to welcome the travelers and directed me to lead them to the castle.”

The effect of fame and achievements! He could meet any kings in the Versailles continent, but seeing as Rosenheim Kingdom was the region Weed started in, the treatment he received was vastly different. If he stayed behind and remained active in Serabourg Citadel, it was possible that Rosenheim Kingdom would experience tremendous development.

“There is work I have to do to keep the peace on the continent. Meeting his majesty, who rules over Rosenheim Kingdom is a great honor even for me. But there is an urgent matter I have to attend to so I must pay my respects later.”

He had dragged on the quest from the old handmaiden for so long that he wanted to do resolve it as quickly as possible. He could always meet the king of Rosenheim Kingdom later.

“Well if it's like that then there is nothing we can do. His majesty will be waiting so please attend his audience.”

“I shall do so.”

Weed and Seo Yoon under the gaze of many players entered Serabourg

Citadel.

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“I am buying and selling items. I do procurement or resale.”

“I can make any equipment you need.”

“Before you go to hunt please check your necessities. I sell them here.”

Weed decided to head to the Square and take care of his bags. An unusually obese man with a parked carriage was waiting there.

“Are you perhaps Weed-nim?”

“Yes, you are right.”

It was the merchant waiting there after being contacted by Mapan. He was ‘Gimme The Money’ an up and coming trader in Rosenheim Kingdom known for his refusals.

“Did you bring the items?”

“Money first.”

“Here. I am being uselessly cautious but these definitely are the goods?”

“Check for yourself.”

If people who did not know the situation listened in on Weed and Gimme The Money, they might have mistaken it for illicit dealing.

“These are definitely the goods. The quantity is without a doubt correct. I receive them in good faith.”

“It was a good deal. If we have a chance then next time as well...”

“Whenever you have the goods, you can search for Gimme The Money anytime in Serabourg Citadel.”

The scene was giving off a bad influence like the crime movies shown on cable.

For Weed, the faster the transaction the better so he received the money bag and turned around with no regret. The leather pouch didn't look like anything special but inside was 168 thousand gold! As these items were

from hunting in Grapass, he received quite a sum. It was also thanks to the japtem Seo Yoon collected as he sold them for quite a good price. It was good practise to not only collect japtem but also to sell them for the right value.

“Right, let’s go now.”

They went to the residence of the old handmaiden. In general the street was filled with similar looking houses but Weed spotted her house quickly.

“I haven’t delivered milk for 3 years and newspapers for 7 years just for nothing!”

When Weed entered the old handmaiden’s house, he noticed that she looked much older than before.

“The adventurer finally returned I see.”

“Yes. I braved the cold wind and morning dew, wandering the continent to keep the promise I made to you.”

“Then did you meet Zahab-nim?”

“You were correct about him. Also he made more amazing sculptures.”

“Regretfully I do not know much about sculptures. For me I only have memories left of Zahab-nim whom the Queen loved. I want to listen to the song from then.”

Weed pulled out a harp to accompany his singing.

“Then I shall start.”

KEEK... BAAK... QUAAK... CREEK...

As soon as Weed finished his song, the handmaiden’s tilted her head.

“It’s strange.”

“Yes?”

“I don’t think it was this noisy when I heard it then, but it also doesn’t seem different...”

It was on a level where the tune was made up! It would possibly be easier for Weed to go back to Jigolaths than singing.

“But I was happy that I could recalled the memories from the past. Do you know? As you get older the happy memories from the past are like jewels.”

“I think so as well.”

“Zahab-nim and the queen really did make a good match. I really want to see a scene of them making sculptures while travelling together...”

Tears dropped from the old handmaiden’s eyes. Weed became weak seeing the old granny shedding tears.

Weed took out 3 small blocks of wood.

Saksak.

One in the shape of young Zahab, another of the queen and he even sculpted the young handmaiden from the video he viewed in the past.

Please set a name for your sculpture.

“Handmaiden... No, Grandmother’s Memory.”

Is ‘Grandmother’s Memory’ correct?

“Yes.”

‘Grandmother’s Memory’ has been completed.

A sculpture made by Weed, who is close to the highest level of sculpting.

Has been sculpted in a very short time.

Artistic Value: 289.

Mastery of Sculpting skill increased.

“This is a gift for you.”

“To have received such a great sculpture! I do not know much about sculptures but it seems to be made with great skill.”

Weed had an idea that it would increase friendship with the old handmaiden greatly. While he did not do this with expectation of

receiving something from her, he did think he could perhaps get a free meal at least. Wyvern's movement speed increased with his level. Therefore Weed and Seo Yoon flew over from Grapass in a moment and could not eat anything on the way.

Seo Yoon and Weed looked upon the old handmaiden with a warm gaze.

“Thank you. To have received such a present before I die. I have enjoyed listening to your song.”

DING!

‘Continue Zahab's Legacy' Completed

Zahab's song awakened the handmaiden Elzase's memory. She will tell you a story you did not get to hear last time.

Quest Reward: Gift from her and information on the next quest.

Fame increased by 569.

Experience increased by a small amount.

‘The quest doesn't end here....’

This was the quest that started from the training center and gave him the chance to choose the class, Moonlight Sculptor. Weed did not expect a big quest reward, which reflected on the 3.7% worth of experience he earned due to his high level. But more surprisingly the quest story that covered Zahab and the Queen was still not finished.

“This is something that I have saved for the person who would allow me to listen to that song again.”

The old handmaiden stood up from her seat and pulled out a small box from the drawer.

“Please open this. It's a jewel the Queen gave me, I want to give this to you now.”

Weed opened the box and saw 3 diamonds sparkling brilliantly.

‘This must worth at least 70 thousand gold.’

Weed estimated the price the moment he saw it.

“This reminds me about the story of the Queen from back then. When Zahab-nim left, the Queen fell into a great sorrow. As the Queen of the nation, she did not show any grief outwardly and appeared to be well. But something happened back then and she died of a mysterious sickness a year and a half later. I know for a fact that there is a diary she wrote during that period...”

The woman who had to live as a Queen after sending off the man she loved since her childhood! As a Queen of Rosenheim Kingdom she was noble and virtuous, but at a young age she contracted an illness and crossed the great divide.

“There should be many other stories of Zahab-nim in the Queen’s diary that I couldn’t tell you. Please ask around for Fabiane, she is another handmaiden who knows more about what happen back then. I do not know if she is still living. I am not sure if this will help but she really likes the melampodium paludosum flower.”

DING!

A Suspicious Diary Somewhere

Written by Queen Evane, the presumed diary is said to have records of secrets of the kingdom.

To find the diary, you must meet Fabiane the handmaiden who has served within the castle.

Difficulty: D

Quest Restriction: Must first complete the quest ‘Continue Zahab’s Legacy.’

To receive the quest reward, the quest must be completed before the old handmaiden dies.

Quest cannot be cancelled.

A chain quest! It was difficult to calculate how many levels it has been since the training center.

Weed could smell the wafting suspiciousness surrounding the death of

the Queen.

“For now... I understand.”

You have accepted the Quest.

Quest reward aside, he came this far and was curious how the quest would end.

\*\*\*\*\*

Hermes guild and Kallamore Kingdom's great clash! People were drooling as their eyes were glued to the screen.

The knights of Kallamore Kingdom increased their speed as they broke through the chaotic battlefield. They perforated the Hermes guild's main army and raised their momentum.

The sound of the horn, the trampling of hooves and the shrieking of people as they collapsed filled the battlefield. The broadcasters wanted to capture every minute detail, but because of the grandness of the battle they could only show the aerial view to the audience.

Each battle arrangement had tens of thousands fighting and in the rear of Kallamore Kingdom, over 100 thousand militia were organized and running toward the city.

“Knights of Kallamore! This is truly amazing and frightening. The knights Kolderim is leading broke through the magic attacks and are charging.”

The knights of Kallamore Kingdom were armed with high magic resistant equipments. The weak magic attacks did no damage and disappeared into thin air. But the spells the advance mages of Hermes guild were using impacted the knights as intended!

Here the knights expertly controlled their horses, riding like the wind as they scattered and changed direction, driving back the Hermes guild. Words could not describe how awesome the scene was, just watching made the heart faster.

“Ah, they are getting killed out there.”

“It would be great if Hermes guild gets utterly ruined by this.”

The viewers sitting in front of the television and the players watching in twos and threes in Royal Road taverns hoped the war would end like this. They were all of one mind and heart for the Hermes guild, which symbolized the prestigious guild in the central continent, to have their power and influence be cut.

Soon after, Kallamore Kingdom and Hermes guild's total command got involved and the war front became larger. To win the war, one side needed to occupy a minimum of 10 castles and cities. Or if analyzed further, the existence of each surrounding kingdom could be in jeopardy.

On the wide plain where the two kingdom's overflowing forces collided, causing the battle immersed viewers to forget about time. It was a complete, full scale war!

After a small amount of time passed, the size of the Kallamore Kingdom's army became smaller and smaller and it retreated to a corner. Many of Hermes guild's high level players were involved and their average foot soldiers experience, equipment, and level was higher than their foe. Each commanders archers, magicians, swordsmen, spearmen, shield men and cavalry were operated efficiently.

Kallamore Kingdom, whose force of cavalry and knight orders were high, began to show their weak point and were pushed back in the overall battle.

“March.”

“Control the western side and capture the center.”

It was the sight of the Hermes guild, who had prepared for a long time for this war, winning. The infantry cut off the Kallamore Kingdoms flank and encircled the main force. Battalions of archers sniped the famous knights of Kallamore Kingdom one by one.

Kolderim was busy all over, dragging his knights to glory. But the Hermes guild straggled the surrounding knights and killed them off.

“Our share is over there.”

Bardray and his Black Knights who were, for a time, looking over the battle, sortied. They were aiming for Kolderim, who was fighting alone in the midst of Hermes guild infantry. They were planning to declare Hermes guild's victory to everyone after they killed Kolderim.

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Weed and Seo Yoon left the old handmaidens house and were walking on the street of Rosenheim Kingdom.

“Ah, this miserable world...”

“Ah, this is annoying. Why is the sky so clear. Just rain damn it.”

“I feel depressed so let's go drink some alcohol.”

“Sure. Let's just drink.”

The atmosphere of the players in Serabourg Citadel was not good. It was because Hermes guild utterly destroyed the Kallamore Kingdom's defense force. Not only the players who saw the broadcast in Rosenheim Kingdom but all over Versailles Continent, the tavern saw a jump in customers.

Even for Weed, the news about Hermes guild was extremely important.

“In the end, they won.”

If the Hermes guild became completely ruined, it would have been a heaven sent gift but he did not even hope for such an outcome. Weed had a feeling that Hermes guild would win from the start.

“In this world, the bad guys always live well in a grand style.”

These famous guilds were no different. If Hermes guild fell, someone else would take their place. No matter who, they would not leave Weed in peace. To be successful in life and to make money, one had to live completely opposite of written ethics.

Even with that thought aside, Weed was troubled about searching for Fabiane. Serabourg Citadel of Rosenheim Kingdom was as familiar to him as Morata. From his poverty stricken time as a novice, to the period of running through every nook and crevice to search for people to buy his sculptures!

“I even remember the alleyways.”

The wide paths where the carriages went through were packed with stalls and during the time when people crowded the street, Weed used the alleys to reduce travel time so he knew the alleyway like the back of his hand. Since then a lot of time has passed and some new buildings were erected, but the residential area did not appear to have changed much.

“A *melampodium paludosum*...”

Weed had memorised a lot of facts on herbalism so it was a flower he knew.

“It’s just a yellow flower!”

The flower was modestly pretty, average in size with split flower petals.

“I think this alley had some of the yellow flowers growing about back then.”

Weed fumbled through his memories as he walked through Serabourg Citadel with Seo Yoon. Even though the castle had many players, the alleys without stalls were devoid of people.

Bees and butterflies flew over the many flowers growing charmingly on the street. Weed and Seo Yoon were walking through the most scenic alley in Serabourg Citadel.

“It’s kind of far right?”

“Not really.”

“It should be close to here. If we had the time we could try to look for a beehive. There is nothing like honey to bolster the body.”

“...”

Weed found the *melampodium paludosum* in the alley and visited each of the 3 houses with the yellow flowers blooming on their porch. The first house belonged to a gardener who was a flower enthusiast.

“You have amazing hand skills! If you have come here to learn flower arrangement, I will teach it to you leisurely from the basics.”

If it was Weed from the past who considered flowers to be useless, he would have turned around and left before he heard the entire proposal. But as he learned sculpting and other skills, he felt that nothing was useless in the Versailles Continent. And so he listened to the gardener's words and learned how to pluck out the withered flower petals and cut off the dead twigs.

DING!

Skill: Flower Arrangement Learnt.

Flower Arrangement: A skill used to grow and appreciate flowering shrubs and trees!

Skill level and affinity to land and plants increases when flowers and trees are grown properly.

Fully bloomed flowers can be put into a vase as an ornament.

By learning Flower Arrangement your affinity to nature increased by 3.

It was an important affinity in manifesting a bigger Natural Disaster Sculpting. Seeing Weed learning it, Seo Yoon copied him and learned Flower Arrangement as well. Weed's skill was at beginner level 1.

"I should plant a lot of flowers at the Morata's lord manor later on."

Through the effect of a Masterpiece that Weed made, a Wildflower Festival occurred in Morata. Of course just looking at flowers was enjoyable but if left unattended weeds and vines could grow ruining them. But when a person applied his hands, plants could find their proper place and become more beautiful.

Weed's Handicraft skill and Art stat were at a surprising level, and with his refined taste through sculpting, if he started cultivation from the seed he could grow breathtaking flower beds and trees.

"To commemorate learning Flower Arrangement let me give you a present."

You have received a white woodsorrel as a present from Gardener Jenkins.

The gardner gave Weed and Seo Yoon a bouquet of flowers with white petals.

“This could become my first Flower Arrangement.”

For Weed, making a vase or a flower pot was like a piece of cake.

“But cultivating flowers during the middle of an adventure is difficult, wait right there for me.”

Weed took a white flower and pinned it on Seo Yoon’s hair. There was no big reason for it other than wanting to try it once. Seo Yoon furtively touched the white flower and looked slightly embarrassed by it.

DING!

Flower Arrangement skill increased to beginner level 2. Flowers and trees become more vibrant. Growth speed becomes faster.

Affinity to Nature increased by 2.

Fame increased by 25.

The flower the gardner gave was of a kind that grew easily and with the intervention of Weed’s Art stat and Handicraft, the skill level increased in a breath of a moment. Also the flower suited Seo Yoon really well and it was one of the reasons he received a lot of skill mastery.

With the white flower pinned in her hair, Seo Yoon looked really beautiful and gave off a feeling of loveliness. Seo Yoon also pinned a flower next to Weed’s ear. A message window also popped up for her.

Mastery of Flower Arrangement rose slightly.

The white flower pinned on Weed’s hair, withered in the blink of an eye. It was as if some unseen force was sucking up the nutrients!

“I don’t think that flower was healthy.”

Weed thought as such. Even if it wasn’t the truth, his heart wanted to believe otherwise.

To find Fabiane, they went to the second house. But inside were children waiting for their parents to return.

“They went to sell some flowers in the market. My mom knows a place in Serabourg Citadel where a lot of pretty flowers bloom.”

“The evil goblins are appearing frequently so it’s difficult to pluck flowers these days. It will be nice if someone defeats them... For us it’s really important but I think it would be too easy for you to do. I don’t have anything to properly reward you with if you clear out the Goblins so I will ask someone else to handle it.”

Weed’s fame was so high it was difficult for the children to give him a quest. As long as Seo Yoon with her high fame and level. did not deliberately ask to accompany him on the quest, there was no reason to accept it.

And so the third house! A granny with deep wrinkles was sitting by the window sill, looking at the yellow flowers.

“Are you perhaps Fabian-nim?”

“For a young man to come looking for me, what did you come here for?”

“I came here to learn more about Queen Evane.”

“It’s not a story that should be told on the street. Please come inside the house.”

As the door opened Weed and Seo Yoon entered her house.

“Please have this while you ask all your questions. You mustn’t skip your meals when you are young.”

The food Fabiane brought them was poached potatoes!

Completing quests in Serabourg Citadel blessed them with meals. Truthfully, one of the most developed businesses in Serabourg Citadel was the food industry. There wasn’t any old traditional food but the restaurants, steakhouses, and seafood buffets were famous. Through the development of a Chef’s daring menu, they could even open a speciality restaurant serving monsters as food.

“Nom nom, this is shockingly good.”

“It’s nice to see you eating it deliciously. I have plenty of potatoes so eat

as much as you want.”

“Is it too much to ask if you could pack some for the road?”

“I heard you are quite a famous adventurer... it won't be a problem to pack you a basket.”

Even while sharing such conversation, Weed was peeling off the potatoes skin fast like a ghost.

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TL Note:

Woodsorrel or 사랑초 in korean might be a double meaning. As (사랑) 초 means (love) and also the meaning behind the flower is ‘늘 당신과 함께 하겠습니다’ or ‘Always with you’

# Chapter 8: Diary of Queen Evane

“I heard that Queen Evane had written a diary.”

“Where did you hear that... There were only a few people who knew she kept a diary.... Ah, did Elzase Unni tell you this?”

“Yes, she did.”

“I see, you were sent by Unni. Thinking about it, it’s been so long since I lost contact with her. Though, sorry to say, I don’t know what’s written inside the Queen’s diary.”

“Then do you know where I can find this diary?”

“I need to search my memories.”

Fabian closed her eyes seemingly viewing into distant memories.

Wagu Wagu.

The only sound reverberating inside the room was Weed munching on potatoes. After his fifth potato, Fabiane opened her eyes again.

“It’s been a long time so I can’t be sure, but the diary won’t be at the Star Palace where the Queen was staying. A month before she died, she went to her hometown. After that, I never saw that diary again. Perhaps she hid it someplace?”

You have acquired information regarding Queen Evane’s diary.

Weed had a reasonable idea of the location of the diary. It was probably hidden at the hometown where the Queen used to play together with Zahab.

“Then, please take care.”

Weed really did take a basket full of potatoes with him and went over the mountain behind Serabourg Citadel. He arrived at the village Queen Evane used to live in and went to the big tree where Zahab used to make his sculptures.

“It’s probably this place.”

When Adventurers used the Detection skill they received a slithery feeling from places related to the quest objective. As Weed did not have such a skill, he had to actually dig the ground up to find out.

“Let’s get started.”

He took out a spade and began to dig the ground. Through the effect of his Mining skill, the ground was dug up quickly under his spadework! After digging 1 meter deep, he found a wooden chest.

You have unearthed Queen Evane’s hidden chest.

Fame increased by 265.

The excavation of Queen Evane’s chest improved the adventurer’s record. If you report this to the Adventurer’s guild you could receive a small reward.

Weed opened the wooden chest. Inside was a pair of rusted keys, a small hand mirror and a book.

You have obtained a key to the Star Palace.

You have obtained a key for a secret room.

You have obtained a mirror that shows the truth.

You have obtained a tear soaked diary of Queen Evane.

Weed checked the keys first.

“Identify!”

Star Palace Key: Durability 2/4

Key to allow Queen Evane entrance to the palace.

Option: Bravery +1

It was the key to open the sealed palace of Queen Evane. Currently the rumors mentioned that after it was abandoned, monsters began to live in the palace.

“I never heard of anything suggesting the Star Palace is open. Then this must be the key that opens the palace. Onto the next item... Identify!”

This time, Weed placed the key to the secret room on the palm of his hand.

Secret Room Key: Durability 1/4

This is the key to open a secret room somewhere.

There is nothing that especially distinguishes this.

It is greatly damaged so it will be difficult to use this several times.

Option: After 4 uses, it will be destroyed.

“Identify!”

Truth Showing Hand Mirror: Durability 14/25

A hand mirror encrusted with precious jewels.

Made of special material, divine power is flowing through it.

Reveals falsehoods and visions, leads one back to the way of truth.

Could be used at a particular place.

Restrictions: Cannot be used by murderers and evil men.

When dancers, bards or priests equip this item, the effect of this item doubles.

Option: Intelligence, Wisdom +7.

Charm +23.

Maximum value of mana increase by 11%.

Faith increase by 38.

In a specific place, it will lead you the way.

“This doesn’t look ordinary...”

Weed sniffed up the many satisfying scents coming from the quest items. Then he opened up the last item left, the diary, and began reading. The diary was not written consistently everyday. There was an entry every one or two months, written whenever it was necessary. There were some parts that were unreadable due to the tear marks, but overall they were

not a hindrance.

16th January

I would rather live free than be a queen.

With Zahab...

Like back then... The happy OO ti OO me...

19th March

Will Zahab come to see me again?

The happiest moments in my life was seeing him making those sculptures.

If only I could return back to the time when I was young and innocent.

7th April

I want to see Zahab.

My heart will always follow him.

If only I was not OOO then I could be happy OO with Zahab...

6th June

I am gathering trustworthy people to protect Rosenheim Kingdom.

We are prepared to die.

Though I am queen, I will tie my fate with them.

1st September

Embinyu Church.

I think I have rushed too much.

They figured out my involvement.

11th September

The spy 'Yiorlin' who is providing information on the Embinyu Church has sent a message.

Assassins have been sent to kill me.

I want to see O Zahab one last time.

14th September

I am burying this diary at the place I have many happy memories with him.

You have acquired information regarding Queen Evane's death.

Reemergence of Embinyu Church!

Weed was still as he chewed over the content of the diary. But his brain spun faster than when he tried to scam for Yellowy's feed. All his perception was in agreement.

'Queen Evane and Zahab. This chain quest is connected to the Embinyu Church.'

Weed came here after meeting Zahab first. The friendship he had earned then was to be used for a situation like this.

'It's to fight the Embinyu Church with Zahab and bring them into account for the death of Queen Evane!'

Although the story was different, there was a time when he had fought with the Embinyu Church in the North. When the Queen's death was all but forgotten, and when meeting the guy who loved her, it was all a scenario that pointed toward the sculptor gaining vengeance against the Embinyu Church!

'This was a rushed action, it's like going to a meat buffet and eating only 5 rolls of gimbap before the meat is ready.'

He was sorely regretting his past actions.

'I should have guessed that the quest would not end with meeting him!'

There were many different thoughts in his head but it was pointless regretting it now.

Weed took the items and returned to the old handmaiden Elzase.

"The Queen's diary! I could have never imagined it would be found again. Did you meet Fabiane?"

“Yes, I met with her. She was living in the alleyway behind the market district.”

“Oh, is that so. Even though she is living so close by, after I left the castle I never contacted her so I never knew. The reason was because somehow the handmaidens serving the Queen were dying one by one.”

DING!

‘A Suspicious Diary Somewhere’ Completed

The diary of Queen Evane was buried in the ground where she was happy with Zahab.

Fame increased by 17.

Experience increased by a very small amount.

Seeing Weed’s level was so high, the easy quest did not even give experience worth mentioning.

The handmaiden opened the diary and read through it.

“My word, how could something like this...! So there was such a secret behind the Queen’s death. But I think it’s too late now.”

“What?”

“It would have been alright if you came 3 month ago... The royal knight Yiorlin died due to a monster attack.”

“.....”

“It’s too sad what happened to the Queen. Except for this diary there is absolutely no proof about the tragic death of the Queen... The relevant people are not even around now. There is only little old me and Sculptor-nim so I don’t know how we can avenge her.”

DING!

Quest, ‘Deliver the Diary’ did not materialize.

Suspension in the chain quest!

There was a great emptiness that came upon Weed.

‘I came too late.’

The Embinyu Church was already spread widely in Rosenheim Kingdom. Also the related incidents already occurred. Because he came too late, the quest disappeared halfway.

“But if it wasn’t for adventurer-nim, then this old lady would have always just brooded about what happened. Although the Queen and Zahab-nim loved each other, they couldn’t be together and in the end we couldn’t even avenge the Queen.”

"....."

“Perhaps this was for the better. The Queen and Zahab-nim would not have wanted revenge. You must have experienced a lot of hardship because of my unreasonable request.”

Fame increased by 13.

Weed feebly left the old handmaiden’s house. He couldn’t even pack the poached potatoes this time.

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On the street, Seo Yoon asked.

“Will you return to Morata?”

“No. We came all the way here and also got the key, we should try going to the Star Palace.”

Weed went to the castle and with the key he opened Queen Evane’s Star Palace. While the castle in Rosenheim Kingdom had many players visiting to meet the nobles and officials, no one went close to the abandoned Star Palace.

Dungeon, you are the first to discover the Star Palace.

Privileges: Fame increased by 1,700.

Double experience and item drop rate for one week.

Monsters hunted for the first time will drop the best possible item that it can.

Bravery increased by 3 for entering the Star Palace.

“Let’s hunt to our heart’s content.”

Inside the Star Palace, old artworks were hidden like treasures and there were rooms hidden with gold articles. This dungeon was luxurious!

Usually in dungeons where only low level monsters appeared, the whole place had to be searched to earn a piece of bronze but here it was filled with treasure. After the death of Queen Evane, the palace was left to rot and turned into a dungeon through a mysterious curse.

The Star Palace was littered with souls of maids, knights, and soldiers who died with regret. The reason was unknown but there was a lot of grotesque monsters called Burple.

“This is quite a dangerous dungeon.”

At Weed and Seo Yoon’s level, the lingering souls were easy to handle. But the Burple monsters charged with incredible speed and thrust themselves into battle, not only was their level mid 400, they were extremely dangerous. Fortunately the monsters didn't rush them all at once, so compared to hunting in the Grapass region, it was considerably easier.

“Call: Death Knight Van Hawk, call: Vampire Lord Torido!”

Weed summoned Torido and Van Hawk and fought together with Seo Yoon. When Seo Yoon wasn’t with him, he cautiously hunted the outskirts of the dungeon with Death Knight Van Hawk using Radiant Sword.

“KIEEEEEK!”

Radiant Sword was effective against curse type monsters, also the skill mastery increased easily but nothing new came out of the light yet. But still, the Burgles had great strength which made them difficult to deal with. Even if he used his skill, the Burgles bashed in with their shield and pushed in, whirling their great swords.

In the morning when the Radiant Sword became weaker, Weed went to the Square and made sculptures.

“Doing this reminds me of back then.”

Lost in his memories he started making sculptures of deer, foxes, and rabbits. Truthfully, these were the shapes he sculpted the most, but it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say these shapes laid the basis of his sculpting skill.

“Tsk tsk, you don't make sculptures like that.”

While Weed was carving his sculptures, a player who looked the same age as him approached.

“Yes?”

“I am also a sculptor, shall I teach you some tricks?”

This player's class was also a sculptor!

The place Weed was at was a good spot where people had to cross to reach the Square's fountain. Blacksmith and seamstress were a given but especially, there were many sculptors sitting there and doing business. While players with other classes wouldn't be interested, Serabourg Citadel in Rosenheim Kingdom was like a holy land to the sculptors! It was to the point that making and selling sculptures here was recommended in message boards as a way for sculptors to grow.

“My sculpting skill is beginner level 4 but my specialties lie in making deer, foxes, rabbits, and wolves. I have made over 10 thousand of them.”

“Why did you make so many of the same images?”

“This is a secret only the sculptors in Rosenheim Kingdom know, this secret is from the peerless hero birthed from Rosenheim Kingdom! The War God and the Great Sculptor Weed did the exact same thing.”

Weed's eyes were bleak and for the first time he looked around his surroundings, observing the different sculptors all making foxes and such sculptures. These were the many unfortunate sacrificial lambs copying his growth method.

Truthfully, sculptures were sold as souvenirs in Serabourg Citadel so the sculptors financial situation became better. But compared to the sculptors,

artists were still scraping by as they had to continually buy paint.

“While the public wouldn’t know, sculpting is a path that is harder than they can imagine.”

Weed nodded his head. Just continually making deer and foxes had truly no bottom or end, it was like walking perpetually to the same spot.

“Most people give up after only a few days, but to become like Weed-nim this is a phase that must be passed.”

“So after you make the basic sculptures in the city, what happens next?”

“After we gather 1,000 sculptors, we are planning to make a pyramid and a sphinx.”

The wrong path of suffering and hardship that Weed laid down, was now walked on and expanded without any change by the next generation.

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Park Jin Suk met with chairman Jeong Deuk Soo.

“I don’t think Seo Yoon even notices me. She is so indifferent it’s hard to talk with her. Is there any good method that I can try?”

When she came back from university, she did not go out again. There was no reason for Seo Yoon to accept his proposal for a date at a sudden notice. He had to try and get to know her gradually but Seo Yoon had no openings. Rather Park Jin Suk became more fretful.

“Then how about playing Royal Road?”

“Royal Road?”

“My daughter spends a lot of time in Royal Road, meeting her there might be more comfortable. Perhaps you haven’t played it yet?”

“I am already playing it. These days there is no one that hasn’t played Royal Road.”

Park Jin Suk thought this was a brilliant idea. His class in Royal Road was a hunter. While hunters could not wear heavy armor, they could use a variety of weapons, do archery, and install and dismantle traps. It was a

versatile class with comparable strength and vitality.

“You could go hunting with my daughter at least.”

“Then we could easily become closer.”

Royal Road was a game that made and broke apart many a couple. In Park Jin Suk’s case, just getting to talk with Seo Yoon was all he could hope for.

“But there is one person my daughter frequents with...”

“I heard she had a man. But from my understanding, they aren’t deeply involved. I can understand that with Seo Yoon’s beauty many men would follow after her.

“Isn’t it? However she plays Royal Road often with that man.”

“Do you know who he is?”

“The character name is said to be Weed.”

“Weed? It’s really a common name.”

Weed was a name spread out and used so commonly in Royal Road, it wasn't much of a help to Park Jin Suk. Truthfully, Park Jin Suk was an ardent fan of Weed. But he was a bit disappointed learning that this rival copied the name for his character.

“I think he was called the War God in Royal Road.”

“What?”

“He became quite famous after beating some monsters.”

Chairman Jeong Deuk Soo didn’t think it was important and spoke unassumingly, but Park Jin Suk was a diehard fan who liked all of Weed’s adventures so much he memorized them. The name highlighted in stations broadcasting Royal Road dozens of times per day was Weed, Orc Karichwi, Undead Legion and Morata.

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Park Jin Suk waited for Seo Yoon at her front door, arranging for the time she came back from university. Seo Yoon was approaching from afar

and when she reached her door and tried to enter he spoke.

“Excuse me, I have a request.”

“.....”

Seo Yoon did not ignore him but also did not enter through her front door, she did not even turn to face him. It was because she already knew the reason why he approached her.

“Um, I heard that you hunt with Weed-nim in Royal Road. Is it possible that I can meet Weed-nim at least once?”

Rivalry was a rivalry but Park Jin Suk as a fan in Royal Road wanted to meet Weed at least once. However Seo Yoon shook her head in a negative manner. This could cause her inconvenience as nothing would expose Weed into the open as this.

“I really want to know what kind of person he is, I just want to meet him for a brief moment and chat with him.”

“.....”

“With my character level, I would definitely lose but I want to ask for a duel with Weed-nim and kinda learn some tricks from him as well.”

Park Jin Suk also wanted to sincerely date Seo Yoon. Through this he thought he could establish a connection with her. While the start would be rocky, afterwards he thought he would have a chance to become closer with her. It was a calculated proposal with a multistage plan.

When Seo Yoon heard it was for a duel, she gave a small nod.

“Rosenheim Kingdom.....”

“I need to go to Rosenheim Kingdom?”

Hearing Seo Yoon’s beautiful voice, Park Jin Suk’s happiness went through the roof.

“Come to the mountain behind Serabourg Citadel.”

“I am currently with some friends in Brent Kingdom. It’s not far from where I am. I will get there as fast as I can. ”

\*\*\*\*\*

“Robin, is it really true?”

“I am telling you, we are going to meet War God Weed right now.”

Hunter Robin. He brought a lot of his friends to the mountain behind Serabourg Citadel. Tingling with excitement at the prospect of meeting War God Weed! He was a figure that was harder to meet personally than the head's of famous guilds.

After hearing that they could meet him personally, Robin, who wanted to see Morata, and his friends stopped their dungeon hunt and came immediately. When they arrived, Weed was no where in sight except for Seo Yoon who was standing in full armor.

Robin and his friends were grinning as they approached her.

“Weed-nim hasn't arrived yet?”

They were tolerant of Weed's lateness as they haven't set an exact time,. And if they could talk to Seo Yoon while waiting for Weed, it would be even better.

However Seo Yoon hadn't even told Weed someone was coming to see him.

As a rule, one should think deeply about the reason for a meeting behind the mountain!

SHIIIIING.

Berserker Seo Yoon unsheathed her sword.

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Weed was waiting at the entrance of the Star Palace for Seo Yoon.

“She's a bit late today.”

She was someone who kept the exact time for a meeting, so he started making sculptures leisurely believings she wouldn't be too late. Weed was making sculptures in the depth of the night but he did not feel any fear. Because if a ghost appeared he could hunt it in a instant!

Sabak Sabak.

He lifted his head as he could finally hear the footsteps of Seo Yoon approaching “You are a bit late.....”

And when he saw Seo Yoon his heart skipped a beat in surprise. Seo Yoon’s name was indicated in red. It meant she was a murderer.

“Did you go somewhere to kill some people?”

Nod, nod.

“How many?”

“8 people.”

With one stroke, Seo Yoon killed Robin and his friends.

“Wow, you killed a lot. How did the fight start?”

“We had different opinions.”

“Was it a problem that couldn’t be solved by talking about it?”

“Ah.....”

Seo Yoo exclaimed in a subdued voice as if she realized something.

“You haven’t tried, have you?”

“.....”

A slight side effect that remained even if they talked about it! When a conflict in opinion arose between Seo Yoon and someone other than Weed, rather than persuading otherwise she went back to her previous habit. If Geomchi was here, he would praise her for such an attitude.

“If you want to remove the murderer status, you will have to do quests or give donations, hunt a lot of evil type of monsters. If you killed 8 people, it won’t be easy to remove the murderer status.”

With the murderer status, she could be attacked by players. They could only tread carefully as her death penalty became more serious.

“Well, let’s just think about how to remove your murderer status while hunting.”

As other players did not come to the Star Palace, he tried to enter and start hunting. But at that moment, something monumental was occurring in Rosenheim Kingdom.

# Chapter 9: Embinyu Church Invasion

"Down with the King."

"Kill all the nobles."

"It's Embinyu god's will. Kill all the heretics opposing the Embinyu Church!"

In the vicinity of Serabourg Citadel, an army of 400 thousand appeared.

The emergence of the rebels! It was composed of both peasants from nearby villages and whole armies from the kingdom, converted to following the Embinyu Church. They came under pretense, waving the Rosenheim Kingdom's flag while being under the banner of the Embinyu god of destruction.

A message window popped up for all active players in Serabourg Citadel and Rosenheim Kingdom.

DING!

The Embinyu Church has begun an incursion into Rosenheim Kingdom's capital, Serabourg Citadel.

A siege has broken out in Serabourg Citadel.

Through magical disturbance, the teleport gate and long range teleportation cannot be used.

"What's happening?"

"What's this disturbance in the middle of the night?"

The players buying goods in the market for a hunt with their party members rushed towards the castle wall. Beyond the walls of Serabourg Citadel was the Embinyu Church army, which stretched beyond what the eyes could see.

"Did a war break out?"

"Are we safe here? What is the status of Serabourg Citadel's defenses?"

The players could not hide their anxiety as they looked around

Serabourg Citadel. While it was the capital of Rosenheim Kingdom, it was not prepared for a sudden siege. Even the castle gates were hurriedly closed only after the Embinyu Church appeared. The loyal forces were hastily dispatched but could be seen emerging without even equipping their armor properly.

“Ah, really. I even prepared a great house in Serabourg Citadel.”

“I have a business in the Square!”

“Can the Rosenheim Kingdom repel the enemy?”

“There is no kingdom that has yet driven back the Embinyu Church.”

“What will happen to us when Serabourg Citadel gets taken over?”

The players fell into panic. When there was a monster raid, the monsters were easily eradicated by the kingdom’s forces. It was unfathomable for a flock of monsters to even reach Serabourg Citadel. But with the Embinyu Church, it was a different story. They possessed shamans, priests, summoners, warlocks, and dark paladins. Not only that, beyond the castle wall, the end to the crowds of tamed monsters and cultists couldn’t be seen.

The cultists of Embinyu! They were composed of ordinary residents of Rosenheim Kingdom. They were at least level 200, and by believing in the god of Embinyu, they possessed demonic strength! They feared no death, and by increasing their faith through battle, their level rose fast.

The moonlight revealed the shape of large demons that would be critical in the siege warfare. Along with them the 9th High Priest Belloni, from the 11th sect of the Embinyu Church could be seen.

The army of the Embinyu Church that the players could only see on television, was gathered in front of them.

“Apparently the Embinyu Church is regarding everyone who does not believe in their god to be enemies.”

“Are they going to attack us alongside the Rosenheim Kingdom’s forces?”

“They don’t show mercy to beginners. They are a group that destroys everything in their path.”

Panic was radiating from the people behind the castle wall. The sudden message of siege caused people to run in panic in the streets and about the square. In the Rosenheim Kingdom’s palace, the soldiers and knights finished their battle preparations and were moving out to the castle wall.

“Will they let me live if I surrender and convert to the Embinyu Church?”

“You could join the crowd outside and be safe there, but that is probably the worst possible choice.”

In reality, there were many players in the central continent under Embinyu Church occupation that chose to convert.

“In the beginning, they give you items and teach you Embinyu Church magic for free. But afterwards, you can’t go to other kingdoms, and you start to get notoriety or other bad stats. In the end, you can’t ever leave the Embinyu Church and become one of their minions.”

Death or conversion, only one of the two!

“Then what will happen to us now?”

“Just wait and see. The Rosenheim Kingdom’s forces could drive back the Embinyu Church.”

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“Check out Serabourg Citadel. It’s a scoop!”

“Did we dispatch anyone there?”

“There is a female player, Lendelina.”

“Then get us connected to her!”

Every broadcast station was in an emergency. Rosenheim Kingdom was under attack by the Embinyu Church. This was a rare event that couldn’t be seen often, and on top of that, it was about the Embinyu Church, which had spread like a wildfire throughout the continent. That’s why the

officials in the broadcast stations were watching the situation with mixed interests.

“Broadcast it live as soon as we are ready! Any station out there that’s already on air?”

“CTS started broadcasting 20 seconds ago.”

“Last time I got into a lot of trouble with the boss for being 4 minutes late... Anyway, switch it on as soon as we are ready. Just show them the video and let’s worry about the rest later. Contact the programming department and call any available support from other teams. And why are the presenters coming so late!”

Every broadcast station erupted in commotion. While they couldn’t suddenly switch to a different program during an important broadcast, most of them initiated a live broadcast because it was a huge incident of the Embinyu Church invading the capital of Rosenheim Kingdom.

Even KMC media’s staff was hurriedly jumping around, but they had a reason for it. They specialized in broadcasting Royal Road, and through their coverage of many incidents from the game, they received recognition from the viewers.

“Our preparations are complete.”

“Get the exact location for each of the delegates, make sure the program switcher transitions the video correctly. Just remember, we are going live without rehearsal so get it right from the start.”

KMC media also initiated a live program. When the broadcast started, the viewers gathered and began to post about Rosenheim Kingdom in various message boards.

“How many players contracted to us are active in Serabourg Citadel?”

“Including Jenkins and Roads, about twenty.”

Information continued to flow to KMC media. It was necessary for them to contract for exclusive information from active adventurers, warriors and magicians for paramount situations such as the invasion by the

Embinyu Church.

“Um...”

The head producer PD 1 hesitated in front of Director Kang.

“What got you on edge during a live broadcast?”

“Before Shin Hye Min went behind the host desk, she told me something.”

“What was it?”

“Apparently War God Weed is in Serabourg Citadel right now.”

“Are you sure?”

When the staff of KMC media heard that War God Weed was in Serabourg Citadel, rather than expecting something amazing they couldn't settle their nervousness. No matter how they saw it, the Embinyu force was too formidable for Weed to do something great.

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Weed heard about the Embinyu Church invasion near his rest time.

Weed-nim, there is war in Serabourg Citadel!

Mapan sent a whisper like he was screaming and other party members sent him a whisper nearly at the same time.

Where are you? I heard that the Embinyu Church is attacking Serabourg Citadel, are you okay?

This is Pale. I hope you are safe and what's happening? I will go there right...

Did you hear the news? The Embinyu Church...

This wasn't much, because the number of people on Weed's friend list that had permission to whisper him weren't many.

Sabrina: This time, Serabourg Citadel.

Edwin: The Embinyu Church is growing scarily big.

Pin: I think it will be difficult to block them off at Serabourg Citadel.

He also received information from the Travelers of the Wilderness Guild. And...

Little brother, are you okay?

I just heard something right now...

Disciple, people are telling me the place you are at is dangerous.

What are you doing right now? Are you perhaps in Serabourg Citadel?

The Geomchis sent lines of whispers.

Weed sighed deeply.

“They said scumbags were expected to pay hospital fees when they simply tripped.”

It has been a long time since he came to Serabourg Citadel, but it was truly ridiculous that the Embinyu Church had to attack the moment he was visiting.

“The only thing I can do right now is to observe... Rather, there is one thing that I can do only at this moment. I will regret it for the rest of my life if I miss this chance.”

Weed rushed toward the Square. Seo Yoon followed after him even though she could be attacked by other players in the Square for her PK status. For a PK'er like Seo Yoon to be running around while the Embinyu Church was encamped beyond the wall was unheard of. Nevertheless, the soldiers nearby still took caution and avoided her.

“I need to purchase some items first.”

Weed bargained for items from the stalls.

“With the Embinyu Church outside if you are not careful you could lose all your trade. Take my offer and sell it cheaply to me.”

Buying below the cost wholesale! Weed currently had a capital of over 160 thousand from selling japtem. After seeing Weed's activity, the merchants soon changed the crowded Square into a wholesale bazaar.

“Selling weapons for cheap.”

“Try putting on some armor. It’s armor that will protect you from the Embinyu Church’s attack!”

“I have general goods. This is an opportunity that comes only once in a lifetime. I am clearing out all my stock.”

Rather than getting all their goods plundered, the merchants were adamant on making just one more penny. The players also crowded to buy necessary items for cheap. The Square was overflowing with passion as people tried to buy and sell.

“Huh, a PKer?”

“There is no time to fight such a person. Just hurry and find the items you need.”

Rather than picking up items by killing the PKer, the goods were being sold for so cheap that the players did not want to miss this opportunity. The merchants also wanted money, because if they died, they would lose less in currency as their goods could be easily looted or lost.

Weed also cleaned out the grocer.

“Give me everything!”

Seo Yoon could not understand how Weed could visit the grocer when Serabourg Citadel was surrounded with battle that could erupt right in front of their noses. Weed’s next action was to go to the castle wall and yelled using his Lion’s Roar.

“Peanuts, squid and soft drinks. Cold soft drinks! Warm potatoes and sweet potatoes to eat while watching the battle!”

This opportunity was too valuable to waste while being swept away by the tension created by the Embinyu Church, an opportunity to make a fortune!

“Please give me two packets of peanuts.”

“Serabourg Citadel is bigger than you can imagine, will two packets do?”

“Then give me four packets please.”

Weed received the money after he gave the peanuts. At the grocers he cleaned out the nuts and other snacks and made massive amounts of profit.

“The characteristics of a natural born merchant.”

The greatest joy for a merchant was to make and swim in money. This magical fun of charging exorbitant prices to the customers during business!

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Nom Nom.

“When are they going to attack?”

“The Embinyu Church is kind of amazing. How did they manage to gather such a large force?”

“I think there will be a stunning battle here.”

The players in Serabourg Citadel sat on the wall and the roof of the stores eating snacks and waiting for the battle to start. There were players who chose to watch the spectacle and some unknown number of people participating with the Rosenheim Kingdom’s force.

Impregnable defense of Serabourg Citadel.

Fight against the Embinyu Church.

If you stand up for Rosenheim Kingdom, fame and glory will be yours.

Reward: Depends on your achievement in battle.

You can earn the right to become the soldier of the kingdom.

Quest Restriction: If Rosenheim Kingdom disappears, the reward is impossible to claim.

There were many players who joined in the defense as the Embinyu Church indiscriminately looted, slaughtered and caused arson.

The quest also popped up for Weed.

“I need to reject this one.”

With his enormous fame, if he joined in the defense his duplicity with the Rosenheim Kingdom's force would soar. He could easily be forced to take on the captainship of the castle gate or become an important figure for the defense force. Playing a central role in fighting against the Embinyu Church by taking command of a force of hundreds, or a thousand soldiers.

Weed judged that at the most, the number of soldiers defending Serabourg Citadel was around 20 thousand. However the opposing force, the Embinyu Church, was composed of over 400 thousand cultists and monsters. In addition the Embinyu priests, cursed shamans and paladins could exploit the monsters by depending on their power of evil spirits.

“It will be extremely difficult to defend against that.”

While they could rely on the castle wall to prolong the siege, in the end they would have to face the enemy heroically! If Weed equipped Balkan's items while under Sculpture Transformation he could have become pivotal to the battle, but due to it's side effect he could not make an appearance so recklessly. Also, due to the incident at the River of Lamentation, he was sure the Embinyu Church was just waiting for a payback!

“Living comfortably is much better than being immortalized as a hero after death.”

If he accepted the quest to defend Rosenheim Kingdom and deserted it afterwards finding the situation untenable, he would be branded with lasting dishonor. Weed, Seo Yoon, and many others who decided not to participate in the battle adopted a wait and see approach.

Weed's face was laden with apprehension.

“I hope Rosenheim Kingdom wins...”

Sudden recovery from seriousness to happiness!

“Well, at least I made some money.”

When he thought of his pocket he became happy, but the current situation wasn't optimistic.

Both the players trapped in Serabourg Citadel and the players affiliated with Rosenheim Kingdom were frustrated.

“Fire!”

At that moment, the vicinity of the mountain top that could be seen far away started burning brightly. It was the signal fire calling for reinforcements from all over Rosenheim Kingdom when Serabourg Citadel was in peril.

The dense crowd of the Embinyu Church army that stretched beyond the pyramid and the sphinx, came closer and closer, dragging their siege weapons with them. Soldiers formed from monsters clanged their weapons and roared in rough voices.

“This is insane.”

“I am getting more worked up from this than from watching a horror movie.”

In Rosenheim Kingdom, knights rode dangerously atop the castle wall and clanged their swords with the soldiers in encouragement.

“For the king!”

“Defend your positions. We just need to endure for one day. Reinforcements are being sent from all the regions in the kingdom.”

It was a scene that lit fires in the heart, but it caused as much fear.

“They are coming.”

“It’s starting.”

Players drooled. At last, the Embinyu Church started firing their siege weapons. While boulders and projectiles were being shot toward the walls, the demons, cultists and Embinyu soldiers charged the castle.

The battle between Serabourg Citadel and the Embinyu Church had begun.

“Fire!”

“Fire everything toward the enemy. Kill them all!”

The Rosenheim Kingdom's archers and crossbowmen were firing their arrows and bolts. But some of the spells from the Embinyu Church managed to slam the wall.

“Concentrate your fire.”

The forces of Rosenheim Kingdom focused their fire of silver arrows on the charging horned demons, seeing it as a greater danger than the monsters or human enemies.

-GWRAAAR!

The archers on the wall shot enchanted and fire arrows that struck into the ponderous demons that lumbered toward them. After a flurry of attacks, the massive demons collapsed, losing their balance as they tried to take another large step. Pandemonium erupted as the 20 meter tall demons collapsed on the Embinyu Church's soldiers.

“Honor the sacrifice for the gods of Embinyu!”

“Kill the enemy and take your own life.”

The cultists and monster troops darkened the castle walls.

“Endure!”

“We can fight them off.”

The cultists and monsters of Embinyu stacked their ladders and threw vines starting their climb of the wall. Magic attacks like Frost Wind and Sand Vortex flew at the soldiers on top of Serabourg Citadel's wall.

The magicians of Rosenheim Kingdom entered the fray.

“River of Endless Fire!”

As the magicians thrust out their hands, the ground split and set the path into conflagration.

At that moment, a screech was heard from above and the Embinyu Church's Wyvern Riders made their appearance. Unlike Wy-Three whom Weed sculpted, these Wyverns were extremely fast, sly, and brutal without compare. The Wyvern Riders descended from the clouds, throwing their

spears and used their swords to attack the magicians and the soldiers below.

If it wasn't for Royal Road, this battle would have only happened in dreams.

A small part of the players in Serabourg Citadel did feel exhilarated as they could watch the battle up close, but they were also electrified by the magnificence before them.

As time passed, the demons of the Embinyu Church became more aggressive. The large demons that were over 3 meters swayed their horns as they bashed into the castle gate. Some monsters climbed the walls like spiders. The Embinyu Church cultists clung to their spears and sword like weapons, pickaxes and cleavers and came like tidal waves. Warlocks made fireballs fall from the sky and filled the walls with agonizing cries.

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Weed stealthily backed away from the place where he was watching the ongoing battle.

“The wall won't last long.”

Being the capital of Rosenheim Kingdom, Serabourg Citadel was quite large. The knights and soldiers were resisting the enemy advances, but the waves of the Embinyu Church were too colossal. Here and there flares soared up and walls gave a rumble as they collapsed.

But the Embinyu Church who was waging war in this place was not a power that could win against the whole might of the Rosenheim Kingdom. Along the border with Brent Kingdom and monster infested territories, Rosenheim Kingdom set up fortresses and outposts with permanent garrisons. But in Serabourg Citadel, the royal knights and the guards were being driven back by the Embinyu Church forces.

“At this rate Serabourg Citadel and the palace will be toppled and then...”

The whole public order of Rosenheim Kingdom would collapse. The Embinyu Church would spread everywhere unchecked and the Kingdom

would be on the path to ruin. The whole of Rosenheim Kingdom could become a hunting ground seething with monsters like the few regions on the Central continent and mountains of quests asking to defeat the Embinyu Church would be generated.

Either voluntarily or under the command of the king, famously difficult quests were generated in Royal Road that concentrated on the rebels but not one kingdom has yet to successfully drive off the Embinyu Church. Rather there were mass exodus of players from the kingdom, leading to it's downfall.

“I should escape before it's too late.”

Weed rolled his eyes. Outside the castle were the Embinyu Church army with hundreds of Wyvern Riders controlling the sky. To survive he had to escape the castle but there was only the perilous way out.

As Weed looked around several guild members or friends bunched together looking for an opportunity to bolt outside.

“Looking for people to escape together. Calling for Warriors.”

“Anyone know how to ride a horse? Planning to get away on a horse through the South gate. Looking for people to come along. Preference to people over level 300!”

“Anyone who can protect a merchant? If anyone could give safe passage I will give a 2000 gold protection fee. I am giving up my carriage, I just need to come out alive!”

The Square and the street were in a pandemonium as players sought for refuge. Even the ordinary NPC residents planned to escape. As the Embinyu Church slaughtered everyone with indifference, once all the residents were killed it would be impossible to re-establish Rosenheim Kingdom. Countless quests would disappear, technology would be lost forever, and manufactured goods would decrease leading to irrecoverable loss.

It wasn't an exaggeration to say that the appearance of the Embinyu Church is a true catastrophe.

“With the situation like this, we should escape as well.”

“Yes.”

Weed and Seo Yoon decided to squeeze in with the most influential group.

“Excuse me, two Warriors...”

“Our party is full.”

“Is there a place for two people?”

“We don’t accept strangers.”

Even at this moment, the people were lording over the newcomers. The high level players grouped together to survive by themselves. If people wanted to join in, they had to pay for admission and there was a chance that they could be abandoned during critical moments.

“Excuse me, two warriors that know how to contribute.”

“Ah, it’s the merchants that sold peanuts for an exorbitant price.”

“.....”

This way, that way, it was difficult for Weed and Seo Yoon to join any group. With Seo Yoon’s PK status it was like entering the eye of a needle. Back then Weed had received PK status after hunting in Todeum, but in extreme cases a PKer could be attacked by soldiers so their movements were restricted.

All heads of the groups and guilds had a meeting.

“In a short while the wall and the gates will collapse. When the Rosenheim Kingdom’s forces are fighting, let’s rush out all at once.”

“Everyone rushing to a different direction.... Then we will head east.”

“Then we will head west.”

“Us, the south. The Embinyu Church will be too preoccupied with seizing Serabourg Citadel, if we penetrate through the encirclement I don’t think they will chase after us.”

All groups coordinated their escape plans. But the group of 8 people that Weed and Seo Yoon were part of only looked around.

“Which direction should we run to?”

“I am going to the east. Karless-nim is part of it, so the chances of survival are highest there.”

“I am heading out through the south gate. Doesn't look like many monsters are gathered there yet.”

The beginners were all forsaken to themselves but they had no choice but to be part of the escape plan. They would receive no protection as each group departed Serabourg Citadel. Rather the chance was high that they would be used as monster bait, but the beginners had very little options left to them.

“Sigh, we don't have the capability to follow after them.”

“Us under level 100, let's just die fighting the Embinyu Church when they break through.”

The beginners sat at the Square in self-abandonment and each group separated, leading their people according to their favorable escape plan.

Weed fell in deep worry.

“No, never like this...”

If he revealed himself now, no group would reject him. He might be called a coward behind his back but something like that was a natural progression of life, something to endure and overcome. A sacrifice that liberates the underdogs!

Any end of the world movie had a touching moment where through the actions of a few heroes, many survive. But rather than becoming a hero, Weed wanted to be that one person who survived till the end. Sentimentality with devotion and sacrifice just made life difficult.

“I must avoid falling into that temptation. Must never fall into temptation.”

Weed saw many people sitting helplessly in front of him. Befitting of the

capital of Rosenheim Kingdom, there were many beginners. There were youths, heads of households and even elderly.

‘If I ignore them, then most of them will die.’

Weed closed his eyes tightly.

‘Let me just take the coward's way out. Besides, not one person gave me a helping hand in my time of desperation.’

# Chapter 10: Escape from Serabourg Citadel

Translated by EE, Proofread by Bloodadept, Britsch, Froshi, Shadowlink, MrBaconator

“Yeah, you only live once. Receiving condemnation for being manipulative and stingy is nothing!”

Weed made his decision. He would escape together with Seo Yoon.

At that precise moment, Selina who owned a flower store in Serabourg Citadel approached him.

“I beg of you, please save us!”

“I don’t have that kind of power...”

“I heard it from the flowers and the trees. You are the one that can save us.”

DING!

Evacuation of the Civilians

From the plants, Selina has found out the truth of your many achievements. While it is a difficult task, the only person who can defend the denizens from the Embinyu Church is you. In Serabourg Citadel, the only person who can save the civilians in this perilous situation is the one who has experienced the most adventures.

Difficulty: A

Reward: A bracelet made of flowers from Selina.

Quest Restrictions: Fame decreases every time a civilian dies.

If you reject the quest, infamy will spread.

After this, it will not be possible to perform quests from Rosenheim Kingdom.

Just by accepting the quest your reputation will improve.

Quests that came round the clock. His fame and quest achievements were at such a level that not only people, but flowers and trees were delivering requests!

“Huk, this path is fraught with difficulty...”

Weed furtively glimpsed at the flower bracelet Selina wore from the corner of his eyes. Selina’s flower bracelet was exactly as described, a bracelet weaved from flowers. The flowers looked to be made by children in their playtime, but as Weed observed carefully it was not an ordinary item.

These precious flowers were purported to be found only in the High Elves’ forest. The flowers had special strength as they did not wither or die after they were plucked and even now, they were still alive on Selina’s arm.

‘I heard of stories about this kind of items being worn by the High Elves.’

An adventurer who visited a High Elf village reported seeing it in their store. It was said that the price was astronomical but imbued within was a generous amount of Elemental and Power of Nature. If he could equip Selina’s flower bracelet on top of Baharan’s bracelet he was wearing, then he would no longer want any other bracelet.

Weed changed his tune.

“Even though I lack the strength, I was planning to do my best to save the people. Though I don’t know if it’s within my power to do so, I will still give my all regardless!”

You have accepted the Quest.

Your reputation among the people of Rosenheim Kingdom has been revised to ‘Savior’.

While the quest was unexpected, the number of civilians Weed could take with him while facing off with the Embinyu Church was not many. How many people could he possibly lead beyond the wall to somewhere safe?

The square of Serabourg Citadel had tens of thousands of newbies who

lost their will and just sat around. With their low level, it was easy for them to succumb to the feeling of helplessness in this large battle and give up. The same newbies who threw themselves into the bush as they got scared of a single deer running toward an apple tree far away!

But there were some who did not depart due to family members being novices, some who were ill prepared to evacuate, and some who were lost and wandering around looking for their party members. It wasn't just the NPCs, but players as well that were both floundering around hopelessly. But there were about 200 high level players staying behind to fight due to their guilty conscience.

Given the uproar of battle that could be heard from the walls, there wasn't much time left.

Weed canceled his skill.

“Release Sculpture Transformation.”

His form changed back from the transformation and returned to its original state. It would be impossible to lead the people to safety with a general form.

“I will have to craft it quickly.”

Taking out his sculpting knife, Weed went toward the ornamental statue nearby. It was a big, decorative dragon statue.

Sak Sak!

Every time Weed's sculpting knife moved, the stones chipped away revealing an existence that would ring out and abandon men, women and children.

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Every station was relaying the scene of Serabourg Citadel, centering around the wall and the Embinyu Church.

“It's astonishing. At this rate, it will only be a matter of time till the Embinyu Church gains control over Serabourg Citadel.”

“With the Embinyu Church's influence spreading from even Rosenheim

Kingdom, they can only become a huge threat in the future.”

“In the Central continent many players are especially flocking to Haven Kingdom as it has largely avoided the Embinyu Church’s wave of destruction.”

“Another Rain of Fire Stone is being cast! The walls and the houses nearby are burning..”

The hosts were explaining their concerns on the expansion of the Embinyu Church. They chatted about the spells being cast, about the race and level of monsters comprising the Embinyu Church and their attack methods.

As the show continued, the NKS station switched their view to the square to show the despair and misery of the players.

“The players need to set up an escape plan quickly. Once the wall of Serabourg Citadel falls, death is inevitable. This is really cruel to the beginners.”

“Death is unavoidable for these people gathered at the square bereft of all hope whatsoever.”

As the host was speaking, it was not the same scene of people slumping weakly just a few minutes ago. Tens of thousands of people were now standing, looking over at something.

“What is that?”

“It seems like something is being shaped. The person is using a sculpting skill.”

One man was making a sculpture. The decorative statue of the dragon was being transformed into something else. With never before seen, astounding elaborateness and daring handling of the sculpting knife.

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“It’s a sculptor!”

“Perhaps... But no, it couldn’t be.”

“There is no way it could be him. But this is his starting place...”

The person who the players all hoped for, the War God Weed.

Once Weed started sculpting, few people nearby became curious. Then as the sculpture progressed, everyone forgot the impending disaster and watched.

Sak Sak.

The sculpture Weed was creating was far from being beautiful. Weed was only known to make breathtaking sculptures, but still the people hoped against hope that this sculptor might be Weed.

“Something ordinary won’t do. I have to completely relieve the battle. It must be something tenacious and durable. Something with the vitality and health to survive till the end.”

After agonizing through several choices, the form of the sculpture he chose was a troll. An ice troll. Compared to an orc, it was twice as big with longer arms and well developed muscles. But it also had a large pot belly.

“Power comes from the belly after all!”

Furthermore the limbs were thick and sturdy like a polar bear.

When a sculpture was expressing a particular race, it’s appearance and figure could be made more distinctive. The unused sculpting skill Weed developed while making figures of the male orc warrior endlessly was being re-discovered while he was sculpting the troll.

“This won’t do. The face is way too placid like that of a goat. There is no way a face like this would cause terror on the battle field.”

Weed really didn’t like how the face of the Ice Troll turned out. The eyelids were too sunken making the cheekbones look to protruding. It had a large head with equally large teeth reminiscent of a crocodile. Because of the size of the head, there were a minimum of 6 knife marks gouged on the forehead and chin.

If Orc Karichwi was to be picked as the number one thug in the nation, then this appearance was enough to take the heinous Orc Karichwi’s

lunch box!

“Waaaa!”

“Sob sob.”

The women and children among the denizens of Serabourg Citadel started crying as they saw the sculpture. Due to Weed’s sculpting skill, the troll look like it was alive and animate.

“It’s truly a shame that this is a rushed work.”

If he could have made it as he imagined, the forehead would be more bumpy, the chin would be further jugged and distinct in its two halves and the ears wouldn’t have looked so normal.

“It would have been better if the tongue was split into three strips and darted in and out repeatedly.”

The sculpture was already the sum of the best traits picked from the whole Ice Troll species to give the most menacing impression, but Weed was striving for a higher state of artistic mastery.

Please set a name for your sculpture.

“Battle Hungry Ice Troll.”

Weed chose such name as it was possible he would have to fight till the bitter end.

Is ‘Battle Hungry Ice Troll’ correct?

“Yes. Let’s fight till I die.”

Sculpture ‘Battle Hungry Ice Troll’ has been completed!

A reinterpreted work created by deconstructing another sculptor’s piece.

The Dragon has been converted to an Ice Troll.

The previously completed work was not so substandard, but a sculptor that has ascended to mastery state has had his hand on it.

Still, leaving it as it was might have been better.

Artistic Value: 3

Special Option: Anyone who has seen the, 'Battle Hungry Ice Troll' will regenerate health and mana 8% faster for one day.

Healing of any injuries will be 7% faster.

Intelligence and Wisdom decrease by 25.

Charm has disappeared.

Strength increased by 41.

Agility increased by 5.

Mastery of sculpting skill increased.

For the completion of the beast monster sculpture, fame increased by 16.

For the insolent destruction of the original sculpture, fame decreased by 143.

Dignity and Art stat decreased by 1 each.

Weed was okay with whatever criticism people had of him.

“The most important thing about art is self-satisfaction.”

The completion of the sculpture was seen by many people gathered in the square and those who were watching through the live broadcast.

The noise of mayhem and chaos coming from the walls was indescribable. Each group was readying themselves to escape. With this frantic activities in the background, Weed hid himself in a large fabric and activated his skill.

“Sculpture Transformation!”

Sculpture Transformation has been activated.

The endless love for sculpting has created the bridge between sculptor and the sculpture!

Weed's body became bigger, his belly bulged out. His skin became completely white. The white, rather than giving off a noble or pure feeling, just made him look more dangerous due to his fierce expression.

Because of the mismatched size of your equipment with your changed

shape, most of your equipped weapons and items cannot be used.

You can now wear the intermediate steel armor.

Please acquire necessary equipment based on your race or appearance.

Due to the effect of Sculpture Transformation, your strength and health has increased greatly. Because of the race trait, your health regeneration became faster. Intelligence and Wisdom has been reduced to an insignificant level. Failure rate of battle related skills has been steeply increased.

Intelligence, Wisdom, Art, Faith, Charm, Dignity has all declined greatly.

Applicable till Sculpture Transformation has been released.

Affinity to Nature has been applied, strengthening the cold effects emanating from the Ice Troll. +239%

Weed liked the change to his physical condition.

“With this overflowing strength, the only thing left to do is fight. Status Window!”

Character Name

Weed

Disposition

Monster

Level

406

Race

Ice Troll

Health

376,271

Mana

1,650

Strength

1,428

Agility

1,395

Vitality

1,684

Wisdom

15

Intelligence

11

Fighting Spirit

719

Endurance

662

Perseverance

959

Art

70

Charisma

462

Leadership

751

Luck

3

Faith

5

Charm

8

Resilience

881

Dignity

6

Concentration

152

Courage

170

\*Ice Troll race traits are active.

Health and Vitality regenerates faster, cold is emanating from the body.

Following the change, skill mastery has been adjusted to beginner level 8.

Such one sided conditions! Stats increased proportional as level went up and it could be increased further with effort. Through questing, Weed had managed to raise his battle and sculpting stats quite high. But all that was converted to strength, agility, vitality, resilience and perseverance.

“This is good.”

Weed’s voice changed, becoming deeper but still resonated loudly.

When the fabric was pulled off people became shocked in finding that the number of Ice Troll sculptures increased to two. The new Ice Troll’s skin was snow white and even began to move. This was a huge reveal to the rest of the world on the secret of the Sculpture Transformation but it did not matter as others could not use the skill until they learned it.

Weed shouted loudly rather than using the Lion’s Roar, due to the mana expenditure and the possibility of failing the technique.

“I am Weed!”

“Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaa!”

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Surka, hearing the news about Serabourg Citadel, was restlessly worrying with her party members.

“What if something bad happens to Weed-nim? Moreover, Weed-nim has many enemies already.”

In Royal Road, it was a common occurrence for the auspicious players to find a knife behind their backs or be ambushed in dungeons. And for a player that Hermes Guild was publicly targeting to be trapped in a castle surrounded by the Embinyu Church! Could there be anything more awful than this?

Pale patted her softly.

“Someone of Weed-nim’s caliber can escape from anywhere so don’t worry too much. Even if someone wants to kill him, he won’t die.”

“Yeah, you are right. No matter how many weeds you pull out they just grow back, even if you spray insecticide on cockroaches they just don’t die.”

“Yes, you are totally right.”

If it was Weed, he would be perfectly fine. He was a person who would try to make money by creating a hot spring in the fiery pits of hell!

The party was currently hanging out in Morata’s tavern, watching the broadcast about the situation. Though the Embinyu Church’s invasion force was tremendous, they were confident that Weed, a user of any unscrupulous methods, could escape easily.

But as the view turned to someone who was making a sculpture, people in the tavern turned white.

“Could it be Weed-nim.....”

“Maybe?”

For a person to be making a sculpture where all the newbies were!

“I just can’t imagine Weed-nim to be doing something so out of character.”

This was the same Weed who grumbled about how hard it was to exploit the newbies, they remembered this vividly. Was it really this Weed who stayed behind for these beginners?

On the screen, it showed Weed turning into an Ice Troll and shouting.

“I am Weed!”

At that moment the deafening cheers of newbies and players gathered at the square of Serabourg was shown on the broadcast.

“Haccck!”

“It’s Weed-nim. Weed-nim is in the Rosenheim Kingdom!”

“War God Weed is on right now.”

The streets of Morata were in a pandemonium.

“Since when did Weed-nim go to Serabourg Citadel?”

“As expected! There is no way he would leave the weak behind and run away by himself. I knew it.”

“Do you think he knew the Embinyu Church would attack and went ahead? You know, to save the people there.”

“Yeah, it might be like that.”

“We don’t respect Weed for nothing.”

The players in Morata were once again misled about Weed!

Pale, Zephyr and even Mapan were becoming uncertain.

‘Is it really like that?’

‘I don’t think I knew Weed-nim’s true character till now, he’s a soft hearted and very kind person.’

‘I thought he was greedier than me. Now I know that’s only the disguise he wears with the intent to value and save the people.’

Seeing how Weed’s closest associates, those who met with him regularly

and thought they knew all about him were so shaken in their beliefs, there was no need to speak about the state of the players of Morata.

All development of Morata was started by Weed and a staggering number of policies for the players were currently in progress. Even though he was a sculptor, no one who specialized in Arts and Culture could compare to his planning!

‘Weed-nim has a big heart, he can definitely pull it off.’

‘He did not spare anything and used his own funds to develop Morata from the ground. Other lords only cared about taxes.’

No one could help but admire Weed if they saw the various successes in Morata.

“How could such righteous person exist in this world...”

“It’s because there are people like Weed-nim that the Versailles Continent is not swept up in darkness.”

“Grass Porridge! Grass Porridge!”

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Weed gathered the players who were over level 300 in the square. With their current strength it was suicide to fight against the Embinyu Church so they had to find a way to escape.

“How about going through the South? A lot of them are assembled there, if we break through their encirclement I think we will be fine.”

“There are less Embinyu Church forces arrayed on the Western side. If we just avoid the demons then I think we are clear.”

These were high level players who could not bear to leave. But as they saw a smidgen of hope of survival, they began to earnestly speak out their way to escape.

Weed was sympathetic to their plea.

“South or West, they are both dangerous. We are too many and too burdensome for the other escape groups to include us.”

“What if we follow the path they clear?”

“Then the monsters chasing after them will target us. There are many of us so our movements will be slow, and it is difficult to protect everyone from the monsters.”

While the number of players was high, there weren't many who were skilled enough to protect the players and fight off the monsters. If demons came scrambling in, the casualties would be catastrophic. No one could easily decide where to go as many lives hung in the balance. They were all waiting on Weed. Though they may all die in this place, their heart was consoled by the fact that Weed was trying to save them.

At that moment, Seo Yoon sent Weed a whisper.

There is a secret passage that can lead you outside the castle.

A secret passage?

A secret passage in the royal palace. I haven't actually been there, but I received this from a knight earlier.

Seo Yoon gave him a piece of a map.

You have acquired the map to the secret escape route in the Rosenheim palace.

Weed hurriedly scrutinized the map and saw that it was an escape route used by the royal family when a crisis arose in Rosenheim Kingdom.

How did you get this map?

When I was heading toward the Star Palace with PK status, the knights in the palaces attacked me. I got it after I killed them.

.....

Usually, beating a palace knight to death in retaliation was something completely unheard of. And on top of that, to receive such a map suggests multiple opponents at once! But discounting the process of acquiring it, the map was absolutely necessary right now.

‘It's a passage that leads outside Serabourg Citadel. There are even six

escape routes.'

He felt there were many escape routes as it was for the king or the royal family to evacuate through.

'The main problem is that the passage doesn't take you very far away from Serabourg Citadel...'

Even if they did escape through the passage, the distance was short enough for the Embinyu Church to find them. But the most urgent thing right now was for them to escape the castle.

Weed decided to give hope to the despondent players first.

"We are now going to proceed toward the secret passage in Rosenheim palace and escape through there."

He was confident that no matter the slim chance of survival, if there was weight to his words people would follow him.

The news spread through the crowd one by one.

"Weed-nim said he's going to save us all!"

"What are you talking about?"

"We are escaping through the secret passage of the royal palace."

"I trusted him from the start you know. I just knew, Weed-nim would save us."

"Ah, what are you worrying for when Weed-nim is here. He's just not Weed-nim. He's the War God!"

The crowd had unquenchable faith in Weed. Usually, with such significant decisions where the lives of tens of thousands hanged in the balance, heated arguments arose and everyone had conflicting opinions. But as one, they all decided to follow Weed. The NPCs of Serabourg Citadel followed suit due to Selina's quest.

"Then, let's proceed."

Weed, Seo Yoon, and other strong players ran ahead, leading the way to the palace.

“Uwah.. we are going.”

“Let’s go!”

As one, the players gathered in the square and ran toward the palace. It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that the situation looked like a riot.

“Hyung, where are we going?”

“Weed-nim is rescuing us. We just need to follow him.”

The players in the square ran as one and the residents of Serabourg Citadel followed as well.

Guards were still posted at the entrance to the palace, but they were too busy mobilizing to fight off the Embinyu Church. The knights guarding the palace were no where to be found, but they probably left to escort the king or the royal family to a safe place.

“Look, they ran away first!”

Weed had the map open in front of him as he moved. It was not difficult for him to navigate through the palace since he frequented the Star Palace recently to hunt.

“There are many escape routes, let just go toward the closest one..”

In any palace where the royals were staying, there was always an entrance to a secret passage.

“We will now proceed toward the third prince’s palace.”

“I understand. I will go ahead and scout the place out.”

As Weed laid out his plan, the high level players who stayed behind and the average players who could not join any other groups, volunteered to scout the place.

Through the scouts, they found out that there was no one in the palace or even any valuables left.

“Let’s go!”

While the third prince’s palace was considerably smaller than the others, it still had a well kept garden with several pieces of artworks. Even

while leading the players, Weed still checked on the artworks and ripped off the expensive ones for himself.

“We can enter through here.”

In the prince’s bedchamber, the secret passage was located in the wardrobe. The players with adventure class had scouted out the place and had already opened the entrance to the passage.

“Let’s hurry.”

Dungeon, you have entered the Underground Passage of the Palace.

Privileges: Fame increased by 315.

Double experience and item drop rate for one week.

Monsters hunted for the first time will drop the best possible item it can.

“Ara, it’s a dungeon. Please wait a moment, I will check it out.”

Adventurer Nadal stepped forward and looked around.

“Identify Dungeon!”

Dungeon, Underground Passage of the Palace

An underground passage made for the royal family of Rosenheim Kingdom, for use in times of crisis. As the kingdom has not experienced any upheaval for a long time, the royal family has been using the passage for questionable activities. The wide underground passage has been occupied by monsters for an unknown period of time, but as they consumed the emergency rations they multiplied rapidly.

Difficulty: Extremely High.

Dungeon Size: Immense.

It was an identification skill that could be used after acquiring a certain amount of information about a special area through reading and conversations! Adventurers had an easier time of finding facts and information.

“Oh my, this says there are monsters here. Considering the difficulty, I feel the monsters here are around mid level 300.”

The adventurer spoke worriedly.

There was nothing for this, as Weed's allies had already informed him of the situation.. A group of fairies glowing like fireflies, appeared before him once he entered the dungeon.

The Queen sent us.

This way is dangerous. That way is dangerous.

Even then, Weed-nim here should be able to easily clear the way. Kyaa, the Ice Troll is cool. It's so lovable.

I think you can go this way... Or was it this way?

The fairies flew around engaging Weed in conversations. Only a noble person could see the fairies, and if they wanted to, the fairies could even hide their appearances from the Spirit Shamans. Though Weed's morality went back and forth, it was fortunate that it was currently on the good side. Also, because of the quest he accepted from the Fairy Queen, they appeared before him and offered their help.

# Credits

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