
Chapter 14: Contract (4)

I didn't know how much time passed. My breathing was often interrupted and all my muscles were so stiff that I could barely move them.

[A few constellations admire your will to survive!]

[The constellations have sponsored you 100 coins.]

But I persisted. I persisted because I believed I could hold on. The light emitted from the thorn in the darkness confirmed that I was alive. After confirming the falling temperature of the stomach wall, I was convinced that he was dying.

[The constellation 'Demon-like Judge of Fire' admires your spirit.]

[The constellation has sponsored you 100 coins.]

When I was hungry, I placed my tongue to the end of the thorn.

The condensed fluid that flowed out contained the life force absorbed from the ichthyosaur. The reason I drank the mucus in advance was to absorb this concentrate.

[Your stamina has slightly increased due to absorbing the power of the ichthyosaur.]

There wasn't an immediate effect of my stats level increasing, but by the time I escaped from the ichthyosaur, I would gain at least two levels in stamina.

It wouldn't work at a higher level, but this was one of the few tricks I could use to raise my stamina without using coins.

...Indeed, this wasn't a dream.

This was all I could do. I was just an ordinary reader. I wasn't a protagonist. It felt like I would wake up screaming in bed at any moment, but no such miracle happened no matter how much I blinked.

...Mother would be fine. She was okay. This wasn't anybody else, it was 'Mother.'

I fell asleep whenever the liquid on the floor drained away and woke up every time the cold river water entered my mouth.

Finally, the ichthyosaur's digestion stopped. The warmth of the viscera suddenly cooled down and the elastic stomach lining gradually solidified. Thus, I could be sure.

He died.

[...You are really great.]

A bright light in the darkness. Bihyung's dim figure was floating in the air.

[Using the stone hog's thorn like this. I never even thought about it. Constellations, isn't it the same for you?]

Bihyung looked at the stone hog's thorn emitting a faint light.

[The stone hog is a guy who mainly lives on the coast and feeds on small sea species. They insert the thorn into the skin of the prey but I didn't think it would be used to plug up the openings for the digestive juices...]

Bihyung's shining eyes weren't looking at me. The words weren't an explanation for me either.

[A few constellations are smiling as if they already know.]

[The constellations have sponsored you 100 coins.]

[A few constellations belatedly understand your judgment.]

[The constellations complain that you should tell them by talking to yourself from now on.]

I ignored the messages from the constellations and drank the last of the condensed fluid.

[Your stamina has slightly increased due to absorbing the power of the ichthyosaur.]

[Your stamina level has risen!]

[Stamina Lv. 11 -> Stamina Lv. 12]

I accomplished my intended purpose. Bihyung came down to me and looked at my burnt arm.

[Furthermore, the mucus...I didn't know the mucus of the hammer sea horse was so potent.]

Originally, my skin should've melted from the ichthyosaur's digestive juices. I opened my mouth to stop Bihyung's nonsense.

"The mucus of the hammer sea horse is immune to digestive fluids. They evolved in this way after often being eaten by the ichthyosaurs."

[A few constellations admire your knowledge.]

Then Bihyung looked at me with a betrayed expression.

[Excuse me, I should be the one explaining...]

"I did it because you don't know. Now is the explanation over?"

[...Yes.]

"Then give me the reward."

[Cheeky bastard.]

Bihyung grumbled while at the same time, a reward message appeared in front of my eyes.

[The hidden scenario has ended.]

[You have obtained 9,000 coins in compensation.]

[You are the first to have successfully hunted a grade 7 species.]

[You have earned 1,000 coins as an achievement reward.]

9,000 coins plus an additional 1,000 coins. It was a very huge income.

[Coins Possessed: 14,800 C]

If I added the 500 donated coins from filming my survival, the total income was 10,500 coins. It was over my target.

[Haha, Constellations. Did you see it well? Let's quickly watch an advertisement before going straight to the next scenario!]

I could hear the faint sounds of an ad somewhere.

New scenario opening featured package, 8,800 coins...

Once the eyes of the constellations disappeared, Bihyung started speaking to me in a friendly manner.

[Sigh...it was a great survival. The response from the constellations was amazing.]

“How much time passed?”

[Four days. I was in suspense the whole time I was watching. Were you unaware of the time?]

“My smartphone died.”

It took more time than I thought. The original goal was two days... Well, Yoo Jonghyuk took four days in the fourth round to catch this so the speed wasn't slow.

Anyway, I did it.

A pleasant feeling of fulfilment covered my whole body and made me confident. I was an ordinary person with ordinary skills. But even so, this didn't mean I could only do ordinary things.

“...How funny.”

It was strange. A novel that hadn't been helpful for 28 years was now making me extraordinary.

[Oh, you are already talking to yourself?]

“...”

[Isn't it good? For an incarnation, talking to yourself is essential. Of course, there are constellations who dislike it but usually...]

“Shut up and open the Dokkaebi Bag.”

[Why? Are you going to buy something?]

“I'm not buying but selling.”

[Damn, I'll have to cut the ad short. Constellations, hold on a second. I'll adjust the volume.]

As Bihyung opened the Dokkaebi Bag, I looked at the thorns embedded in the wall.

The upper barrier was hardened and deep cracks formed around the thorns. I could now smash through the upper barrier with my strength.

I broke the wall little by little with the one remaining thorn. Shortly afterwards, I encountered the core of the ichthyosaur that was glowing blue.

[Ichthyosaur's Core]

It was an ether core found in monster species grade 7 or higher. I could raise my magic power level without coins if I ingested them. It was good quality because it was a sea commander grade ichthyosaur.

I carefully cut at the flesh around the core while Bihyung looked at me with a dumbfounded expression.

"I'll sell this."

[You really...]

"Of course, I don't mean to sell it to you. I'll put it on the dokkaebi auction."

Bihyung accepted it like he was tired of asking me anything.

[Sigh...do what you want. How much are you going to charge?]

"I won't sell it for coins. I'll sell it by barter."

[Damn, you know all sorts of things.]

Bihyung grumbled while uploaded the item to the dokkaebi auction. His desires were simple. This guy might listen better than I thought.

"Someone will show up to buy it. And the item exchanged must be 'Broken Faith.'"

[Broken Faith? There is a person with it...in any case, it is registered.]

“Yes. And I will buy this...”

I saw White Pure Star Energy in the shopping cart. Indeed, nobody bought it yet. Most constellations weren't well aware of the value of coin items. The expensive items in the Dokkaebi Bag weren't unconditionally good.

[Wait a minute, can I talk to you for a moment?]

At Bihyung's words, the advertising volume increased again.

[The constellations are complaining about the long advertisement.]

Once I saw that one more advertisement had appeared, I had a hunch about what Bihyung wanted to say.

“Is it the contract?”

Advertising was the only way to hide the eyes and ears of the constellations without turning off the broadcast. From now on, it wasn't a story for the constellations.

[Yes. I wasn't certain but I became convinced after this scenario. Well...let's try it once. I can help you a little bit.]

“Won't this violate the streamer's pledge?”

[Ah, of course, I can't really help you. I'm just saying that. Will you sign the contract?]

"What are the conditions?"

[Take a look.]

The dokkaebi pulled out an extravagant contract that had been prepared.

I read the contract that emerged as a transparent window in the air.

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[Stream Contract Agreement]

Incarnation Kim Dojka (Gap) will sign an exclusive contract with Bihyung (Eul) until all scenarios are completed or until his death.

(TL: Gap and Eul are based on the 10 celestial/heavenly stems (Link). In Korea, they are consistently used to denote the smaller and larger contractor in a legal contract.)

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"... I am the gap?"

[Haha, don't humans like this? It doesn't mean anything. Keep reading.]

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Incarnation Kim Dokja (Gap) will never choose a sponsor until all scenarios have ended or his death.

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This was also as expected.

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Incarnation Kim Dokja (Gap) should only be active on the channel of Dokkaebi Bihyung (Eul). Incarnation Kim Dokja (Gap) and Dokkaebi Bihyung (Eul) will distribute the revenue from stream contracts and this ratio will be determined through mutual consultation.

Incarnation Kim Dokja (Gap) and Dokkaebi Bihyung (Eul) will be subject to destruction in accordance to the laws of Star Stream if they break this contract.

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I read the contract carefully to the last item. I thought he might play an unknown joke but I didn't see that part.

Except for one thing.

"There is the most important part."

[What do you mean? You can just say that you agree. The stream contract is a soul pledge—]

"I'm talking about the pay ratio."

[A-Ahh. Haha. Right.]

As if this bastard didn't know.

This was the most important part.

"How about 5:5? Instead, I'll get rid of my channel fee. Ah, do you know how to calculate it? I will accurately divide your future donations in this ratio. For example, if you get 100 coins, you will receive 50 coins and I will receive 50 coins.]

All stream contracts were like this. The constellations had incarnations appear on the dokkaebi's channel and the contributions received from other constellations would be divided by a percentage. This was normal.

"Are you taking me for a pushover? I won't accept."

[What? B-But this is the industry's default settlement ratio...]

"I'm an incarnation without a sponsor. When donating to an incarnation without a sponsor, the constellations must pay a huge fee to the dokkaebi. Haven't you already enjoyed a lot thanks to me?"

Bihyung's jaw slowly dropped open. But there was no point making that expression.

"10:0. You will only get the commission. I won't pay you a single penny."

[What?! That is ridiculous...h-how about 7:3?]

The ratio changed greatly. But I wasn't going to concede.

"10:0."

[What is this fucking bullshit? It is a ridiculous rate—]

"Then don't accept. I will just go to another channel. 'Gildal' is doing well these days. I should ask him."

[...8:2. I can't concede anymore.]

"10:0."

[.....]

Bihyung's expression changed to a threatening one. He looked at my head like it would explode at any minute. But I knew. He would never give up the contract. My existence was his last chance.

"The advertisement is coming to an end. Don't you see the constellations complaining?"

In the end, Bihyung gave up.

[Shit, I understand. Then will you sign the contract?]

He surrendered easier than I thought. In fact, I was going to give up at 9:1.

...Maybe he earned more money than I expected. It was a bit disgusting.

"Yes. And one more thing."

[What? What now?]

"You have to give a separate down payment. Give me 5,000 coins."

Bihyung's expression tightened.

[Y-You really...]

I laughed. Why was a 'gap' a 'gap and why did humans dwell on it...I would let that damn dokkaebi know.

[The stream contract is concluded.]

[You have received 5,000 coins as a down payment.]

The advertisement finished and the constellations came back. I patted the dokkaebi on the shoulder and said.

“Let’s get out of here.”

Now was the real start.