

# After Ten Millennia in Hell

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Chapter 11 - Demonic Energy Accumulation Project (3)

"Huff, huff."

A rough breath emerged from Oh Kang-Woo's mouth.

There were dozens of Goblin corpses around him.

"Fuu."

Kang-Woo tried to calm down as he stood up.

He dismissed the blade he had been maintaining with his meager demonic energy.

'As expected, it's more difficult going against more of them.'

He had struggled quite a lot during this fight, despite how confidently he had leaped toward them while shouting about fried chicken. There had been a large number of them, and because they moved as a group, he couldn't deal with them mindlessly.

However, the biggest problem was that his stamina had become a lot weaker ever since his Ten Thousand Demon Core had been sealed. Kang-woo had quickly exhausted his already low amount of demonic energy, and that made him use up quite a lot of stamina.

After killing the last five Goblins, he even struggled to maintain his Authority of Blades.

'But still...'

Kang-Woo smiled while looking at the corpses of the Goblins around him.

"I was able to kill a lot of them."

He had struggled quite a bit, but the result was positive.

'My level has also increased.'

After clearing out the Monster Hideout, his level rose by four, and he was now Level 8.

'But the demonic energy stat didn't increase.'

A Player's stats randomly rose by one to three points whenever they leveled up. Yet, all of Kang-Woo's stats increased except the one he needed the most. He didn't know if this was because he was just unlucky or because there was some sort of rule that he didn't know about.

'Well, I guess it doesn't matter. I can also increase demonic energy with the Authority of Predation.'

Other Players might feel disappointed if the stat that they needed the most didn't increase, but that wasn't the case with Kang-Woo. He had a cheat skill that allowed him to increase his most important stat without leveling up.

"Predation."

Black smoke emerged from his body and spread all around him. The Authority of Predation began consuming the Goblins that were closest to him first.

Crunch! Crunch!

'If I gain enough demonic energy, I will be able to use the Authority of Predation for offense.'

The biggest strength of the Authority of Predation was its ability to devour the corpses of enemies and absorb their power, but it wasn't the only possible usage. With enough demonic power, he could also use it in combat. Since it was an Authority he had used for ten millennia, he knew how to use it very well.

'I still need more demonic energy before I can use it offensively.'

With a somewhat disappointed expression, Kang-Woo devoured all of the Goblin corpses around him.

[Demonic Energy has risen by 2.]

'Good.'

It was only a small amount, but Kang-Woo smiled after feeling that his demonic energy had increased. Stacking demonic energy little by little like this reminded him of the early days when he had just fallen to Hell.

Back then, he'd gained strength by devouring the weakest demonic beasts of Hell first, just like he was doing right now with the weakest monsters.

'But I'm different from who I was back then.'

When Kang-Woo had just fallen to Hell, he had no time to relax. He took action desperately by following his natural desire to survive.

However, things were different now. He knew exactly what he needed to do to become stronger and faster more efficiently. It was like playing a game that he had already cleared.

Kang-Woo was becoming stronger at a speed and level of stability that was incomparable to his initial days in Hell.

'My current Demonic Energy stat is 16.'

He didn't know what kind of numbers other Players on a similar level had for their stats, but he was sure that his wasn't low.

"This is just the beginning."

Kang-Woo sat on top of a Goblin's house that had been destroyed from the fighting, and he rested a bit to recover his demonic energy.

He was only hunting Goblins right now, but once he became stronger, he would probably be able to hunt in Gates with a higher rank. Then, he would be able to gather more demonic energy and thus recover his old level of power faster.

'I'm sure Goblins aren't the only monsters with demonic energy.'

Kang-Woo felt slightly anxious since he hadn't faced any other types of monsters after returning to Earth. Nevertheless, he thought that it was unlikely that there were no other monsters with demonic energy.

Rustle.

"Krrrrr."

"Hmm?"

Kang-Woo was deeply immersed in his thoughts, but he suddenly heard a monster approach while making a ferocious cry. Its cry was different from that of a regular Goblin.

He frowned and turned around to see a giant Goblin with brown skin emerge from the bushes. Unlike the normal Goblins that were around a hundred and fifty centimeters tall, the height of this brown Goblin was nearly two meters.

Upon seeing the brown Goblin, Kang-Woo remembered what he had heard from Tae-Soo.

"That must be the Hobgoblin."

He had found it weird that the boss had been nowhere to be seen while he cleared out the Monster Hideout. It appeared that the Hobgoblin had just gone out for a moment.

'I'm glad.'

Kang-woo wasn't sure how strong the Hobgoblin was. However, he knew he would've struggled a lot if he'd fought against it while trying to deal with dozens of Goblins.

Regardless, Kang-Woo prepared himself to fight, manifesting a black blade out of demonic energy that had been replenished while he rested.

"Graaaaahh!!!"

Stomp! Stomp!

When the Hobgoblin saw that its hideout had been destroyed, it roared angrily and charged at Kang-Woo. Unlike the poorly made knives that most Goblins had, the Hobgoblin had a sharp greatsword.

'Mana?'

Additionally, Kang-Woo could see a tiny amount of mana enveloping the Hobgoblin's greatsword.

'So, monsters can use mana too?'

The mana stone was their core, so it wasn't weird that they could control mana.

The Hobgoblin fiercely tried to slash Kang-Woo, but Kang-Woo lifted his left hand and blocked the attack.

Bang!

"Kurgh..."

There was a sound similar to that of an explosion as the two beings collided, and Kang-Woo was pushed back.

'It seems like it's still a bit hard to block the Hobgoblin's attacks directly.'

The problem wasn't the mana infused in the Hobgoblin's sword. In terms of raw power, demonic energy was stronger than mana, so that wasn't the reason why Kang-Woo was pushed back. Rather, it was simply because of the difference between their physical parameters—it was purely a difference in strength.

The explosive power from the almost two-meter-tall Hobgoblin was hard to withstand even with Kang-Woo's strength, which had been supplemented with demonic energy.

'Then...'

Kang-Woo's gaze sank.

However, he wasn't anxious just because he couldn't fight against the Hobgoblin head on. He was used to fighting in conditions that weren't favorable to him. In the countless battles he'd experienced, there had been more instances in which he didn't have the advantage.

"Graaaaahhh!"

Stomp! Bang!

The Hobgoblin kept roaring angrily because its hideout had been destroyed.

Monsters were living creatures with emotions, so it was expected that they would become angry in such a situation where their home had been destroyed and their underlings had been killed.

Kang-Woo smiled upon seeing the Hobgoblin charge at him in a blind rage.

'I can use this.'

Kang-Woo dodged the Hobgoblin's greatsword by a narrow margin and extended his hands toward it.

"Authority of Rage."

He activated the Authority of the demon Crocell. The Authority of Rage was usually used to make its user enter a state of rage, simultaneously bestowing enormous power onto them. It was mostly used as a buff.

Yet, Kang-Woo used that Authority on the Hobgoblin instead of himself, making the movements of the Hobgoblin faster and stronger. Most people wouldn't understand why Kang-Woo did that.

"AARRGGHH!! GRRRR!!"

Bang! Stomp!

'This isn't really a buff.'

Kang-Woo watched with cold eyes as the Hobgoblin went berserk.

It was true that the Hobgoblin had become stronger thanks to the Authority of Rage, but that wasn't the point.

Slam!

Kang-Woo was able to easily dodge the Hobgoblin's extremely simple attacks. He could now clearly see how the Hobgoblin would move and attack.

"Graaahhh!"

'This is a curse.'

Kang-Woo had never used the Authority of Rage on himself. Getting stronger by becoming angrier was something that worked only in a manhwa. In reality, the angrier a person became, the more their rationality faded, making their movements simpler. This made becoming stronger meaningless.

Consequently, Kang-Woo was now able to read all the Hobgoblin's movements easily. Being strong meant nothing if the Hobgoblin couldn't land its attacks on its opponent.

'Here it comes.'

The Hobgoblin's greatsword sliced through the air, making an unsettling sound. This large movement left the Hobgoblin's defense full of openings, perhaps because the Hobgoblin had lost its rationality.

Kang-Woo ducked and dodged the greatsword. Then he stabbed the Hobgoblin's knees with his blade.

"GRRRRRR!" the Hobgoblin growled.

Despite its crumbling posture, the Hobgoblin swung its greatsword toward Kang-Woo yet again. However, there was no way the Hobgoblin would be able to put enough power into its swing with its current posture.

An even bigger opening appeared in its defense.

"Grrr..."

Kang-Woo bounced back up and stabbed his blade into the Hobgoblin's head, piercing its chin and going all the way to the top of its head. The Hobgoblin began to stagger, and it soon collapsed after taking a few steps.

"Huu." Kang-Woo looked down at the Hobgoblin while trying to catch his breath.

'Fighting with low demonic energy sure is uncomfortable.'

He found it annoying that he struggled so much against an opponent that wouldn't have been his match before.

"I need to hurry up and accumulate more demonic energy."

Kang-Woo clicked his tongue and approached the Hobgoblin's corpse.

Looking down at it expectantly, he wondered inwardly, 'I wonder how much demonic energy this guy is going to give me?'

The amount of demonic energy a Goblin possessed was very low, so hunting them was bad in terms of efficiency. While it was true that even a small amount was of great help to Kang-Woo, the fact that it was such a small amount didn't change.

However, the Hobgoblin's strength was incomparable to that of a normal Goblin, so Kang-Woo expected the Hobgoblin's corpse to give him a larger amount of demonic energy.

He slowly extended his hand.

It was at this moment that...

Riiing.

A sound he had gotten used to hearing rang in his ears.

[You have decimated a Monster Hideout by yourself.]

[You have obtained 150% additional EXP.]

[You have successfully defeated the C-rank boss monster Hobgoblin.]

[Your level has risen by 3.]

[You have reached Level 10 and have achieved your Second Awakening.]

[Your Second Awakening Trait has been unlocked.]