

## Ark Vol 10 C 6

### Chapter 6

#### ACT 6 My Fair Lady

‘Ah, no.....it is impossible anymore.’

Ark’s patience was slowly reaching its limit. As Lariette became worse in the battles, Dedric started openly annoying them. He was still collecting ingredients for their meals.....

-Thanks to the player, your pets were able to eat comfortably and have become satisfied.

Wasn’t it understandable that the message window rubbed salt in his wounds? Ark’s stress continued to accumulate.

‘Is there another way?’ There must be a way to make Lariette more useful in battles and to fix that child Dedric’s bad behaviour! If I can’t find a way then I really will die.’

Ark groaned and glanced at Lariette. In fact, she was very difficult for Ark. It was difficult because she was a woman. He couldn’t openly tell her off, but he was suffering and almost died because of her.

‘Should I close my eyes just once and try to say something?’

He thought about it many times but just ended up going in circles. It wasn’t just another woman, this was Lariette. He was so natural with Roco that he would have no problem telling her.

‘Hah.....that reminds me of Lee Myung-ryong Teacher.....’

Ark thought of Lee Myung-ryong. There were a considerable number of policewomen present at the gym. But Lee Myung-ryong didn’t treat them any different from the other members of his team. Well, if he was bothered by acting violent towards women then he couldn’t be a SWAT team leader.

"If a woman wants to be treated nicely then she should stay at home doing laundry!"

That was Lee Myung-ryong's thoughts. Of course the policewomen didn't express their dissatisfaction. If they didn't train properly at the gym then they would get yelled at.

'Eh? Wait?'

Ark lifted his head at the thought.

'That's right, why didn't I think of that?'

Ark had found a way to solve all his problems. He stood up and went to Lariette.

"Lariette-nim, I have something to say."

"Please say it."

"Lariette-nim is now a knight. Isn't Innocence Knight similar to Holy Knight? Then holy magic is used more as support. Learning how to fight with swords and shields is more important than holy magic. Didn't Lariette become caught up in the fights because you enjoyed it?"

"Yes....."

Lariette replied in a small voice. Yes, Lariette already knew about it from watching Alan. So she learned combat skills and approached monsters because she wanted to be useful for Ark.

"But you've spent a lot of time as a magician so you can't just suddenly master close combat. So let's focus on supporting the battles using recovery magic while you slowly learn the basic combat skills step by step. If you like then I would be happy to teach you the basics."

“Ark-nim will teach me?”

“Yes. I’ll teach you everything from using a sword to moving in combat.”

Lariette wavered for a moment before nodding.

“.....Let’s give it a try.”

A smile formed on Ark’s mouth. Yes, if she didn’t know how to fight properly then just teach her. Besides, Ark and Lariette were now mentor and disciple. He didn’t know how to speak to a woman, but if it was a disciple then couldn’t he say everything he wanted to?

‘I don’t know how good it’ll be but it is better than moving forward blindly.’

Ark brought Lariette to a suitable place and indicated.

“Now, let’s begin immediately. First swing your sword 1,000 times!”

“Huh? 1, 000 times?”

“Other warriors have swung their swords since they were level 1. If you have such basics then you can fight against level 200 monsters. If Lariette-nim wants to reach that standard then you need to swing that much every day.”

Ark was relentless once it became a mentor and disciple relationship.

“I’ll come back once you’ve done 1,000 swings. Then we will follow up with defense training.”

After Ark made Lariette train, he approached Dedric, Razak and Buksil who were at the camp. He grinned widely and opened his mouth.

“Hey, everyone follow me.”

“Huk, what, what?” Surely you aren’t taking us to a dark place to beat us up?”

“Beat up? It’s training. Lariette-nim is working hard to become stronger while you guys are just lazing around eating rice. Since we have to stay here a couple of days to train Lariette-nim, I’ll also make you guys do training. But everyone has already graduated from the basics so I guess it’s time for sparring.”

“N-no, I don’t want to!”

“I will not. Why should a merchant train.....”

“Noisy, just come with me!”

Ark dragged his pets and Buksil into the forest. Then.....he used the pretence of sparring to deal indiscriminate violence for a long time. 2 hours later, the faces of his pets and Buksil were completely swollen so Ark brought training (?) to an end and they returned to the camp. Lariette who had been brandishing her sword said with surprise.

“Omo, your faces.....”

“It was training. After seeing Lariette-nim, those guys were so motivated that they wanted to train as well.”

Buksil’s face contorted with Ark lied about training. But when Ark smiled and elbowed him, Buksil instantly nodded with sweat on his face. The effect of 2 hours of education appeared.

‘Ah, how refreshing! As expected, I have to break them to teach them manners.’

Ark was so refreshed that he felt like he lost 10 years. For the next few days, Ark stayed in that place and focused on training. Fortunately, Lariette learned her ‘Sword Mastery’ and ‘Heavy Defense’ skills while

Buksil and his pets lost all the weight they gained. As a bonus, they once again listened to him after the discipline.

‘Huhuhu, I should’ve done this sooner.....once again the control is in my hands.’

After Lariette got the hang of basic postures, Ark immediately began the next part of the training.

“Now, I’ll be showing you the first party formation so please watch carefully. Dedric, Razak!”

“Yes, Master!”

Clack clack clack!

The disciplined Dedric replied while floating.

“The formations will range from plan A to D depending on the command. Go!”

Ark led his summons and began a battle against a group of Kurun. Lariette’s eyes widened. In fact, she hadn’t understood anything while watching Ark in the previous battles. The timing to evade a hit, sword angles and footwork! Everything was standard techniques, but she hadn’t been able to understand it since she wasn’t a trained warrior. But now she had a high level of knowledge thanks to Ark teaching her battle skills. In addition, she also learned a lot about party cooperation with the summons.

‘It is a level higher! Now I know how much of a hindrance I’ve been to Ark-nim. But he never expressed any of it.....he was afraid of embarrassing me so he taught me combat skills.’

Lariette now looked at him with a lot of respect. Anyway, Ark had given her a textbook which explained the standard pets formation. After the training, Lariette’s skills were around a level 30 warrior. So Ark instructed her properly using his pets. In fact, in the past he never would’ve imagined commanding her. But after they became a mentor and disciple, it wasn’t that difficult teaching her things. No, it was to the extent that he didn’t understand why he hesitated so much before.

‘Yes, she’s just another person I know.’

Lariette was no longer considered a ‘guest’ so he didn’t have to be so careful anymore. It was only traveling with a colleague. If that’s the case.....was there any reason to keep on feeding her? Once the relationship was established, Ark revealed his true colours.

“Lariette-nim, the Dawn Blade guild has been dismantled right? You don’t have to worry while accompanying me, but one day you’ll be travelling alone so you’ll require skills to take care of yourself. Among them, the most essential thing to learn is cooking. Learning how to collect ingredients will also be helpful towards cooking later on. I’ll teach you. Buksil, I’ll also teach you to collect ingredients.”

“Huh? But I have the mission to record Ark-nim.....”

Buksil said in surprise but shut up when Ark shook his head. So Ark forcibly taught him how to forage ingredients. Since there were mainly high grade ingredients in the Netherworld, there was a lot of failures. But after a couple of days of suffering, Lariette and Buksil managed to learn the Ingredient Foraging skill.

“Kyaaa, I’ve learned it. Ingredient Foraging!”

“Congratulations. But now’s the important part. We need to increase your proficiency in order to take advantage of the skill properly. You will always be looking for ingredients except when fighting.”

So Ark forced the collection of ingredients to Buksil and Lariette from now on.

‘Phew, now I can concentrate on raising Leather Extraction and Butchery instead of collecting ingredients.’

That was the reason why he forced ingredient foraging on the two of them. He had to raise Leather Extraction and Butchery in advance to be able to obtain the skin and heart of the undead. But he had been so busy trying to feed the five of them that he had no time to raise the skills.

‘It will now be a pleasant journey!’

Therefore all the stress he had built up flew away. But they encountered a new ordeal shortly after they resumed the journey.

“A-1 plan! Lariette-nim, attack from behind!”

Ark was allowing Lariette to practice the battle formations. When the A-1 plan was implemented Ark, Lariette and his summons attacked from 4 directions. Then the special Kurun that was twice as big as the others wasn't able to last and collapsed. And it dropped an item.

Resilient Shield made of Garam Wood (Magic)

Armour type: Medium Shield

Defense: 250 (+40)

Durability: 320/400

Weight: 25

User Restriction: Knights level 150 and more

The shield covered in Garam wood is stronger than steel. Garam wood is taken from a sacred tree and is used in a lot of sacred items. If used to create a wooden armour, a holy aura will protect the wearer.

“A magic item!”

Ark's eyes gleamed. But the performance of the item was a problem. It was a knight only shield and it also amplified holy magic. When Lariette decided to accompany Ark, there was an agreement that all items would go to him. But just by looking at this item, it was clearly an item that Lariette had to use. Even if they reached an agreement, the shield would definitely be coveted.

'But it isn't just a magic item. Shields that have a special option is rare! It will earn at least 1,000,000 won on the auction site so I can't just concede it! But it is a lot better than all the japtem I've collected.....'

Ark struggled and avoided Lariette's gaze until he finally lifted the shield. He couldn't give up 1,000,000 won even if it pricked his conscious. Then Ark suddenly had a brilliant idea.

'.....I might be able to avoid any damage and still get credit.'

"Lariette-nim, do you need this shield?"

"Huh? No, I....."

Although Lariette used ambiguous language, she couldn't take her eyes off the shield. Ark made a worried gesture before speaking in a serious voice.

"In fact, it's been weighing on my mind. Even though you've changed your occupation, you don't have any knight exclusive items. I only gave you japtem."

".....I already decided to concede all items to Ark-nim."

"But if such an item dropped then it should definitely go to you."

"But I'd feel sorry...."

Even though Lariette was glad, she still felt sorry. Then Ark muttered something.



“But do you know about the Baran’s trading methods?”

“Huh? Baran’s trading methods?”

“We should barter items of similar value. For example, Lariette doesn’t need the magician items anymore so you can barter with those items. Yes, we should do that.”

Buksil who had been watching from the sidelines felt his face heat up. He noticed the intent in Ark’s words. He was offering to trade the shield for an item with equal value of Lariette’s! Buksil was distressed at such a dirty method. But Ark was resolute.

‘I might be embarrassed now, but I would regret giving up money forever!’

Ark decided not to be worried about Lariette any longer. Of course, Lariette was still his ideal woman. Although he was more comfortable after making her train, his heart would still feel sick if she cried. But Ark braced himself.

‘What have I been doing so far? No, wake up!’

Ark didn’t know what was in Lariette’s heart. Although he felt a strange expectation at one time, Ark wouldn’t accept it even if Lariette confessed her love. That was because Ark already loved one person more than anybody else. He devoted his whole life and love to that person! It wasn’t some cheap feeling. He sincerely felt like that.

My love, my life, my past and future. My eternal fair lady!

‘Mother.....yes, the person I love most in this world is my mother. How can I feel shame if that money will pay for my mother’s medical bills or for slightly better food? I would do even worse things if it is for my mother!’

He was not ashamed. Everything was for his mother! That was one reason why Ark could act so dignified while behaving like this. But Lariette’s reaction was unexpected.

“Ah, that’s fair enough. Yes, I would feel sorry so let’s exchange it for my magician items. So we do this if any other knight items drop in the future?”

“Huh? Ah, yes.....”

Ark was puzzled by her reaction. In fact, Ark’s behaviour didn’t seem that good to Lariette. But she didn’t hate that attitude. When she was a part of Dawn Blade, Alan had been overly hospitable to her. At some point it became a burden and she decided to leave Dawn Blade. But Ark was different from Alan. He didn’t treat her well just because she was a woman. In reality she was a beauty so nobody had ever treated her like Ark did. So Ark’s actions in the last week was refreshing for her. The talk about beauties being attracted to bad boys wasn’t unfounded. Anyway, Lariette exchanged her wand for Ark’s shield.

“Then shall we continue?”

Ark smiled pleasantly after the transaction finished. Ark didn’t just ‘move on.’

“Buksil and Lariette, please move over there and gather ingredients.”

When the battle finished, he instantly forced Buksil and Lariette to raise their experience. Both of them ended up with sore backs from bending over to pick up ingredients. Ark’s bags were moderately full from their efforts so he said firmly.

“Continue collecting ingredients until your proficiency has increased.”

‘Do we have to live like this until it reaches intermediate?’

Lariette was scared by the thought. On the other hand, Buksil was frightened for another reason.

‘If the bag becomes full then I’m going to end up like my younger brothers....!’

But Ark was quite satisfied with the situation.

‘Hehehe, I really needed to do this. Now my stress has disappeared!’

Ark exploited the two people while entering the Forest of Life.

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Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

“Fire wall!”

A barrier of flames erupted along the trajectory that Jewel pointed towards. They weren’t simple flames like a candle. The fire exploded from the ground with tremendous pressure! The dozens of Nakujuk was engulfed in flames and ‘burned.’

“Piercing arrow!”

Duke shot an arrow towards the Nakujuk through the wall of flames. It was a piercing skill that could only be used on steel arrows! The steel penetrated through the bodies of the Nakujuk and dealt tremendous damage. Jewel and Duke were pioneers and took care of 3~4 at once. Magicians and archers had a lot of wide damage skills so they showed their full power when there were plenty of enemies. The only drawback was that they specialized in long distance attacks and had low defense.

“Steel barrier!”

But the warriors used a shield skill and stepped in front of them. Therefore Jewel and Duke had plenty of leeway to maximize their skills. However.....there were too many of them. They had killed more than a hundred but the enemy numbers did not decrease at all. It felt like they’ve only lifted a spoonful of sand in a desert.

“Damn, what the hell?”

“That Ark didn’t appear at all.....”

“Don’t tell me he tricked us and went the opposite direction?”

Jewel muttered. After receiving the information, they had chased after Ark for a few days. Not long ago Jewel’s group finally crossed the northern mountain. Of course, even that wasn’t easy. The northern mountain was the one near the Abyss of Despair. They used skyrays the first time they went there, but now they decided to cross on foot. The monsters on the northern mountain were no problem. It was the unbearable terrain of the northern mountain.....the ground, walls and ceilings were all covered in the sharp stalactites, making it difficult to grab and climb the rock cliff. They weren’t able to cross the terrain using conventional methods. But Jewel’s group didn’t give up even despite being stabbed by the brambles.

“There is definitely a way to pass here somewhere.”

“If that bastard Ark managed to cross then we should as well!”

Everybody was resolute towards getting revenge on Ark! They were able to use their vengefulness as an energy source and crossed the mountain. But none of them could’ve imagined the suffering that was waiting beyond the mountain. Was Ark waiting for them? No. Instead the group of red Nakujuk were gathered.

“Intruders!”

“Seize them, the Baran have clearly sent spies!”

“Huk, what is this?” Retreat!”

Jewel’s group panicked and ran away. However, the northern mountain was blocking the path behind them. Why was there a group of Nakujuk instead of Ark? After a while, they realised that Ark wasn’t there and he had led them towards the Nakujuk just like before.

“No, I can’t die like the previous time. Lure them into the valley!”

They didn't know the circumstances inside the Abyss of Despair but this time was different. They might seemed stupid sometimes but they were still pioneers. Jewel immediately judged the situation and lured them into the valley. A traditional tactic of dealing with a lot of enemies was to use a narrow passage to bottleneck them. So even though there were hundreds of Nakujuk, there only faced around twenty at one time. Jewel stopped the Nakujuk's rush using warriors at the front with support from ranged attacks. So there were able to deal with a hundred monsters without receiving much damage. But Jewel knew that it was only a temporary solution.

'It will be the end once my mana runs out. We need to find a way to penetrate the siege and run away. It isn't possible to come here and not kill Ark!'

Jewel bit her lips until it became bloody and started thinking. Then Duke exclaimed with black pupils.

"Jewel, their leader is near the valley entrance!"

It was the ranger's advanced skill 'Hawk Eyes' which could see everything in a range of 200 metres! While looking around to determine the number of enemies, Duke had spotted the large figure of the leader.

"The distance?"

"Behind those troops over there. Level 350."

"Okay, this is a chance to improve the situation!"

Jewel's eyes lit up. In a battle between users and monsters, the existence of a leader was important. If the leader was killed then its troops would be in a state of panic for a while. Their morale would fall and their formation collapse. If that happened then it would be possible to penetrate the Nakujuk's encirclement.

"If we kill him than those guys will fall into a panic!"

“Understood, let’s penetrate the enemy with the triangle formation. The goal is 50 metres from the entrance!”

“Let’s go!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The warriors transitioned from defense to attack and pushed through the Nakujuk. Jewel and Duke used penetrating attacks while the warriors used their shields to push the Nakujuk away. Suddenly the only enemy in front of Jewel’s group was the elite leader. He was a giant with huge axes in both hands.

“Don’t pay attention to the followers and focus your attacks on the leader!”

“Ohhhhh, Heroic Strike!”

The ten group members surrounded the leader and enthusiastically used their skills. Although the elite monster possessed incredible strength and stamina, under the concentrated attacks his health quickly fell. Then Duke’s precise shot hit his knee and he kneeled down.

“Ugh, u-unbelievable……!”

“At last!”

Biiiiik-!

The warriors ran up for the final assault and swung their swords. Suddenly there was a sharp cry from the sky as a black eagle descended towards the battlefield. At the same time, a flash of light fell towards the leader. There was an intense shock wave that pushed the warriors back.

“Ugh, what, what the……?”

“Who is that? A person fell.”

Jewel’s group lifted their weapons. The form of a person appeared amongst the cloud of dust. It was a man with red hair wearing a white mask!

‘What is this guy? An enemy? But somehow the atmosphere.....?’

Jewel couldn’t determine how to handle it.

“You’re the people from the Abyss of Despair. You did well.”

The Red Man gazed at Jewel’s group and nodded.

“How about it? Would you like to join hands with me? If you work for me then I’ll promise a payment.”

“What? Join hands? What are you saying after suddenly appearing?”

“Or.....would you like to die here?”

The Red Man moved his hands and gestured around. Jewel looked around dumbly. Jewel hadn’t realised, but the Nakujuk had stopped attacking once he appeared. The leader had also stopped and wore a look of surprise. So the Red Man must have a lot of influence on the Nakujuk clan. If they rejected his request then it was obvious what would happen.

“Who.....Who are you?”

Jewel rolled her eyes and asked with a dissatisfied expression. Then there was an amused look in the eyes revealed by the mask.

“I’m a user. The same as you.”