

## Ark Vol 10 C 8

### Chapter 8

#### ACT 8 Ark's Responsibility

One idea could change the world. It was a commonplace phrase in CFs but it was certainly true. When his heart changed, Ark was immediately determined to help the cockroaches. Their appearance didn't matter once he changed his mind. That's right. Racism, religious wars, and even bullying were all social issues that occurred differently. But that all occurred from arrogance and different thoughts..... Anyway, Ark wasn't disgusted by touching the Galgin's hands and feet anymore. He forgot all thoughts of a quest reward. Ark examined the patients like hoped a doctor would. Then he wondered about new questions that he never considered before.

'There's something strange.'

There were approximately 50 Galgin gathered in the camp. But they all had different symptoms.

'They should have the same symptoms if they caught the disease from here. The Galgin are showing over 10 different types of symptoms. It isn't just some simple symptoms but a mixture of them. So it must not be a simple disease. There must be some other reason.'

Ark decided to interpret the events in a different direction. In the world, there was no effect without a cause. The Galgin became sick after entering the forest so they must've done something different. And that act might've evoked the disease. Ark asked the patients what they did after entering the forest.

"Forest....after coming....nothing unusual.....huk huk huk."

"Anything is good. It is important so please describe in detail."

"Just.....as always.....gathered to celebrate....ate some food....danced and played.....and not long after.....one by one we started feeling sick....."

'Ate some food?'

Ark eagerly asked again.

“Did you use any different ingredients?”

No..... The ingredients here are scarce....we used a few obtained here....but we mainly ate what we normally do.....”

‘I got it wrong?’

Ark thought they might’ve eaten toxic ingredients. But if he thought again, they were professional travellers so the Galgin should be quite experienced with ingredients. They wouldn’t blindly eat mysterious ingredients found in a forest.

‘But there might be something that tricked them so I should check it out.’

“Where is the place you obtained the ingredients?”

“We couldn’t get any proper ingredients near this area.....so we went far away.....fortunately.....we found a few near the river.....we mixed it with our ingredients..... Just head in the direction of that large tree.....”

“Lariette-nim, wait here for a while.”

Ark left the patients with Lariette and Buksil and went to find the river.

“Dedric, head towards that large tree and look for the river.”

“I’ve found it.”

After a while, Dedric came back from scouting and directed him towards the river. It was a rainbow river commonly found in the Netherworld. But it wasn’t easy to find ingredients near the river. The foxes had

a keen sense of smell and they would swallow the plants whenever it grew. Ark was patient and finally found one.

“Let’s have a look shall we? Ingredient Identification!”

Asatarod

An edible grass which grows naturally on the riverbank. The roots and leaves can be eaten and it can be used as a spice.

“Was it a useless thought?”

Ark sighed and shook his head. Then there was a lively sound as an information window appeared again.

The advanced effects of ‘Ingredient Identification’ had obtained further information.

The Asatarod you are currently holding has been deformed because it grew beside a polluted river. If a person with no resistance consumes it, the fatal symptoms of headache and fever will be displayed. However, the Asatarod can also be used as a medicine to treat the toxicity. Thus, depending on the processing method you can extract a medicine to treat the symptoms caused.

When Ingredient Identification became an advanced skill, there were no additional effects. He never paid it that much attention, but he never thought that it would help in this manner.

“What the, polluted river?”

Ark obtained some water from the river and used Ingredient Identification again.

Polluted River Water

Water from a river running through the Forest of Life, which can be used to make food.\*Advanced Additional Information: It looks like ordinary water but a closer look shows that it has been polluted with an unknown mixture of chemicals. The effects of consuming too many kinds of chemicals are unimaginable, and the level of contamination even affects the surrounding flora and fauna.

“As expected, there was a problem with the food the Galgin ate.”

Ark was convinced of his reasoning after investigating. And he was able to guess the reason for the Galgins’ multiple symptoms. The river had numerous chemicals mixed into it. Those chemicals could either be good or bad for the body. And the plants growing around the river would be deformed by those chemicals. If the Galgins had learned advanced Ingredient Identification then they probably wouldn’t have eaten such dangerous ingredients. But the ingredients looked like normal ones so they just used it casually in their food. Therefore, the Galgin had a mixture of food poisoning and chemical poisoning. Therefore Lariette’s Cure Disease and Ark’s Nursing didn’t have an effect.

‘Even so, the Galgin have food poisoning.....’

The environment pollution was a more serious problem for them.

‘Well, there’s a solution now that I’ve found the cause.’

Ark recalled the information discovered using Ingredient Identification. The river didn’t just have toxic chemicals mixed in. There were also some good medications. So he had to treat the food poisoning and toxic materials with the good medication. Medicine could also become a poison. So he had to extract the good parts while neutralizing the toxins using the same processing method. Ark looked at the river with a serious expression. He had figured out a method. But there were several problems implementing it. First, he had to investigate what ingredients the Galgin ate. It was in order to determine the cause of the symptoms and how to treat it.

‘Hopefully the Galgin will be conscious so I can question them and figure out how to make the medicine.....’

The information window showed the method of processing the food ingredient to obtain the medicine. Soaked in water, dried, fried, steamed etc.....there were numerous methods to extract the medicine. He needed a large amount of time and effort to investigate the right methods one by one. But that was a problem for the future.

‘The urgent problem is that I have to collect at least 20~30 samples of each ingredient in order to research it.’

Ark looked gloomily around the river. The river in the forest was quite large. But he couldn’t find any ingredients no matter how he looked. The Bandit Foxes ate everything. He barely gather one after 10 minutes so he couldn’t imagine how long collecting 20~30 would take.

‘I also have to keep using Nursing on the Galgin so I can’t spend the whole time collecting ingredients. Lariette and Buksil’s Ingredient Foraging skill is only at the beginner level so it would likely fail even if they find an ingredient.’

Ark was worried for a while before he thought of a method.

‘That’s right. It’s a little expensive, but it is possible with that skill.’

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“Dedric, Razak. Drive them out!”

“Understood, wooooo!”

Clack clack clack clack!

Dedric and Razak yelled wildly through the forest.

“Lariette-nim, drive them out with Buksil!”

Lariette and Buksil were swinging sticks at the bushes on the other side. Ark closed his eyes and concentrated everything on his hearing. After a while, he heard the sound of something stepping on leaves nearby. Ark opened his eyes and raised his hand.

“It’s near, Mind’s Eye!”

Then the eyeball ring on his finger rolled around and shot out sonic waves. At the same time, there was a blurry picture where previously he couldn’t see anything. There were Bandit Foxes disguised with Protective Colouration. Even though it changed colour to camouflage with the surroundings, the foxes became surprised and ran away as soon as Ark headed towards it. If someone approached it, the Bandit Fox would use its enormous speed to run away.

That was why Ark was so worried about the Bandit Foxes.

‘Huhuhu, it is still an animal despite its speed.’

Ark grinned and laughed.

Kaheong!

He heard the screams of the foxes after a few seconds. When he turned his head, Ark saw that the Bandit Foxes was struggling with the vine wrapped around its body. That’s right. It was Nadingka’s fruit! Ark had spread Nadingka’s fruit around in advance in a similar method to land mines. Then Dedric, Razak, Lariette and Buksil pushed the fox towards the minefield. Thanks to that, Ark managed to reduce its movement speed by 50%. Although it was still fast, he could now catch it.

“That’s it, Sprint!”

Ark narrowed the distance.

“Demonic Opening, Elemental Sword fire property, Flash!”

He swung the sword covered with ghosts and fire at the foxes. They were only level 100. And he increased his attack power using the skills. But Nadingka's fruit only lasted 1 minute so it was highly likely that the foxes would escape. This time Ark used Flash to increase the damage as much as possible.

"Whew, it isn't that difficult to catch them once I've made up my mind."

Fortunately, the foxes had low defense so he killed it with two shots.

Ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak ssak!

Radun jumped down and instantly ran to the fox's corpse. Just like Ark, Radun had also been stressed because of the foxes.

"Radun, stop. Move your body. Now we have a few of them."

Ark returned to the camp carrying the Bandit Fox's bodies. The camp already had the body of three foxes.

"Altogether we have 6. This should be enough. If there is too much then I'd be in trouble."

Ark gathered the bodies of the foxes together and looked at Razak. Yes, that was the reason why Ark suddenly started catching them.

"Razak, now it's time to show the effect of your evolution. Death's Equations!"

Yes, it was the skill that Deimos learned after he evolved into Razak. Ark had never used this skill so far. There was no reason to use it when it consumed some of Razak's bones. However, this time Ark would accept the damage. Razak sighed and demolished 6 ribs. The ribs powder was then sprinkled over the corpses of the foxes.

Razak had offered his ribs to use Death's Equations.

Due to 'Death's Equations' the Chimera=Bandit Fox A, B, C, D, E, F has been resurrected. The 'Chimera=Bandit Fox' will absolute obey every command while the spell is maintained. But if Razak moves from his current location or loses concentration then the spell will be disabled.

The bodies of the foxes trembled after the skill was activated. It looked like some kind of zombie was being created. But it didn't matter as 50% of the health and stats were restored.

"Okay, you will be named the processing unit. You will go around the riverside and search for ingredients. But you can't eat them. Bring all the gathered food to me!"

Kung kung kung kung!

The zombie fox unit saluted and ran to the riverside. It was why Ark hunted the Bandit Foxes. Even with 50% of their stats, it was equivalent to Ark's speed when he used Sprint. They also had a keen sense of smell and the ability to forage ingredients. In other words, the foxes could run around constantly at Ark's fastest speed to gather ingredients. That was the key point. Well, he had to sacrifice 6 of Razak's ribs but.....It would only take a couple of days to restore again.

Anyway, the six foxes ran around gathering ingredients. They scoured the river for ingredients.

"That's it, now I just have to wait."

Clack clack.....clack clack clack....

Razak had been deprived of his ribs and sat miserably in a corner of the camp.

Kung kung kung kung!



A fox came back with one ingredient. It couldn't grasp it so the fox had to bring them back one by one. Sometimes they would come back wounded. They were branded as traitors by other foxes and occasionally attacked. But the foxes had absolute loyalty to Razak and diligently carried the food away.

'Hmm, if they bite only one then bringing the ingredients isn't that efficient. By the way, I'm actually a little bit sorry after seeing them wounded.'

Ssak ssak? Ssak ssak ssak ssak!

When Radun saw the foxes, it stared at them coldly before running up and squeezing them. It was punishment for stealing from Ark. On the other hand, Buksil was terrified when he saw the scene.

'Scary, he really is the god of exploitation. It isn't enough to use our bodies to scrape ingredients..... Now he's using the Bandit Foxes as well. If they don't listen to him and collect the ingredients then he'll probably just kill them. They can't get away from that person even when dead.'

Thus, Ark planted a new form of horror inside the poor pig merchant. After 3~4 hours had passed, there were many ingredients gathered.

"Larriette-nim, write down every patient's symptoms without leaving anything out. Buksil, write down everything I tell you on a notepad."

"Huh? Yes!"

Faced with the thought of discipline, Buksil approached holding a notepad.

"Now let's begin."

Ark had been resting while the foxes gathered the ingredients and now he burst into action. He started with identifying the ingredients.

"Ingredient Identification!"

Karantatura

A moss which grows in the river. It can revive the body when added to soup.

\* Advanced Additional Information: It has grown in the polluted water and has been contaminated with a lethal toxin. If a person with no resistance eats it, strong sores will attack the body. If purified in a special way, you can extract a soothing anti-inflammatory medicine.

As he guessed, all the ingredients in the river had been contaminated. The cockroaches who ate it with their food had no choice but to receive food poisoning. Now Ark needed to figure out what food they mixed it with.

'If I compare the symptoms discovered by Lariette with the ingredients then I will figure out the answer. The problem is how to extract the medicine.'

Ark took several equipment out of the Galgin's bags. He took several ingredients and tried a variety of methods such as burning, soaking it in water etc. and then checked with Ingredient Identification while Buksil wrote the results down. There were hundreds of ingredients but he stayed patient while testing out every method and recording it.

'If I give up then the 50 Galgin will die!'

He felt a commitment to studying, just like someone learning medicine would feel. After 8 hours, Ark started to realise the best method of extracting the medicine from the ingredients. It wasn't completely clear but he noticed a pattern.

'Well.....if I put most of the toxic ingredients in pure water and soak for 30 minutes before boiling then the poison would be neutralized. If steamed or baked, the toxin became stronger while boiling would weaken the toxin. If I baked it after boiling then wouldn't the medicine be extracted?'

It was the first time Ark had tried these cooking methods. Normally he just put them in the pot and his cooking skill would automatically make the food. But he couldn't use that cooking method this time. He had to check the ingredients manually one by one during the process. It would be lucky if the processing of ingredients created a good dish. With survival cooking, he would only know the results of the dish after eating it. It meant that Ark might also be stricken by poison. Anyway, Ark just concentrated on researching the ingredients instead of eating it. But he couldn't lose himself in the work completely.

"Ark-nim, it is time for your rounds."

Lariette said after checking the status of the patients. While he was researching, the Galgins' health was still falling thanks to their illness. So Ark had to occasionally stop his research to go around and use Nursing.

"My studies have progressed so please have courage. Once I've treated you then you'll become healthier and will be able to carry around a backpack again."

Fortunately they held up but the Galgin were getting thinner every hour. But the Galgin noticed Ark's sincerity and thanked him every time.

"Yes, thank you."

"We will believe in Ark-nim."

"I'll have no regrets even if I die."

Ark felt pained every time he heard such words. No matter how different they looked, their images would overlap with his mothers who would bow her head in gratitude every time a doctor showed her kindness.

'Yes, I can't afford to be resting. The patients will suffer while I'm resting. I need to figure out the extraction methods faster.'

Ark didn't take a break and just headed straight back into work. And he once again focused on researching the ingredients. How much time had passed? In the meantime, Lariette had disconnected and then returned.

A full day had passed. Ark however stayed in the game and only clung to studying, refusing to even eat or drink something in reality. Ark persisted even when he became dizzy. Then Lariette spoke in a worried voice.

"You'll be in trouble at this rate. Please take a break."

"No, I'm fine. The work is almost over. Please be patient....."

Ark didn't even look around and just stared at his work. Lariette looked at Ark with a complicated expression.

'I don't understand. That guy.....what type of person is he?'

She couldn't understand Ark even after travelling with him for one week. She had been happy after meeting him in the Netherworld. Lariette was even more impressed after Ark ran to her rescue. If a man's dream was a beautiful woman, a woman's fantasy was a man who would risk their life for her. It didn't matter if it was in a game. But now she was seeing a strange side to Ark. At first, he treated her like every other man. Then his attitude underwent a 180 degree change after entering a mentor and disciple relationship. In addition, he exploited Lariette and Buksil under the guise of teaching. Of course, such an image wasn't bad. She had only been the receiver of over-eager attention in her life. However, she knew that their intentions weren't 'pure.' She was a woman, but she only received attention because of her looks. Even after comparing his actions, she never saw those intentions in Ark. Therefore Lariette felt that it was convenient to be with Ark. No, she felt impressed after he taught her combat skills. But she just had a vague good impression of him. Those feelings once again changed today.

'How can someone do all this for an NPC? I didn't want to help because I was disgusted by their appearance.....Ark-nim is different. At first I thought it was due to a quest reward, but.....it's not.'

After working for a long time at the reception desk, it was possible for her to grasp people's sincerity. Despite what people told her, she could tell through their eyes and voices. And it was obvious that Ark

really wanted to help the Galgin. Otherwise, he would not invest Razak's stats for a quest reward. He was different from the person who exploited her and Buksil.

'I don't understand. What is Ark-nim's true self? When did he show it to me? Was it when he taught me combat skills? When he exploited us? Or maybe.....when he stayed up all night helping the Galgin?'

In Lariette's head, Ark was increasingly becoming a person who she couldn't understand.

'Anyway, Ark is a much more affectionate person than he seems.'

The answer she came up with after a long time worrying.....was no answer. But she just looked at Ark and laughed.

'Yes, I honestly like this more than someone pretending to be good in front of a woman. Furthermore, discovering the method after a small clue.....he is also very smart. Did he graduate from a medical college? He treats the patients skillfully.'

It was really different.....once again she had misunderstood.

Anyway, she couldn't endure like Ark so she disconnected and went to sleep. The next morning she got up early and accessed the game. It had been 32 hours since he started. Buksil was dozing while holding the magic projector. And Ark was still engaged in research. She deliberately got up early but Lariette had nothing to do so she just sat on the side and watched. It was a somewhat comical scene as she could see Dark Wolf's tail wagging around.

"Well, it would be better with his original face....."

Lariette murmured and laughed. It was at that time.

"Hahaha! That's it, that's it! I've finally found the information for all the ingredients."

Ark suddenly jumped up and yelled excitedly. Buksil was shocked and picked up the magic projector.

“Huk, what, what the?” “Ark-nim, it’s over?”

“Yes, I’m done! Now I understand the extraction method for all the ingredients! All I have to do is adjust it for the patient and feed them. I’ll start treatment immediately so please follow me with the ingredients.”

“...Ark-nim, you have huge bags under your eyes.”

Ark had stayed up 32 hours and his complexion was like the zombie foxes. But Ark just shook his head.

“I won’t be able to sleep if the Galgin is suffering after I’ve finished my research. I’ll be able to sleep much better if I treat them first.”

Ah, wasn’t it a wonderful sight? Ark had always wanted to act like a doctor.

“Okay, that was terrific!”

Buksil filmed it with the magic projector and gave him a secret thumbs up without Lariette noticing. And soon the human medical drama began. Ark approached a patient with a calm expression and said.

“Now, please tell me all your symptoms and don’t leave anything out.”

“I have a splitting headache.....and my whole body is itchy because of boils..... I can’t swallow food and water without vomiting.....”

“That’s right. The ‘dried powder made of Rarona seed’ will treat the headache while the ‘steamed toxic Urana roots’ will treat the boils. Your stomach is injured from eating the food so you should eat the ‘Kalpana leaves’ which has been soaked in pure water for 24 hours.”

Ark murmured and put the ingredients into his pot. He used the pure water Buksil obtained from a faraway place and made the necessary dishes using Survival Cooking. The smell of herbal medicine

drifted from the pot. The one unfortunate thing was that even though it 100% treated the Galgin's injuries, it did not improve his pets' stats as well. Then Ark filtered the dregs from the soup and fed it to his patient.

"Oh, my body.....my body is starting to feel better."

"Some of your symptoms will disappear instantly. If you take the medication properly then the remaining symptoms will clear up and you will recover immediately. Now, what are your symptoms?"

Ark listened to every patient's symptoms and administered the medicine. The cockroaches' faces started clearing up. When Ark heard the symptoms and made the medicine, the Galgin's illness disappeared.

"Wow, this, unbelievable.....!"

"So many symptoms are gone in a flash!"

"Daddy!"

Reid's wife and children became better and got up. After suffering from the illness for so many days, all of the Galgins' eyes were focused on Ark.

"It's all thanks to Ark-nim!"

"Ark-nim is the most skilled doctor in the entire world!"

"I just combined the right food ingredients."

Ark modestly exclaimed while the Galgin instantly shook their heads.

"Don't say that. We are not blind. Everyone saw how hard Ark-nim worked. You've stayed up all night and constantly studied the ingredients."

“We were able to endure because we could see Ark-nim. If it wasn’t for Ark-nim.....we would all.....huk.....thank you very much.

The 50 Galgin bowed and expressed their gratitude. The campsite suddenly became a place with a lot of activity.

“Wow, it’s a very human documentary!”

Buksil was also shedding tears while filming with the magic projector.

“Master is so dumb, going to all that effort to save some cockroaches....sniff.”

Dedric muttered while sneakily rubbing at his eyes. Then, a message flashed in front of Ark with a cheerful sound.

After studying the ingredients deeply, the rating of ‘Survival Cooking’ has risen.

Survival Cooking (High Grade, Passive): After deeply studying the ingredients, you have reached a new level of cooking. Now you can draw out the effects of ingredients by 100% and change the effect through various secret ingredients. In addition, the more skilful handling of ingredients means that the expiration date will lengthen while the associated penalties will also increase.

In fact, his survival cooking skill had reached 499 a long time ago. But no matter how much he created, it would not reach 500. In order to reach the mastered stage, he needed a new type of enlightenment. However, that was not the end of the bonuses. A new information window appeared before the other one even disappeared.

Since ‘Survival Cooking’ has reached the ‘High Grade’ stage, you are able to choose it as a sub-profession.



Master Chef.

In the past, a medicine derived from nature was created by a foreigner. The secret to it was 'Conscious Mobilization.' Food and medicine to treat illness has the same foundation. In some cases, medicine can be created using weeds on the side of the road. Survival cooking is a skill that has been developed using this knowledge. Now that you have become a master in Survival Cooking, you can actively practice that 'Conscious Mobilization.'

When you become a 'Food Worshipper', a bonus will be applied to a successful Survival Cooking dish.

Would you like to accept the 'Food Worshipper sub-profession?

Ark read the information window carefully. The sub-profession could be changed at any time. Prior to this, he received an offer to become a gladiator at the Evil Silrion but refused because it required him to participate in the tournament once a month. Furthermore, there was a bonus applied to survival cooking dishes?

"I select the Food Worshipper sub-profession."

You have chosen the sub-profession Food Worshipper.

\* The requirement to become a culinary master in Survival Cooking is complete.\* A bonus of 50 is applied to the proficiency of Survival Cooking and Ingredient Identification.

\* 20% increase in the probability of making the best dishes.

\* The profession-specific skill 'Herbal Decoction' has been learned.

(Herbal Decoction (Beginner, Passive): As a 'Food Worshipper,' you will be able to determine the medicinal effects of ingredients when using Ingredient Identification.

While you boil the ingredients using 'Herbal Decoction,' a special effect will be added to the medicine. The herbal medicines can show a variety of therapeutic and nourishing effects, and can be poured into an empty bottle and used like potions. Herbal medicines can be used in battles and there is no expiration date.

'Huk, what is this?'

He could use the ingredients to boil the ingredients and create a herbal medicine? And he could use it like regular potions in battles? In other words, it was a skill to create potions like alchemy. He was also using regular food ingredients instead of the expensive magic items. Of course, his herbal decoction skill was only at a beginner's level so he couldn't make medicines that would rival recovery potions. It might even be better to cook more food. But there was a separate part that attracted Ark's attention.

'Since it doesn't expire, there is no need to discard it once it becomes spoiled!'

It meant he could sell the herbal medicines on the auction site.

"Ha.....ha ha ha! Ha ha ha!"

Ark released an involuntary burst of laughter. It was indeed New World! If he made an effort then the world would reward him! He had spent a few days submerged in this task. He suddenly felt dizzy after all the tension melted away. Lariette who had been watching from the sidelines and the Galgin flocked towards him. Lariette spoke in a concerned voice.

"Okay, it's finished now. Stop and rest."

But Ark shook his head with a firm expression.

"Not yet.....there is still something to be done."

“Huh? The patients are treated now.”

“Isn’t it? So.....”

Ark murmured in a low voice as he approached Reid. Then he extended his hand and said.

“G-give me the compensation.”

At that point everyone froze.

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‘Oh my God!’

Hyun-woo rushed through the hospital with an embarrassed expression. How could he make such a mistake? He was amazed just thinking about it. He realized the mistake 1 hour before. After staying up a few days to rescue the cockroaches, Hyun-woo succumbed to sleep. Then he connected like usual to New World. Lariette and Buksil connected at the same time and greeted him with a smile.

“Ark-nim, Happy New Year.”

“Happy New Year!”

Hyun-woo was confused for a moment.

“That.....sorry but I don’t think I can play the game today. I need to go somewhere.”

His surprise continued after hearing Lariette’s words. Yes, New Year’s Day had arrived while Ark had been sleeping.

“Hehehe, Ark-nim, I’ve got a lot of time unlike Lariette-nim.”

“Then please continue gathering ingredients!”

Ark yelled before disconnecting. Then he got dressed and ran to the hospital.

‘Where on earth did I sell my spirit?’

Obviously he sold it to New World.....

After the end of year party, he had prepared for New Year. If he was still exercising daily at dawn then he probably wouldn’t have made this mistake. However he stopped exercising for a while and his sense of time had been distorted after staying awake for 32 hours to help the cockroaches.

‘Pathetic.....how could I forget about New Year’s Day?’

In fact, Hyun-woo’s melancholy was usually the greatest on New Year’s. Five years ago, his relatives and friends of his parents would flock and give him a lot of money. But it changed entirely after his father passed away. Were they scared to be associated with Hyun-woo? The acquaintances and his relatives didn’t even send a greeting card on New Year’s. He had become like that. A worthless thing.... At that time, Hyun-woo was a high school student who felt exhausted.

‘I don’t care. It’s just a holiday.....’

But his mother was different. She never had anyone in her hospital room to celebrate New Year’s Day with her. Therefore the sense of loss became even more magnified. And now her one child had gone crazy and logged into a game on New Year’s Day. It was afternoon and he hadn’t even shown his face? Was there anyone else like this in the world?

“Hey, don’t jump in the hallway!”

A nurse exclaimed as he jumped onto the stairs. Their nerves were already sensitive because they had to work on New Year's. But why would he care about the mood of a nurse? Hyun-woo just sprinted towards the hospital room. Just as he was about to open the door, he flinched and stopped. His hands were empty. After he remembered and ran at full speed, he couldn't prepare a fruits basket. Although he was late, he rummaged through his wallet but it was empty. He forgot to withdraw money in advance.

'What should I do? Should I find an ATM to withdraw cash and buy a fruits basket?'

Hyun-woo stood in front of the room contemplating for a moment.

"Hahaha, that's right. He is certainly not that charming. We've talked about it before."

"Oppa, this is a hospital room. Keep your voice down a little bit."

"Well said Hye-sun. Such noisy guys.....do you think this is a market? Anyway, the problem is that they are unable to learn. That's why I told you not to come."

"Ah hyung-nim, you're terrible. Aren't you glad that we're helping?"

"Hehehe, don't be angry. We knew that Hyung-nim must've been excited about spending time with noona. We understand."

"Ohu, so that's what happened earlier."

"What, what are you guys saying....that, it's not like that!"

"Oho, look at you blushing like a child. It's not very convincing."

'Hye-sun?' In addition, these voices are.....?"

Hyun-woo opened the door with a puzzled look. He never imagined the things that were occurring in the room. Gwon Hwa-rang and 10 rehabilitation members.....the big men were gathered in a small hospital room. And there were a variety of holiday food placed on the tables.

“Ah, Hyun-woo.”

His mother who was surrounded by rehabilitation members spotted Hyun-woo.

“Mother, this is....”

“They all came to see you.”

“Huh?”

Hyun-woo looked at the rehabilitation members with a foolish expression. And he felt very emotional at the sight of his mother laughing happily amongst everybody.

“Hyung-nims.....!”

Ark had only just realized it was a holiday and hurriedly ran to the hospital. Then he found that the rehabilitation members were one step ahead and already at the hospital. They even prepared hospital food.....It was the first time Hyun-woo had seen such an act of kindness after the accident. Now it felt strange to him since Hyun-woo wasn't used to it. Was he upset at someone taking care of him? No, they didn't give anything to Hyun-woo so he wasn't upset. But it involved his mother so he was unable to express his gratitude.

“Oppa, you're late!”

Jung Hye-sun said while sitting next to his mother. She made it seem like they had arranged to meet.

“Uh....Yes.”

Hyun-woo replied in an awkward voice and entered the room. At that moment Hyun-woo felt really strange. Gwon Hwa-rang, Jung Hye-sun and the rehabilitation members being at the hospital was really unexpected. So naturally he felt awkward interrupting. But Hyun-woo joined them in laughing and being noisy. How much time had passed?

Since they all played the game, naturally the topic turned to New World. The first to speak was Hye-sun.

“Hey Oppa.....you’re in the place called the Netherworld?”

“Why? Are you bored without me?”

“Bah, what are you saying?”

Hye-sun pouted at Hyun-woo’s words. But after a brief moment, she spoke in an anxious voice.

“I’ve heard rumours around Cairo. There’s a bounty on Hyun-woo oppa.”

“Bounty? For me?”

Hyun-woo asked bewildered. In New World, users could place bounties on other users. But the target had to be chaotic in order to get a formal reward from the government. It wasn’t possible to hang a bounty on someone who wasn’t chaotic in New World. Hyun-woo wasn’t chaotic so he couldn’t understand the bounty.

“It’s not a formal bounty through the government.”

“What? Then....?”

“The Hermes guild has offered a ‘Merchant’s Contract’ to the chaotic users.”

Hye-sun described the contents of the contract that she overheard.

-Merchant's Agreement.

The person with this contract who gets rid of Ark will be paid a reward of 100 gold.

Raiden created a mug shot of Ark and scattered the contract among the chaotic players. Hye-sun often travelled between Lancel Village and Cairo where there were a lot of chaotic users so she heard the rumours.

"I heard they scattered quite a lot of contracts."

"Bah, that Raiden.....he's using cheap tricks like always."

Hye-sun was worried but Ark dismissed it. If he was the same as before then it would definitely seem threatening. But Ark wasn't worried about chaotic users any more. Chaotic players received various penalties so they had a slower growth than general users. Moreover, 100 gold was a large amount but it wasn't to the extent that they would hang themselves. In other words, Ark's high level meant that not many chaotic users would consider 100 gold worth the risk. He was able to handle pioneers like Jewel and Duke so 3~4 chaotic users wouldn't be a threat. It didn't matter if they formed a group and attacked.

'Raiden also probably doesn't expect the chaotic players to catch me. He already has evidence that I'm in the Netherworld but he's not showing that information to the public.'

Hermes Guild.....the pioneers probably contacted each other off line as well. In other words, Raiden probably knew about the Netherworld through Jewel or Duke. He knew that Ark was there. Even so, he never mentioned the Netherworld to the chaotic users at all.

'It is difficult to find someone in New World. The contract is in middle earth.....so my location will probably be identified quickly when I return to middle earth. If a chaotic user with a contract dies because of me then Raiden will be able to determine my location. This means that the chaotic users are hounds that Raiden released to find me in middle earth.'



In this situation, Raiden didn't have to waste 1 copper in order to obtain a large source of information. Indeed Raiden.....his ability to use cheap tricks was superior to everyone else.

'If the chaotic players stick to me than it can become a little annoying.....'

But if he killed someone with a chaotic alignment then there was a 100% chance that one equipped item would drop. If people wearing bank notes approached him then of course Hyun-woo would be glad.

'But the Hermes guild is occupying Silvana. They must have recovered if they're doing something like this. Huhuhu, well okay. If Silvana stabilizes and develops then it will be more rewarding later on. Until then they can run freely.'

Hyun-woo laughed and shook his head.

"You don't have to worry about those contracts. If the prize money is not officially offered by the officials then there will be a significant penalty."

At that time, Jjak-tung who had been studying Ark's face interrupted.

"Speaking of New World.....there is a slight setback in the Slime's Immortality Pill production plan."

Currently Gwon Hwa-rang, Jung Hye-sun and the rehabilitation members were collecting the Slime's Essence in the underground labyrinth. And the progress of the operation could be described as successful. They've collected quite a lot of 'Slime's Essence' and raised their level considerably as well. But an unexpected problem occurred when they tried making the Slime's Immortality Pill. First of all the 'Corrupted Fairy Wings'.....Ark was going to collect more while hunting. However, there was a sudden disruption to the supply since he went to the Netherworld. And the second more serious problem was the 'Unicorn Horn.'

"The 'Unicorn Horn' is more difficult to obtain than we thought. In the past it cost 700 gold but now the price has surged to 1,000 gold."

“Yes, I have heard.”

Hyun-woo sighed and nodded. In fact, Hyun-woo had confirmed the information on the auction site. Surprisingly there were a lot of people trying to obtain unicorn horns on the auction site. That was because users had found a new purpose for the unicorn horns. In the past it was only used as an ingredient in the highest level potions, but now they found that it could add significant options to a warrior's sword or a magician's wand. But thanks to the indiscriminate catching, it was extremely difficult to find a unicorn these days. Due to the shortage it was natural that the price would soar.....but that meant his production line was interrupted.

‘If I want to make a profit with Slime's Immortality Pill then I have to find unicorn horns for less than 700 gold. It would be difficult to make profit if it costs 1,000 gold. And I don't have the time to go around looking for the corrupted fairy wings. They might need to buy it from a store which will make the total earnings a deficit.’

If he couldn't make a profit then it was just a waste of time.

“Sheesh, I thought of such a good plan.....’

Ark sighed and replied.

“It isn't possible. The production of Slime's Immortality Pill will stop for the moment.”

“Then we can leave the underground labyrinth?”

The rehabilitation members asked with great joy. In fact, the rehabilitation members' main problem was not the cost of materials. Ark had gone to the Netherworld approximately one month ago.....thus the rehabilitation group had been stuck hunting in the labyrinth for a month. At first their levels rose fast and it was interesting to obtain the ‘Slime's Essence,’ but that changed after a month.

“I don't want to look at slimes and skeletons anymore.”

“Sunlight.....I want to see the sun.....”

"I feel like I've been stuck in a cell."

Since Roco could ride the unicorn to obtain food, they couldn't even use that excuse to go outside. Thanks to Roco's consideration, they spent one month smelling like a sewerage plant. Now they felt sick if they even heard any mention of Cairo's underground labyrinth.

"Yes, but how many 'Slime's Essences' have you found?"

"...10."

"So if you find 2 more essences to make 12 then it will be enough for Hwa-rang ajusshi, Hye-sun and hyung-nims. Talk to Sid and ask him to obtain the unicorn horns and corrupted fairy wings when it is available for a cheap price."

"Yes, we'll check it when we have time as well."

"And we'll promise to pay you back the royalties once we figure it out."

"No, you already went to all that effort so some of it will belong to you."

Hyun-woo was very thankful to the rehabilitation members and promised them some of the royalties. Since he met up with the rehabilitation members, he asked them about Shambala. They had a unicorn horn that had been sent by Shambala. When Ark gave him the first scroll, Shambala had promised to exchange it for the unicorn horns and corrupted fairy wings.

As expected from Shambala. Shambala had already obtain the corrupted fairy wings and made the immortality pill. After seeing the effects, he sent the extra unicorn horn to the rehabilitation members. Of course....

It was placed on a credit note. Along with a similar message. Thanks to the relationship between Ark and Shambala, he was willing to give them the items.

'Anyway, we've obtained 2 unicorn horns from Shambala and now he is going to begin cleaning up the Dark Brothers organization. Then isn't he going to advance to the 2nd stage profession before me?'

Hyun-woo was aware of threat. While Hyun-woo was thinking, Jjak-tung suddenly scratched his head and said with an embarrassed look.

"I'm really sorry. We've just been talking among ourselves....are you bored?"

"It's okay. It's pleasant watching people have fun."

His mother smiled at Jjak-tung while Gwon Hwa-rang glared.

"Ah.....we're stealing precious minutes from Hyung-nim."

"W-What the!"

"Don't become so angry. We're supporting Hyung-nim."

Jjak-tung laughed and got up from his seat.

"Now, we have to say goodbye to the raccoons in the underground labyrinth so should we return to New World? Hyung-nim should stay a little and clean up. Hey, let's go. You guys too."

Jjak-tung dragged the rehabilitation members away from the hospital.

"Mother, I'll come back in a few days."

"I'll go with Hyun-woo oppa."

Hyun-woo and Jung Hye-sun followed the rehabilitation members' example. Hyun-woo and Jung Hye-sun entered the hallway where the rehabilitation members were waiting.

"What, these people?"

"Are they here to get back some loans?"

"That ward is where the patients with large operations are....."

"But to even visit the hospital on a holiday."

People were gossiping at a distance. Since the 10 of them looked like gangsters, it was natural for there to be a misunderstanding. That was the reason Gwon Hwa-rang never brought them to the hospital. Bulkkun heard what the gossips were saying and sighed.

"Hye-sun, Hyun-woo, you should fall back a little bit."

"Why?"

Of course, Hyun-woo also heard the voices. Perhaps if Hyun-woo didn't know the rehabilitation members then he would also gossip. But Hyun-woo proudly held his head high and walked side by side with them. Then he spoke in a loud voice.

"Hyung-nims, I'll pay for lunch today. There's a great restaurant nearby."

The rehabilitation members jumped and turned to Hyun-woo. Hyun-woo nodded and smiled at them.

".....Thank you."

"We really, really appreciate it."

The rehabilitation members laughed and put their arms around Hyun-woo's shoulder.

"This child, thank you."

"Let's go!" Hyun-woo is paying for our meals for once."

"I'm only going to eat rice. Then let's watch a movie."

Jung Hye-sun grabbed his shirt and murmured. Hyun-woo left the hospital with a large grin.

.....On the other hand, Gwon Hwa-rang was left alone with Park So-mi. There was an awkward silence before Gwon Hwa-rang got up and started cleaning the mess.

"Those stupid guys.....I'm sorry. Normally they're not that troublesome....."

".....Why don't you sit down a little bit more?"

Park So-mi spoke in a low voice and grasped his hand.

"Thank you."

"Huh? Yes? What is it?"

"Hyun-woo laughing like that.....I've finally seeing it after a long time."

Park So-mi looked at the door where Hyun-woo and the rehabilitation members had exited through.

"It's all thanks to Detective Gwon."

“M-me.....no. You’re exaggerating....I mean.....”

Gwon Hwa-rang stuttered with an embarrassed face. Gwon Hwa-rang really felt that way. But Park So-mi just leaned her head on his shoulder. She had no immunity against the sight of Hyun-woo laughing with Gwon Hwa-rang. Even though he could clearly smell the alcohol, it seemed like Gwon Hwa-rang was surrounded by a garden of flowers.

The new year was bright. Gwon Hwa-rang was having a truly happy New Year’s.