

## Ark Vol 10 C 9

### Chapter 9

#### ACT 9 Magaro's Laboratory

'Huhuhu, it is a jackpot.'

Ark had connected after resting comfortably and started blowing and polishing the lamp again.

"Aigoo, you've become so beautiful."

Ark rubbed his cheek against the lamp and happily smiled. Except for the skull carved on the handle, it looked like an ordinary old lamp but it was the reward for completing the quest. Of course, the reward item wasn't just an antique. It was a magic item with options! The problem was the special effect of the lamp was truly vague. But the smart Ark could tell with one glance. The rare lamp was more valuable than some rare items. Or it was for Ark who was a Dark Walker. He had finished the quest right before going to sleep.....but he asked for the compensation from Reid first.

"T-the reward....."

Reid scratched his head with an embarrassed look. Although he had made the request with an urgent heart, he couldn't think of a suitable reward. He trembled as Ark's face slowly hardened.

"Of course. Reward! Of course I've prepared it. You've saved our lives so we have to give you the best thing we have. Please wait."

Reid gathered the other Galgin together. And they huddled in a corner and conferred for a while.

"Aye, what do we have to give?"

"Let's see? Do you know what the human's middle earth is like?"

“How about this? I obtained it in the south.....”

“This is also acceptable. It is 300 of the Ranke fruit.”

Their opinions were divided as they showed Reid different options. Since 3 people completed the quest, three rewards needed to be given. In fact, Ark had used Discerning Eye on Reid in the past and knew that the Galgin didn't have many good items. So he didn't expect a big reward for this quest. But even so, this was terrible.

Reid confidently showed him the items ,

Ark became angry after checking the compensation list.

‘Eating for free? Is this a joke? Who cares about eating for free in the Netherworld? In addition, a statue of a cockroach? My intimacy with the Galgin is already the best thanks to this quest so what is the use of the statue? There aren't any good options. What the hell is this crap?’

When researching the ingredients, Ark had obviously wanted to help the Galgin. He accepted that he would suffer a bit. But that moment of emotion and delight had passed. Ark immediately returned to reality. He finally remembered about money. He had invested 32 hours into studying contaminated ingredients. He even destroyed 6 of Razak's ribs. But now they couldn't even reward him with an item he could use? He started to regret it while looking at the list of reward items. Ark stared at the list with a sour face and sighed.

“You don't like it? Then I could show you something else?”

Reid spoke immediately after seeing Ark's dissatisfied face. Ark had a sudden thought as he listened.

‘Show me something else? Then I can select the reward for this quest?’

Ark thought that he had to pick one of those items as the reward. No, normally it was like that. But sometimes the system of compensation was different depending on the species.

'Then I don't need to decide hastily. The Galgin clan are peddlers. There might be something of use in their goods. Okay, I don't need to decided straight away and can wait until a good item appears.'

Then, Buksil approached and looked at the statue.

"Eh? This is a pretty well made statue?"

Ark kicked the pig's feet and smiled calmly.

"Like I said earlier, I didn't do that much. It looks like these items are precious to you guys so I can't accept it without feeling the burden. I'm sorry but could you show me other stuff?"

Ark didn't want to decrease the precious intimacy so he spoke gently but firmly. But Reid had good sense for a cockroach and notice.

"You don't need to feel burdened. The items we gave aren't valuable to you."

".....They're still great, that, um, so."

Ark was reduced to one syllable by Reid's powerful force and retreated. And the cockroaches gathered again.....

"Hey, is this good?"

"But is there anything to give to our benefactor?"

After consulting for a while, Reid returned with three new items. However, Ark still returned them. They were just like the first few items. The situation repeated so many times that even the cockroaches became annoyed. Of course, Ark wasn't feeling great either. He had been awake for 32 hours so his eyes were drooping.

'But I might receive a surprisingly good compensation. I can't just accept something useless because I'm sleepy. I have to receive something that can be somewhat useful!'

Ark desperately opened his eyes and persisted. The items Reid brought were completely random. In some cases, there were slightly useful items but they didn't meet Ark's expectations. When 2 hours passed, his spirit surged.

'Damn, okay. There will be nothing if this keeps on happening so let's give it a try!'

"Pass, pass, pass, pass, pass!"

Ark didn't look at the items properly and just called 'pass.' Reid who was tired from running back and forth with the items groaned pitifully. Now Reid started to realize that Ark's reason wasn't because of the 'burden.'

"Hey, it seems impossible."

"Didn't he go four days without any sleep?"

"At this rate we might be doing this for the next few days."

"It's impossible. Take out all your collections."

"If we don't find something fast then we'll collapse of exhaustion."

"But the really good stuff....."

The cockroaches hesitated and looked at each other. At that time, a young cockroach rubbed its eyes and said sleepily.

"Daddy, I'm so tired."

“Darling! Take out the item you’re so proud of.”

Reid’s wife couldn’t stand it anymore and shouted angrily. Then Reid flinched and said in a frightened voice.

“Ha, but these are.....”

“Are those items more important than me and your children?”

“It’s not that, but.....”

“If you keep acting like that then I’ll divorce you straight away!”

“U-understood, I understand. But these can’t possible please Ark. Hik, okay. So don’t glare at me like that. I’ll show it to him.”

When his wife glared, Reid grumbled but took out a bundle. Yes, they were merchants. And as mentioned before, Reid was a peddler who didn’t engage in any business that would lose him profit. Of course, they felt gratitude towards Ark. But the Galgin were born peddlers and couldn’t give the best items for free, even to their benefactor. So Ark was shown general items. And they thought he would just give up if shown the same items. They truly were merchants to the bone! However, even those merchants were forced to wave the white flag before Ark. Well, half the win was thanks to the glare from his wife.....

“Ah Ark, how about this? You don’t like it either? Then I’ll show you something else.”

Reid showed a quick glimpse of the bundle before taking it back. That was a mistake. In fact, Ark had almost reached his limit. So he was about to say ‘pass’ automatically. If Reid had showed it normally then Ark probably would’ve passed it. But his questionable behaviour stimulated Ark’s curiosity.

“Wait. Please show it to me again.”

“T-this? It’s not a big deal. You don’t need to see it again.”

“Please show it to me again.”

“Hahaha, there’s no need. I’ll bring something else immediately.”

“Show, it, to, me, again.”

Ark said firmly when Reid tried to escape. Then Reid turned around and looked at his wife with a desperate expression. He sighed at his wife’s frown and put the items down. He added in a small voice.

“It’s nothing much.....it’s just a lamp I picked up when crossing the Urubasa Valley a few years ago. But it’s broken and doesn’t work. The other items are the same. They’re just a toy and graffiti that I picked up.....”

Dark Lamp (Special)Item type: Lamp

User restriction: None

An old magic lamp created by unknown people. Complex shapes are drawn on the bottom. This lamp is different from normal lamps, and will cause darkness instead of light when used. It is the greatest treasure of the Galgin who enjoyed napping but dislike bright places. As the owner of this lamp, Reid had been envied by other Galgin. However, you have to sacrifice magic ingredients in order to activate the dark attribute.

‘W-what it this?’

His sleepiness quickly fled. He never imagined that there would be such an item. In fact, this item wouldn’t be any use to an ordinary player. The cockroaches loved the darkness which is why they used

the lamp. What ordinary user would take a nap? But this was much more important to Ark than a rare sword. The lamp would activate a 'night-time' effect in the area. Didn't that mean he could receive his darkness attribute bonuses even in the daytime? It was an item that could give him a 40% bonus at any time! What else did he need to say?

Thanks to his tenacity, he had found a pearl at the end of all his passes. The other two items were also vague but useful! They were far better than the ones shown previously.

### Wisdom Ring (Special)

Item type: Special consumable

User restriction: None

This is a puzzle type item made of entangled wire and metal to create complex shapes. Although the history is unknown, it seems to be made by a pretty smart person. The solution is so difficult that it can raise wisdom depending on the level reached, with levels ranging from 1-5. But you have to be very smart to reach the 5th level.

### One Thousand Visitors

Item type: Collection

User Restriction: None

This is a collection that a very famous calligrapher wrote down a long time ago. If you placed this in your store then it will increase your business.

Ark's eyes lit up. The 'Wisdom ring' was meaningless to Ark. Every time a puzzle was undone it gave +3 wisdom. That was a total of 15 wisdom. But wisdom was a stat that didn't really matter to Ark. But Lariette used Holy magic so wisdom was more important to her than strength or agility. The effect of Holy magic would vary depending on her wisdom.

'Well Lariette also went through a lot of trouble during this quest.'

Ark decided to concede the Wisdom Ring to Lariette. But Buksil didn't help so Ark had no intention of conceding any items to him.

'The One Thousand Visitors is a surprisingly good item. I can't give an item like this to the pig. Fortunately, the item is not restricted.'

Ark grinned and received the items. It was definitely the best reward he could get from Reid.

"Thank you. Like Reid said, it is use a 'broken lamp,' a 'toy' and 'graffiti' so I won't feel burdened if I accept these."

"You'll accept these?"

"Yes, I'll think of the Galgin every time I see these items."

Ark laughed while Reid gaped at him and tried to open his mouth. But the Galgin had been there for 2 and a half hours so they rushed to cover Reid's mouth.

"It's really admirable."

"Take these items as a sign of our gratitude....."



“Will you take these and go?”

“Let’s meet again in the future. Hopefully the distant future. In the really, really far future.”

Reid spoke in a tearful voice and ran away quickly. Ark had only been expecting to receive some pet exclusive items from the quest. In contrast to his expectations, he received some valuable items. Anyway, the touching quest ended with a funny skit.

“Lariette-nim, thanks for the hard work. This seems like an item that you’ll need.”

“.....Thank you.”

Ark handed the Galgin’s Wisdom Ring to Lariette. She had also inwardly wanted the Wisdom Ring so she accepted it thankfully. After Ark handed it to her, Buksil approached with expectant eyes. But Ark just turned his head and said.

“Then I’ll quit and rest for a bit. I’ll see you in 6 hours.”

Buksil grunted and exclaimed.

“Ah Ark-nim, aren’t you forgetting something?”

“Huh? What?”

“That.....3 people completed this quest. So.....”

“Ah, that? You’re referring to that?”

Buksil sighed with relief at Ark’s words.

“Hahaha, yes, that. Since you know.....”

“It’s okay, I don’t mind at all.”

“Huh? What are you.....?”

“Aren’t you sorry that you were no help in solving the quest? It’s okay, I don’t care that much.”

“No, it’s not.....”

Buksil noticed something strange and opened his mouth. But Ark hit first.

“I don’t mind keeping it. After all, I spent 32 hours not eating or drinking in order to complete the quest and you received experience from it. Even though you didn’t help and just napped while I was suffering, we’re still colleagues. I don’t have to feel offended by such little things, right?”

Every one of Ark’s words pricked Buksil’s conscience. And finally he couldn’t say anything. He could sense the hidden message ‘don’t be greedy for trivial items and hurt my feelings’ in Ark’s words. Buksil just laughed awkwardly.

“Yes, that.....that’s right. For understanding.....t-thank you.”

“Let’s stop this talk now. You’re my important colleague after all. Hahaha.”

.....So that’s how Ark received both the Dark Lamp and the One Thousand Visitors. Buksil’s mood was now gloomier but Ark had no interest in his feelings. He was still a guy aiming to strike at Ark’s back. He had no moral obligation to give items to someone disloyal. In addition, Ark had already considered a use for the One Thousand Visitors.

‘Huhuhu, I’ll sell it to Sid and make him place it in the trading post at Silvana. After the earnings increase then Sid’s monthly salary will also increase. Then I can receive the debt quicker and increase my secret funds!’

Currently the trading post at Silvana was earning thousands of gold. With a 3% increase, the profits would go up. Then Wolkosu could add some of it to the secret set of books. Ark just had to wait until he became the Lord of Silvana again.....Selling it to Sid would increase his secret funds. It was indeed killing two birds with one stone! What reason did he have to give it to a pig?

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“Then I should start.”

Ark placed the polished lamp on his waist. Lariette and Buksil stood up and asked.

“Are we collecting ingredients?”

Whenever Ark said ‘Let’s go,’ they automatically stood up to forage ingredients. However, Ark shook his head.

“No, we’ll go directly to the destination.”

“Huh? But you still haven’t found the lab.”

“I already know where the laboratory is. Follow me.”

Ark replied with a smile. Ark had roughly guessed the location of the laboratory while completing the Galgin’s quest. The culprit of the incident.....was the polluted river water.

‘The Galgin might’ve provided me with a clue to find the laboratory.’

When Ark investigated the river using Ingredient Identification, he found that the river was polluted from various chemicals upstream. That meant the cause of the pollution would be found upstream. But the Netherworld hadn’t developed alchemy so there shouldn’t be that many chemicals.

.....Now did they understand what Ark meant? That's right. The genius alchemist who had come to the Forest of Life a long time ago! The chemicals polluting the river were probably coming from his laboratory. If so, the answer was simple. Just go along the river to find the source of contamination. Using that reasoning, Ark headed towards the river. How far did they walk?

River flowing through the Forest of Life.

The river in the Forest of Life is full of energy. It has various nutrients and abundant plant growth, which will have an excellent effect when cooking.

He was finally able to reach the point where the river was not polluted.

'The river was polluted just before here. So the chemicals should be flowing into it somewhere around here.'

Ark mobilized his pets, Lariette and Buksil to search around. Soon after, they found a cave hidden in some nearby bushes.

Cave filled with the odour of chemicals

You have found a cave with a terrible smell in the Forest of Life. An abnormal cluster of plants never seen in the Forest of Life grows around the cave. An unpleasant mucus also sticks to your feet. For a long time, even monsters and beasts won't appear around here.

The message window flashed once he entered the cave. Then there was a look of elation on Lariette and Buksil's faces. They were also in the top 10 users who entered the Netherworld and received the title of Great Adventurer. So they also received the same skill bonus as Ark for finding the cave. However, it did not remove Ark's tension. There were unexpected risks in a new dungeon.

“Dedric, Razak, scout around the perimeter.”

“Okay.”

Clack clack clack clack!

His two experienced pets also looked around nervously. And one step, one step.....they carefully entered the cave.

Ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak ssak!

How far did they go? Suddenly Radun blinked and surveyed the area with tearful eyes.

‘Monster?’

Ark and his summons focused their attention and took an attacking stance. Then a hazy image appeared in the darkness. Dozens of monsters appeared while he was creeping along the cave wall. But there was something weird. They were floating in the air and seemed dead.

‘Eh? That monster.....?’

Ark cautiously approached the monster. And soon witnessed a strange scene. The monsters.....were trapped in a place that looked like a big water bag. To put it more precisely, they were being grown. From young to adult monsters, they were floating in the water bag like the clones that floated in a capsule in science fiction movies. He saw common monsters from the Forest of Life like the ‘Chimera=Kurometin’ and ‘Chimera=Bandit Fox.’ Ark finally realised why their names were so peculiar after seeing the capsules.

‘Chimera.....that’s right, it’s a common term.....in fantasy, chimera is a word used to describe an artificial monster. And this is Magaro’s laboratory. If that’s the case.....all these monsters were made by Magaro?’

After realizing this, he understood the peculiar abilities of the monsters. The Kurometin was probably used to protect the lab while the Bandit Foxes were used to gather ingredients to study. But after Magaro grew old and died, the controlling power was destroyed and they returned to the wild.

‘Once thing is clear.’

Just like the Magic Institute said, Magaro was a genius alchemist if he could artificially create monsters.

‘Well, it doesn’t matter since he died of old age.’

“Ah, Ark-nim.....”

Lariette came close to him and stuttered in an uneasy voice. Of course she would be scared being surrounded by dozens of deformed monsters in the darkness.

“There’s no need to panic. They’re all dead.”

Just like Ark’s words, all the monsters in the capsules had been rotting for a long time. But that just made it seem even creepier to Lariette who shuddered.

“I’m aware of that. But.....”

Ark just laughed at Lariette’s reaction. He was now 100% sure that this was Magaro’s laboratory. He assumed that Magaro’s laboratory would have documents piled up like mountains. In order to receive the quest reward, he needed to give the Magic Institute the documents found in the laboratory. And understandably, Ark had no thought about splitting it with Lariette and Buksil. It was natural. Ark had suffered so much trying to find this place.

‘Lariette-nim doesn’t know that Buksil is after Magaro’s legacy. I can’t be careless even when finding the legacy. This is a good excuse to keep Buksil in this room.’

“Then please wait here with Buksil. Looking at the atmosphere, there doesn’t seem to be any monsters. I’ll go on my own to look at the situation.”

At the end of Ark’s words, Buksil jumped with surprise.

“What do you mean? I’ve chased Ark-nim here to record your heroic adventures. But you want me to wait during this historic moment?”

“No, I can’t promise that there will be no danger ahead. And do you want to make Lariette-nim more anxious? Who will stay with her? That’s why I’m getting you to stay here.”

“B-but.....”

Ark scowled at Buksil who immediately shut up.

“I’m sorry.”

Lariette spoke in an apologetic face while Buksil avoided her eyes. Anyway, Ark left the two of them there and ran towards the treasure. The cave became increasingly brighter as he entered. It was a magical place to study medicine. A faint light glimmered from the cave wall.

‘Yes, all that medication. It made the entire wall glow.....if I had this at home then I wouldn’t need to pay my electrical bills.’

The electricity required to power the entire cave....would be out of the reach of normal people like Ark. Anyway, it was a lot of light for a large space.

‘Finally.....I finally arrived. The Genius Alchemist’s Laboratory!’

Was this the feeling of discovering a new continent? Was this how the adventurers felt when they discovered El Dorado? Ark inwardly cheered as he surveyed the area. The space Ark arrived at had numerous machines and experiments hooked up. On one side of the wall was a bookcase which

contained numerous scrolls, books and colourful liquid medicine bottles. He had finally managed to track down the genius alchemist's lab using a few clues!

'It was a good idea to use Buksil.'

The scrolls and medicines in the lab were now in Ark's possession. He didn't know what the effects would be, but since it was the work of a genius alchemist then it wouldn't be a common item. No, he could convert it into a large amount of money even if it was the low recovery potions. But the problem was the quantity. Even if he emptied his bag, he wouldn't be able to fit everything in!

'I don't know what Buksil is expecting but I'm not that easy. I will discipline him again and make him sign a contract, then pack it in his bags and send him to middle earth. But what about the materials needed to complete the quest? The quest log says that the research materials are necessary to complete it.....'

Ark entered the lab with a wily smile. At the same time, a shadow watching from the corner of the entrance trembled.

'Bastard.....I knew what you were thinking as soon as you split the group.'

The person trembling in anger was someone who Ark considered as a walking bag. It was Buksil. Buksil wasn't stupid and knew the reason why Ark had visited the laboratory alone. So he spoke to Lariette about recording Ark's historical achievement and blah blah blah.....then sneakily shadowed him. And he found Ark laughing in the laboratory. Just looking at that smile. His body trembled with anger like a Pepe seeing a dismantling knife. He could imagine Ark's devilish plan. But a wild smile flashed on Buksil's face.

"Bah, do you think this will go your way? That Ark bastard, you dared to make me work so much? But even after all your abuse and exploitation, the final winner will be me. I'll make you regret messing with me!"

Buksil put his hand into his bag and grabbed his 'secret weapon.'

'Sapjil, Ulmeok, my younger brothers.....! Please give me strength from heaven (?)!'



Buksil clenched his teeth and made a firm resolution. Suddenly a voice was heard from behind the bookcase that Ark was reaching for.

“Who is it?”

Ark was frightened and retreated. Buksil was also shocked and hid behind the corner again. Then an old man walked out from behind the bookcase. He was an old man with white hair and beard wearing rags.....He stared at Ark and looked him up and down.

“Who are you? How did you get here?”

“Can I ask how I’m talking to?”

“Huh, what an interesting friend. You suddenly came to my house and asked me who I am. Well, it’s not like I hung a nameplate on the front door.”

“Somebody’s house?”

“Yes, this is my house. To be correct it is my laboratory.”

“Laboratory? No way.....are you Magaro?”

Ark asked the old man in a surprise voice.

“How do you know my name?”

Ark’s mouth gaped open. Magaro? He was Magaro? What absurd thing was he saying? According to the Magic Institute, Magaro had disappeared many decades ago. From the records, he discovered that Magaro came to the Netherworld 100 years ago. At the time, Magaro was already older than 80 years.....if he was still alive then he would be over 200 years old. But the life expectancy in New World was 70 years old.

The granny Johansson he used Nursing on in the novice village died because her age exceeded 70 years. But 200 years old? Was he mistakenly looking for a dragon?

‘Oh damn.....what if he created the Elixir of Immortality using alchemy?’

Ark had no interest in whether he lived for 200 years or 2000 years. The problem was the piles of items in the laboratory! If they had no owners then Ark could just take the items. But if the owner was alive then how could he obtain Magaro’s legacy?

‘Dammit, dammit, dammit!’

Ark felt like grabbing the old man’s neck and squeezing. But even Ark wouldn’t kill an old man for his inheritance.

‘Then am I only able to receive the quest reward?’

Magaro had been watching him with wary eyes and asked again.

“You still haven’t answered my question. How do you know my name?”

“In fact.....I found you after being commissioned by the Magic Institute.”

“Magic Institute?”

Magaro was puzzled before he nodded.

“Ah, yes, that’s right, I think that answers it. After coming to the Netherworld, I jokingly sent some clues to the Magic Institute. Then you came here after putting all the clues together. I never thought anyone would get here.....how shocking.”

“Well, it was really difficult.”

Ark replied bluntly. Then Magaro clicked his tongue and muttered.

“But the Magic Institute is very strange. I know they have no patience, but I haven’t been missing for that long that they would send someone to look for me. Tsk tsk.....”

Ark retorted with an astounded expression.

“What did you say? As far as I know, one hundred and ten years had passed.”

“One hundred and ten?”

Magaro widened his eyes and burst out laughing.

“Hehehe, why are you joking? It’s only been 10 years since I’ve come to the Netherworld.”

“Huh?”

Ark replied with a stunned look. What did it mean? Had the Magic Institute lied to him? But why? No, it wasn’t only the Magic Institute. Even the recorded history in the valley village.....

Then Magaro continued talking.

“They must’ve also hired you to play a friendly prank. One hundred and ten? Pfff, even I’m still alive then wouldn’t I be a dragon? Well, apart from that.....yes, why did the Magic Institute send you? Did they want to say something to me?”

“They requested me to bring Magaro’s research to them.”

“Research material?”

“Yes, the research material that Magaro had been studying in the meantime.”

Ark spoke calmly. Then Magaro’s face twisted and the impression he was giving off completely changed.

“My study materials.....my research.....what I dedicated my whole life to.....”

The skin on his face started cracking and falling apart. The subsequent face that was shown.....looked like some monsters had been stitched together.....yes, it was similar to Frankenstein’s face in a horror movie that had been created with graphics. While Ark was shocked by the sudden change, Magaro grabbed his hair and howled. A metallic voice seemed to emerge.

“Research materials, research materials, research materials! I stomached the pain and degraded my flesh! The research material that I dedicated decades of my life to! You bastard.....you wanted to hide like a rat and steal it from me? Are you trying to take my life? I dare you to!”

“P-please relax. Your blood pressure.....”

“Shut up, kill! I’ll kill anyone aiming for my research!”

Suddenly Magaro shrieked. His body tore to pieces and a large monster emerged. The distorted body was painful to look at. Many spider eyes were nailed to the face, while the body looked like a lion with 10 arms attached. And there were bright coloured blister like things growing on the body. It was so horrific a monster that he felt like vomiting up his meal.....!

A red warning message floated in front of Ark.

-The boss monster ‘Crazy Alchemist Magaro’ has appeared!