

Ark Vol 11 C 2

Chapter 2

ACT 2 A Heartless City

“Huh? Nothing?”

“Yes, some came in a month ago but it was sold out immediately.”

“Then when will they come in again?”

The shabby looking merchant asked in a desperate tone. The specialty store owner just shrugged and shook his head.

“I don’t know either. Sometimes it might be a couple of months and other times it is six months. But it usually takes 4 months. Aside from the delivery date, the quantity might be very low so we would see out immediately. Well, it can’t be helped with rare items.”

“T-that can’t be.....”

When the merchant whimpered, the shop owner smiled and raised his finger.

“Although you’re quite lucky.”

“Huh?”

“Our store has a sale for guests visiting from distant places every year. All of the items on display will be sold for a 15% discount. Only until the end of this week. How about it? You’ve travelled all this way so why don’t you buy something? This place is small but there are many rare specialty items around. You’ll get a much better price than in other provinces.”

The shop owner made noises about a sale and slashed prices. If a stranger heard such talk then of course they would be tempted. But the merchant looked at the shelves and shook his head.

“.....No, thank you.”

There was a difference between a general user and specialty merchants. When trading with NPCs, the general users didn't have to worry about the price. The prices at stores such as general or weapon stores varied in different villages. There was no reason for the users to pay a big price. On the other hand, specialty merchants were different. The prices between areas were significantly large and the price would often soar or slump depending on different circumstances. Not only that, but NPCs at specialty stores would often deceive them and sell it for the previous slump price. And they didn't hesitate to push forward unpopular stock in a sale like now. The merchants who naively believed in the NPCs words would become bankrupt overnight. Transactions between an shop owner and merchant was like a sword match.

“Just think about it. It is difficult to get such quality stuff elsewhere. And isn't there a sale? Okay, if you buy items worth 100 gold even with the 15% discount then I will give you a special gift.”

If the shop owner went this far then his inventory was 100% unable to be sold.

“That's okay. I'll come back.”

“Hmm, too bad. I might've even given you 2 special gifts.... If you change your mind then come anytime.”

The shop owner was truly persistent. The merchant shook his head and waved before exiting the store.

“Bah, who is he trying to scam? I can tell just by looking at the half price inventory. Anyway, even a remote country place doesn't have any.”

The user grumbling was none other than the hobbit merchant, Sid. If it was the past then he probably would've been fooled by that sale. But now Sid was different from his old self. After tasting the bitterness and sweetness of Ark's friendly care (?), he had grown quite experiences as a merchant. No,

Sid had also obtain a large amount of fame in Nagaran as a merchant. His hard work played a role in building that fame, but it was also because of Nagaran's complicated situation.

"Two months has passed since Ark-nim left Silvana....."

Sid muttered and recalled the past. In the meantime, there had been a lot of changes among the 12 estates. Thanks to the guild sieges, the Lords changes so many times that it was hard to keep track. But a time of stability came after all the confusion. Among the many guilds challenging the Lord's seat, many could not survive the war of consumption and several successful alliances appeared. And once the alliance captured the seat, they firmly held it. There were 5 alliances in Nagaran! Once the 5 alliances occupied a seat, the area completely changed. The majority of guilds were not satisfied with one castle.

The first target of a user was to occupy a castle and become a lord. Once they became a lord, they could earn an honorary title of Viscount. And that was just the starting point. If they used their forces to occupy 3 castles then they could earn the honorary title of Earl. The dividends from the castles would also increase. If they managed to obtain 6 estates then they would be promoted to Marquis. And if they managed to get all 12 estates in Nagaran then they would receive the honorary title of 'Public King.' Although the information about 'Public King' was unknown, it was clearly the best title available. The revenue obtained would be unimaginable! It was a place where money and fame was obtained from blood. So obviously Nagaran would be plunged into the era of 'War of Conquest.'

However, the forces of the 5 alliances were almost equal. None of them had the strength to capture another castle. No, there couldn't afford to show their ambitions even if they had reserve forces. If they revealed things too soon then the remaining forces would strike at them first. So the 5 alliances held each other in check while the lesser guilds engaged in a war of consumption for the other castles. In human history, the larger powers would be plunged into a cold war while the minor powers fought against each other. The necessary requirement to survive in this cold war period was economic power. The 5 alliances had already seen this and poured money into their estate and focused on development. They would then invest in military forces when the rating of the manor increased and they received more income.

So after one month.....one of the five alliances rose to prominence. It was the Hermes Alliance which occupied Silvana directly. In the past, Alan and Ark had recognized the geographical advantage of Silvana. Once the Hermes Alliance firmly grasped Silvana, they invested a lot of money into it and became the first estate to be promoted to a C class estate. And the most significant contribution to their development was the trading post that Ark had the foresight to build. Once the lord changed, the trading post was renamed to 'Continental Commerce Firm' and received the tax from it, keeping them one step ahead of the other estates.

“Huhuhuhu, behind them is the Kerobon Sid.”

Sid smiled with satisfaction. Sid got a job in the Continental Commerce Firm thanks to Ark. The chairman of the firm was the NPC with a fanatic belief in Ark, Wolkosu. Thanks to the escalator promotion, Sid was now the business manager. He handled the purchase of all good for the Continental Firm and oversaw the sales. In one week, Sid had already moved through 10,000 gold. Thanks to these enormous transactions, Sid's various skills went up like crazy. Thanks to the experience from each transaction, Sid had long passed level 200. And not too long ago, he received the title of Kerobon that every merchant fantasized about.

“Oh, that person.....Sid!”

“He's the legendary merchant who moved thousands of gold in one week!”

“In just two months he was promoted to the foreign department of the Continental Commerce Firm”

“Weren't his results recognized a short time ago and he received the title of Kerobon from the Midus Merchants guild?”

“That's right, the decoration on his chest is only provided to merchants who have received the title of Kerobon.”

“Amazing, how many people have received the title of Kerobon?”

“But that's not all. A Kerobon merchant is able to receive VIP treatment from guilds and can get deluxe information. It is incredibly obvious what would happen with the deluxe information. His funds are probably sufficient to create 1~2 guilds.”

Whenever Sid appeared at a trading place or the Merchants guild, he was the source of envy for all merchants.

‘Huhuhu, respect. More respect!’

Sid puffed up every time. But occasionally people in the street were puzzled.

“But why would someone with so much money dress like that?”

“Yeah. Doesn’t he smell like poverty?”

Sid was wearing low level clothes. Moreover, he was so busy that he had no time to wash them properly.

“I guess rich people don’t care about their attire.”

The merchants nodded and continued speculating. But Sid’s thoughts flared up at those words.

‘Are your eyes bad? How dare you take such a pretentious air when talking about me? Damn, I have no money to eat let alone buy clothes!’

Yes, he was the foreign business manager of the Continental Firm! The merchant who moved 10,000 gold in one week! The Kerobon recognized by the merchant guild..... These facts painted him in an amazing light. But the reality was that he only earned as much as a salary man in the firm. Of course, he now had a monthly salary consisting of his wage and bonuses. It was enough for other merchants to eat and even become rich if careful. However, most of those earnings were seized by Ark.

‘Huk.....that’s why I shouldn’t fall into debt.’

At first, Ark seized 50% of Sid’s revenue. But once his earnings became better, Sid was sent this message through Roco.

-I heard your salary climbed a lot? Shouldn’t you pay of your debt first before earning money? Tell Wolkosu to send 90% of Sid-nim’s monthly salary to me.

.....A devilish human.

Thanks to that, his increased monthly salary withered and he became even more destitute. But was that all? He also often made Sid run errands. The reason Sid left Nagaran and came to this remote village was because of Ark. Not long ago, Ark once again delivered a message through Roco.

“Ark-oppa needs ‘Unicorn Horns’ for Lancel Village.”

“Huh? How many?” The rehabilitation brothers can only prepare 4,000 gold.”

‘Dammit, does he want me to lose my hair? My hands? Not once has he given me an expense fee!’

The reason Sid couldn’t lose his temper? He still needed to pay Ark back 3,600 gold....

“.....I understand. Give me the money.”

Sid sighed and replied. Then Roco asked him in a puzzled voice.

“What money?”

“I need the money to buy the items.”

“Oh, that? In fact, the rehabilitation brothers don’t have the money yet.”

“Then how do you want me to buy it?”

“I don’t know.....Ark oppa said that Sid-nim is a Kerobon? Isn’t a Kerobon allowed to borrow 4,000 gold from the Merchants guild? Just bring it to Lancel Village and we’ll settle the bill.”

“Eh?”

Sid was outraged. How could he accept that? Of course, as a Kerobon Sid was eligible to apply for a loan from the Merchants Guild. However, the loan was literally a debt. The procedure to apply was quite complicated and he needed to pay interest as well. But was that all? Once he applied for a loan, his credit rating was significantly slashed. First he had to pay back Ark.....and now he was being sent on an errand without being given once penny and would end up in further debt?

But Sid soon changed his mind. The purchase requester was Ark. He wasn't evil, but he would always pay people back. So he wasn't worried about that if he received a loan.

The loan scheme administered by the Merchants Guild had rules. The merchants guild's loan wasn't exactly borrowing gold. If they used the Merchants Guild's name as a guarantor, they could purchase items without gold. That is.....when applying for a loan from the Merchants guild, they offered an credit note. The merchant would be able to purchase items from the NPCs with the credit limit on the credit note. However, there was one limitation. The person issued the credit not must have the equivalent amount in their possession, whether it be gold or goods.

In order words, the items had to be worth 4,000 gold. In this case, if the trader only had goods worth 1,000 gold then they needed another 3,000. If their remaining belongings and goods didn't equal 4,000 gold then they would become bankrupt until the guild could reclaim the loan. It was a situation to prevent selling the borrowed gold outside of the game. If he happened to sell at a loss (e.g. meeting a thief during the determined trading period) and wasn't able to pay off the loan, the merchant would become bankrupt. It was a bad reminder of the old days when Sid owed a debt to the Merchants Guild. Anyway, thanks to this rule he could afford to buy Ark's items at reasonable prices.

'The person I can believe in the most in this world is Ark-nim. If I get a bad credit rating from the loan then surely he'll rescue me? Yes, it should be safe to go on.'

So Sid went to Selebrid where he was issued a credit not and had his credit rating cut. Then he went to the auction in Giran to find the Unicorn Horns. Forgotten memories flashed through his head.

"Wait, it was Unicorn Horns? I think I've seen that somewhere before? Oh, that's right!"

Merchants often visited the NPCs in poultry stores or the Merchants guild to obtain information on specific items.

'It's just a rumour so it is up to you to believe it or not.' Those words were 100% associated with information to make money. Among them, Sid had heard someone mention Unicorn Horns a while ago.

"Aren't the prices of Unicorn Horns rising these days? So I did a little digging. In a mountain village not far from Giran, there is a specialty store that sometimes sells Unicorn Horns."

The NPC whispered as he came close.

"There isn't a lot of them, but you can buy it for a relatively cheaper price than the market price. Well, it's still very expensive but you can likely afford it. If you're near Giran then you should stop by once."

He had registered the information and then forgot about it. But it was a great opportunity if true.

"The money Ark-nim allowed to purchase the Unicorn Horns is 4,000 gold. The present market price is 1,000 gold so he intended to get 4. But if I can get it for cheaper than market price.....wouldn't I be able to get the remaining money? Even if I buy it for 50 gold cheaper, that is still 400 gold!"

Sid's eyes gleamed at the thought of gold. While purchasing items for the Continental Firm, everything was recorded down. Isn't this a chance to get around those records? He wouldn't feel remorse, even if the opponent was Ark. Sid immediately turned around and headed towards the village selling Unicorn Horns. However, the result was a total failure! Other merchants had been told about the speciality store and already bought it. Sid had been brought to reality from his land of dreams and sighed.

"Che, I thought I could pay off a lot of my debt....."

He owed Ark 3,600 gold. He became gloomy when he thought about it. Sid sighed and took out a big piggy bank from his bag.

"I can only believe in one thing."

It was an item he had obtained by chance on one of his merchant quests.

Lucky Pig of Good Fortune

Item type: Piggy Bank

User restriction: Merchant

A nice piggy bank surrounded by gold light.

An old item that had been gathering dust on top of a mountain. If you're aiming to become rich as a merchant, you can't forget the importance of small money. This piggy bank is important for people who cherish small money and the money won't be able to be withdrawn until it is full.

1 gold every day was 100 gold.

After 100 days, he could receive a bonus 10~30 gold. The only pleasure Sid received while under this debt will filling the piggy bank.

"Huhuhu, it is half full. Yes, it's best to make money safely. If I can sneak one or two gold away from Ark-nim then someday I'll earn my independence."

The hobbit's grand dream of becoming the best merchant on the continent suddenly turned into gaining independence from Ark.

Clink, clink.

Sid felt better after hearing the sound of coins in the pig's stomach. Even though Sid was a Kero bon, he had lost his vigour.

"Now is now the time to be doing this. I have to hurry. If I'm late then I might suffer some criticism."

“Haaayaahh!”

Sid heard it as he was about to leave the village. All of a sudden, a loud cry was heard from one side. Sid automatically turned his head and saw the person exercising in the moonlight.

“Hat, hat, hat, hat! The 5,000 yelling regime is over! Next is kicks!”

“What the? That man?”

Sid asked with a puzzled look. No matter how much he looked the user was clearly a merchant covered in bags. But somehow the shape was different. What sane merchant would yell and kick on a vacant lot?

In addition, what was that?

“Kuaaak.....damn, it broke again. Ugh!”

The merchant frantically kicking the tree groaned and grabbed his swollen ankle. In order to maintain a sense of realism in New World, users who received an injury would receive a shock. However, that shock was at a similar level to static electricity. It wasn't to the extent that it would be painful. But the merchant was really moaning like a person who broke his leg. Sid couldn't understand. The person suffering in front of him was really experiencing the pain of a broken leg.....

Yes, it was the only user in New World who suffered realistic pain! The merchant was Lee Myung-ryong, no Isyuram. Sid had visited the village was Isyuram was modifying his body. Thus Sid and Isyuram had a fateful encounter.....

“There really are strange people.”

.....It hadn't even begun yet.

Sid jumped and quietly avoided that area. It wouldn't be good for a crazy person to notice him. So he once again rushed to the road that headed towards Giran. He had left the village for 10 minutes.

Grrrrrrr.

The village was so remote that there was no path for Sid to walk along. So he was walking in the woods when a low cry was audible from a distant place.

'Huk, gnoll!'

Sid panicked and jumped behind some bushes to hide his body. Soon enough, four monsters with a dog's head approached.

'Grrrrrr, strange. I thought it was in this area.....'

"No, I heard it too."

"Maybe it's that crazy merchant?"

At those words, the gnoll flinched and looked around with anxious faces. However, one gnoll shook his head and muttered.

"No, I would be able to smell him from a distance. Hold still. Kung kung kung, this is a different person. I think somewhere in the vicinity? It's faint but obviously near."

The gnoll sniffed and approached the bush.

'Ugh, why is it coming here? Huk, don't tell me.....?'

Sid quickly checked the information window frantically. After confirming that there was no lasting effects, his heart fell.

'Oh my god, has the effect of the [Safe Travel] scroll worn off?'

Even if they were highly ranked, a merchant had no combat abilities. Even a level 300 merchant wouldn't be able to beat a gnom. That's why merchants always needed mercenaries when travelling a long distance. However, hiring mercenaries for a low level area didn't fit. He would obtain a loss instead of a profit if he hired mercenaries. That's why the Merchants Guild developed the special scroll [Safe Travel]. The effect lasted 2 hours and there was a low probability of being attacked by monsters. Even if they were right around the corner, a monster with a keen sense of smell wouldn't be able to notice him. Because of that, merchants only hired mercenaries when going to high levelled areas and just used the [Safe Travel] scroll in low areas. Sid was level 200. When he used the scroll, it was impossible for him to be discovered by level 100 gnom. However, the duration was 2 hours so he had used it once and forgot about it.

'I need to quickly use the scroll before being discovered!'

Sid hurriedly opened his bag. But he couldn't see the scroll no matter how much he looked.

'T-this is....I was so busy applying for a loan in Selebrid that I forgot to buy a scroll!'

"Grrrrr, hiding in a place like this!"

"Ohh, how long has it been since we saw a hobbit?"

"Hehe, you've done excellently."

The eerie voices surrounded the hobbit who looked up fearfully. Sid got up, screamed and tried to run away.

"Grrrrr, do you think we will miss?"

"Take this!"

One of the gnolls threw his club. Pakak, the club collided with Sid's back with a heavy sound.

-You have received a critical hit to your head. 400 damage!

Kung kung kung kung!

The merchant became caught in a stunned state. He couldn't see the approaching monsters but it was obvious. The gnoll swarmed around the stunned Sid and was about to beat him up. The stun lasted 10 seconds but Sid wouldn't even last 10 seconds against the gnolls.

'Damn.....my resurrection place is Selebrid.....'

Sid swallowed his bitterness. It was incredibly difficult for a merchant to reach level 200 and of course he didn't want to die.

'There's nothing good about selecting a merchant. First I get treated like a bag by Ark-nim, then exploited because of my debt and now I'm about to become a dog's food.....'

He was so miserable that he couldn't even cry anymore. It was at that time. Just as he was in a critical condition, a voice singing ridiculous lyrics was unexpectedly heard in his ears.

"Where do you stand~ someone~ when anything happens."

".....?"

Sid turned his head puzzled. One man was slowly approaching with crossed arms.

'Eh? That man is.....?'

The gnoll and Sid all gaped at that person. Sid had seen him before. It was Isyuram who had been exercising in the moonlight. Sid looked dismayed and sighed with disappointment.

'Damn, I thought it was a warrior passing by.....but it's just that strange man? I'm going crazy. That merchant just came here to be eaten.....'

Yes, there should be two bowls of dog food. However, Isyuram was still humming and didn't grasp the mood.

"This, this, this, this, Isyuram~ tremendous energy~."

In this situation, singing a 70s theme song.....he was indeed insane. But the gnolls' reaction was surprising. The gnolls winced and retreated from the merchant.

"Grrrrrrr. T-that guy.....?"

"The Mad Merchant! The Crazy Merchant!"

"Dammit, we didn't see him for a few days so I had hoped he went somewhere else....."

"He is still a merchant. Kill him!"

Kung kung kung kung!

Sid wasn't in a shape where he could run away so he just watched. The gnolls flocked to Isyuram and swung their clubs. Isyuram just curled his lips and said.

"Heh, these guys aren't going to run away. Okay, then I'll show you the results of my training!"

Then.....Sid witnessed an incredible scene.

“Haaayaahh, Shoryuken! Adododo, jumping kick! Somersault kick!”

Merchant. No matter how much Sid looked, he saw a merchant. Nevertheless, he was almost equal to the gnolls! No, he was overwhelming. He was a merchant so he lacked defense and attack, but he avoided their attacks with amazing timing and counterattacked which had a high probability of being a critical hit. It was also surprising that he was able to use techniques such as shoryuken and jumping kick.

“Take that, Pile driver (wrestling technique)!”

Kueeeeeek!

He even grabbed the gnoll, jumped and drove it into the ground upside down. After 3 minutes, Isyuram had taken care of all 4 gnolls. Then Isyuram approached Sid who was making a ridiculous expression.

“Boy, are you okay?”

“Huh? Ah, yes.....”

Sid looked at him stunned before asking.

“But aren’t you a merchant?”

“Well, unfortunately I have such a shape.”

“But a merchant against gnolls.....and four of them.....?”

“Huhuhu, Ryu and Ken, Chun Li and Zangief are all my teachers so of course the gnolls can’t compare to me.”

Isyuram rattled on in a smug voice. But after a moment, Isyuram’s body stiffened and he paled. Then he flopped onto the ground as sweat dripped down his face.

“Ugh, d-damn.....indeed....this pain....can’t get used to it.....”

“W-what’s wrong?”

“I-I’m okay.....this much..... I’ll be fine after a little bit.....”

Isyuram clenched his teeth and shook his head. No matter how he looked at the situation, it clearly wasn’t normal. He appeared suddenly humming a 70s theme song, said that Ryu and Ken were his masters and then suddenly he looked like he was having a seizure? Sid didn’t want to hang out with these sorts of people, but he couldn’t just ignore him after being helped. Sid hesitated before sitting in front of him and waiting for the attack to end. Fortunately, Isyuram returned to normal after 10 minutes.

“Phew.....I’ve survived. Aye, you shouldn’t have seen that in our first meeting.”

“Ah, it’s nothing.”

Sid shook his head and asked with uneasy eyes.

“But what was that just then?”

“Heh, a hero’s ordeal.”

Isyuram replied with a smile. He couldn’t understand as expected. But Sid didn’t question it anymore. He was scared of what insane answer he would receive. And he had other questions.

“Then how was ajusshi able to defeat them while playing as a merchant?”

“I told you. Ken and Ryu, Chun Li and Zangief are my mentors.....”

“Then who are they?”

“Eh? You don’t know those names?”

Sid shook his head and Isyuram sighed while scratching his head.

“Hah, kids these days don’t know about them? Hyu.....I really am old. To put it simply, they were people who burned martial arts into my soul in my childhood.”

“.....?”

“The gnolls were defeated after holding the images of my teachers in my heart. But it isn’t easy using those skills. My bones have really suffered because I’m a merchant.”

Isyuram recalled his memories of the past fortnight. Yes, he couldn’t forget the fortnight of humiliation and suffering every day. As soon as Isyuram became dog food, he was immersed in his training. However, Isyuram was a merchant. His limbs couldn’t keep up with his training and kept on breaking. That wasn’t all. Sometimes he would fight against the gnolls to confirm his training and really felt the pain of dying. Since the police’s training unit was set to ‘Reality,’ he felt 100% of the pain inflicted on his character.

‘Ugh.....it really is horrible. Why would anyone play the game while suffering such pain? No matter how fun the game is, isn’t it too much? They would surely be hit in battles.....maybe everybody is a pervert?’

Isyuram couldn’t understand it.

‘Anyway, I can’t just give up. Damn, this is a matter of pride. When will this body be able to defeat the gnolls?’

Of course, this problem would be solved if he just asked someone. However, who was Isyuram? In the game he was a merchant, but in reality he had been the captain of the number 1 SWAT team. How could he give up a game because of the pain when even a school kid could play it? It was a matter of pride now.

'I don't know anything about a merchant! I just have to try until I die!'

Every time he was hit by the gnolls, a cloud formed over his eyes. And he clung even more insanely to the game. One day a miracle happened. Once again he was fighting the gnolls with a broken wrist and ankle. Isyuram's pride had been injured so much that he just persisted and clung to their legs, biting.

"Kuaaak! This vicious child, stop biting!"

"Hik, is he infected with rabies?"

Was this a joke? The dogs were talking nonsense so he continued biting. Then a message window flashed in front of Isyuram.

-You have learned a new skill.

Self Defense : You have built up your body using basic training methods.

Self Defense is a skill that only non-combat professions can learn and it allows the user to show a minimal combat ability. It is possible to reduce the risk of injury using Self Defense -You have learned a new skill.

Invincible Spirit : You're a weed who never gives up despite the desperate situation. Even if a person with Invincible Spirit gets injured, it will not interfere with their action in battle. In addition, if your

health is reduced below 50% then you will enter the 'invincible state' and a bonus will be applied to your combat power. However, all damage received during the fight will be applied after the battle finishes.

If your health falls by 70%

If your health falls by 90% and you're in a critical condition

'Eh? What is this?'

Isyuram wasn't used to playing games and couldn't understand all the information in the message window. But it wasn't necessary for him to understand. Even if he couldn't understand it with his head, he could sense it in his body.

'Eh? What kind of thing is happening?'

In fact, this was the first time Isyuram fully grasped the gnolls' attack patterns. The simple attack pattern of the NPCs wasn't difficult for someone who had experienced actual fighting. But he was being slaughtered thanks to his insufficient merchant's body. With his ankle broken he couldn't move quickly enough let alone deal damage with a broken wrist. However the situation completely changed with Invincible Spirit. If he was injured in battle then it wouldn't interfere with his actions. Isyuram's fighting abilities had such a huge effect that it transcended common sense. In addition, he learned a merchant only skill 'Self Defense' which was similar to the warrior's skill 'Sword Mastery.' Well, Isyuram was in a critical condition when he received these skills so he still died but now he could finally fight back.

"That's it, I can finally show the results of my training!"

Isyuram was completely delighted with the skill effects and went crazy. But that was Isyuram's mistake. In fact, Invincible Spirit was an illusionary skill. The additional stats were too fantastic. This skill couldn't be learned in a normal way. In the early stages of New World's production, there were a few skills that could only be learned using this method. However, feeling actual pain was too absurd so the development was stopped. Invincible Spirit was one of those skills. Of course, a general game unit could never learn a skill like this. However, Isyuram believed 100% in his training and didn't doubt the execution.

And Invincible Spirit was actually the most dangerous among the aborted skills. There was a reason for this. One reason was that they might become too accustomed during a battle and then suffered huge penalties after the battle ended.

-The battle had ended and 'Invincible Spirit' has been automatically released. 'Invincible State' has been released and all injuries received during the battle applied. Your wrist has broken thanks to the impact! Your ankle has twisted due to moving beyond its limits! Your ribs have cracked due to a blow.....

"Kuaaak, w-what is this?"

Again, Invincible Spirit wasn't a skill where he would receive no injuries during the battle. The injuries just wouldn't affect the body until the battle was over. And all those injuries would be applied at the same time. Experiencing at the same time a broken wrist, ankle, ribs.....it was so painful it felt like a truck had run over him! The reason Isyuram suddenly turned pale and started sweating was because of this penalty. An average person suffering this would've probably just fainted! He had astonishing mental strength to endure it but Sid only saw that he was having something that looked like a seizure.

Anyway, Isyuram then spend time smashing the gnolls around the village. He had caught three hundred gnolls during that period. Thus Isyuram could now completely identify the patterns of attack. Furthermore, he was able to reduce the probability of an injury but quite a lot thanks to Self Defense. So Isyuram finally felt the serious feeling of martial arts. Then it finally reminded him of a street fighting game that had been released a long time ago.

"Yes, it's better to enjoy the game a little bit."

Isyuram imitated the techniques of those characters and fought against the gnolls. So he made up some nonsense about Ryu and Ken etc. being his mentors.

"That.....are you okay?"

Sid's voice was suddenly heard from the side. Isyuram woke from his recollections with an embarrassed face and scratched his head.

“Well, I was a merchant at first but it was a fair bit of trouble.

“Indeed.”

Sid nodded and realized that he was just as strange as Sid expected.

‘I don’t understand. If he would rather fight then why didn’t he save money and change to a warrior profession? Does he have to be a merchant because of some circumstances?’

In New World, if they paid a fee of 200 gold then the former profession could be cancelled and an initial profession selected. And his predecessor had told Isyuram this information in the pile of documents left to him. As well as information about the pain settings..... All of Isyuram’s efforts were indeed wasteful. But the information was so basic that Sid thought it was impossible for the level 150 Isyuram to not know it. If Isyuram became aware of the facts now..... Well, ignorance was bliss.

“Anyway, we’ve met like this so let’s share a meal together.”

Isyuram whistled and took out a pot. Sid was glad to hear those words. He had been so heavily in debt that Sid had only eaten wheat bread for a while. But he expected a proper meal after seeing Isyuram take out the pot. The joy only lasted a moment as Sid freaked out when he saw Isyuram prepare the ingredients.

“Hik, w-what are you doing?”

“What?” I’m making food?”

“N-no way.....you’re going to eat the gnolls?”

“Ah, you’ve never eaten dog meat?”

“No, I’ve eaten dog meat.....”

“Ah, your worried about eating the gnoll meat. I was wary at first but it turned out surprisingly fine once I ate it. It is really chewy like dog meat. And it’s also good for the body.”

Isyuram casually said as he sliced off the meat and placed it in the pot. Although Isyuram was a merchant, he had managed to discover a secret. It was impossible to make dishes with every type of meat in New World. However, the meat of a monster which wasn’t classified as edible was toxic. The meat of a gnoll was toxic. Therefore most users never even considered cooking gnoll meat.

However, Isyuram just abandoned common sense and ate the meat of a gnoll. And the taste was really similar to dog meat. Isyuram was a fan of dog meat so he immediately liked the gnoll meat. Of course, the toxic gnoll meat caused an abnormal state but he didn’t pay attention to such trivial problems.

“Well, this state won’t cause me to die.....I will quickly recover. It’s not like the meat has maggots. I can’t abandon this taste just because of a little venom.”

After making two hundred of the gnoll soup, he received an unexpected skill.

-You have learnt a new skill.

Bizarre cooking : You have an interest in making dishes out of bizarre monster meat. When bizarre cooking is used, it can neutralize the toxic monster meat. In addition, if you cook a certain monster more than a certain number of times then you will instil fear in the monster.

After eating all that dog meat, even wild dogs didn’t dare come near him. The dogs instinctively felt afraid of someone addicted to dog meat. That fear was why Isyuram became a horrifying presence.

“Hrmm, everyone has ripened already. It won’t take a long time to cook. Ah, this isn’t supposed to fall in the soup.”

Isyuram swallowed his saliva and pulled a bottle out of his bag. When he first started eating the dog soup, he stopped by the village’s tavern and bought some drinks. Although the sake bottle cost 10 gold,

Isyuram had no sense in regards to money. The expensive liquor soon spread through his whole body, making it feel hot. The glow made him feel rewarded for the pain he just suffered.

“Hahaha, being able to drink and eat dog soup is like heaven after everything I’ve suffered! After a little food and alcohol, my spirit will be purged until I feel hungry again. What the? Why aren’t you eating?”

“No....I....I’ll just eat my wheat bread.”

Sid said with a frown.

“I guess your taste buds are really picky. Then drink a cup of sake.”

“But I’m still a minor?”

“It’s fine to drink with an adult.”

“Yes, then just a little....”

Sid cautiously took the cup.

‘He’s not that strange after all.’

At first he only drank one cup, then it turned to two and three before he eventually ended up drinking five cups. Sid had become so tipsy that he confessed his problems to Isyuram.

“.....So you came all the way here for an errand only to have to return in vain?”

Sid nodded at Isyuram who frowned.

“But did you say Ark? He seems like a bastard or a crook. What kind of person would make you fall into a debt and then exploit you? In addition, it is 3,000 gold so the interest is 1,000 gold? Even if this is a game.....shall I lend you a hand?”

“Hik, please stop.”

Sid panicked and waved his hands.

“Ajusshi doesn’t know how scary Ark-nim is. Ark-nim won’t take it silently.”

“Is he that strong?”

“It’s not just that he is strong. Ark-nim is definitely not a bad person. When we first met, he saved me from Leo a chaotic player.”

And then he extorted the escort price out of Sid.

“.....And he helped me when I was in really bad debt.”

In order to treat Sid like a walking bag.

“.....He also left me in charge of the enormous profits from the business in Cairo.”

Which caused him to obtain a debt of 4,000 gold.

He felt even more miserable after he spoke. Sid sighed and shook his head.

“Anyway, Ark-nim is not a bad person.....I think. He even got me a job to repay my debt and thanks to that I climbed a lot of levels.”

“Well that doesn’t matter.”

“But I have a serious problem going forward.”

“What?”

“I carelessly didn’t buy any [Safe Travel] scrolls. They’re only sold by the Merchant Guild in large cities.....I don’t know how I can make it to Giran.”

“I’ll come along.”

“Huh? Isyuram ajusshi?”

“Yes, I’m a little tired playing here so I thought of going somewhere else. And I have a reason to go to where people congregate. Giran is the nearest city around here? Then it would be better to go with someone who knows the way.”

“R-really? I would like that.”

“Okay, then let’s go.”

Isyuram finished the remaining alcohol and jumped up. Then he escorted Sid towards Giran. Of course, it wasn’t an entirely pleasant trip. They were attacked a few times by monsters. But honestly, Sid was more scared of Isyuram after the fights than the monsters.

“Huhuhu, it’s no big deal. This small amount is....Kuaaaak!”

Every time a battle finished, Isyuram would turn pale and look like he was suffering from a seizure. After the seizure, he would just get up and cook the monster.

“Hmm hmm hmm, the meat of a troll is quite tough? But it’s good when I chew it. It’s juicy so it would taste a lot better once the meat softens.”

Any troll who heard that would be frightened. Anyway, the trip filled with terror and thrills ended after half a day. Sid sighed with relief after crossing Giran’s gates.

“Thank you. I was able to reach here safely thanks to ajusshi.”

“Hahaha, I wasn’t bored thanks to you.”

“What are you going to do now?”

“Well.....”

Isyuram scratched his head. Ever since starting the game, it was the first time he had been to a place with so many people. He had been buried in the mountains and now suddenly there was a busy city with lots of noise and people.

‘I can just wander around. But the problem is.....’

Money. When Isyuram received the character, his bag had 800 gold. But his funds was empty because he bought the 10 gold sake and went on a drinking spree.

He would drink a bottle whenever he ate a monster.

‘I suffer so much fighting the monsters so what fun will the game be if I can’t drink?’

Isyuram was finally able to drink during working hours so he went overboard. Isyuram explained the circumstances to Sid who sighed.

“I’m sorry. I don’t have any money right now.....”

“Ah, no. Don’t get me wrong. I’m not asking for money.”

“But.....”

Sid used vague language and lifted his head.

“Oh, then wouldn’t ajusshi have a ridiculously amount of japtem in your bags?”

He remembered that Isyuram would put the japtem from the monsters he killed in his bag with a grunt while they were travelling together. Then Isyuram nodded.

“Yes, then I can get money from selling those things?”

“Eh? Ajusshi, haven’t you conducted any deals as a merchant?”

“Well, there are circumstances.....”

“Hah, I really can’t understand you ajusshi. If you don’t like engaging in business then why are you a merchant? Well, in these circumstances I guess I can help you. Ajusshi can sell it directly, but if a merchant like me sells it then you will receive a lot more money.”

Sid had a conceited expression on his face as he spoke.

“Hehehe, my trading skill is actually quite high. I’d be able to get at least 30% more profit. Usually I would charge a fee but for ajusshi I’ll do it for free.”

“Oh, really? Then please.”

Isyuram's expression brightened and he opened his bag. Sid became surprised and quickly shook his head.

"Don't just hand your things directly over!"

"Eh? Why?"

"You really don't know anything. I might run away with your items of course. Whenever conducting a deal, you should receive a contract first."

Why did he have to explain this to a level 150 merchant? Isyuram really seemed to know nothing so Sid explained while drawing up the contract.

-Merchant's Agreement.

Sid will sell all the items received from Isyuram and return all the proceeds. The sale price has to be higher than the purchase price. There will be no sales fee for this service.

"Take a good look. Any time you give something to a merchant, you should always receive this contract. In some cases, the person will sell it for a lower purchase price just to raise his skill so you should always add the provision that it should be higher than the purchase price.

"How complicated."

"You'll soon get used to it. Now, please hand me the items."

Sid smiled and began the trade. Sid was soon handed the items in the bag. Isyuram didn't know how to buy or sell goods. Of course, most of what he carried was monsters' leather. But Isyuram also handed over expensive trade goods and specialty products.

'Where the hell did he get all these items? Coral silk, pearls.....aren't these speciality items from the southern region? They're worth 700 gold. No, I could receive 800 gold for them. What else will there be? Eh? T-this is.....!'

Sid's face stiffened as he was handed something.

"Huh? What's the matter?"

"Ah, it's nothing." You will sell all of these?"

"Yes, will it make money? I do not know....."

"Well, let's see? I won't know until I sell it. I'll check the market price for the moment and sell it at the right price. Let's meet back here after 1 hour."

Sid muttered before quickly running to the shops area. Then he halted in an alley and quickly opened the bag.

"C-clearly....is it that?"

Yes, the item that Isyuram gave was 'that.' The unicorn horns that Sid took out a loan to buy! And there were 4 instead of just one. To make matters worse, the purchase price was set at 850 gold when he investigated using his merchant skills. Currently the market price was 1,000 gold so that was 150 gold cheaper.

'Then the person who bought the unicorn horns before I arrived in the village was Isyuram ajusshi? If he doesn't know how to conduct business then he did he get the money to buy these?'

His heart had pounded as soon as he saw the unicorn horns. Anyway, Isyuram didn't know the market price for this item. Of course the contract said he had to sell it at a higher price than the purchase price, but wasn't 851 gold higher than 850? When considered Ark's quoted price of 1,000 gold, Sid would receive 149 gold. Then he could make a profit of 596 gold? But he had already written the agreement as the sales agent. Sid couldn't snatch the item in the middle. In addition, Sid had a credit note. He could

use it in NPC run shops or auctions but it couldn't be changed to cash directly. And it wasn't possible to explain the situation to Isyuram. He would have to explain the market price value first..... What crazy guy would sell it for 851 gold when he knew that it was worth 1,000 gold?

'There is a way.'

In fact, Sid's chest pounded for this reason. He knew a method to snatch the unicorn horns for 851 gold. However, Isyuram had rescued him. And didn't it continue to accumulate on the way here? Even though money was at stake, to betray that person's trust.....

'No! Why wouldn't I?'

Sid wildly shook his head.

'Haven't I lived honestly so far? And all I ended up with was a debt of 3,600 gold. Just like Ark-nim said. Only fools get tricked in this world! Why can't I do as Ark-nim said? That's right, chances like this won't always come. I have to grasp the chance whenever possible!'

After being debt-stricken, Sid had become corrupted like Ark. Sid made up his mind and put the unicorn horns in a suitable size box before heading to a nearby store. He passed the box to the NPC of the merchants guild and said.

"I'm sorry, I have urgent reasons so there is no time to visit an auction. So can you put this item on the blind auction at the merchants guild? The condition is that it will be sold immediately when the asking price is met. And if possible, I don't want to reveal my name."

"It's not a difficult thing. I understand. You just have to pay a handling fee and it will be put up for auction under the name of the merchants guild."

"Thank you."

Sid paid the fee and immediately ran to the blind auction room. After standing in front of the auction place, the NPC finally bought the box and registered it 10 minutes later. If he needed to explain again,

nothing in the blind auction could be touched. In other words, there was no way to figure out what was in the box. However, Sid had set the selling price as 3,404 gold, the price of 4 unicorn horns at 851 gold each. Of course there was no way it would sell. Sid visited the auction house and quickly spoke to the NPC.

“I’ll buy this box!”

“Huh, this? You have no idea what the contents are and it is 3,404 gold.....that is a tremendous gamble. I understand. Then can you pay immediately?”

“I have this credit note issued by the merchant’s guild.”

“Well, you have enough credit. I understand. It will be addressed immediately.”

The salesroom NPC signed and deducted 3,404 gold from the 4,000 credit note. When Sid paid off the loan, he would only have to pay the 3,404 used at the auction and the interest. So he managed to obtain the unicorn horns without one penny. In fact, the person who came up with this method of deception was Ark. If he wanted to sell his items in a blind auction then he would use the services of the merchant’s guild. Even without any money, all he had to do was pay the handling fee to the merchant’s guild and he wouldn’t suffer an actual loss.

‘What I learned then really worked!’

Sid carried the box joyfully. After selling the other items at the stores and visiting the merchants guild, he managed to obtain the 3,404 in gold. Even after paying the merchants guild 40 gold, he still received 556 gold. Now Sid would receive that money after passing the unicorn horns to Ark.

“Huk huk huk, I’ve finished. I got a lot more than I thought.”

After a while, Sid returned to where he promised to meet Isyuram. Then he handed over the money made from laundering the japtem.

“Oh, 4,580 gold! Those items were that expensive?”

“Yes, if you look at the receipts then you’ll see I got them for more than the market value.”

“Hey, I’m lucky I met you! I’ll treat you since I have money now. Where is the most expensive tavern?”

“No, that’s okay. I have somewhere to be right now.”

“Really? Unfortunately it can’t be helped. Now, this is a tip.”

Isyuram held out 100 gold. Ah, he really was scamming this ajusshi! Sid’s conscious was poked.....for a moment. He was already scammed once. What use was feeling bad? Anyway, the world was filled with stupid, gullible people. Sid kept in mind Ark’s words and took the gold from Isyuram.

‘Hehehe, I did it! I earned 656 gold!’

Sid felt no remorse once he got his hands on the money. Ark’s 2nd generation merchant was truly growing up in this heartless city of Giran. Hehehe, those useless things were worth so much money. I never would’ve known if not for Sid. I’m glad I met such a nice guy.”

Isyuram was unaware that he had been scammed by Sid and muttered this. Well, merchants in Giran should always be aware of other merchants eager to fill their purses. The future of Isyuram who didn’t know this world was still unknown.