

Ark Vol 11 C 5

Chapter 5

ACT 5 Baran Family Rescue Mission

“Ku, kukukuku.”

Duke raised his body and giggled slowly. He alternated looking between Ark and Buksil.

“Hahaha Ark, you’re softer than I thought. Are you willing to die for a colleague?”

“What are you talking about? He’s a house pig.”

Ark blushed and declared sharply.

“Anyway you just did something stupid. I’ll make you regret it.”

‘Dammit.....you don’t need to say it, I’m already feeling regret.’

Ark inwardly sighed. Was he crazy? Plunging into enemy lines just to save a pig? By now, 50 Nakujuk had appeared..... The odds weren’t in Ark’s favour. It wasn’t something he would normally do when sane. But it had already happened. Although he acted unknowingly, Ark wasn’t the type to give up once a battle had begun.

‘I just have to get away from the enemy’s formation.....’

Ark was thinking that when something interrupted him.

“Everyone attack!”

The fifty Nakujuk rushed in unison at Duke's command. Thanks to their momentum, Ark would be pierced by fifty swords!

"Slime's Time, NO1!"

Tu tu tu tung-!

Ark's body was wrapped in a yellow slime and the swords bounced off it. He couldn't attack but he was invulnerable to all physical attack skills for 10 minutes. In fact, the Myutal were a race that couldn't develop magic. That's why he never saw any magicians in the Baran clan or among the Nakujuk at the Abyss of Despair. In other words, Ark could use Slime's Time if Jewel wasn't present.

'Okay, I can earn some time with this.'

But that was Ark's mistake.

"Bah, using that skill again.....but that's not enough!"

Duke ran and continuously shot arrows. At the same time, flames appeared where it hit Ark's body.

-You have been damaged by the exploding arrow. 450 damage!

'Ah, magic arrows!'

He forgot that Duke could use magic arrows. Magic arrows were granted a magic attribute! Thanks to 'Slime's Time,' he received 100% of the damage. But there was even more. When using Slime's Time, Ark's body was covered in a viscous liquid. So his sword became soft and he inflicted 0 damage. In that situation Ark couldn't even fight back.

“Kukukuku, did you think I would fall for this again?”

Duke sensed this and enthusiastically shot his arrows. Flames were rising everywhere and his health was decreasing.

‘Dammit, I knew I shouldn’t have done it. I accomplished nothing and only made the situation more complicated.’

Ark shot Buksil an angry look. Why did he have to suffer so much because of this guy? But there was no way to run once he took action. Ark grabbed Buksil by his collar and shouted.

“Why are you just standing here? Let’s go!”

“Huh? Ah, yes!”

Buksil was surprised and ran after Ark.

“Do they think I will miss?”

Duke chased after them and shot his magic arrows, engulfing them in flames.

‘With these odds, I’m unlikely to be able to get away!’

Ark rolled on the floor with Buksil and clenched his teeth. Duke’s profession was a ranger. The ranger’s default movement speed was faster compared to other professions and he could also track their trail if the path split. Was that all? His ability to detect stealth was the worst for rogue type characters.

‘But there is a way!’

Ark grabbed Buksil and pushed through the Nakujuk with Dark Dance.

“Kill them!”

The Nakujuk swung their swords as Ark twisted among them. But Ark was invincible against physical attacks when covered with slime! Rather, he made it difficult for Duke by leaping between the Nakujuk.

“What the? T-these morons, get out of the way!”

Ark moved among the fifty Nakujuk who were hit by some of the flying arrows instead. But the magic arrows even triggered splash damage. The Nakujuk were caught in an explosion. The Nakujuk belatedly noticed this too late and scattered all over the place. But Ark didn't willingly let them get away. He clung onto the Nakujuk like a leech.

“You rat bastard. But time is running out. You won't stand a chance!”

‘It definitely will be tough to win this.’

Ark had to use the Nakujuk as shields until time ran out. Once Slime's Time ended, the Nakujuk would be able to hit him with their swords. He would definitely not be able to avoid all those swords. However, Duke was forgetting one thing. If Duke was acting more calmly then he would've noticed straight away.....

Even though he was cornered, Ark's pets who always followed him wasn't there and neither was Lariette.

‘Slime's Time is almost finished. Are they almost done?’

Ark's stomach went tight as he determined the time remaining on his skill. There was only 10 seconds left when Dedric's voice flowed into his ears.

“Master.....ready.....it's finished.”

At the same time, the slime disappeared from Ark's body. Fire burned in Duke's eyes.

"His skill has ended. Attack!"

"Ooh oh oh oh!"

As expected, the Nakujuk ran up and stabbed their swords. Ark used Riposte to push back the group of Nakujuk. The Nakujuk collided with their colleagues and fell down in a huge mass. Ark quickly stepped past the Nakujuk and ran towards the narrow gap between the hills.

"Kukuku, what a foolish fellow. You should've run away to some other place.....After him!"

The Nakujuk followed closely behind Ark and swung their swords. Ark confirmed that all fifty of the Nakujuk were coming and took out the Saw Blade. After converting it into a whip, he twisted it around them and gathered the group together. Ark held the Saw Blade and shouted towards the top of the hill.

"Now Radun!"

It was at that time. A giant lizard jumped out from the hill. It was Radun transformed into Radunma. Radun blocked the Nakujuk from the entrance of the hills, making them flinch.

"Huk, what, what the?"

"Radun, just push against them!"

Ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak ssak!

Radun let out a sharp cry and pressed his body against the Nakujuk. Thanks to the narrow gap between the hills, the Nakujuk was pushed back.

"Damn! What, this lizard is?"

“Kill them, tear them apart!”

“Huk, wait a minute.....I-look behind you!”

The Nakujuk tried swinging their swords. Then one of the Nakujuk saw something behind it and screamed. Radun had pushed the Nakujuk inside a hill....there was a round circular shape that looked like a mirror. Then all the Nakujuk disappeared, making it seem like a lie.

“What, what the? What happened? Eh eh?”

While being pushed by Radun, the Nakujuk had been swallowed by that circular space.

‘Success!’

A satisfied smile spread on Ark’s face while he watched from the hilltop. Yes, this was the strategy that Ark thought of. He had jumped off the hill to save Buksil, but before that Ark entrusted Lariette with one item. She used the ‘Dimensional Movement Powder’ to draw a circle on the hill to middle earth while Ark bought some time. He didn’t have to explain the reason. The Nakujuk entered the hill and was transferred to middle earth. Fortunately, only 500 grams of the precious powder was used. While the Nakujuk were being swallowed by the dimensional gate, Duke came running.

“Grab that bastard Ark....eh? Where did everyone go?”

Duke looked around with stunned eyes. All the Nakujuk gathered in that narrow space had disappeared so of course he was puzzled. Ark just grinned from above and said.

“They were sent to a good place. They’ll probably receive a warm reception.”

“You, you.....what the hell did you do?”

“I told you. They were sent to a good place. But there is no space for you.”

“You bastard....!”

Duke lifted his bow. But Ark was many times faster. Ark pushed off a tree branch as he jumped down and his heels landed on Duke’s head. It was like a 10 metre thunderbolt dropping down. Duke’s face was smashed into the ground and he became stunned.

“Now, shall we fight fair and square? Of course, I’ll be fighting fairly.”

Lariette, Razak and Dedric stood around them smiling. Thus Duke’s fate was decided.

“Razak, prevent that guy from running away!”

Clack clack clack clack, daeng kang!

Razak pushed Duke back using his sword, while Duke couldn’t grasp the situation.

“Hahaha, didn’t you hit me with the exploding arrows before? It might’ve only hit this body for 3 seconds, but I store a grudge for 300 years. Take this, Dark Dash!”

Dedric chattered next and rushed into him.

“Ugh, those fellows.....!”

Duke remained baffled and fired arrows all over the place. However, nobody in Ark’s group was idiot enough to be caught by one of the blindly fired arrows.

No, there was one.

“Ugh!”

Buksil screamed as an arrow hit his bulging stomach. His health was already low and he fell into a critical condition. It really was ridiculous.

“You idiot, don’t stay too close. Lariette-nim, the 3 piece set of offensive buffs please!”

“Yes, the great warrior’s soul.....Hero’s Spirit, Warrior’s Concentration, Storm Breathing!”

His damage, attacks speed and critical hits rose thanks to the buffs. However, there was no need for him to receive the buffs.

‘What the? Is this guy really Duke?’

Duke’s health dropped to 30% before he understood the situation. Even though the situation was bad, Duke was a pioneer and regrouped before starting a counterattack. When they fought in the Evil Silrion, every shot by Duke felt like a special move. But now they were too weak. Of course, it wasn’t like Duke weakened. If that was the case.....

‘Have I become that much stronger in the Netherworld? Enough to feel like a pioneer is nothing?’

In fact, it was the inevitable result. Duke had been engaged in the sieges at Silvana. And the biggest drawback of the siege was the penalties when dying and that no experience was received from defeated users. In the long run it wasn’t possible for him to grow that much and the same thing happened in the Netherworld. It wasn’t possible to hunt since they were chasing Ark. On the other hand, Ark had hunted in the ice cave and the Abyss of Despair after coming to the Netherworld. His level was already overwhelmingly above Duke. After being helped by Lariette, it was impossible for Duke to be a match. Duke realised it as well.

“T-this is impossible...!”

“Why is it impossible?”

Dedric smiled boldly and smacked him in the back of the head. Thanks to Ark's overwhelming strength, even his pets were acting dismissively.

"Dammit, we'll see! Cheetah Feet!"

Duke was eventually forced to admit the difference in strength between him and Ark. Once his pride was lost, he thought of escaping using Cheetah Feet. It was an escaping skill that increased his movement speed by 30%! But Ark had been aiming for that moment.

"Sprint!"

Ark shot forward like an arrow and slashed Duke's leg. In his completely defenceless state, Duke received a critical hit. However, Ark wasn't aiming for the abnormal state then the damage.

-The additional 'Cutting' effect of Drastic Measures had been activated.

Cutting! When he succeeded in 'Cutting,' he could cut off a monster's limbs. But against a user, he could only sever the tendon. Anyway, Ark succeeded in the using 'Cutting' and slowed down Duke's movements. Rather than his movement speed slowing down, he couldn't even move that leg. At the same time, the 'Cheetah Foot' skill was released from his legs.

"T-this is.....!"

Duke had suddenly become a 2nd grade disabled person and tried to counter attack. However, both legs were required for a ranger to shoot his bow accurately and with a fast firing speed. Thanks to one leg being unusable, the firing speed of his arrows went down by 50% and kept on missing. Ark avoided the arrows and damaged the other leg. After a couple of minutes, Duke was forced to the ground as his other Achilles tendon was cut. But that was not the end of Ark's brutality.

"Damn, just kill me!"

Duke shouted with desperation but Ark just smiled and shook his finger.

“I can’t finish this so easily. Now, this time is the arms!”

“What, what the?”

He moved around Duke and attacked his arms. After a while, Duke was down to 3% health while his arms couldn’t move. Thus Duke changed from a 2nd grade to a 1st grade disabled person with none of his limbs working.

“Y-you.....!”

Duke talked wildly with his face in the ground.

“Ark-nim, I know you’re angry.....but it is too much.”

When Lariette looked at him with pity, Duke’s face became hot. Indeed, a pioneer looking so shabby and being pitied would definitely injure his pride. But Ark wasn’t trying to injure Duke’s pride when he did this. There was a wide and deep meaning for his actions.....

Ark walked up with Buksil who had a swollen face and laughed.

“Buksil, now it’s your turn.”

“Huh? What?”

“What? Do you need to ask? You don’t know why I bothered slicing his limbs?”

“Well, let’s see? There’s a serious problem in Ark-nim’s personality.....”

“What the?”

“Oh, no, how could I possibly understand the deeper meaning behind Ark-nim’s actions?”

“Ah.....you’re right.”

Ark looked at Buksil with pity in his eyes before speaking.

“Is your head okay? Your memory? Don’t you remember what happened a few minutes ago? He beat you up. If I hadn’t stopped him then he would’ve killed you. But there’s even more. You brother Sapjil had no choice but to die in the Abyss of Despair because of those guys. With your enemy so close to you, I had to make sure that a chicken like you could get some payback.”

“But I’m a merchant. I’m not strong like Ark-nim.”

Buksil sighed with a gloomy face. Ark wrapped an arm around Buksil and bent down. He then whispered a secret into Buksil’s ears.

“It’s okay. Now that guy is weaker than you.”

“Then perhaps.....?”

“Think of it as a New Year’s gift.”

Ark smiled sweetly. Buksil looked at Duke dumbly for a moment. But Ark was behind him whispering ‘Show me you’re a man, take revenge for you brother!’ and a slow smile grew on his lips. Then he finally took out a stick and started hitting Duke.

“Hahaha, didn’t you hit me before? Take this! This and this!”

Wouldn't a weak man become more violent when he suddenly gained power? That described Buksil perfectly. After experiencing the taste of endorphins like adrenaline and dopamine, he went into a completely frenzied state and beat up Duke. His eyeballs rolled around and he went into a dangerous state. However, Buksil was still Buksil. The frenzied state did not last long.

"You....bastard.....Buksil.....I'll remember your name and face..... You'll soon see.... "

Duke's face was dyed with colours from bruises and glared at him with his full power. Buksil suddenly felt like cold water had been poured on his spirit.

"Ack, w-what have I done.....?"

Buksil realized what a huge mistake he had made at Ark's urging. Buksil already knew Duke's identity. He was one of the pioneers of the Hermes Alliance, one of the 5 alliances settled in Nagaran! It was no different from antagonizing the Hermes Alliance. If a mere merchant built up such a large grudge then he would have to give up the game.

"No, I.....it's not my idea...."

Buksil stuttered as he stepped backwards.

No, it was when he attempted to step back. Someone pushed him as he stepped back and he ended up stepping on Duke's face.

.....It was a critical hit.

Duke's health disappeared from the blow. Buksil jumped and quickly tried to give excuses. But Ark went forward and clamoured loudly.

"Indeed Buksil! That last blow was the best. I never thought you would end it by stepping on his head. You never even blinked an eye at his threat. Wonderful!"

“N-no, Ark-nim! I never meant to do that.....”

“Ugh! Okay, you son of a bitch.....! You’ll see.....!”

Duke eventually hung his head and died. A pioneer had literally been stepped to death by a merchant. Duke had been raging with anger when he was stepped on and died so Buksil’s immediate future was dark. But Buksil’s tragedy didn’t end there. With two dings, a new message window appeared.

-Buksil has murdered a player and became chaotic!

“Huk, c-chaotic!”

Buksil screamed when he saw his name turn to red. Ark smiled wickedly while watching Buksil.

‘Huhuhu, just as planned.’

Yes, that was the reason why Ark made Duke unable to fight and incited Buksil. Jewel’s group had stormed the NPC village and occupied it. Thanks to clever planning, Jewel, Duke and Hermes members managed to avoid becoming chaotic. In order to avoid becoming chaotic, they would attack and then avoid dealing the final blow. That was the problem. If Ark killed Duke then he would become chaotic. Of course, users had methods to avoid becoming chaotic even if they killed someone. If he received the first attack then the opponent’s alignment would temporarily fall and become grey. In that person was killed then he wouldn’t become chaotic. But Buksil had been so excited it wasn’t possible to think and he attacked Duke first.

‘I’m level 280 so the chaotic penalty will be quite extravagant!’

He realised this while fighting Duke. So he made Duke unable to fight and forced the kill onto Buksil.

‘Huhuhu, I’ve taken care of Duke and Buksil.’

Being chaotic was a disaster for a merchant. They wouldn’t be able to freely enter or leave a village. In addition, their combat abilities were lower than warriors so they couldn’t defend against hunters. They

would have to stay in jail until their chaotic state was released. A chaotic user was also likely to be robbed by general users.

‘And now he had a hostile relationship with the Hermes Alliance.....’

It wasn’t possible for Buksil to live without Ark’s protection anymore. Although he was acting a little suspiciously before, as a chaotic user would he dare attack Ark without any hesitation? So he was protected from betrayal until the chaotic state was released. Killing two birds with one stone. No, three birds!

‘Hahaha, why am I this smart?’

Ark smiled warmly and approached Buksil.

“Well done Buksil. You are indeed a man!”

“Huh? I, I.....”

“You proudly took revenge on your brother! Huhuhu, aren’t you thankful? But don’t forget whose protection you’re under. You owe me one. Do you understand?”

The poor merchant was dropped into a hopeless despair while Ark patronized him.

‘It was planned! That bastard expected this from the beginning! I actually felt grateful to him for a moment.....I’m so stupid!’

Buksil hurled curses at himself. However, the bus had already left. His weakness had been grasped and all he could do was suck it up.

“Ark-nim, now what?”

Then Lariette and Bona who had been hiding asked.

“Let’s see…….”

Ark sighed and shook his head. The problem regarding Duke was resolved.

‘Let’s organize my thoughts for a moment.’

Ark’s main purpose was to save Beseutyu in order to find a clue for the quest. But it was close to impossible at the moment. Ark’s present power consisted of Lariette, a pig, a child and a dog. Against Jewel’s group and the 400 Nakujuk, it simply wasn’t possible to him to rescue Beseutyu.

‘If that’s the case, the only remaining way is…….’

Ark glanced at Bona and asked.

“Bona, didn’t you say that Beseutyu wanted to ask for help from other villages? Are there a lot of the Baran clan spread throughout the south?”

“Yes, very much. There are many several times larger than this village.”

“Will they help us if we find them?”

That was the method Ark came up with. It was too difficult to save Beseutyu by himself. In addition, he didn’t have the power to prevent the Nakujuk from taking over the Netherworld. After the Baran were told of the threat, they would have no choice but to rally against the Nakujuk. But Bona sighed and shook his head.

“It isn’t easy to meet the Baran clans since they are spread throughout the south. And visiting them to ask for help is ineffective. The Baran don’t know how to fight.”

“What? What are you saying? Then what you said earlier.....?”

“In fact, the Myutal with a warrior’s lineage is the Baran clan. When the Baran used to live in the north, they would constantly fight against monsters and the Nakujuk. They would go out in groups and fight against the Nakujuk. But eventually the Baran were chased from the north by the Nakujuk and they dispersed in the south. The Baran won’t move unless all the clans move.”

“Then shouldn’t we go and visit them?”

“It’s difficult because the tribes don’t interact with each other. There is a method to call them.....by lighting the Pledge Beacon.”

“The Pledge Beacon?”

“Yes, it’s a beacon on top of the Golgi Mountains. But the only one who can light the beacon is an elder of the Baran clan. And Grandpa is the only elder in our village.”

.....In the end he still needed to rescue Beseutyu.

‘Unbelievable. Why is it so complicated?’

Ark felt like his insides were burning. Jewel would soon figure out that Duke died. Of course Jewel would furiously leave the boundaries of the village in order to catch Ark. With Ark’s current strength there was no way to defeat them. But he couldn’t run away blindly.....

‘Wait? That Jewel.....?’

At that moment, a huge exclamation point appeared in Ark’s head.

‘There may be a way!’

Ark raised his head and looked at Duke's corpse lying on the ground. An evil grin appeared on Ark's mouth.

"Shall I give it a try?"

"Huhuhu, it is moving faster than I thought."

Jewel gave the tower being built a warm look. Jewel finally felt rewarded after suffering and dying.

'I never thought I would get such a good fortune in the Netherworld.'

Jewel reviewed the memories of the past few days. Not long ago, they had been besieged by Nakujuk after chasing Ark. While Jewel's group was desperately fighting the Nakujuk, they unexpectedly encountered a user with red hair. And there was an unexpected proposal. If the Hermes Alliance helped the Nakujuk conquer the Netherworld, portions of the southern region would be handed over to them. Jewel immediately informed Raiden of this fact. Since they had a way of contacting Raiden, Jewel hadn't been concerned about entering the Netherworld.

"There's no reason to refuse. Because I can break the alliance anytime with Trick."

Raiden left full control of the Netherworld to Jewel. Thus the Hermes Alliance joined forces with the Nakujuk. After they allied, the Hermes members and Nakujuk immediately took over the valley village. The Nakujuk couldn't conquer the Netherworld because they couldn't cross the northern mountains. There could use the Draken to carry them across. But the Baran clan regularly patrolled the skies using their skyrays and they couldn't bring across enough men to invade the south.

The reason 400 Nakujuk were able to move to the south was because of Jewel. In order to move the troops, Jewel used 'Mass Teleport' which was an advanced skill of the Stalker. Of course the movement distance wasn't too far so it had to be used a few times, but the skill managed to move the troops safely to the south. And eventually they succeeded in invading the valley village.

“Once the tower at the outpost is finished, we can start conquering the Netherworld. Taking over the Netherworld would be simple with this tower!”

Jewel looked at the plans and smirked. That’s right. Ark had already guessed that Jewel was creating the tower in order to use letter movement. And the tower in the north had already been completed by the Nakujuk. When the tower was complete, thousands of Nakujuk would pour into the south from their headquarters.

“How the hell did he manage to get his hands on these plans?”

Jewel was once again startled by the amazing plans.

Reception Tower for Letter Movement Plans (Architect: Magaro)

You can build a reception tower for letter movement.

When you build the reception tower, you will be able to teleport from connected towers using the ‘Letter Movement Orb.’ In addition, the technology in these plans is one step higher than the towers created on middle earth. It is probably because alchemy has modified the original design.

These plans were also given to them by the Red Man.

Jewel had advanced magic while the warriors had advanced alchemy and architecture so they were able to immediately build the tower. That was probably why the Red Man requested Jewel’s help. He was able to control the Nakujuk and get a rare plan yet he passed it to some unknown users. But Jewel didn’t think too deeply.

‘I don’t know what he’s up to but he’s only one person. We can easily defeat him after we conquer the Netherworld. And after Nagaran is controlled.....’

Raiden and Jewel were satisfied with what the Red Man gave them. Once the Netherworld and Nagaran were fully controlled, they would have time to obtain the treasures in the Netherworld.

‘Raiden has entrusted the Netherworld to me so I have to conquer it!’

Jewel was dreaming about the rosy future. Suddenly someone approached from far away with an odd gait. Jewel frowned with confusion.

“What the? Duke? How did it go? That kid?”

Yes, it was none other than Duke who went chasing after Bona a few hours ago. But why was Duke’s state so weird? His face was black with bruises and his eyes seemed like it couldn’t focus. He also didn’t have any of the Nakujuk that left with him.

“Why are you alone? And what happened to your face?”

Then Duke hesitated before bending down and writing something.

-There’s no time. Ark has come.

“What? A-Ark?”

Jewel asked with surprise while Duke nodded.

“Where? Where is he?”

-Near the eastern forest. We have to hurry. That guy returned to the village and ran away when he saw us.

“What, what the? So right now.....!”

-The problem is that he's not alone. The reason he came back here was to take care of us. Do you remember the previous colleagues we saw at the siege? He brought them here.

"He gathered his colleagues? How?"

-I do not know. Anyway, the Nakujuk were completely killed by them. I barely got away. Thanks to that, they know we have an alliance with the Nakujuk. So he'll probably run away again. If we don't follow him quickly with our forces then we'll lose him.

Jewel's heart was frantic after Duke's explanation. An opportunity to capture Ark had arrived at Jewel's feet. There would be no time to catch Ark once they started conquering the Netherworld with Ark. They had to get revenge while the opportunity was still here. So Jewel quickly gathered some troops.

"They should have 50 people if he gathered his old colleagues. I'll leave some troops in the village with everyone else chases after Ark. Hurry up!"

Jewel left 150 troops to monitor the residents while chasing after Ark with the rest of the Nakujuk and Hermes members. Then Jewel suddenly asked Duke something.

"Ah, but why have you suddenly bothered with writing everything?"

Duke flinched. After a moment he nodded and wrote.

-My throat is swollen badly after a cold.