

Ark Vol 12 C 2

Chapter 2

ACT 2 Netherworld GO, GO, GO!

Rattle, rattle.

“Come on quickly.”

“What do you want? Well, it’s not a big deal so just roughly pick something.”

The 3 merchants yawned and muttered when the bell rang. Their gaming life had become quite different since they’ve met Ark and thanks to their older brother becoming chaotic, the three little pig siblings were now salesmen at Ark’s Comprehensive Store for a low wage. Although they were semi-compelled to take the job, the three pigs didn’t hate it that much. In fact, the three little pig brothers were doing quite well thanks to the game system. This was because.....merchants raised their skills and levels through various transactions. If they sold a lot of things at once then their growth would naturally be faster.

When their level increased, they could buy items for a cheap price and then sell it for a more expensive price. The three pig brothers began by Buksil purchasing and selling rare goods. Therefore Buksil managed to raise his level faster than other merchants, which led to him buying items for a cheaper price and subsequently raising Sapjil and Ulmeok’s levels. Even if they were incompetent, they were able to become better merchants using this shortcut. But Buksil had accompanied Ark so the two of them couldn’t do that sort of work anymore. After they died, it was common for them to lose money and experience in transactions. Thus they were grateful when Ark approached with the offer of a job.

‘At least we won’t lose any experience working here. We also receive a salary. Yes, it’s not that bad to be a salesman here until hyung-nim accomplishes his historical feat. We can’t work in the meantime so this shop is good.’

That was the three little pig brothers’ intentions. They had been a little uneasy about Ark’s Comprehensive Store at first but now it was fully settled. Its revenue was around 1~2 times more than the other stores in Lancel village. Thanks to that, the three pigs were so busy that they barely had time to eat. However, the three pigs exercised patience and waited for a chance.

‘That Ark is not a merchant. He prepared the store but he won’t always be here.’

‘He will end up going somewhere else in the world! We can just waste time during business hours!’

‘It will be a win-win situation when that Ark leaves.’

Therefore they snorted when Roco was appointed as store manager.

‘Bah, we have to listen to a girl’s orders?’

‘Huhuhu, we’ll make her cry when Ark disappeared.’

‘You’re mistaken if you think we’re innocent little pigs.’

The three pig brothers smiled sneakily and thought brutal thoughts. Roco definitely had experience from her part-time job at the mart. She was proficient at stock and cash counting as well as dealing with customers. However, she was still just a girl and would have insufficient force compared to Ark. So the three pig brothers thought up devious schemes while listening to Ark. They immediately revealed their true colours when Ark left the store. They were as heinous as planned! They didn’t do inventory or cleaning, ate during rush hours and left the customers waiting.

“Huhuhu, you see? We can do this too.”

“Hyung-nim, I’m a little shaky doing bad things like this.”

“It’s okay. Just think about hitting Ark. In addition, we should’ve got a salary for 12 hours of doing nothing which is 60 gold a month.” But we didn’t even get our shares!”

In fact, thinking about it that wasn’t their actual salary. A month in New World was 10 days in reality, so their monthly income in reality would be 180 gold. That was quite high for a part time job in the game. But that was Ark’s trap. Ark previously seized a contract where the three pig brothers would provide him with 50 gold each month. However, the current balance of the three pigs had reached rock bottom

thanks to the failed transactions so the payments had been put off. Thanks to the salary, Sapjil and Ulmeok could now pay Ark the support money. Therefore those two only got a monthly salary of 10 gold. With the money for food and boarding deducted, it was actually only 1 gold. It wasn't an exaggeration to say that it was exploitation.

"Huk, I've suddenly become sad."

"Don't cry, don't falter. Anyway, we're going to make Ark drink water."

Buksil, Sapjil and Ulmeok became more inspired and acted even worse. They pretended in front of Roco but once Roco left they would greet visitors with annoyed expressions. The sales which had gone up like crazy suddenly dropped after a few days.

"How much for this item? I don't know."

The three pigs murmured without even looking at their guests. Whenever they replied this way, the visitors would just look around and then leave. However, the reactions of the guests was different this time.

".....I definitely heard that."

"Maybe they need a decent education?"

The guests gossiped between them before 1 person suddenly approached the counter. He was a huge man with wide shoulders and bright eyes. He glanced at Sapjil and Ulmeok playing cards before suddenly hitting the counter and yelling.

"Attention!"

"Huk, why, why did you do that?"

"Why? Aha, that's a good question."

The man laughed before grabbing Buksil's collar and lifting him up.

"I feel like beating up an unfriendly salesman whenever I see one."

"Huh? What are you.....?"

"Noisy!"

Pepepek, snap, crunch, jjeok!

The effect of various forms of violence endured inside the store. The three pigs lost their spirits as they suddenly became punching bags. Of course, a user didn't feel any pain when hit inside the game. But that didn't mean they felt nothing. There was a jolt of static electricity every time they were hit. It wasn't to the extent that they felt pain but they still suffered. In addition, a critical hit caused 3~4 times the shock so it really felt like they were dying.

"Huk, robbery!"

"G-guards, help us. These people are trying to kill us!"

The three pigs shouted as they barely managed to open the door. A few guards were patrolling so some of them turned their heads when they heard the SOS.

"T-that's it. You unscrupulous people, you guys are now....."

"These brats are really noisy."

However, instead of running away the group of men just stepped on them harder. What was going on? Why weren't they scared even though the guards were notified? They were even more amazed at the guards' absurd reaction.

“Ah, Captain. When did you come?”

“Oh, it’s you guys?” I arrived a short time ago.”

“Why are you beating up those pigs?”

“It’s no big deal. Just doing some work.”

“I understand. If you need any help then just call us.”

The guards saluted before going away. What was with this absurd situation? They were good salesmen in the village so why wasn’t the guards helping them? In addition, didn’t they call for help? Yet the guards just left even after seeing the them being beaten up? It wasn’t just the guards. The nearby residents also witnessed such atrocities yet they didn’t care. Even the Meow clan elder Hassan waved to the leader of the group before disappearing after a leisurely chat.

‘What the? What on earth is going on?’

‘Are we invisible to the residents?’

The three little pig brothers couldn’t understand their current situation. They were being beaten up for no reason yet no one came to save them. Why was this unfair thing happening to them? The three pigs shed tears while screaming with pain and chagrin.....

“Why are you doing this?

“Huk, please stop hitting us. We’re good pigs!”

They were almost half crazy by the time they heard the voice of salvation.

“Omo? This is.....?”

Roco had gone to the training camp to receive the ingredients from the Baran clan and had finally returned. The three pig brothers caught the hem of Roco’s skirt.

“S-store manager!”

“Save us. We didn’t do anything wrong but those people are trying to kill us!”

The three pig brothers shouted as they pointed towards the group of men. The three pig brothers always treated Roco badly when Ark wasn’t present. But in this situation they had no choice but to ask for her help. Roco had a regretful expression as she wiped off the three pigs’ nosebleeds and protested towards the group.....

“Oppas, what is this? I told you not to hit their face so why did you hit their faces?”

“Uh, did you? I’m sorry. I unconsciously did it.”

“How can they engage in business when their faces are like this?”

Roco smiled as she meticulously polished the faces of the three pigs before getting up.

“Okay, it’s done now. Please continue.”

...What was she saying?

Buksil wore a stupid expression as he looked between Roco and the group. Which reminded him.....he had seen those guys before. They were the 11 people previously seen in Selebrid with Ark! That’s right, it was JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members. He finally remembered. Then Buksil saw it. There was a light smile on Roco’s face..... At the moment, Buksil felt like it was the climax of a terrifying horror movie.

'Oh my god, it was this. The thing Sid mentioned.....!'

He understood the entire situation after seeing Roco's smile. When Ark left Lancel village, Sid also returned to Silvana. At that time, Sid and Buksil were familiar with each other and Sid seemed to have guessed his plan. After Ark left, they planned to ignore Roco and make a mess of the store..... Then Sid put his hands on Buksil's shoulders and said in a serious voice.

"Whatever you're thinking now, it is better to stop. You don't know how scary Roco-nim is. Do you think Ark-nim won't see what you're doing?"

However, Buksil forgot about it as soon as Sid left. After Ark left, it was just Roco and the three pig brothers remaining. Roco was just holding the store until Ark returned. So the three pig brothers judged Roco to be too nice and did their own things. But he should've listened to his senior's words.

'Then Roco incited all of this.....devil, that woman is the devil!'

Buksil felt like he saw black wings flapping behind Roco. The Devil's girlfriend was also a devil. He realized this simple fact too late. After the three pig brothers were turned into mincemeat, Roco guided JusticeMan and the rehabilitation group to the 2nd floor. JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members surveyed the store.

"Yah, I heard about it but that Ark really did set up a store."

"At any rate, when did that Ark managed to prepare this?"

"Isn't there quite a lot of items?"

"By the way.....you're managing this store for the moment?"

"Yes, the situation is like this."

Roco smiled and put on a mock-concerned expression.

“But didn’t oppas act too severely just then?”

The sound of groaning pigs could be heard downstairs. In fact, Roco had suffered quite a lot because of the three pig brothers. She had to work hard to earn gold in order to build that house on the blue meadow.....but the situation turned bad as soon as Ark left. Thankfully the sales hadn’t decreased that much after Ark left. Roco also had experience with this thanks to her part time job. Often the men working at the convenience store would pick on Roco after the boss left. But that wasn’t all. Sometimes they would even start openly talking dirty. Of course, the three brothers didn’t take it that far but they were similar in that they looked down on women.

‘It would be resolved in an instant if I told Ark oppa.....’

But she didn’t want to act weak when Ark trusted her with the store manager position. That’s when she remembered that the rehabilitation members were coming to Lancel after they left Jackson. She explained it to JusticeMan who thought up this plan. While the three pigs were being beaten up by JusticeMan, Roco would appear and indirectly plant fear into them.

“You don’t have to worry. Just do it so that those guys will notice.”

“That’s right, if they see signs that you’re worried then they’ll start acting up again.”

“Daring to bother Roco and smashing Ark’s shop, they must be insane.”

“We’ll take care of it.”

“We’re professionals at disciplining guys like this.”

“Instead Roco, you finally did it!”

“Huh?”

“Huhuhu, aren’t you looking after Ark’s livelihood?”

JusticeMan smirked and muttered.

“If a man trusts his livelihood to you then it’s already over.”

“Have strength Roco. Now there’s only one step left. Oppa will cheer for you.”

“Aye, it’s not like that. By the way oppas.....”

Roco got up with a sulky face. She placed several different types of herbal medicines on a tray and placed it on the table.

“These are the goods in the store. Take a look at the flavour.”

Roco truly had a friendly personality.

“Oh, as expected of our cutie. We only have you.”

“Eat a lot. You probably didn’t eat properly while in the underground labyrinth of Cairo.”

“U-underground labyrinth!”

The rehabilitation members’ hands there were reaching for the food paused at Roco’s words. And their faces became gloomy as they looked at each other.

“That’s right, we couldn’t eat properly.

“It’s was three months. Never seeing sunlight, stomach starving while hunting skeletons and slimes for three months..... Meanwhile we.....”

“When compared to the underground labyrinth, a jail cell is like heaven. At least you get to see the sun.”

“Ugh, let’s stop. I’m going to be sick if I think about it anymore.”

The rehabilitation members muttered as they started sweating. Yes, the rehabilitation members really didn’t want to be reminded of the underground labyrinth again. After going down into the underground labyrinth, the sewers smelt like rotting corpses. Their opponents were also skeletons and slimes. Although it was interesting at first thanks to gaining levels and items, after three months they felt like they were wondering the labyrinth in a dream.

-You haven’t seen the sunlight in so long that you’ve gained ‘Autism.’

-You haven’t seen the sunlight in so long that you’ve become ‘Depressed.’

Anyone in those states would’ve given up out of tiredness. But the rehabilitation members had their own pride. Ark needed it so they shouted and endured. If the unicorn horn prices hadn’t soared then they would’ve probably still been in the underground labyrinth suffering from depression.

“I would rather be in jail then go back to that underground labyrinth!”

The rehabilitation members all nodded and agreed with Jjak-tung’s words. That atmosphere was too gloomy so Roco changed it to something else.

“T-thanks to that suffering we’re able to make some Slime’s Immortality Pill.”

“Indeed.....”

Fortunately, the rehabilitation members looked a little brighter.

“Didn’t Shambala send a unicorn horn and Sid bought 4 as well? Then we’ve acquired 5?”

“Six.”

“Six?”

“.....Ark oppa gained one more.”

Roco hesitated before explaining. Yes, before Ark left Lancel village he gained one unicorn horn from Roco’s mount, the Unicorn. While speaking with Ark, Roco summoned the Unicorn without thinking. But Ark suddenly looked at the Unicorn like it was surrounded by a golden light. He had cut off the horn six months ago and now it had grown back.

“Roco, that horn.....!”

“No.”

Roco outright refused. The unicorn horn had grown back thanks to Roco’s efforts for half a year. The horn also made the Unicorn look a lot nicer. During her spare time, Roco had read all the information on the unicorn and found it good food and basically took care of it. When Roco refused, the Unicorn snorted at Ark which made him angry. However, the Unicorn didn’t know a woman’s mentality that well.

“Roco, please. Yes? I’ll divided the earnings with you 7:3. And it’s not for me. The rehabilitation hyungs went through all that trouble yet we only obtained 5. You still won’t let? Okay, then 8:2. How about it? I’ll also watch any movie you want to watch this weekend in the evening.”

“R-really? A movie in the evening? Promise?”

Eventually, the Unicorn was abandoned for a movie and dinner.

“Now, this white horse, why don’t you have a short talk with hyung?”

Hihing? Hihihihing? Hihihihing!

Ark grinned as he grabbed the Unicorn’s neck and led it somewhere else. After a while, Ark once again cut off the unicorn horn. After exchanging it with the rehabilitation members’ funds for 20%, Ark was able to obtain 200 gold.

‘I’m sorry. But Oppa and I haven’t gone on a date for 3 weeks.’

A woman in love would often do cruel things with no hesitation. Of course, Roco couldn’t explain everything to the rehabilitation members so she summarized it quickly.

“I’ll temporarily give it to oppa for 500 gold. We’ll decide if its insufficient later.”

“Well done.”

JusticeMan nodded as he packed the unicorn horn.

“But what is Ark doing that he left you in charge of the store?”

“Ah, that’s right. Ajusshi and oppas wouldn’t have heard yet.”

“Heard what?”

“In fact”

Roco explained what Ark had told her. Currently the Hermes Alliance had joined up with the Nakujuk to conquer the Netherworld. Ark had gone to the Dark Brothers to ask for help preventing it. JusticeMan and the rehabilitation group's foreheads wrinkled at the description.

"Those Hermes bastards...."

"They went all the way to the Netherworld to pick on Ark?"

"And they also raided the village and enslaved the Baran?"

"Hyung-nim, how can we leave these actions alone?"

"Yes, we can't keep watching while the Hermes Alliance acts like this."

"And I absolutely don't want to go back underground."

JusticeMan nodded at the end of their words.

"Of course. It would be didn't if I didn't know, but I can't do nothing now that I do know. By the way, shouldn't Ark have consulted us first?"

Then Roco grinned and replied.

"That's why Ark oppa spoke to me before leaving. Oppa asked me to explain the situation in the Netherworld to you when you arrived. Of course he thought you would help."

"Oh, is that right?"

"Probably. Huhuhu, Ark hadn't forgotten us."

“This war.....my blood is starting to boil.”

“It’s a good opportunity to try out our new professions.”

Roco’s eyes widened at the end of JusticeMan’s words.

“Change profession? Did you change your profession in Jackson?”

“Huhuhu, I did. I finally found the perfect job for us.”

JusticeMan struck his chest and laughed.

Then Roco noticed something different about JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members.

“Eh? Oppa, attached to your chest.....medal? It’s a medal?”

“Now you noticed.”

JusticeMan rubbed the shining medal on his chest proudly. Then he explained how he changed professions in Jackson.

Until recently, JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members had no profession. Of course they hadn’t intended it that way. When they arrived at Jackson which was the first place they could switch professions, the Event Quest was triggered and there was no time. Then after the event quest, he received an offer from Lord Jackson which made him reconsider changing professions. He proposed that if they built up their reputations in the Evil Silrion, when they came back they would be an autonomous force. Therefore JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members headed to Selebrid with hopes of success. But they tangled with the bandit group and got saddled with an unprecedented number level 200 freeloader thieves. That was why JusticeMan and his group went to pay Lord Jackson a visit. It had been over one year since the Lord Jackson made his proposal to them. Yet they never even stepped past the

threshold of the Evil Silrion so they were extremely sorry towards Lord Jackson. So he deliberately went in order to give an explanation.

“.....It is an unpleasant thing.”

The young Lord Jackson spoke in a heavy voice. JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members didn't give any excuses and just bowed their heads silently.

“We're really sorry.”

“You should be sorry. Do you think I'm so narrow-minded that I would blame you for that? In addition, wouldn't Jackson lose some great talents if I blamed you?”

“Huh? What are you.....?”

JusticeMan was puzzled by the end of the Lord's words. Then the watching Cross interrupted with a smile.

“Teacher, the Lord already knows the circumstances so you don't have to explain.”

“The thieves you rehabilitated live in Lancel village which is right near Jackson. And Cross mentioned that you helped Ark stop the disturbing plot of Alan and the Asyeosu church. Yet you thought I would be unaware of your deeds?”

The Lord gave an outrageous laugh. Then he tapped JusticeMan's shoulders lightly and spoke again.

“I am very happy yet regretful as well. I am glad because you brought true justice to the kingdom of Schudenberg. But it is regretful because I can't keep such wonderful people underneath my command. Sir Cross, bring them to me.”

When the Lord beckoned, Cross handed something over to him. They were 11 medals with a blue gem inlaid in them.

“Although you don’t realise it yet, your fame and skills have already passed the point of an autonomous force. I went through a long process of appeal with His Majesty for these. You have already obtained the necessary honour and fame, so I wanted a guaranteed position for you. And His Majesty sent me the answer a few days ago. These are the Protector medals.”

With the Lord put the medal on JusticeMan, an information window appeared.

Protector Medal (Special, Locked)

Item type: 1st rank medal

User restriction: Propensity for Unemployment 100, Fame 6,000 in the Schudenberg Kingdom.

This Medal of Honour is awarded to a person with special achievements recognized by the King. The person with this medal will obtain the title of ‘Guardian.’ A Guardian is someone who is the true definition of justice. In the past centuries, it was an honourable title given to the militia who fought to protect the borders in the Dark Century.

Although the meaning has faded, people given the title of Guardian still receive respect. Those who own the medal will receive special treatment in all government offices depending on their level of fame. In addition, if the nobility gathers a militia then they will give priority command to holders of the medal.

JusticeMan read the information window with a puzzled expression. Then there was a ringing sound and a new information window appeared.

-You have acquired information to switch professions.

If you have not selected a profession when you have acquired a 3rd rank or more medal, you will be given the opportunity to select a new profession depending on the rank of the medal. JusticeMan has received a 1st rank medal so you can change your occupation to 'Guardian= General.'

JusticeMan has no current profession so there will be no penalty if you change professions.

If you change professions, you will have the opportunity to learn a variety of skills associated with 'Guardian=General.' However, 'Guardian=General' belongs to a special category of professions which can't be cancelled once they have been selected.

Would you like to change your profession?

"C-change profession?"

The rehabilitation members also murmured after receiving their medals. Just like JusticeMan, each of the rehabilitation members had their information updated when they wore the medals. When they read the description of 'Guardian' it sounded similar to a knight profession. However, it wasn't just a knight wielding a sword. Each of them had a specific type of job depending on their skill set. It was similar to a branch of service in the army. Just receiving the medal didn't make it possible to change to Guardian. The necessary conditions was 100 propensity for employment and 6,000 fame. It was a condition that users who normally changed professions between level 15~20 couldn't even imagine. In addition, there was a minimal strength, stamina and agility value set by the limitations of the professions. Before changing into a Guardian, they needed to exceed at least 100 points in each stat! Who on earth would wait to change professions until then? However, it wasn't a problem for JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members since they were over level 200.

"I am convinced that you are suited for these medals."

The Lord said with a warm smile. He was advising them to change to the professions available thanks to the medals. Those words convinced JusticeMan. Here was a good person who acknowledged them. And he gave a proper reward for that acknowledgement. They had halfway given up on reality and just lived in the game. JusticeMan wouldn't refuse the job even if it was ridiculously bad.

"I'll change my profession!"

“Pay your respects to the new Guardian!”

“Wah ah ah!”

The soldiers lined up on both sides and cheered at the Lord’s command. At the same time, the profession information window floated in front of JusticeMan.

Guardian = General

Long ago, there was a famous general who led the militia during the Dark Century.

Since you’ve changed your profession to General using the Medal of Honour, you can’t officially influence the Kingdom’s soldiers. However, the soldiers will have a very favourable impression of you and will offer you a variety of amenities. In addition, you can learn more professional skills to govern an army. After changing to ‘Guardian’, there will be an added bonus and you can use a special strategy.

Normally only the warrior profession would receive an added bonus. However, the guardian’s bonus for changing jobs was twice as high. The stat bonus was like increasing his level 16 times! There were also 7 different commander skills added. Since he already had skills like ‘Strategy’ and ‘Command’, the overlapping effect caused the skill proficiency to increase. The other rehabilitation members also selected according to their fame and skill orientation.

Guardian = Assaulter

The assaulter of the militia who fought in the Dark Century. Using powerful strength and stamina, the assaulter was able to cut down knights of the Dark Legion.

You can use every type of weapons except for the magic types and you can wear plate armour and shields.

Sword Mastery and defense are the basics of a 'Guardian= Assaulter.'

In addition, depending on your level there is a chance to learn a special assault skill or impregnable defense wall.

Guardian = Scout

A scout who was in the militia in the Dark Century.

Using their exception agility, the Scout disturbed the Army of Darkness. Their main equipment are daggers, bows and leather armour.

The 'Guardian=Scout' has the basic skills of fencing, archery and stealth. In addition, depending on your level there is a chance to learn special skills related to intuition, concealing and obscurity.

Guardian = Engineer

An engineer who helped out the militia in the Dark Century.

An all-round handyman who deals with a variety of equipment in order to assist the militia. Their main equipment is a spear, tools and chain armour.

The 'Guardian=Engineer' uses the basic skills of weapon construction of architecture. In addition, depending on the level you can learn a variety of skills involving siege weapons, installing traps and supplies.

Guardian = Strategist

A strategist who was in the militia in the Dark Century.

A strategist assists the General in improving the success rate of various strategies. Their main equipment is a long sword, a flag and fighting spirit.

The 'Guardian=Strategist' has the basic skills of Sword Mastery and evasion. In addition, depending on your level you can learn special skills such as deceit, geography and scheming.

The 10 rehabilitation members finished changing their professions into the respective Guardian type. Every profession had Guardian attached as a title so the Guardian Unit was completed with the General as their commander.

"Huhuhu, we're no longer the rehabilitation group. Guardian has a nice ring to it."

"We should test out the newly learned skills."

"The Netherworld war.....we'll get to have a proper fight."

JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members already had their blood boiling at the idea. Then JusticeMan suddenly spoke with confusion.

"But don't we have to wait for Ark before going to the Netherworld?"

"No. Oppa left a guide for us."

"Guide?"

"Hey, Buksil oppa!"

While JusticeMan and Roco were talking, the three pig brothers had finished their mental training downstairs. Buksil immediately jump up and obeyed when Roco called.

“Yes, you called Store Manager!”

“Do you remember Ark oppa’s words? These people are the ones you will be guiding to the Netherworld.”

“Thanks you in advance. I am called Buksil. Please let me serve you.”

Buksil dragged his body like it was gravy as he winced. It was the result of the mental training. Anyway, a user had to designate the target when using Dimensional Movement Powder. The rehabilitation members had never been to the Netherworld so they couldn’t use the powder. That was why Ark left Buksil in the store. Thanks to Buksil his younger brothers briefly showed signs of revolt, with the pigs ending up like dogs.....

“Okay, now let’s go!”

JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members shouted after the gate was created. Then Roco ran up to them and said something surprising.

“You’re going? Oppa, I have to calculate it before you go.”

“Huh? Calculate what? You already gave us the price for the unicorn horn. We decided that any new ones would be 500 gold.”

JusticeMan asked with a perplexed expression while Roco became frustrated.

“Please stop it. I have to collect the money for the tonics and food I gave you before.”

“Eh? Y-you want money for that?”

“What are you talking about? You ate the goods from the store so of course you have to pay.”

“B-but you have all our money.....”

A rehabilitation member muttered in a low voice, causing Roco to laugh.

“You thought I didn’t know about everyone’s emergency funds? Behave yourselves and take it out quickly. The business has become difficult thanks to Sapjil and Ulmeok so I can’t afford to feed you for free. You ate 30 days’ worth of tonics and 11 luxury dishes. Eleven cups of Herbal Tea. The total is 18 gold and 32 silver. I would be happy to receive items as payment. Ark oppa won’t let me. But he has already gone on the road. If you don’t have money then you can mortgage your armour.”

JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members froze at the end of Roco’s words. For a warrior on the battlefield to mortgage their armour.....wasn’t that impossible? In the end, the rehabilitation group had to quickly search through their emergency funds to pay for the food before going to the Netherworld. Ark really had chosen an amazing store manager.

“Hey friend! It’s been a while. Have you been well?”

Ark smiled as he entered the parlour. Shambala had been having a serious conversation with Isabel. His eyes seemed surprised when he first saw Ark before it became somewhat restless.

“What the? What are you doing here?”

“Yaya, give me a break to recover my breath. Miss Isabel, have you been well?”

“I’m fine but thank you for your concern.”

Ark kneeled like a medieval knight before lightly kissing the back of Isabel's hand. It was an awkward movement for a modern man but Isabel lived in medieval times so such gestures were natural to her. Shambala's mouth contorted as he watched through eyes as sharp as a hawk's.

"I asked you a question!"

Shambala nudged him with the hilt of a sword.

"Ugh! Why wouldn't I come? I swore friendship to the Dark Brothers."

"Since when have you sworn friendship to the Dark Brothers?"

"Of course since I helped defeat Nabein. Isn't that right Miss Isabel?"

"Yes, Ark-nim is a rare guest."

Isabel smiled beautifully and nodded. Ark laughed and threw his arm around Shambala's shoulder.

"Don't act so sour. Eh, Deliverer-nim?"

"Damn brat."

Shambala declared sharply with a voice mixed with annoyance. However, Ark stayed close to Shambala and whispered in a low voice.

"Why are you so nervous? Aren't things going well between you and Isabel noona? Did you want to consult with me?"

".....Do you want to die?"

“Gosh, you really want to hit me? Okay, I’ll knock it off. Who knew you would be having so much difficulties that you would turn to violence?”

“Difficulties? Me? You’re the one making my blood pressure high.”

“Huhuhu, why are you like this?”

Ark retreated as Shambala held up a fist. Then he lowered his head politely to Isabel and began to talk.

“There actually was a special reason for my visit.”

“Please say it.”

“I wanted to confirm it first.”

Ark erased his playfulness and spoke seriously.

“I heard that the Dark Brothers is currently in a difficult situation. Is it true?”

Isabel and Shambala flinched at Ark’s question. Isabel hesitated as she looked at Shambala. Then Shambala gave a little nod and took one step forward. It was a very short scene but Ark could guess the relationship between the two based on it. Isabel postponed answering a difficult question until she looked at Shambala. It meant she trusted and relied on Shambala. And Shambala took a step forward so he would be in a position to speak for her. Ark’s keen eyes could sense the relationship between the two with that one move. So why he couldn’t understand the girls surrounding him.....was unknown. Then Shambala nodded and answered.

“It’s not to the extent that I would call it a difficulty. It is just a bit noisy.”

“You came back here because it was a bit noisy?”

"If seems like you've been poking around uselessly. Why don't you tell me what you want to say?"

Ark turned around at Shambala's annoyed voice.

"I'll do that."

Ark laughed and nodded his head. He had heard about the Dark Brothers' problem from number 206 just then. It occurred while Ark had been playing in the Netherworld. During that time, the Dark Brothers went through many changes. It changed because of Shambala's profession quest. He was to wander to continent and unite the scattered branches of the Dark Brothers. Shambala's current quest achievement was at 60%. He had rallied more than half of the Dark Brothers' forces. It was the first time they had rallied that many forces since Salrin the Master Assassin during the Dark Century. It seemed like a prelude to achieving Isabel's dream of drawing the Dark Brothers into the light. If Shambala successfully achieved 100% then that would undoubtedly be his next goals. This desire made him want to rally the Dark Brothers even quicker. But in the past people had rallied all of the Dark Brothers but it wasn't possible to achieve Salrin's goal. Then what did he have to do? Isabel was worried until Shambala gave her some advice.

"Do you remember the rehabilitation group who helped us the other day? They managed to rehabilitate thieves they subdued in the past. And now those thieves are living as ordinary people."

The ordinary thieves were living in a bright world. The rehabilitation members' achievements raised Isabel's hopes. Thus they decided to reform the Dark Brothers using the model derived from the thieves' rehabilitation. The first step was to stop the assassination missions. But Isabel overlooked one thing. The chaotic value of thieves who sometimes robbed and killed merchants was significantly different from those of the Dark Brothers who had assassinated nobility. The thieves only took 1 month to lose their chaotic status while the Dark Brothers would take a year. Furthermore, the thieves were a group of people with no professions. On the other hand, the Dark Brothers were assassins. They hadn't learned anything other than fighting. What could the Dark Brothers do if they stopped assassinations?

The thieves received help from Lancel village but that wasn't possible for the Dark Brothers. Thanks to rallying the scattered forces, their numbers had increase even more. After their income disappeared, the finances suffered and was stretched by the extra numbers. Of course, the assassination organization had a long history so they piled up a small fortune. However, there was no guarantee that the fortune would last. If their assets disappeared completely then what would Isabel do? Without any money left, wouldn't the Dark Brothers just be unemployed assassins?

“I understand Chief-nim’s intention. Chief-nim is not the only one with that desire.”

“But will motivation be enough?”

“Did you forget that we were forced to choose the assassin life?”

“We are a family. If we starve then we’ll have to make the same choices as our ancestors and start the bloody history again.”

The elders of each branch started expressing their dissatisfaction. It was to the extent that some elders insisted on returning to the independent assassin lifestyle. Thus Shambala halted his quest and returned to the tower. If this situation continued then there was no assurance that the people he rallied would stay.

Well, he was mostly worried about Isabel’s predicament.....

‘Shouldn’t it be better since Shambala has finally arrived?’

Shambala played the game quite differently from Ark. Ark was the type that would flatter the NPCs if there was any benefit to him. On the other hand, Shambala was the type to rush silently towards his goal. Thanks to that character the assassins trusted him but it didn’t help in fixing this complicated situation.

‘I’m sorry Shambala and Isabel but this is a great opportunity for me!’

It was fortunate he met number 206 at the entrance. Ark had saved number 206’s live so his intimacy was at the highest possible. If he hadn’t met number 206 then he wouldn’t have known the internal details. Because of that, Ark was in the best condition to start negotiations. Ark hesitated before making a suggestion.

“The Dark Brothers’ problem, maybe there’s a way I can help?”

“Yes?”

Shambala sent him a doubtful look. But Ark just feigned ignorance and continued.

“Let me sum it up. What’s the current problem of the Dark Brothers?”

“We can’t do any other work.”

“Yes, that’s the point. You can’t work. Thus you won’t make money. In addition, stress will accumulate without anything to do. This is the biggest problem. You need to work to resolve this issue. But if you start the assassinations again then the Dark Brothers would just get further from the light.”

“.....So what’s your suggestion?”

In a conversation, he had to make sure person A, B, and C understood the situation. After pointing out the situation, he moved one step closer to his goal.....if he just threw the body then they would cut it down coldly.

“You just have to create a proper job.”

“What?”

“That’s what you wanted to say?”

“You really.....”

Isabel interrupted when Shambala started frowning.

“Wait. A proper job? Tell me more.”

“Some people might not like it.....but they’ll do it at Chief-nim’s request. Now, I’ll explain it again. I discovered another dimension on my travels. And the residents of this dimension are being threatened by a hostile tribe. They desperately need someone’s help.”

“You want us to help them?”

“You’re very perceptive.”

“How will that help us?”

Shambala cut in coldly. Ark looked at him with pity and shook his finger.

“Tsk tsK tsK, so slow..... So you didn’t understand? Shall I explain? It is another dimension. In other words, the laws of middle earth don’t apply. The assassins from the Dark Brothers won’t have any problems living there. No, if you help the residents against the hostile tribes then they would welcome you. The Dark Brothers could set up a new base there.”

Now there was a slight change in Shambala’s face. But Shambala closed his eyes and thought for a moment before sighing.

“If it is enough to threaten the residents then shouldn’t the power of the enemy be quite considerable?”

“They wouldn’t need the Dark Brothers help if that wasn’t the case.”

“Even if it would work, our forces would take quite a hit as well.”

“Aren’t some sacrifices necessary to accomplish your purpose in middle earth?”

“.....”

Shambala was silent before opening his mouth again.

“Okay, I assume that is your purpose. But our dream is to establish ourselves in the world of light. Hiding in an unknown place would be just like hiding right now.”

Good, now it was progressing in the desired direction. Ark laughed and nodded his head.

“That would be true if my purpose ended there.”

“Purpose ended there?”

“If you interfere with the enemy’s attack then I can re-join the Netherworld with middle earth. Thus a new continent would appear in New World. What would happen then?”

Shambala just tilted his head with confusion, making Ark shake his head.

“Slow, you’re so slow Shambala, can’t you use your imagination to guess what will happen?”

Ark continued.

“So I’ll give some more hints. A new continent that didn’t exist until now appeared in New World. Then wouldn’t the residents of the Netherworld seem like aristocrats? What kind of behaviour would you receive?”

“You, you don’t mean.....?”

“Now you’re starting to understand.”

Ark nodded and Isabel’s burst out with surprise.

"I see, I understand what Ark-nim is saying! If the place Ark-nim called the Netherworld appeared in middle earth, it would be a new continent. If a new continent appeared then there would be two reactions. Hostility or friendliness."

".....Please continue."

Ark looked at Isabel like she was awesome and nodded. Thus Isabel continued in an even more excited tone.

"But the relationship between the three kingdoms isn't that great. After fighting in the Nagaran War for so long, they can't afford something like that. Therefore their reaction will be friendliness. It's difficult to believe.....if a new kingdom appeared then the balance of power in New World would change."

"Well done. Then here's the last question. What would happen if the Dark Brothers defeated the hostile forces and were firmly allied with the residents by the time the Netherworld appeared in middle earth? I'll tell you beforehand. The society of the residents is less developed than ours so they won't understand the politics of that scale."

"Then the Dark Brothers would act as the representatives of the Netherworld and meet with the three powers for friendly talks."

Isabel replied with a wide grin. Yes, that was the weapon of persuasion that Ark had prepared. Ark had actually sketched the contents while leaving Lancel village. But his persuasion method changed slightly after hearing number 206's words. If he hadn't know that and went to the Dark Brothers first, he would've worded it as a cry for help. Although the precondition changed, the results was the same.

'Huhuhu, I'm in a position to ask something from the Dark Brothers.'

Ark's knowledge in cheap tricks was increasing every day. However, Shambala made a slightly dissatisfied expression like expected.

"But Ark might just be telling a story."

“Shambala-nim won’t believe in your friend?”

“Ah, it really is sad.”

Ark sighed and made a pitiful expression at Isabel. Thanks to that, Shambala was made to look like a bad guy and he spoke in an embarrassed voice.

“W-we still don’t know if there’s a place called the Netherworld. We also don’t know anything about the hostile forces threatening the residents.”

“Our ancestors also experienced that when they first stepped foot on this continent.”

“Of course. Didn’t the Dark Brothers inherit the blood of the ancestors with the courage to explore the unknown world?”

“Ark, you’re too noisy!”

Shambala raised his voice angrily and spoke to Isabel.

“Are you willing to give up Salrin’s Towers where you were born?”

“.....It won’t be a problem if it’s for the Dark Brothers’ dream.”

“That’s what I mean. Can’t you make your home anywhere?”

“Ark, I told you to be quiet!”

Shambala viciously glared at Ark like he was tempted to kill him. In a battle it might be different but Shambala couldn’t win against Ark in an argument.

-You have reached your goal through clever words.

His Art of Communication only rose when he successfully persuaded an NPC! Because of the information window, it was clear that Isabel had already made up her mind.

“We have to shake off our dark history in order to be truly reborn. This is the long-cherished desire of the Dark Brothers. We have to achieve it at any cost for the next generation. Deliverer-nim, I don’t want to miss this opportunity.”

With the situation like this, there was no way Shambala could go against Isabel. That was why Ark had concentrated on capturing Isabel.

‘Huhuhu Shambala. You still have a long way to go.’

Anyway, Ark’s purpose was accomplished but it wasn’t a bad thing for the Dark Brothers. No, it was an opportunity just like he said. In other words, every part was good so.....it was a win-win. Then Shambala narrowed the distance and bluntly told Ark.

“Okay, you got your way. Now tell me something. What do you want?”

‘I was waiting for that question.’

Ark knew that Shambala would ask such questions. In fact, while coming here Ark only thought he would be lucky to receive help. But the situation changed. Now Ark didn’t just get help, he also opened a way for the Dark Brothers to live. Meanwhile Ark would be able to complete the and quests.

“Well, that’s right. Of course I will receive some favours if everything goes well.”

Ark pretended ignorance and talked about compensation. If was impossible for Ark to go to all this trouble for no profit. He clearly had some other purpose. So Shambala’s doubts disappeared after Ark talked about rewards.

"I see."

"We should be able to accommodate that much. It is for the fate of the family."

Isabel accepted Ark's request. Then she summoned a meeting and began preparations to enter the Netherworld. Meanwhile Ark also checked his equipment and hurried to make preparations to return to the Netherworld.

"Summon Demon, Dedric and Razak!"

"Ah, damn.....my precious vacation has finished."

Dedric's complaints increased as soon as he was summoned. He hadn't seen Ark for a while so he became undisciplined again. But Ark just stroked Dedric's head and spoke in a gentle voice.

"Don't be annoyed. I'll give you another great holiday when this finishes."

Then Dedric's jaw dropped as he stared with bemusement.

"Huk, w-what is going on? Master, did you eat something bad?"

'This brat.....'

Ark became angry but held it in. It was thanks to the Affection stat that Ark endured it. He knew how to utilize Affection now so it was important to refrain from any violence to raise it even more. If it was for that goal, Ark could see his pet's rebellion as humorous.

"Now let's create the circle!"

Ark created a very large magic circle on top of Salrin's Towers with the help of his summons. The scale of the expedition was quite large since the Dark Brothers' fate was tied to the Netherworld. There were 400 of the Chief's elite troops. They also gathered 800 of the Dark Brothers finest assassins. Isabel had wanted to be the commander but conceded thanks to Shambala's earnest persuasions. Instead, Isabel decided to stay at the tower to provide rear support while the rest of the Dark Brothers prepared to leave for the Netherworld.

"A long time ago our ancestors stepped on this continent to find a new hope and now it is our turn to take up the challenge. The place we're going isn't a comfortable land. A lot of pain and sacrifice will follow. But we have to go. For the sake of our future.

For the glory of the Dark Brothers!"

Isabel's sword thrust into the sky while hundreds of other swords following. The war where the Dark Brothers' fate was intertwined with the Netherworld had begun.