

Ark Vol 12 C 5

Chapter 5

ACT 5 Special Attack Corps

“Reinforcements?”

Raiden asked with a frown.

“Didn’t you tell me a few days ago that the Nakujuk would be sufficient?”

“T-that is.....”

Jewel stuttered an excuse on the other side of the handset. Well it was actually an excuse that he heard several times so far. Thanks to Ark, the rehabilitation group and the Dark Brothers, the Nakujuk’s conquest of the Netherworld had unexpectedly been halted. However, Jewel had refused Raiden’s support after they gained consecutive victories in the first few battles. That’s because Jewel would receive less shares of the Netherworld if she accepted Raiden’s help. But the situation had changed and the battles had become increasingly difficult. In addition, they didn’t have an extra Letter Movement Orb so they couldn’t accept reinforcements from the Nakujuk for the moment. But was that all? Every time Jewel, Duke and the Hermes guild participated in the battles, the situation became messy because they were smashed by Ark and Shambala.

“So now you need my help with these issues.”

“We’re really sorry.”

Jewel replied in a weak voice, making Raiden sigh.

“Okay, we can’t afford to have our forces currently leave Silvana. I’ll hire a few people from the mercenary guild and send them to you. But it’ll take them some time to go through the red wilderness. Can you hold out until then?”

“It is difficult to advance but they don’t have enough to take us all out.”

“Then be patient.”

Raiden hung up and immediately connected to New World. Then he used the gold reserves to hire mercenaries. He hired approximately 1,000 mercenaries which would be enough to change the situation in the Netherworld.

‘This is serious!’

At that time, there were eyes watching them leave for the Netherworld. It was the foreign business manager of the Silvana trading post, Sid. Raiden had secretly hired and gathered the mercenaries but there was no large transfer of funds in Silvana that could escape Sid’s eyes. Ark had already guessed that Jewel would ask for help and assigned Sid to watch Raiden. And he passed this information straight to Ark.

“Wah ah ah!”

“We managed to defeat those guys and retook Kurata canyon.”

“Commander JusticeMan, hooray!”

It had been a week since the Nakujuk war started.....

In the meantime, they had fought five times in the canyon and the momentum seemed to be with the Baran as they drove the Nakujuk back. In addition to Ark and Shambala, the popularity of JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members also increased.

“As expected, our decision to entrust this to you was completely correct.”

The elders had completely become Ark's followers. He disapproved of the sudden change in the elder's attitude but who was he to complain about a good thing.

".....The victory in this battle is huge. Our approximate line of defense has been completed."

JusticeMan spoke with a satisfied expression as he looked at the map. Thanks to the victory just now, they could build ten guard towers on either side of Kurata canyon. The Nakujuk had no choice but to advance through Kurata canyon if they wanted to reach Haman Fortress. Of course, this didn't mean that the guard towers was absolute. If there weren't any soldiers stationed there then it would just be a normal building. But when the battle spread into the canyon then it'll show its powerful function and would improve the percentage of victory. In addition, the monitoring range would increase by a huge amount if they used the guard towers. They would be able to watch every move of the Nakujuk in the canyon.

"With Haman Fortress's extension, they won't dare attack it anymore. In addition, the supplies they gathered in the south east is already running out. With the guard towers blocking the movements of the Draken, they'll probably won't be able to hold out and will retreat to the valley village."

"Now we've overcome our inferior power and stabilized the region."

Shambala also nodded. Ark's party was now completely immersed in the Netherworld war. There wasn't that many opportunities to experience a massive war like this in the game. It was a matter of life or death for NPCs but it was just a game for users. They were able to experience a hot battle so they were enjoying it. In particular, JusticeMan and Shambala's motivation had increased by a considerable amount. It was a 180 degree change from the siege or battles they previously participated in. The siege was just a war. But this war had some justification. JusticeMan was helping the residents so he considered it a good cause while Shambala was looking after his precious girlfriend (?). Fulfilling Isabel's wish was his justification!

They faced this war with a different type of determination. Moreover, the opponents were monster-type NPCs. Unlike the siege where it was just a competition between users, this war would give fame, experience and items. In addition, the war gave additional experience to users with a title. The experience of JusticeMan and Lariette who were the deputies, the rehabilitation members who were the commanding officers of their units and even Buksil who was in charge of supplies went up dramatically. However, the one who ate up the most experience was obviously Ark who was the Commander. As the commander of the Baran clan, he received a certain amount of experience every time a Nakujuk was killed. Thanks to that, Ark climbed 16 levels in a week and finally reached level 300.

Character Name Ark Race Human Alignment Good +400 Fame 10, 725 (+ 500) Level 300 Profession Dark Walker Title Cat Knight, Caretaker of the Abandoned, Jackson's Hero, Great Adventurer Health 4,710 (+150) Mana 4,700 Spiritual Power 200 Strength 593 (+28) Agility 753 (+55) Stamina 893 (+20) Wisdom 107 (+10) Intelligence 912 Luck 103 (+30) Flexibility 119 Art of Communication 66 Affection 31 (+10) Resilience 358 Special stat: Knowledge of Ancient Relics 138 * Equipment item effects Guardian Armour of the Merpeople: Water Attribute Resistance +100%, Penalty based on water is nullified.

Cat Paws (Gloves): Attack Speed +10%, Agility +15, Critical Hit +10%

Raccoons Pith (Helmet): Agility + 10, Wisdom + 10

* Set effect: Strength + 10, Agility + 10, Stamina +10, Defense +20

Warrior's Transcripts (Shoulder Blades): Strength + 3

Wind Spirit's Boots (Shoes): Agility + 30, Movement Speed +30%, Attack Speed +10%, 'Slide' available

Galgashi's Fur (Mantle): Cold resistance +100%, Agility +20, When health is less than 50%, 'Magic Protection' automatically activates.

Adelaine's Necklace (Necklace): Defense + 40, Affection +10, 'Blessing of the Sea' available

Resurrecting Spirit (Ring): Strength + 5, Mana recovery + 5%

Rarukan's Ring (Ring): Agility + 10, Attack Speed +10%, Critical Hit +8%, 'Dark Protection' available

Amulet of Vitality (Bracelet): Health + 50, Health recovers by 5 every 20 seconds

Gladiator's Honour (Bracelet): Strength, Agility, Stamina +10, Fame +500, Sword-based Skill Growth +5%

- * All abilities will increase by 40% in the dark

- * You have the ability to hide in the darkness (20 minutes duration. Cancelled when you get into combat)

- * Resistance to Fear, Darkness, Blind, and Seduction spells is increased by 50%.

- * You can bring out the true abilities from all types of tools.

- * Shock absorption is increased by 20%.

- * Poison resistance has increased by 50%.

- * 10% increased attack and defense

His fame also went up considerably as the Commander. The average level of the rehabilitation members reached 220 while Lariette also became level 200. They received less experience than Ark but they were lower levelled so their speed was still fast.

‘Levelling up like this isn’t good. My experience gain will start slowing down.’

Ark was unexpectedly complaining. As expected, it was gold and money that made Ark happy instead of levels. Currently the percentage of Baran who’ve received the raccoons’ weapons was 80%. 1,000 was necessary but only 800 had been completed and passed through Ark’s hands. Thanks to that, Ark managed to receive ores equivalent to 1,600 gold. Of course, he made it into weapons and sold it in his store as cash.

‘The merchandise trade it huge!’

Ark was impressed by how much he gained from trading merchandise. He didn't have to lift a finger in order to gain 1,600 gold. If he could monopolize dealings bigger than this, the profit would be unimaginable.

'If I can monopolize the Netherworld after it rises, as well as Silvana and Lancel village then hunting for money won't be a problem!'

Anyway, the people who were always ahead were the ones who grasped an opportunity. Ark was able to envision a more realistic aspiration thanks to his business. Ark had also picked up a significant amount of loot on the battlefield. Buksil had already moved the japtem to the displays in Ark's Comprehensive Store. But even if all of it was sold, he was only be able to receive 300~400 gold at the most. The best items were the ones obtained from the Hermes guild. Even if it wasn't their original items, it was still high levelled magic items. On auction sites he would be able to receive an average of 30~50 for it. So far he had secured 20 items from the Hermes guild which meant 600~1000 gold.

'Kukukuk, being chaotic at that level.....stupid guys.'

After calculating, he earned approximately 3,000 gold in one week! That was around 30 million won earned.

'I've only just signed the lease contract and I've already earned 3,000 gold in a fortnight. It's a lot and there's still slightly less than 2 months left. If I keep this up then the rental amount won't be a problem!'

Ark really felt like he was flying. But no matter how much he liked it, he couldn't drag the war on forever.

'The movement of the Hermes Alliance is serious.'

Ark had received information from Sid that the Hermes guild had hired mercenaries. But there was no news of a siege beginning at Silvana.

'They are clearly bound for the Netherworld. They're sending in reinforcements.'

Currently the Netherworld war was 6:4, with the Baran being slightly superior. But there was no guarantee that the situation couldn't reverse. If the Nakujuk headquarters managed to produce a Letter Movement Orb in time then more reinforcements could come at any time. If there were joined by the Hermes mercenaries then the situation would spiral out of control. The canyon had 10 guard towers, but RTS games have proved there was a limitation when there were too many people. The side with a lot of numbers would win. Although bombs could be used in reality, the rule of numbers was absolute in medieval battles where people fought with swords and shields.

"What do we do now?"

Shambala asked in a worried voice after hearing all of the circumstances.

"This war couldn't be won anyway. I knew that from the beginning."

"What? What are you saying.....?"

"Me? I told you so from the beginning. Even if the Baran win here, it isn't possible to capture the Nakujuk's headquarters. Eventually the war will continue and they won't be able to win."

"If you knew that then why did you drag us into the war?"

Shambala stood up and glared at Ark. This guy, he was so immersed in the war that he forgot the true purpose. Ark looked at Shambala with pity in his eyes before speaking.

"It's not finished, now's the time to start the main point."

"Main point?"

"Hah, do I have to explain it again from the beginning? Shambala, what is your purpose for coming here?"

"Purpose.....occupy a place here.....when the Netherworld rises....."

“That’s it.”

Ark said with a smile.

“Did you forget? Our purpose is not to win the Netherworld war. Our goal is strictly to elevate the Netherworld to middle earth.”

“Wait a minute. What will happen to the Baran clan when the Netherworld rises to middle earth?”

Lariette’s question also wasn’t difficult to answer. Shambala also nodded and added.

“That’s right. The Nakujuk will still attempt to conquer the Netherworld even if it rises.”

Sometimes it was tiring talking to a person who wasn’t as clever. He was nice and handsome so couldn’t he solve such problems without Ark telling him? Ark shook his finger and spoke.

“Think about it. What will be one of the most significant changes if the Netherworld rises to middle earth?”

“The biggest changes.....?”

“The biggest change will happen to the Netherworld. Like Isabel said, the first change will be the visit from the Three Kingdoms and the second change is that users will descend on the Netherworld.

“Well I guess.”

“Won’t users show interest in the Netherworld’s quests?”

That was the solution that Ark thought of for the Netherworld. A huge number of users will surge to the Netherworld with no information. And the first thing they'll see will be the Baran suffering from the Nakujuk's invasion. When ordinary users saw it, they would think that the Baran clan were the good NPCs. On the other hand, the Nakujuk would be labelled as monsters. That is, the users' enemy. He didn't know how Jewel's group allied with the Nakujuk, but ordinary users would feel obligated to help the NPCs and defeat the Nakujuk.

"If the Baran elders commission the users then the Nakujuk would be annihilated."

It was just like a huge defense league had come to the Netherworld. So naive users would apply for the militia. If the Hermes guild sent reinforcements then their numbers would be nothing compared to the number of Baran. In addition, users couldn't permanently die. So it would be possible to recycle the troops again and again. The Nakujuk wouldn't be able to survive against that.

"If the users assist the Baran clan then the Hermes Alliance won't be able to move excessively."

If the Netherworld rose and the Nakujuk still tried to conquer it, wouldn't the user help the NPCs against the monsters? If that happened, the users would publicly forsake the Hermes Alliance if they saw them allied with the monsters.

"That's why I said we don't need to win this war to win. If users appear then the elders can ask them to subdue the Nakujuk."

".....And they'll do all the work."

Shambala shook his head with a tired look. It was a strategy which manipulated users and NPCs. But this was only one part of Ark's grand plans. The users who came to the Netherworld would form a defensive wall in the war. Of course, this required a person to supervise them. And JusticeMan, the rehabilitation members and the Dark Brothers were already firmly established with the Baran clan. Naturally, Ark's companions would be authorized to supervise the users. In other words, no matter how many users came to the Netherworld Ark's party would still have exclusive rights to the Baran's territory. If he was smart then there were endless ways to obtain a profit.

‘The Baran clan’s economy is still in the Bronze Age. But that will change once users start arriving. If the capital of the Dark Brothers is used to establish an economic system beforehand then I can also benefit from it.’

Even though they stopped the assassinations, the funding of the Dark Brothers couldn’t be ignored. Nabein wanted to rebel in the past before he didn’t want to lose his source of profit. If the Baran used that to build an economic system, he would gain huge profits as the Netherworld continued to evolve.

‘Huhuhu, I’ll be able to achieve all the plans in my head if I have the funding of the Dark Brothers. Naturally a large amount of soybean powder will fall in my direction.’

When Ark first entered the Netherworld, he thought he would be able to profit if he monopolized the quests and dungeons. However, this wasn’t such a trivial amount. Ark recalled the various business plans he thought of while exploring the valley village. Guided tours of the Netherworld on the skyrays, tamed monster safari and even created a new currency system for a fee..... It wasn’t just for users in the Netherworld, it could also be applied to trading with the Three Kingdoms. Ark was going to invest the Dark Brothers huge capital into all those businesses.

In fact, it was also necessary for the Dark Brothers. They would have the power to negotiate with the Three Kingdoms when the Netherworld appeared. If Ark used the Dark Brothers capital to initiate some projects then they would make the capital back and he would profit, And Isabel had already agreed and signed a contract before they entered the Netherworld. Yes, the eligibility to participate in Netherworld businesses. That was the reward for Ark’s information he mentioned to Shambala and Isabel.

“Bah, you had such ulterior motives.”

Shambala now realised that the conditions Ark presented weren’t as simple as he thought. However Ark just ignored him.

“What are you talking about? I’ve been thinking of the Dark Brothers.”

Ark paid no attention to Shambala’s glare and continued.

“Well, well! Let’s focus. Anyway, the important thing is to maintain the defense line until the Netherworld rises.

“Although you said it early, but I can’t easily imagine it. The Netherworld will really rise to middle earth?”

“That is correct.”

Ark had emphasized the word ‘we.’ Because Ark needed to complete the quest but the purpose for reviving the world was for ‘them.’

“Then it would’ve been better to revive the world tree instantly.”

Shambala spoke in a strange voice. Then why didn’t he revive the world tree as soon as he came to the Netherworld?

It was a question with plenty of answers. But there were three reasons why Ark hadn’t done it. First, if the Dark Brothers hadn’t established themselves by the time that the Netherworld rose then Ark’s profits would decrease. Secondly, reviving the world tree required a number of special conditions.

“The world tree is an existence which maintains the balance of the world. It gets its source of power from the Netherworld. There has to be a full moon in the Netherworld when trying to resurrect the world tree. The increase in power will increase the probability of success.”

“Right. Isn’t tomorrow a full moon?”

“Okay, that’s why I mentioned that we needed to hold on for one week once the war started. That’s the reason why I didn’t want to push too hard against the Nakujuk. If they felt the crisis then Jewel might’ve called in reinforcements from the Hermes guild earlier. Understood? And one last thing.....”

Ark pointed towards a section of the map rolled out on the table.

“This is the location of the world tree.”

Ark had pointed beyond the northern mountains where the headquarters of the Nakujuk was located.

“Yggdrasil told me that the world tree was worshipped by the Myutal. So naturally the Baran built a castle around it. The Baran were driven from that place and now the Nakujuk occupies it. Therefore, I have no choice but to lead the troops there to resurrect the world tree. But realistically it is impossible. And the Hermes Alliance has already sent the mercenaries so there is no time.”

“The Nakujuk headquarters.....then?”

“There is only one way left.”

Ark traced the path between Haman Fortress and the world tree with his fingers.

“I have to sneak into enemy territory with a small force and revive the world tree.”

“You’re going to organize a special attack corps?”

“That’s right, we’ll use the skyways to fly past the northern mountains. Furthermore, the Nakujuk will be busy thinking about the war in the south. It would be difficult with a large number but I might be able to infiltrate with a small group. And I’ll have to do whatever it takes to break through the enemy lines and revive the world tree.”

“So this is the final and most important mission.”

JusticeMan nodded with a convinced look. Since the time in New World will triple the rate of reality, a full moon actually appeared every 15 days in reality. If they missed the opportunity tomorrow then they would have to wait another 15 days. But the Hermes mercenaries would arrive in a few days so there was only one chance.

“There’s no choice.”

Shambala murmured and turned to look at Ark.

“Of course, I’ll have to attend?”

“Naturally. The destination is the enemy’s stronghold. The odds aren’t in my favour if I go with a large force. We can hit and run with a small number of people. Thus I need a small and elite force that can move quickly. And as much as I hate to admit it, you are a strong ally.”

“Then I’ll go.”

“Me too, there’s no way I’ll miss this.”

The rehabilitation members immediately raised their hands when the strategy was decided. But like he said, it was better to have a small number for this operation. If they wanted to sneak in undetected then it required a maximum of 10 people. And Ark had already picked the people he wanted to infiltrate with in his head. Aside from the reliable Shambala, the one he needed most was Lariette with her recovery magic. JusticeMan was also a reliable person. However, reviving the world tree meant nothing if the fortress was taken so JusticeMan needed to remain at the fortress. He instead decided to choose the members with the highest levels which were Bul-kkun, Ddeok-dae, Jjak-tung, Yapsab, Hae Gyeol-sa, and Tazza. The level was necessary but they also needed to be able to work together. 10 of the Baran clan warriors also wanted to accompany them but that would be detrimental to his plan of sneaking in. Therefore, the Baran warriors were given the role of guiding them through the northern mountains. In the end, the ones who would sneak through the enemy’s camp to revive the world tree were 9 people.

‘This is the only chance!’

Ark began to prepare for the expedition and checked his equipment.

“The fate of the Netherworld rests on your shoulders.”

JusticeMan said firmly as he handed the rehabilitation members the ‘Slime’s Immortality Pill.’ During their spare time in the Netherworld, JusticeMan had created the Slime’s Immortality Pills but he hadn’t

decided who should eat them first. But thanks to this situation, the privilege was given to the 6 people in the special attack corps.

“Oh, isn’t this thing awesome? My abilities have gone up!”

Bul-kkun’s mouth gaped open as he saw the effect of the Slime’s Immortality Pill. The remaining 4 people also reacted the same way. The special attack corps finished the preparations and climbed aboard the skyrays, with JusticeMan saying one final thing.

“The northern mountains have a lot of Drakens that the Nakujuk use to patrol. It’s not going to be an easy path. So in order to avoid the Nakujuk’s attention, you’ll go around the canyon to enter the northern mountains.”

“.....I understand.”

“Good luck.”

The special attack corps saluted and flew into the sky. Then JusticeMan stepped back and turned around. The thousands of Baran gathered in the fortress square lifted their arms and cheered.

“Wah ah ah!”

“Commander Ark-nim, we wish you the best of luck.”

Roaaaaar!

The sharp gust of wind blasted against their skin. The pressure felt like a huge beast was attacking them.

“Lower your upper body and lean forward. It’s the end if you get caught in the gust!”

Ark shouted as the skyray were pummelled by the wind. They had to avoid the eyes of the Nakujuk so Ark's group made a detour around the Golgi mountains after departing from the fortress and finally arrived in the Valley of Fangs in the afternoon. In order to cross the northern mountains, passing through the valley of fangs which connected the northern and southern parts of the mountains wasn't a popular path. It intricately crossed the northern mountains like a maze. And just like the 'Abyss of Despair,' the Nakujuk's garrison was situated in the middle. It would be unreasonable to break through that garrison on the skyrays. In addition, they might inform the headquarters even if Ark managed to break through which would make things more difficult. That's why he had the Baran warriors accompany him in order to guide him.

"Fang Valley has a secret passage that the Nakujuk don't know about. It is a very, very dangerous place but you'll be able to go undetected by the Nakujuk.

The Baran warriors said it was a secret passage located in a deep cave in Fang Valley. It was situated in the middle of sky-high cliffs so they wouldn't have been able to enter without the skyrays. And as soon as they passed through the cave, they would arrive at Ageiron the current headquarters of the Nakujuk and former castle of the Baran.

"Okay, let's do it."

Ark directed the skyrays towards the cave and a message window popped up when he entered.

-A lava cave hidden in Fang Valley.

You have found the lava cave hidden inside the maze-like Fang Valley.

The Baran clan used this cave to escape when they were driven from the north a long time ago. But after a long time, the cave has taken a different form thanks to the lava flowing through it. And the faint cries of beasts could be heard from along the cave walls. It seems to be a very unsafe passage.

"Eh? It's different from the stories?"

The Baran warriors looked around puzzled at the maze like cave complex. The information window stated that the lava had been flowing for 100 years so the shape of the cave would've changed a lot. Moreover, even the Baran warriors had never seen the cave. All they had were loose sheets of maps that their ancestors drew when they escaped from the north a long time ago. Thanks to that, the group spent a large amount of time wandering the cave. In addition, there were sharp fangs of rocks jutting out from all over the cave walls. It wasn't easy to fly through the cave while avoiding those rocks.

"But the most irritating thing is this heat....."

In fact, Ark was extremely tired from the choking heat. The cave the Baran warriors were guiding them through had lava running like a river on the ground. The gusts of winds also blew hot air like a hair dryer. It was to the extent that his skin became hot and sore after being hit by the wind. Ark wiped off his sweat and the information window once again updated.

-Due to the extreme heat, your fatigue has risen by 10%!

Relaxing away from the extreme heat or eating cold food can lower fatigue>

That was the information window that appeared shortly after entering the cave. It was an opposite effect to the 'cold' that Ark experienced when he first entered the Netherworld. Fortunately, it was easier to recover from than the cold effect. Fatigue could be lowered simply by resting in a place away from the heat. However, the cave was filled with sharp rocks on all sides. Even lava was flowing on the floor. It wasn't possible to find a place to rest. Thanks to that, Ark's fatigue had already increased to 40%.

"Damn, if it wasn't for these rocks....."

If they were speared by the sharp rocks then they would be roasted like grilled skewers. No, even without the rocks it would just be like they were roasting in an oven.

"Ah, this place is indicated on the map. Fortunately it doesn't seem to have changed that much!"

“We’re almost there now. Have strength!”

Ark’s companions gasped with exhaustion while the Baran cheered them on.

‘Damn, it’s easy for them to say.’

In fact, the Myutal didn’t feel heat or cold. The climate in the Netherworld always changed on a whim so they’ve adapted to those type of environments. Therefore the Baran’s cheers only seemed like someone was clawing at Ark’s thighs. But the real problem started now.

‘If I eat Patbingsu (shaved ice) then I’ll feel better....but there is no place to land.....’

Ark gasped while looking around. Then he suddenly saw a dark shape approaching rapidly from inside the cave. Ark stared at the dark shape blankly before suddenly shouting.

“D-Draken?”

Kurwarwarwarwa-!

Ark’s shout echoed along with the Draken’s roar through the cave. The warrior leading the party shouted with a perplexed expression.

“Huk, w-wild Draken!”

There were ten Drakens approaching them from the front.

“Damn, my breath is already choked up just from flying.....battle formation!”

Ark, Shambala, the rehabilitation members, Lariette and the Baran warriors lined up in their formation. It was one which protected Lariette in the middle with her recovery magic while still allowing them to fight. Ark took out his sword and asked the Baran warriors.

“How far is the exit?”

“Not far according to the map. It’s in approximately 1 kilometres. The Draken are settled here so they probably won’t chase us if we managed to get out through the exit.”

“Okay, Shambhala let’s just rush and penetrate through them. Dark Blade!”

“Okay, Meteor Strike!”

Shambala and Ark rushed forward like an arrow and swung their swords. Tazza and Jjak-tung attacked the Drakens from the rear with their cannons. However, they only managed to push back a few Drakens before they were surrounded by the rest.

“Dammit, our attack power is weakened.”

Ark swore as he turned around to avoid the Draken’s counterattack. Normally those attacks would’ve penetrated through the Draken. However, Ark’s group had accumulated fatigue thanks to the heat so they weren’t in a condition to exert their full power. It wasn’t simply a matter of the stats or damage decreasing. Every breath he took while swinging his sword sounded clogged like a man stuck in a sauna. That wasn’t the only problem.

“Ugh, I can’t aim properly!”

“I can’t fight and control the skyray.....”

Unlike Ark, Shambala and the rehabilitation members had no experience with combat on skyrajs. It was taking everything they had just to calm the skyrajs who were frightened by the Drakens’ attacks. It wasn’t possible to aim a cannon or bow while the skyray was running wild. In addition, the wild Drakens had higher levels and damage than Ark’s group.

“Heok, aaaaaak-!”

Eventually, two of the Baran fell into the lava thanks to the Drakens' attacks. And another Baran warrior was caught by a Draken and died. The Baran warriors had their morale fall after seeing such horrible scenes.

"It's impossible to fight against a bunch of Drakens. We have to get the hell out of here!"

"It can't be helped. Shambala and hyung-nims, please gather the Draken in one place!"

Ark shouted and took a sword out of his bag.

"U-understood. Hik!"

The rehabilitation members avoided the attacks of the Drakens and flew all over the place. Soon the ten Draken were lined up. At that moment, Ark dropped his sword from above them and made it explode.

"Blade Storm!"

Kwakwakwakwa, kwakwakwakwa!

The devastating storm of sword fragments swirled with an intense glare! The Draken was pressed by the huge pressure of the storm and fell. He thought they might fall in the lava but the Drakens soon regained their balance and flew up again. However, it was possible to block the movements of the Drakens for a while thanks to Blade Storm.

"Now's the time! Guide, you take the lead. Let's break through to the exit!"

The Baran warriors and Ark's group traversed the cave at a tremendous pace.

Kurwarwarwarwa-!

The Drakens' cries of fury quickly came from behind them. Their eerie cries felt like the Draken's were breathing on the back of his neck. But there was no room to look back. Ark's group leaned forward on the back of the skyrays like they were riding motorcycles and raced through the cave. Then they clumsily drifted around a corner.

"We'll arrive soon! All that's left is the exit in front of us.....huk!"

The Baran warriors turned the corner and screamed before suddenly braking. They stared in front of them with desperate looks and moans.

"Ugh, unbelievable.....!"

The exit the warrior mentioned existed. But it wasn't an exit anymore.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Large amounts of lava was flowing down from the ceiling like a waterfall in front of the exit. Even with his 75% flames resistance, Ark would still receive huge amounts of damage from one drop of lava. Shambala and the rehabilitation members would only have their bones remaining if the lava fell on them.

"Son of a bitch!"

"Ark, the Drakens!"

He turned his head at Shambala's warning and saw the Drakens come around the corner. However, now the Drakens weren't the problem. If they concentrated their energies then it might be possible to deal with the Drakens somehow. But if the exit was blocked then it was meaningless to deal with the Drakens.

'Soon it will be evening and the moon will rise for 4 hours, I don't have time to turn around and find another way.'

There wouldn't be enough time to reach Ageiron if they turned back through the cave to Fang valley. The time limit attached to this operation was until the moon rose. No, before that he would have to get past the Nakujuk's garrison first.

'Damn it, I should've started the infiltration earlier.....'

Ark avoided the Drakens' attacks while grinding his teeth together. The only way to enter Ageiron was through this exit.

'Is there a way to pass through the lava waterfall?'

It was impossible no matter how much he thought about it. He would need a steel umbrella with 1,000% fire resistance.....

At that time, an idea popped into Ark's head.

'Wait, umbrella.....? Maybe.....no, there is an umbrella!'

"Shambala!"

Ark immediately approached Shambala and explained the plan. Timing was crucial for the method Ark devised. And the only person who could match his timing was Shambala after fighting together in the Evil Silrion. Shambala's eyes lit up when Ark explained and he quickly nodded.

"It can be done. Do you have confidence?"

"We have no choice.

"Okay, I'll believe in you."

Shambala grabbed the reins and flew up towards the ceiling.

“The rest of you maintain a defensive formation in this area and please endure it!”

“Hik, u-understood. I really dislike aerial combat.....”

The rehabilitation members and the warriors started flying around and screaming from the dizziness. Fortunately, one of Lariette’s skills was ‘Balance of Spirit.’ When this skill was used, the person could accurately gauge their position even if they were on a rollercoaster. Thanks to that, they could avoid the attacks of the Drakens. So the Drakens and the Baran warriors engaged in battle, with two of the warriors being sacrificed. They weren’t lacking in strength but their priority was to protect the rehabilitation members.

“We do not mind the sacrifice. The entire Baran clan depends on this mission.”

It was truly praiseworthy. However, Ark felt even more tense every time he heard a scream. After the fifth Baran warrior had died, Shambala finally called out to him.

-Ark, I’m ready! There’s enough room now.

-Okay, now wait for my signal. Don’t forget, timing is crucial!

-Don’t worry about me and steady yourself.

“Dedric, it’s your turn. Lead a Draken near the lava waterfall!”

“Eh, what do I look like in Master’s eyes?”

Dedric shouted as he avoided the Draken’s snapping fangs.

“You’re the only one I can believe in number 2! Razak and Radun aren’t any help now.”

“Sheesh, I understand. Ya, these lizard. Try to catch me if you can!”

Dedric used Taunt and cursed at the Draken. The Draken flew after Dedric who fled towards the lava waterfall. After a moment the Draken appeared in front of the waterfall!

-Now Shambala!

“Torpedo Sword!”

Shambala used Torpedo Sword while near the ceiling. Then the sharp icicle like rock dropped with a loud sound.

‘Now, timing, timing, timing!’

Ark concentrated hard and glared at the falling rock. He had learned how to grasp the timing of moving objects in taekwondo. Ark calculated the timing in his head and rushed at full speed towards the rock. The moment he collided with the rock, Ark connect Parry and Counter attack to use Riposte.

Kkakakakaka, daeng dong!

The rock bounced off him like an arrow. It was the reason Ark rushed forward and used Riposte. If he used all his momentum to push the heavy falling rock with Riposte, it would shoot off in the opposite direction like an arrow. Of course, the force of the impact wasn’t small but Ark had concentrated and stared at the rock. The goal of the flying rock was the Draken chasing after Dedric!

Snap, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The rock penetrated the Draken’s chest and lodged it in the wall. The Draken was like an insect specimen nailed to the top of the lava waterfall! The lava fell onto the Draken and split in half like it was an umbrella. And the exit was clearly exposed. The Draken started struggling as it took a shower in the lava waterfall. However, the rock was firmly lodged in the wall and wouldn’t budge. So, that was Ark’s plan.

“It’s a success, now quickly go through the exit!”

“Oh, exit!”

The rehabilitation group and the Baran warriors turned away from the Drakens and charged in Ark’s direction. Ark, Shambala and Lariette had already passed through the exit. Meanwhile, the Drakens health was quickly disappearing. Its skin had started to melt from the intense heat. Even the Drakens who lived in the lava cave couldn’t withstand the heat of the lava.

“Hurry. It won’t last for much longer!”

“Ah, understood!”

The rehabilitation members stopped aiming the cannons and arrows at the Drakens and went through the exit. At that moment, the sound of the Draken’s skeleton was heard as it floated away in the lava waterfall. The lava waterfall was also starting to block the increasingly narrow exit. Hae Gyeol-sa had just came in that direction and cursed.

“Dammit!”

“Hae Gyeol-sa hyung!”

“Damn! It’s not possible.....I’ll have to stay here..... Don’t worry about me and just go..... The Baran warriors and I.....we’ll return to Haman Fortress.”

“We’re sorry.....we believe in Commander.”

The sound of Hae Gyeol-sa and the warriors’ voices became lost thanks to the loud waterfall. But they were already surrounded by a bunch of Drakens. It was impossible for them to exit the lava cave and return to Haman Fortress.

“It can’t be helped. They were too slow. Let’s just think like that.”

Jjak-tung said after shaking his head and patting Ark's shoulders. There was no way for them to go back and help Hae Gyeol-sa and the Baran warriors anyway. Ark looked at the lava waterfall for a brief moment before nodding and turning away. This was Ark's infiltration mission where the destiny of the Dark Brothers and the Netherworld was at stake, it wasn't possible to stop and worry about the people who had fallen behind.