

Ark Vol 13 C 7

Chapter 7

ACT 7 Forced Slave Pens

How much time had passed? Ark suddenly raised his head and scanned the area.

“What, what the? Where is this? What happened?”

It was a dark space filled with a strange smell. Why was he in a place like this? Ark looked around with a puzzled expression before he touched something. His gaze lowered until he saw the collapsed form of Buksil.

“Hey, Buksil! Are you okay? Wake up!”

“Umm.....” A-Ark-nim?”

Buksil opened his eyes after Ark shook him. Then he stared at Ark foolishly before suddenly flinching.

“Heok, v-vampire! A vampire was drinking my blood..... Huh? Where is this place?”

“I just woke up and I don’t know either.”

Grrrrr.

Then he heard a horrifying sound behind him. He jumped with surprise and turned around to see deep red pupils in the darkness. It wasn’t just one. In the front, from the side, dozens of pairs of eyes with a menacing light approached them.

“Hik, hik, I didn’t see anything. Nothing was seen. I will faint. Please let me faint.”

Buksil shouted as the unidentified monsters surrounded them and grabbed Buksil's hair. But the situation wouldn't improve even if he fainted.

'Damn, I don't know what is going on but for the moment..... Huh?'

Ark quickly pulled out his sword. No, it was more like he tried to take it out. But his sword wasn't around his waist. It wasn't only his sword. All his armour and accessories were gone, with only rags left.

'What on earth is going on? Why is my equipment gone?'

A red message window appeared when he tried to open his bag.

-The use of a bag has been prohibited by 'Chain of Blood.'

'Chain of Blood? Ah, that message I saw a while ago!'

Ark recalled what happened before he lost consciousness. That's right. Karakul had sucked his blood and Ark fell victim to the curse 'Chain of Blood' after dying. After checking his status information window, Ark confirmed that he couldn't escape from the castle with Chain of Blood still active. In addition, his stats had been restricted by 80% and his skills, bags and equipment were all prohibited. A moan naturally emerged from Ark's mouth as he remembered.

"Oh my god! This absurd skill....."

Then there was that sound again and the red eyes came closer. With his equipment, skills and stats reduced, Ark tensed up and retreated. If he was attacked by a monster in this state then he would be torn apart.

"What on earth are these guys?" "Kikira, Kura! Stop..... Everyone is in the same situation....."

It happened when Ark and Buksil were surrounded by the red eyes. He suddenly heard a voice from behind him. The intimidating red eyes winced and withdrew. Then something hopped between his eyes.

“I understand..... It’s the first time that humans came here..... There was no intention to hurt you..... No reason to harm you..... Nor any motivation..... They just gathered because it was unusual.....”

Ark’s eyes gradually started to adjust to the darkness. His vision gradually brightened so Ark surveyed the area. Ark had awakened in an underground stone room. And dozens of monsters swarmed in this place. Monsters that looked like earthworms, monsters that looked like bulls etc. It was like a museum of monsters with all different types gathered. The only common thing in common was that all their complexions were pale. It was a monster the size of a flea called a Flip that had spoken. If he went by appearance, it looked like the weakest but all the monsters seemed to listen to it. Fortunately, the atmosphere didn’t seem hostile. No, he couldn’t see the flea’s impression but it seemed to be friendly.

“Where is this place? And you are?”

“This..... It is Earl Karakul’s dungeon.....”

The Flip spoke slowly.

“And..... We are the monsters seized by Karakul..... Just like you guys..... Well, it’s quite puzzling in many ways..... You’ll get used to it.....”

“You were seized? Is that why monsters aren’t seen in Karakul’s territory?”

“That’s right. But Earl Karakul is different..... The vampire has been capturing monsters for a long time in order to increase his magic..... He uses it to make his subordinates..... You might have seen them..... Monsters the colour of blood..... The vampire changed them using his magic and called them Bloody.....”

According to flip, the Bloody were originally monsters who had been changed by the vampire’s magic. So Albert thought that the Vampire Lord killed all the monsters but he was actually using them. The Flip had a strange expression on its face as it continued.

“The monsters confined here..... Is because they failed to become Bloody..... Because not all monsters can change into Bloody..... Well, I don’t know whether it is fortunate or unfortunate.”

“Why wouldn’t it be fortunate?”

“If only it was that good..... We have two types of work here.....”

“Two types?”

Ark asked with a dubious expression. Then there was a metallic clinking sound and a couple of Bloody entered.

“Hey, it is time to work!”

When the Bloody swung its whip and shouted, the monsters flinched and exited. The Flip murmured in a low voice as they exited.

“Just go outside for the time being..... I’ll tell you beforehand..... Now that you’ve come here..... It is better not to think about resisting..... You can’t escape this place even if you die.....”

“You’re moving too slowly, quickly!”

“Hik, I’m going! I’m going! Please don’t hit me!”

Tears flowed down Buksil’s face as he was hit by the whip. When they went outside, a large underground area appeared.

“Start quickly, all those that don’t fill their quota will be punished!”

The Bloody shouted as it indicated a pile of shovels and pickaxes.

‘What do I have to do with these?’

“This brat, are you going to just stand there?”

When Ark hesitated, the Bloody instantly swung its whip at him. Ark had a sudden realization. He thought that Buksil had exaggerated when he screamed after being struck by the whip. This was a game so any type of pain would only be felt as static electricity. But the pain he felt now couldn't even be compared to that shock.

‘Ugh! W-what is this pain? No, that bastard.....!’

When Ark glared at it, the Bloody cursed and swung its whip recklessly. The pain felt like his flesh was actually being struck!

“Please wait.....”

At the time, the Flip came running and begged while on the ground.

“This, this guy is new..... I'll teach him so just this once.....”

“Is it Flip?”

The Bloody looked between Ark and the Flip before turning away.

“Okay, I'll let it go just this once. Make sure you teach him properly.”

“Thank you..... Hey, you.....! You should also say thank you.....”

The Flip cringed and pushed Ark's head down into a bow. At that moment, Ark felt tears gather. He was level 314 yet he had to cringe before a monster? What the hell was this situation? However, there was no other way at the moment. In fact, he felt like tackling the Bloody but his body wouldn't move. It was reasonable because his stats had been reduced by 80%. In addition, he couldn't fight without his equipment or skills.

“Hey..... This human seems obedient..... Take him and make him work.....”

“Heok! No, Ark-nim..... Hiik!”

Buksil panicked and shook his head, but an earthworm like monster just wound around Buksil and dragged him to a place with other monsters gathered. Meanwhile Ark accompanied the Flip to a workshop. Then it indicated Ark’s ankle and spoke.

“You really have a sharp temper..... It is better to kill that temper..... It’s not possible for you to escape anymore..... I know it is difficult but..... With those shackles, you won’t be able to endure it if the Bloody whips you.....”

“Shackles?”

Ark looked dubiously at his ankles. Although he hadn’t been paying attention to it, his ankles had shackles tied around it. There were no chains connecting them so he had disregarded it. But Ark’s face distorted when he examined the information window closely.

-Shackles of Pain

Shackles made by a vampire to hold his slaves.

These shackles have been created by the vampire’s magic to increase all pain dealt to the body by 10 times. The shackles will automatically loosen if the vampire dies or you escape from its sphere of influence.

‘Oh my god! There really are various measures.’

He had been caught by Chain of Blood and now he even had these shackles on him. Ark instantly felt very gloomy. What would he do next?

'What do I need to do? I need to escape from Karakul in order to release the Chain of Blood. I'm in no state to deal with Karakul and his Bloody at the moment. No, there is no guarantee I can deal with them even with all the monsters here. Besides, this place is underground. There is only one small passage to go aboveground.....'

No matter how hard he thought, there was no clue to solve the situation. Ark shook his head forcefully.

'I can't give up yet. Yes, this is still a game. If they trap users in this place then there should be a way to escape. There must be a way to clear the doorway. Even if my pride is injured, I have to pretend to follow their orders so I can collect information.'

Acting rebellious wouldn't help him. Wouldn't collecting information be easier if he wasn't struck all the time?

"I understand. I'll be careful from now on. Please teach me a lot."

"Uhh..... You've finally understood me....."

"So what do we have to do here?"

"For the moment..... Just dig in this area with the shovel....."

Ark obeyed Flip and started digging at the ground with a shovel. After 30 minutes had passed, he had dug up a lot of pebbles and sweat was trickling down his back.

'Huk huk huk! Why the hell are we shovelling? Aren't only pebbles coming out? Why are they making us do this? Were the monsters captured just to dig at the ground? Is that right?'

He was Seutandal's hero but now he had been captured by a vampire and forced to shovel at the ground. Ark vented his anger by swinging his shovel even more powerfully. All of a sudden the Flip picked up a small pebble from among the earth and sand.

“This..... It’s what we are looking for.....”

The stone that Flip picked up emitted a pale light when he examined it.

Moon Rock (Hearthstone)

A hearthstone that has absorbed the magic of the moon for a long time.

It isn’t uncommon in New World to find mysterious stones that can absorb the magic around it. The nature of the stone will change depending on where it is buried. A stone buried in a volcano will take on fire properties. Stones buried on a snowy mountain will take on the property of ice. Stones that take on attributes are called hearthstones.

The Moon rock is also one of the hearthstones. The Moon rock which has absorbed the property of the moon has the ability to strengthen a character’s magic attribute. It is also effective in regaining mana when used as a magic ingredient. In addition, it will give mysterious powers to items with sockets.

‘What is this? Hearthstone?’

Ark’s eyes widened as he looked at the stone. He had received a socket item a while ago. He never imagined that something could be inserted into the socket this way.

‘I can put this stone in the Promised Sword.’

But Ark made a disappointed expression after looking at the Moon rock closely. The effect when added to a socket was mana recovery +2%. The Promised Sword had four sockets so the effect would be 8% at most. Of course, it was better than nothing but couldn’t he find better hearthstones if he made an effort to look? Well, his bag was banned so he couldn’t collect it anyway.

'Surely not all the Hearthstones would be trivial like this?'

The Flip saw Ark looking at the hearthstone and continued talking.

"Earl Karakul..... This is his purpose for us after we failed to become Bloody..... It is in order to mine these stones..... I don't understand too well..... The castle basement..... These Moon rocks have a different power compared to ordinary pebbles..... Karakul knows a method to increase his magic using these Moon rocks....."

"Is that how vampires can become stronger?"

"Hmm..... You really don't know anything..... Well, I have been bored without anyone to talk to here..... I'll explain it..... But don't stop moving your hands because the Bloody will see it....."

The Flip continued digging and murmured like he was complaining.

"Earl Karakul..... No, all the vampires that live here..... They're always waiting for the chance to attack each other's territory. So they have to raise their magic..... In order to lead more Bloody....."

"Huh? Doesn't the Vampire Lord rule here?"

"That is correct..... The Vampire Lord does control this area....."

"Yet he's just watching members of the clan fight each other?"

"That..... The vampire's scary point is....."

Flip had become quite bored without someone to converse with. It couldn't stop talking once it opened its mouth. In fact, the vampire was a species with enormous strength in magic but they had a lot of weaknesses. If they saw a cross or smelt garlic then they would become confused. In addition, the skin is sensitive so it would be burned if sunlight hit it. That wasn't all. In the real world that would be it but this

was a game. Although it was impossible here, a priest with light magic could easily take care of vampires.

“The Vampire Lord is someone who has lived over 1000 years..... He is the highest ranked aristocrat..... Those weaknesses are all eventually conquered..... By growth spurts in vampires..... He will only use his powers if the vampires are in danger of extinction.....”

That’s the reason he erected wards to protect the vampire clan. Thanks to the Lord, the vampires increased their numbers after the disappearance of their natural enemies. That’s the reason why the Lord overlooked all the fighting. Although the Dark Earth was wide, it wasn’t infinite. Since the vampires were near invincible inside the Dark Earth, population control was a problem. Moreover, the life expectancy of the vampires was hundreds of years so they wouldn’t die of old age.

“When the Dark Earth was first created..... All the vampires lived in the Lord’s castle..... But thanks to the numbers increasing excessively, now only the highest ranked aristocrats are allowed to live there..... Everyone else was expelled..... Even vampires would eventually age and die..... But the Lord is different..... He is immortal..... And the Immortal’s castle is a place where magic dominates..... It is a place where other vampires could also become immortal if they were selected.....”

That’s why all the vampires driven out were eager to return. In order to return to the castle, they had to defeat other aristocrat vampires and take away their territory to increase their status. The vampires who increased their power to the highest rank would be allowed entry to the Lord’s castle. Then that vampire’s territory would be distributed to new vampires and the war would begin again.

‘What the? Then the Lord created a war of fratricide as a solution to the population problem?’

It was absurd, but a fitting solution for a vampire to come up with.

“Fighting between vampires..... It’s more complicated than you think.....”

“What do you mean?”

Fighting between vampires was entirely different from a human’s war. The vampires who fought in the Dark Earth had several absolute rules they had to follow. It wasn’t that easy for vampires expelled from

the castle to capture territory. In order to control their territory, the vampires had to imbue their own power into the soil. In other words, owning the soil would make that land theirs. That's why the ones that led the Bloody were more likely to win.

"It is because the Bloody can fight in the Dark Earth..... There are also no restrictions on the Bloody..... In order to attack other castles or prevent being attacked, a vampire needed to increase the number of Bloody..... But no matter how many Bloody they lead..... It's no use if the vampire itself is weak."

"Why? Can't overwhelming amounts of Bloody kill the ones on the other side and then the vampire?"

"I told you..... The vampires are under the protection of the Lord..... He doesn't care if vampires kill each other..... It is only when other species kills a vampire..... They would incur the wrath of the Lord..... The Lord was an existence who once terrified the world..... It was to the extent that even the Dark Lord couldn't recklessly anger him..... Even a dragon would die if it incurred the wrath of the Lord....."

'What the? Then even if I manage to escape this place and gain power, I can't kill Karakul?'

Thanks to the Dark Earth, there was no guarantee that he could defeat Karakul in a 1-on-1 fight. But how strong would the Lord be compared to a high ranking aristocrat? He would truly die if he ever encountered such a monster.

'The problem at the moment isn't defeating Karakul.....'

"The vampires just use the Bloody to create a route..... It is the only method to enter enemy territory to ask for a duel..... Vampires can't refuse when they receive a duelling challenge from another vampire..... That's why the Bloody are no use to a weak vampire..... Only strong vampires like Karakul would mobilize the Bloody....."

Among the expelled vampires, Karakul was quite strong. He had crushed many of the surrounding areas and gained considerable intelligence and status. Of course, other vampires would obtain those things if they defeated Karakul but there was none with the power in this area. That's because Karakul used all his power to concentrate on defense.

“Life as a vampire truly isn’t easy.’

It was a species that had trouble living with family or other people.

“Earl Karakul has extremely strong magic..... It is thanks to these hearthstones..... These hearthstones only appear here.”

‘Is it really such a great item? This stone?’

Ark once again looked at the description of the Moon rock. It was a stone that had gained the property of the moon and increased magic, but it was just a normal stone to Ark. Although there was a mana recovery effect, it was only 10 mana at most. His skills used between 50 and 500 mana. He wouldn’t even be able to sell it for a few silver in the stores. It was better to buy recovery potions even if they were more expensive. The socket item was also the same. He wouldn’t even be able to sell it for a few silver in the stores.

‘Well, I don’t know if the information is useful but it is lucky that I encountered an NPC willing to give information. At least the information is more reliable than Albert.’

Ark needed to learn all the necessary information.

“By the way, have you ever seen a beast clan in the Dark Earth?”

“Beast clan..... I haven’t seen anything like that..... But I’ve seen humans.....”

Ark became puzzled at Flip’s answer.

“Humans?”

“You might have seen them..... There are humans living near the coast..... I don’t know why Karakul is leaving them alone.....”

“But.....”

Karakul said that no humans existed in Dark Earth. Therefore Ark thought that the villagers were also camouflaged Bloody. But they were people? Neither Karakul nor Flip had a reason to lie to him. If that's the case, who was wrong? Ark made a confused face. Then the Flip turned its head and spoke.

“By the way..... I have to explain why I've been kind to you since I've first seen you.....”

“Huh?”

“I wanted to tell you..... Because I'm truly thankful.....”

“Thankful? What do you mean?”

“That is the end of today's work. Everybody gather here!”

At that time, a group of Bloody entered the underground square. The monsters started trembling at the sight of the red eyes.

“Heh, you lowly things. Don't worry, they've already been selected. That plump fellow and the conceited one! Follow me, the Earl has summoned you.”

The monsters sighed with relief as the Bloody pointed towards Ark and Buksil. While Ark was unsure of the situation, the Bloody pulled Ark and Buksil somewhere. Buksil shrieked and collapsed like a pig that was being led to a slaughterhouse. Unlike Buksil, he had no reason to resist just to earn the whip so Ark just followed silently. Then Ark started to suspect the situation when they arrived in Karakul's room.

“Huhuhu, you've come. I was waiting.”

Karakul smacked his lips together with a joyful expression while a napkin was hanging around his neck.

'Oh my god! This bastard.....!'

"I'll eat thankfully!"

Karakul ran up to Buksil and immediately attacked with his fangs.

Suck suck suck, suck suck suck suck.

Buksil's already haggard face shrank even further as his blood was sucked out. Buksil became a mummy in an instant and Karakul rushed towards Ark. The dirty feeling of having all his blood sucked out! His body became colder and he felt dizzy. The appearance of his dead grandmother suddenly flickering in front of him. After he almost died, Karakul retreated and wiped his mouth.

"Mmmm, mmmm. Although it is regretful, overeating isn't good. But fresh human blood is so delicious. Once I've tasted it, I can't go back to tasting other blood. I'll just have these guys as my meals for a while. That's it, take them away."

'Damn, I'll kill you. Absolutely, no matter what it takes, I'll kill you!'

However, Ark and Buksil didn't even have the energy to lift a finger after being turned into mummies. The Bloody had to drag them like a piece of cloth.

'This is the second task Flip was talking about.'

Ark now understood the situation. Karakul hadn't captured the monsters simply for a labour force. They were also food for him. Flip was kind to Ark for that reason. Probably the monsters had been chosen at random so far. Now that the fresh blood of a human was added to the menu, he would never consider feeding on monsters. Thus Flip was grateful for Ark and Buksil taking on Karakul's meal duty.

'Oh my god, being forced to work and now I'm used as a lunchbox.....'"

He was feeling the same as when he tried to suicide by jumping out the window. But his resurrection point had changed because of Chain of Blood. Committing suicide wouldn't do anything but cut his stats. The only consolation was that he didn't lose any stats when Karakul sucked his blood. When they arrived at the underground dungeon, all the other monsters were already sleeping.

'Hah, is there really no way to escape?'

Ark sighed before he suddenly heard Flip's voice in the darkness.

"It's better to give up early..... I've lived here for 20 years..... I'm still alive thanks to the magic of the vampires..... I've also never seen any monsters succeed in escaping..... Don't make it more difficult for yourself..... The next day will be the same so you should sleep early....."

Then the Flip lay down and started snoring. The voice of Buksil continuously sobbing could be heard beside him.

"Huk huk huk, it's over. The game is now over. Huk huk huk, now what? This is all because of Ark-nim. Why didn't you just let me return when I wanted to?"

'Damn, is there really no way?'

Ark had no energy to retort so he just sighed and leaned against the wall. It was at that time. Something moved around his waist and pushed out from his rags.

Ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak!

"R-Radun.....!"

Ark exclaimed before blocking his mouth. He checked that all the monsters were still sleeping before whispering.

"Radun, how are you here?"

Radun thought about Ark's question but licking his tongue and twisting his body to make gestures. Ark started at him before quickly opening the character information window.

"Character information window!"

Chain of Blood has sealed all special traits.

Character Name Ark Race Human Alignment Good +450 Fame 11,425 Level 314 Profession Dark Walker
Title Cat Knight, Caretaker of the World Tree, Jackson's Hero, Great Adventurer, Magic Institute
Member, Seutandal's Hero Health 5,005 Mana 4,995 Spiritual Power 200 Strength 604 (-80%) Agility
764 (-80%) Stamina 954 (-80%) Wisdom 120 (-80%) Intelligence 973 (-80%) Luck 114 (-80%) Flexibility
127(-80%) Art of Communication 66 (-80%) Affection 57 (-80%) Resilience 415 (-80%) Special stat:
Knowledge of Ancient Relics 138 (-80%) * Equipment item effects

Chain of Blood has cancelled all equipment.

* Character Special Traits

Chain of Blood has sealed all special traits

* Available skills

Chain of Blood has sealed all skills.

* Skill points: 30

There were no changes in Ark's basic stats except for the 80% restriction. In other words Ark thought that he had died but he only lost consciousness thanks to Chain of Blood. Therefore Radun wasn't forcibly recalled. Since then, the clever Radun had hidden himself before sneaking out after the monsters fell asleep.

"Well done Radun!"

Radun was like a ray of light after Ark thought that everything was lost. Chain of Blood restricted his equipment, skills and use of his bags. But Radun had already been summoned. The restrictions applied to Ark didn't work on Radun.

"Radun, please pull out the items one by one from your stomach. There might be something helpful."

Ssak ssak, ssak ssak, ssak ssak!

Radun opened his mouth wide and pulled out the items one by one. He had placed quest items and treasures inside Radun. If he placed it in his main bags then there was a chance that it could drop.

'Oh, this is it! If I use this then I can solve this situation.'

The item Ark grasped was the Sacred Branch.

'I can communicate with Yggdrasil or Yuzuria when I use the Sacred Branch. Ark was going to call Yuzuria to ask for help from JusticeMan or Isabel.

Of course, the Flip mentioned that the Lord would be furious if Karakul was killed by other species but he would worry about it then. Since he couldn't escape from here, he had no time to worry about the game scenario that would ensue. But when he placed the Sacred Branch on his forehead, all he heard was static before a message window appeared.

-Your current location has no reception.

Ark was lost for words. What was with the old-fashioned cell phone message? As expected, Yuzuria and Yggdrasil were no help in important situations. The next item Ark picked up was the Promised Sword he received from the Magic Institute.

'I had no intention of using this for the moment so I had placed it in Radun. It might become useful.'

Then Ark's dreadful fate started. Ark's daily routine was labouring in the morning before Karakul sucked his blood in the evening. He was also tired and in bad shape after returning to the dungeon. However, Ark waited until the monsters were asleep before using the sword to scratch away at the wall. It was like Papillion who escaped from jail using a spoon! But he had to give up after a couple of days. The rock wall of the jail was stronger than he thought. In addition, his stats were cut by 80% so it was hard for him to effectively use the sword. Ark also didn't have the patience to wait dozens of years to escape like Papillion. Ark started to become more anxious as his last possibility faded away.

'Unbelievable. What is an alternative method? Surely there must be a way to escape.....'

Bump!

Ark had been sighing while shovelling. Then his shovel suddenly hit a blunt object.

-Unidentified Monster Bone

The bones of a pitiful monster who died a long time ago from the labour.

"How dreadful."

In the distant future, it might be Ark's bones that were found. Ark sighed and started to throw the bone away when he suddenly stopped.

'Wait? Bones? Maybe.....?'

Ark considered something for a while before his eyes suddenly gleamed.

'Yes, that's it. Obviously a lot of other bones will be buried. I might be able to escape if I collect them. No, I can escape! Ohhhh, now there's a possibility!'

Ark avoided the eyes of the Bloody and quickly slipped the bone to Radun. Then he approached Buksil and whispered quietly.

"Buksil, please dig a bit deeper from now on. If you discover any bones then you should bring it to me without the Bloody knowing. Hopefully it will help us escape."

"Huh? H-how?"

"I'll explain later. Please just collect the bones."

Since then, Ark and Buksil started frantically shovelling. The monster bones were buried quite deeply. Thanks to that, Ark and Buksil had to dig two or three times deeper than the other monsters. Then it had almost been one week, or two days in reality.

-You have learnt a new skill.

Excavation (Beginner, passive): You're handling of a pickaxe and shovel has become more proficient. Thanks to Excavation, it has become easier to dig up the ground and the probability of finding items has increased.

In some cases, amazing treasures can be found buried in New World. If you ever feel suspicious of an area then you should dig it up.

“Ohu, what is this?”

Despite his skills being blocked, he could still learn new skills. The skill made excavating the monster bones even easier. The items he found started pouring out from the ground. Of course, most of it was pieces of metal, wood or other miscellaneous items. But because he shovelled the whole day, sometimes he would find jewels like emeralds or amethyst.

‘The jewels are cracked so they’ll only be worth a few silver but it is still something. I also have to collect as much Moon rocks as possible.’

The quota of Moon rocks assigned to each prisoner a day was 10. When he first started digging, he was barely able to reach that amount. Now thanks to his Excavation skill, he could dig up 20 in one day. After Ark filled his quota, he would pack everything else into Radun. It was a gloomy situation but he still had to make money. He could feel this way because hope was visible.

‘Okay, I have to keep this momentum going!’

Ark became even more motivated and started digging even harder.

“Huh! That guy, he’s not playing around.”

“How can he have such energy when the Earl sucks his blood every evening?”

“Hey, newbie. You should take a break. We’ll be in trouble if you collapse.”

It was to the extent that the Bloody were worried about him. Ark just wiped his sweat and smiled brightly.

“Please don’t worry, my body is very durable. I will work hard for the Earl!”

“By the way, the human really isn’t talented. He works so hard but can barely fill his quota.”

The Bloody clicked their tongues and muttered. They never imagined that Ark was using Radun to stash the items. After his many blisters turned into hard calluses, his Excavation skill finally rose to intermediate. His hands holding the shovel became even faster like a motor. The odds of finding bones, trash and Moon rocks also rose to 20%. Thanks to that, Ark once again became more motivated and dug into the ground as hard as possible. Then there was a ringing sound and a message window appeared.

-Your skilled workmanship has dug up a rare product.

-Vampire Stone (Rare Hearthstone)

For hundreds of years, this hearthstone has absorbed the magic of a vampire. The hearthstones that have managed to absorb the magic of a vampire can be counted on one hand.

Of course, the hearthstone can be used as a deluxe magic ingredient or it can give the attributes of a vampire when inserted in a socket.

'Ohhh, w-what it this?'

Ark's eyes widened by one centimetre as he confirmed the item information. In other words, it was a rare hearthstone that had absorbed Karakul's magic for hundreds of years. As expected, the performance of a rare hearthstone couldn't be compared to a normal Moon rock. It was an effect which absorbed 5% of the enemy's damage! In other words, if he received 100 damage then he could recover 5 health. It might not seem that great, but monsters level 300 could deal between 6,000~8,000 damage with one attack. Based on the percentage, he could recover 300~400 health. It was as effective as drinking an intermediate recovery potion.

'Gulp, if I manage to find four of these hearthstones and socket them.....'

20% life absorption! It would make it possible to hunt monsters of a similar level infinitely! Although he frantically dug around, another Vampire Stone never appeared. It was actually a miracle that he managed to find a rare hearthstone when his excavation skill was only intermediate level. He had been digging 20 hours a day for a week. Although he never rested during that time, the probability of finding it was still really low. It was almost impossible that a few rare hearthstones would appear in the same place. Anyway, he finally managed to collect enough bones after a week.

“Radun, I want you to sneak around secretly and find any type of string. Something like wire would be best.”

Ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak ssak!

Radun nodded and headed towards a mouse hole in a corner of the jail. He soon returned carrying a strand of something resembling thread.

‘Now’s the troublesome part.’

Ark confirmed that the monsters were sleeping and pulled out all the bones. He stayed all up night making the escape tool that he took one week to prepare.

“.....As expected, I never get tired of it no matter how much I eat. That’s it, I’ll stop here.”

Karakul murmured after finishing his meal. Once again Ark and Buksil had collapsed. It was evening and they had been called to become Karakul’s dinner again.

‘Ugh, I still haven’t got used to the feeling.’

Although it was only 1 day for NPCs, one day was 8 hours in reality. Since it was 8 days in reality including today, his blood had been sucked twenty four times. He hoped that he would become familiar with it, but he would get goose bumps every time the fans entered his neck. And since they were chosen on a daily basis, Ark and Buksil soon became as skinny as sticks.

“Hmmm, they’ve become increasingly smaller. Should I let them grow for a few days?”

The two of them looked so pitiful that even Karakul was talking like that.

‘Damn bastard, today will be the last time. I’ll escape no matter what!’

Ark and Buksil were dragged out to the hallway by the Bloody. As soon as they left the room, Ark wobbled and pushed off the hands.

“Ah, I can walk by myself. Is that okay?”

Buksil also smiled weakly and nodded his head.

“Yes, yes, hahaha! I’ve already adapted to it.”

“Heh, then go ahead.”

The Bloody hesitated before grinning and replying. They judged that the two of them couldn’t run away. They couldn’t even walk properly so how could they escape from the Bloody? The Bloody surrounded them as they walked down the hallway. Just as they walked past a large window, Ark grabbed Buksil and jumped onto the railing. The Bloody turned around and flinched.

“Hey, what are you doing?”

“This fool, is he trying to jump off and commit suicide?”

“They’ve been caught by the Earl’s magic so suicide is useless.”

“Suicide? No, we’re escaping.”

“What?”

“Now Radun, hang glider!”

Ark shouted powerfully. Radun poked his mouth out and spat out an item. Just like a genie appearing from a magic lamp, it was a black object over 10 metres long. Yes, this was what Ark had prepared to escape! A hang glider. Ark had collected the durable bones over previous week and tied them together to produce a hang glider. Ark had the idea after seeing an item inside Radun.

Grimwing’s Wing (Special)

The wings of a bat made huge through mutation.

The purpose is unclear, but it is obviously a rare item.

It might become useful later on.....

It was Grimwing’s Wing that he obtained in the Argus Mountains. So far the purpose of the item had been unclear. The wing was folded, but once stretched out it was an incredible size. The length from left to right reached 10 metres! Ark had looked at the shape and remembered a hang glider. One of the reasons Ark couldn’t escape was the location of the castle. Karakul’s castle was located on cliffs dozens of metres high. On the other hand, his special quality ‘Slime’s Time’ had been sealed so he couldn’t use it to invalidate the fall damage. If he jumped through the window then he would 100% die.

‘But it is possible to fly in the air.....!’

He might be able to escape from the castle and Karakul’s sphere of influence. However, there was one problem with this plan. It was whether the hang glider could handle two people. However, Ark and Buksil had their blood sucked twenty four times by Karakul. Their status had changed to mummies after having their blood sucked just now.

“Buksil, maintain the centre well!”

“Yes, I’ll do whatever it takes to escape from this place!”

“Okay, let’s go!”

Ark and Buksil ran and jumped off the railing. When the hang glider suddenly fell, it wobbled for a while but they managed to figure out the balance.

“Eh, t-those guys……!”

“Run, we can’t lose them!”

The Bloody cried out in large voices as they finally grasped the situation. But Ark had jumped off the 10th storey and Karakul’s territory was too large for the Bloody to chase him.

“Ark-nim, we did it!”

Buksil became tearful at the thought of escaping from the demonic Karakul. But they suddenly heard a rough voice from behind them.

“You impertinent bastards, you think you can get away from me?”

“Hik, A-Ark-nim!”

Buksil turned around and his face turned pale. Karakul had heard the news and chased after them through the window. Karakul was a vampire so he could turn himself into a bat.

“That abnormal bastard……!”

There was a tight knot in Ark's stomach. Although it could fly through the sky, the hang glider wasn't powerful. On the other hand, Karakul could directly chase them with his wings so of course he was faster than the hang glider. Karakul caught up with Ark after 5 minutes and attacked the hang glider with his sharp claws.

"Hik, hik! It tore the wings!"

"Damn, I know! Don't shake your body!"

"Hehehe, what silly people!"

The wings became tattered every time Karakul flew over them. Therefore the hang glider's speed gradually slowed down. Buksil was unable to balance himself and the hang glider started shaking.

'At this rate, we'll fall before we escape the sphere of influence. Everything is finished if I die. The Bloody now know about Radun so there will be no second chances.'

Ark bit his lip before speaking.

"Buksil, I'll definitely come and rescue you."

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

"I'm sorry. Isn't it better if I live and rescue you?"

"Hik! Ark-nim, w-wait a moment!"

"Buksil, I won't forget your courageous sacrifice."

Ark turned around and aimed a powerful kick at Buksil.

“Haaayaahh! Pig missile launch!”

“Aaaaaaak, A-Ark-nim!”

“Huk, what, what the?” Cough!”

Buksil was thrown at the exact moment Karakul came to attack and they collided. Karakul who encountered the pig missile fell from the sky like a plane without wings and crashed. Buksil’s scream and Karakul’s cold, furious voice could be heard.

“Ark-nim, yooooooooooooou…….”

“Y-you……. Are you even humannnnnn……?”

“I have no reason to listen to words from you!”

Ark shamelessly answered as he flew across the sky. The sweet taste of freedom after experiencing hell for 8 days……. It really was sweet.