

Ark Vol 14 C 4

Chapter 4

ACT 4 Land of the Dead

Pa pa pa pa, pa pa pa pa!

Radun shook his bum as he ran across the field. The weather was good and no troublesome monsters could be seen. However, Ark's expression while riding Radun wasn't that bright.

"Ugh.....I still feel sick."

Ark frowned and shook his head. The effects of the nightmarish alcohol bombs caused by the jealousy of the rehabilitation members was still affecting him. In fact, Ark wasn't the type to become drunk easily. It was the first time the morning after had been a little difficult but it seemed tolerable after going for a light jog and sweating it off. Therefore Ark enthusiastically tried to start a new adventure.

'Damn those dolphins!'

The dolphins he summoned at the Dark Earth was the problem. He had already experienced it when heading to Dark Earth but riding the dolphins was the worst. Aside from that, it took an incredible amount of skill to stay on every time the waves surged. Every time that happened, Ark's stomach which he barely soothed would jump upwards. Although he didn't get seasick, he had to endure the motion sickness from the dolphins. There was also the throbbing pain in his lower back.

'No matter how free it is, I'll be worried if I have to ride the dolphins regularly.'

So Ark showed his superhuman patience and endured for 4 hours. Of course, there was the possibility of a land route after he left Dark Earth. However, the land route was surrounded by mountains so it would take him many times longer to get back to Seutandal. He would rather suffer from motion sickness.

'Anyway, I'm also affected by the alcohol. If I go on a drinking spree with expensive alcohol then of course it won't be good for my body. Plus.....'

His face became hot as he thought of the psychological warfare between Roco and Lariette. Ark wasn't stupid. At the time he had been puzzled, but he understood the situation after the alcohol wore off. It was caused by Roco's misunderstanding.

'That Roco, what were you thinking.....?'

Ark mistakenly thought that Alan was Lariette's boyfriend. Although it would be difficult to understand when looking through Ark's eyes, no men would look at it objectively. No, these days Ark unexpectedly thought of Alan as a decent guy. He never asked directly but Ark was under the impression that Alan was Lariette's boyfriend. Naturally Lariette would have a handsome boyfriend with lots of money. Why would she be interested in Ark? Roco hadn't known the situation and unreservedly exposed her jealousy. But Ark was really puzzled by the situation that unfolded from her jealousy. Just thinking about that incident caused his face to become hot.

'I should avoid Roco and Lariette-nim for the moment.'

He didn't have the courage to face them.

"Uhh, I don't like it."

Then Racard's voice was heard from Ark's shoulder.

"Huh? What?"

"I don't like seeing that pig's face. That stupid pig!"

Racard stared at Buksil and murmured with dissatisfaction. Buksil turned his head and smirked at Racard. The reason Buksil was making that expression was because of his pet dog, Baekgu.

'It is an really surprising combination.'

In fact, Buksil had initially disliked it when Baekgu was made into his pet dog. Having a dog two times bigger than him? Even if he was tamed by violence, that was only relevant to Ark. He might've sworn an oath of obedience to Buksil but it wasn't enforceable. Buksil wasn't assured by Ark's words. No, it was a wolf and a pig. He was lucky if the wolf didn't eat him. However, Ark had a very strong reason for making Buksil Baekgu's owner.

'Now they I've fulfilled his current wish for a subordinate, he won't ask for another one in the future. I can also reduce the money spent by 50% after giving Baekgu to Buksil.

Although they were travelling together again, Ark and Buksil's relationship was different than before. Even though Ark had previously been unpleasant to Buksil, this time it was necessary that he hire Buksil. It could be said that Buksil had been promoted from a slave to a free person. As the exclusive cameraman, Buksil had made a request.

"I won't do any labour."

"What does that mean? I'm giving you a monthly salary."

"Yes, obviously I would film the video if I receive a monthly salary. But I refuse to do any other type of labour. You'll have to pay me the same amount if you want other types of labour."

Buksil's request was natural in a capitalistic society. Of course, Ark was angry about paying for a position he normally got for free but he had no choice. He could threaten him but he had no way of knowing if it would keep working. At the end of their negotiations, Ark and Buksil managed to agree on a reasonably price for Buksil's work in gathering ingredients. Ark agreed to pay him 1~5 silvers within the normal asking price of the store for the ingredients after 30 days. That was an expense of approximately 1 gold per day in Ark's budget. Of course he had to pay for the labour, but thinking about buying the ingredients that he previously got for free made him upset. But the ingredients that Buksil gathered were necessary. Ark had to feed Buksil, Racard and Radun who needed an enormous amount of food after transforming. Thanks to that, it was easy to start lacking ingredients. When that happened, Ark's travel speed would decrease by half.

'Isn't there a method in which I can save money?'

Then Ark subsequently made Baekgu Buksil's pet dog.

“If you’re my employee then why do I have to feed your pet for free?”

That was the reason why Ark put Buksil in charge of the expenses for Baekgu’s meals. The situation had completely reversed. Ark charged 50 silver per day for Baekgu’s regular three meals. In other words, Buksil ended up only receiving 50 silver for gathering the ingredients. The meal expenses matched the price of Ark buying the ingredients.

“I was tricked again. Damn, this is a lump not a pet dog!”

It was natural that Buksil thought like that. But after travelling with Ark, Buksil’s thoughts changed by 180 degrees. In fact, Buksil had been most worried about whether Baekgu would listen to him. Unlike his worries, Baekgu obediently followed Buksil’s commands. He thought that Buksil was better than Ark who would randomly hit him. In addition, Baekgu was quite useful. As a Wolrang he had some degree of fighting ability so he could be used as Buksil’s bodyguard during fights. In addition, his keen sense of smell helped find ingredients. So even with Baekgu’s meal expenses settled, they found so many ingredients that they could receive 1 gold for it. But it was the riding function that was Buksil’s favourite. Just like Radun, Baekgu could be used as a mount.

Pa pa pa pat, pa pa pa pat!

Now Buksil could ride Baekgu instead of Radun. Ark hadn’t expected it but having Baekgu as another mount was good. Thanks to Radun not having to carry Buksil, their travel speed became 30% faster.

‘The result of entrusting Baekgu to Buksil is quite good…….’

‘That’s strange? Buksil is a nice fellow? Why does anger well up whenever I see his face?’

Racard tilted his head like he couldn’t understand. He agreed. In fact, Ark also didn’t like it. He couldn’t understand why but it felt like Ark would be disadvantaged when Buksil was happy.

“What are you doing right now?”

Ark asked with uncomfortable eyes. Then Buksil laughed and raised the memory crystal.

“Huhuhu, do you want to see?”

“The memory crystal? Is there something unusual about it?”

“Nothing like that. Just take a look at it.”

Buksil activated the memory crystal and played the footage that was stored. The scene showed when they were riding the dolphins.

“What is this?”

“Just wait and see. Oh, it starts now.”

Ark turned his head at Buksil’s words but there was no special change. What was he meant to see? Ark made an uncertain expression until he noticed something strange. It wasn’t necessary to say again, but Buksil took the video using the magic projector. Of course, most of the footage was taken from behind Ark. But this video was different. There were also situations where the scene was filmed from in front, behind or on his left and right.

“How is it? Doesn’t it feel completely different?”

“What on earth is going on? You were behind me when riding the dolphins.”

“I applied the Vampire’s Eye.”

“Vampire’s Eye?”

“It is the skill I learnt after Karakul sucked my blood.”

Of course Ark also knew that. It was a skill which could use the eyeball to scout the area.

“I don’t understand what it has to do with filming the video?”

“I thought it was a skill that might be useful so I’ve been testing its various uses. Then I accidentally found a new use for it.”

“New use?”

“This is it.”

When Buksil smiled and tapped the back of his head, one eyeball popped out. No matter how many times he saw it, it really was an uncomfortable scene. However, Buksil was already accustomed to it so it wasn’t strange for him anymore. Then he took out a memory crystal the size of a finger and inserted it into the back of the eyeball.

“Ugh, that was slightly painful. Anyway, now the eyeball will act like a magic projector and anything it sees will be preserved in the memory crystal. Huhuhu, isn’t it awesome?”

It was amazing. The idea of embedding the memory crystals on the eyeball was really great. Thanks to the Vampire’s Eye, the video filming ability was really amazing. Buksil popped out his remaining eyeball and embedded it with a crystal. Then the two eyeballs with crystals in them circled around Ark. When the eyeballs were collected and the video played, the scene which showed looked like it had been filmed from a helicopter.

“So I can also edit the scenes taken earlier. Not only that. I can use the eyeballs to film battle situations taking place somewhere else at the same time to give a sense of urgency.”

“But how can you see when your eyes are removed?”

“The magic projector.”

Buksil laughed and took out the magic projector. Then he extracted the plug and inserted it into the back of his head.

“This allows me to see all the scenes shot.”

With the magic projector attached to him, Buksil laughed as he spoke. The eyeballs floating on either side of him also seemed to laugh. However, Ark didn't feel like laughing. Not a cyborg.....little by little he was becoming a strange monster.

“It is wonderful.”

“Isn't it? Isn't it? Having my blood sucked turned out to be a benefit.”

Baekgu snorted at Buksil's exclamation.

“Huhuhu, this will revolutionize game videos. The broadcasting stations will drool over this.”

That was the reason for Buksil's excessive excitement. Buksil had already earned a good amount of money from selling the rights to a game video. Although it was eventually discovered by Ark and they made a contract for him to receive 50% of the video income from now on.

“Now the possibility of an exclusive contract with the broadcasting station isn't a dream. Ark-nim, please show me some good situations.”

Buksil did a thumbs up and laughed. Buksil had been forcibly compelled to become Ark's exclusive cameraman and he had been seriously worried about his future in Dark Earth. He had contemplated if he should continue travelling with Ark in New World. But after thinking about it, he realised that it wasn't so bad to stay with Ark. Anyway, he had raised his level quite a lot by conducting the sales for the items Ark sold. And he now received money for the ingredients he gathered and a pet that he normally would've never received.

‘Plus.....’

In fact, Buksil had a simple dream. It was to become the cameraman of a broadcasting station..... That was why Buksil had been carrying around an expensive magic projector which he used to shoot videos of Ark. And he was one step closer to his dream after seeing his video appear on the TV.

‘The broadcasting station is interested in videos of Ark. If I become his exclusive cameraman then my videos can appear on TV again.’

In addition, he would receive 50% of all fees. It was an opportunity to earn money and accomplish his dreams! Although it was sometimes an unfair and regretful experience, Buksil was also a little thankful to Ark. Thanks to that idea, Buksil changed his mind and started to earnestly fulfil his obligations. But no matter how happy the pig was, the scene with the missing eyeballs still seemed like something from a horror movie.

‘The person appears satisfied by himself.....’

Ark scratched his head and clicked his tongue. If the videos sold well then Ark also received something, so it was good. But why? Seeing extracted eyeballs with crystals embedded and a magic projector attached to the head of a pig like a cyborg made his eyes water. Racard looked at it with upset eyes and muttered.

“Master.....I can’t stand looking at that guy.”

“Yes.....”

-You have entered the Land of the Dead.

You have entered a special area and the environmental effect is applied.

“This is the undead territory?”

Ark confirmed the information window as he looked at the expanse of swamp stretched out in front of him. If it was the Land of the Dead then it should be infested with undead. There was still a considerable distance to travel before he reached the City of the Dead. Perhaps the undead only infested the city and not the areas surrounding it.

“Well, I don’t have to worry about the special area environmental effect.”

In New World, special environmental effects were applied depending on the region. The first time he experienced it was the ‘cold wave’ effect when he entered the snowy mountains of Seutandal. Then there was the ‘heat wave’ effect that was previously applied in the lava cave. However, it wasn’t simply a penalty. Although Dark Blood would apply enormous penalties to general users, it was actually a bonus to Ark. If he explained it more deeply, the impact of environmental effects could be divided into two types.

First, it was based on attributes or skills. For example if someone with a ice attribute or a user who learnt ice magic was in the snowy mountains, their attack power or magic would become stronger. On the other hand, that skill or magic wouldn’t be able to exert its full power in an area with a ‘heat wave.’

And the second type was based on species. In a dense forest, general characters might have a bonus of ‘natural resilience increased by 20%’ but the forest elves would receive an effect like having their magic increased by 30%. On the other hand, dwarves would receive bonuses in underground areas such as dungeons. In the past, the rehabilitation members had spent several months in the underground labyrinth and received penalties such as ‘depression.’ If a dwarf like Buksil had spent that time in the underground labyrinth, they would receive a bonus instead. Thus the combat power of a user would change depending on the area they were in. That was the reason why Ark chose a human when he first started. Generally, humans weren’t significantly affected by environmental changes. Humans might receive a bonus depending on the area but there was no significant penalty applied. They weren’t particularly resistant or vulnerable to certain states. So it was possible for stable play. Of course, there were also areas where the environmental effect had nothing to do with species such as the Land of the Dead.

“This standard is nothing to worry about but.....”

Natural resilience affected the rate at which his health recovers without the use of potions or magic. The 50% reduction was impractical but nothing to worry about since he could use food at the end of each battle for recovery. The same thing applied for fatigue. He actually had a separate worry.

“Baekgu, you stepped on some poo.”

“Eh? Uh, where? Ugh!”

Baekgu let out a cry of distress and retreated at Ark’s words. Then his foot entered the swamp and his health quickly decreased.

‘As I guessed.’

Ark grinned and nodded. In fact, Ark had been to a similar area before. It was a black swamp surrounded by dead trees with a nasty smell coming from it. In an area like this, the thing he had to pay the most attention to wasn’t monsters but the swamp. If he fell into the swamp then he would instantly be affected by deadly poison.

“Ah, I’m sorry. I thought it was poo but it was actually just mud.”

“Ah, Ark-nim! Heok, B-Baekgu.....! What are you doing? Detoxify him quickly!”

“Don’t you know? A herbal antidote costs 70 silver.”

Ark held the antidote and laughed.

“Damn, give it to me!”

Buksil snatched the potion and poured it over Baekgu. Thankfully, Baekgu was cured of the poison and he stared tearfully at Ark.

“Huk huk, I’m alive. Phew, Master-nim.

“Yes yes. I know, I know.”

“As expected, I only have one Master.”

The friendship between the wolf and the pig was deepening every day thanks to Ark. Anyway, Ark was able to determine that the swamp was poisonous from that small incident. However, the entire area wasn’t covered by swamp. There were fields between the swamp that three or four people could navigate through.

“But the path through the swamp is too complicated. If there are no monsters then I should ride on Radun.’

It was natural since Radun had a high immunity for poison. Buksil could also ride Baekgu so it wasn’t a problem. Although he had no tolerance against poison, he could jump dozens of metres. Therefore the length of the swamp wouldn’t be a problem. No, it was actually faster than riding Radun. How long had passed since entering the swamp? Then Baekgu who was ahead of him stopped moving and twitched his nose.

“Baekgu, what is it?”

“No, I smell rotting corpses all of a sudden.”

“Rotting corpses?”

Ark looked around the area warily. This was the Land of the Dead. If there was the smell of rotting corpses then wouldn’t there be undead monsters nearby? Indeed, they were already deep into the swamp. It would be around this time that any monsters would appear. However, Racard who had been scouting returned and shook his head.

“I went and looked but I can’t see anything.”

‘Hmm, then the monster is not visible. Once Baekgu reacted to it.....’

Ark was thinking that when something interrupted him.

Ssak? Ssak ssak ssak ssak!

All of a sudden Radun screamed and fell into the swamp. Ark instinctively jumped off Radun and landed on the ground. He was able to grasp the situation after turning around. A rotten arm sticking out of the swamp had pulled Radun’s leg.

‘The monsters were hiding in the swamp?’

“Radun, release transformation! Dark Blade!”

Ark swung his sword and cut off the arm that was holding onto Radun. Meanwhile, Radun returned to his snake form and slipped around Ark’s waist. However, Radun was barely able to sigh with relief before Racard screamed.

“M-master, the swamp.....!”

Ark’s face stiffened as he turned his head.

Bugul bugul, bugul, bugul.

It wasn’t just one area. All around the swamp, bubbles started appearing and some dark forms started rising one after the other. The stench of rotten flesh travelled over the distance as the shapes revealed the exposed bones, with maggots and leeches attached to their remaining skin. It was like the disgusting sight of food left to rot for three years! However, Ark wasn’t horrified by the monsters.

“Oh my god, this is.....!”

The number of monsters that rose from the swamp was 100! Using Eyes of the Cat, he confirmed that the name of the monsters was Mould Zombie and they were level 300.

“Damn, how am I supposed to fight 100 of them in such an inconvenient terrain?”

But the situation wouldn't improve if he complained. He had to fight if monsters appeared. No, it was impossible not to fight.

Kuaaaa!

It was the amazing sight of Mould Zombies heading towards him. Ark quickly attacked using Dark Blade. But once the battle started, he realized the Mould Zombies weren't as strong as he thought. They were level 300 so why did their health decrease by 10% every time he attacked them?

“What the? These guys are weak compared to their level?”

Ark thought about it and realized the reason why.

“That's right, my dark attribute bonus is now 50%!”

Thanks to the Moon Piece, his Gift of Darkness had upgraded! The effect increased all his stats by 50%. After completing the quest, Ark's current level was 325. With the 50% bonus applied, his current level was 487. Of course the level 300 Mould Zombies wouldn't be a match.

“Okay, then the zombies' large numbers won't be a problem!”

He was now overflowing with confidence after realizing the situation. In addition, zombies were weak compared to other monsters. It was difficult for thoughts to process in their brain. So unlike other monsters, zombies just used their superior numbers for straightforward attacks. In addition, the movement their movement was slow so he wouldn't be hit even if he was careless.

“Hahaha, these guys are so slow, catch them!”

Racard was puzzled at first but quickly grasped the situation and become lively. Slow moving monsters were the easiest for Racard to deal with since he could fly in the sky. The reason users avoided zombies was because of their terrible appearance. However, Ark had seen movies about a murderer eating minced raw flesh so his nerves was stronger than that. The zombies weren't a problem.

"Okay, let's sweep them all up. Dark blade!"

Ark blindly used the skill and rampaged among the zombies. However, there was something Ark had failed to notice. There was a reason the zombies in the swamp were called Mould Zombies.....Ark only realized the meaning when one was defeated. When the Mould Zombie died, its stomach started swelling up before suddenly exploding. The maggots and leeches attached to the rotten flesh of the Mould Zombie flew towards Ark.

"Sheesh, I feel dirty.....Spirit of the Cat!"

Ark shouted and the form of a huge cat appeared above his head. The maggots and leeches collapsed after hearing the piercing scream. It wasn't just the ones on Ark. It was an advanced skill so all the leeches attached to the zombies that were in range collapsed. But it wasn't the leeches who only sucked 1~2 health that Ark had to pay attention to. He wasn't aware of it thanks to the maggots and leeches. When the Mould Zombie had exploded, a grey powder had scattered in every direction.

-The 'White Mould' of the Mould Zombies has encroached into the interior of your body.

"Huk, what is this?"

A baffling message had surfaced in front of Ark. Why was it suddenly a situation where he couldn't touch the Mould Zombies?

"What on earth is going on?' Skill Penetration!"

Ark used 'Skill Penetration' with a puzzled expression. It was an extra effect that he received when Eyes of the Cat advanced to the Master level.

-Eyes of the Cat (High Grade, Active): You have observed numerous enemies using the eye technique.

Thanks to the accumulated experience, you can know more information about your opponent. In addition, you can use your sharp intuition to figure out the opponent's skills. Thanks to the bonus of reaching the Master rank, you can see details of the opponent's skills.

Skill Penetration: You can confirm the details of the skill the opponent used. If you use it continuously then you can also determine the timing of the skills. Once activated, it will consume 5 mana every 10 seconds until cancelled or mana runs out.

In the past, he had no problems without this effect. In low level areas, the skills of a monster or chaotic player was obvious so he had no need to check the information window. However, high-level monsters would often use strange or unique skills. In that case, Skill Penetration was an extremely useful skill as it allowed him to figure out the information quickly. Once he used Skill Penetration, it instantly showed him information about the mould.

-Mould Zombie racial skill: Mould spore scattering.

There are various parasitic moulds present in the interior of the Mould Zombie. When the host is injured, the parasitic mould will escape from the interior and propagate outside. Of course, the mould would also escape to the outside when the Mould Zombie dies. The mould spores have several different colours and can have different deadly poisons. If something living breathes in the spores then it would be a dangerous situation.

【 White Mould 】 The Mould with the weakest toxins. It will increase symptoms of 'hallucinations' for 10 minutes.

【Purple Mould】 A lethal mould. It will give the symptoms of a 'zombie.' The moment it is inhaled, the flesh will rot and you will die.

* It is impossible to treat using the common remedy treatments

‘What is this? Mould spores? Damn, the mould zombies have parasitic fungi? They raise the mould inside their bodies? Then just breathing it in would cause an abnormal state? How can I avoid it? Isn't it like I have a 100% chance of dying if I inhale the mould? W-wait? Didn't I breathe in the grey mould before? Isn't grey mould hallucinations? But nothing seems to have changed.....?’

“Master, what are you doing? Back, back!”

Then Racard shouted from behind him. Ark instinctively halted his sword movement.

“Eh? Lariette-nim, how.....?”

Surprisingly, it was Lariette smiling behind him.

“What are you saying Master? Are you blind? Steady yourself!”

“What?”

Kuaaaa!

Ark asked with a befuddled look. Then Lariette winked, ran up to Ark and bit his throat. It was a critical hit and his health drained away. Ark gasped with surprise and pushed Lariette away.

“T-this is.....heok! JusticeMan ajusshi, rehabilitation hyung-nims, Shambala.....!”

It wasn't just them. All the users and NPCs become acquainted with while playing the game appeared. After seeing their forms, Ark realized that he had been caught in an abnormal state.

“This is the hallucinations?”

Ark looked around with a stunned expression.

It was an absurd technique. Of course, the hallucinations weren't a big problem for Ark now that he noticed. It might've been a serious problem if Ark was in a party, but he was fighting alone. Therefore the only presences that approached him were those trying to kill him. But among the three mould types, there was one that would rot his flesh and cause death. If he inhaled it then it was a 100% fatal poison. Then Lariette's body which he injured a while ago swelled up and exploded. Ark rushed to cover his mouth but it was too late.

-The 'Green Mould' of the Mould Zombies has encroached into the interior of your body.

It wasn't necessary to search for more information about this state. His body trembled and wouldn't move properly.

'Damn, I made a mistake. If I get affected every time I kill one then how will I keep 100 of them? I should retreat for now.'

“Buksil, Baekgu, retreat! Escape outside the swamp!”

“Hik, understood. Baekgu, let's go!”

Buksil instinctively perceived that the situation was serious and hurriedly exclaimed. Baekgu could jump several metres with one breath and escape to the swamp outside. However, they were already surrounded by 100 Mould Zombies so it wasn't easy to escape. Just as Baekgu was jumping, one of the Mould Zombie jumped and grabbed his leg. This caused Buksil to fall off.

“Ack, M-master!”

“Aaaaak, Baekgu, Ark-nim, help me!”

Buksil fell into the swamp and turned pale as he was immediately poisoned. The panicked Buksil was like a gift for the Mould Zombies who converged on him. But Buksil was already halfway to being a corpse after being trapped at the vampire's estate. Buksil frantically jumped out of the swamp and ran around randomly. Baekgu followed after Buksil and muttered.

"M-master, please hold still for a bit.....!"

"Ack, I don't know, I don't know! Just help me!"

'Dammit, Buksil will revive if he dies but Baekgu won't.....'

Although Baekgu was a pet dog, he wasn't a summon. He was a regular NPC who would stay dead if he died. But there was no way for Ark to help. He was still under the effects of 'Hallucinations' so he couldn't even tell Buksil apart from the Mould Zombies. It would be different if he hadn't caught the 'hallucinations.' Honestly, Ark wasn't even sure if he could shake off the 100 Mould Zombies to escape.

"Huck, red mould!"

One of the Mould Zombies Ark attacked died and scattered red spores. He was screwed if he inhaled it! Ark quickly tried to withdraw from it. He was so surprised by the red mould that he stepped into the swamp and the Mould Zombies swarmed. Ark hurriedly left the swamp and drank the antidote but his health had already dropped from 70% to 40%.

'There's no choice. I'll have to leave Buksil with Baekgu and try to survive myself!'

"Riposte!"

Ark pushed back the Mould Zombies with Riposte and ran. Since they scattered the mould spores every time they died, it was best to use Riposte to push the zombies back. But it wasn't easy while Ark was still affected by 'Numbness.' He felt terrible every time he moved his body. It felt heavy every time he used his skills. Ark couldn't even move 100 metres before he was surrounded by the Mould Zombies again.

'Damn, it can't be helped. I have to reduce the number of zombies somehow!'

“Racard, return to my side and use Blood Lane!”

“Ah, yes. Blood Lane!”

At that moment, Racard’s eyes turned red and blood gushed out from his mouth. It flowed up and covered a range of 10 metres like a rain shower. It was the descent of the cursed blood which caused a large number of abnormal states!

“That’s it, now I’ve got you guys.....eh?”

Ark was delighted but then his eyes suddenly widened. Why was an ‘immune’ message flashing over all the Mould Zombies when he confirmed it with Eyes of the Cat? Ark swore after confirming the information.

‘Ah damn.....I was too careless!’

Blood Lane was a skill which caused abnormal states associated with the mind. But the opponents were zombies. They were also filled with mould. It was impossible for a mental attack to affect them. The use of ‘Blood Lane’ put Ark into an even more serious situation.

“Oooooo, I’m dizzy. B-b....I need blood.”

The penalty of using Blood Lane was that his movements and abilities would fall by 50% until Racard recovered the blood. Therefore Racard couldn’t fly and collapsed on the ground. Then a mould zombie grabbed Racard. Then Racard drooled while looking at the hand and bit it.

“Oh, b-blood....!”

However, Racard only rejoiced for a moment before falling to the ground with nausea.

“Eh? Eww, disgusting! That damn blood has passed its expiration date!”

Naturally the blood of an undead wouldn't be fresh.

“What are you doing in this situation? Just eat you useless bat!”

“What did you say? Master was the one who told me to use Blood Lane...ouch!”

Racard had been stepped on by a zombie. Despite his evolution, the Mould Zombies were still 50 levels higher than Racard. In addition, his stats had fallen by 50% and he couldn't fly so he was no match for the zombies. The Mould Zombies firmly stepped on Racard and he quickly fell into a critical condition.

“Why aren't you different even after evolving? Riposte!”

Ark pushed the zombies back with Riposte and picked up Racard. The situation was still serious even after rescuing Racard.

‘Damn, what now? There is still a long distance before I can escape outside the swamp and I can't even move 100 metres.....using Sprint in the swamp is also difficult..... However, I can't fight earnestly against the Mould Zombies.....’

It would be dangerous if he was affected by the White Mould or Green Mould again. And the Red Mould guaranteed a 100% chance of death. Then he suddenly heard Buksil's voice out of nowhere.

“Ark-nim, this way!”

He turned around and saw that Buksil and Baekgu were jumping around and shouting in a cemetery. In fact, tombstones had sometimes appeared in the swamp. Most of those tombstones were on the plains, not the swamp. The place where Buksil had fled to was a place with tombstones gathered. But the atmosphere of the tombstone that Buksil was standing next to was slightly odd. It was three or four times larger than the other tombstones and a pale light was surrounding it. The most surprising part was the Mould Zombies who chased after Buksil and Baekgu couldn't enter the area and were just circling it.

“What’s going on?”

“I’m not sure either. I accidentally ran to this place and then the zombies couldn’t enter.”

‘A safe zone inside the swamp?’

He didn’t know the reason but it was fortunate that Buksil had found the place. He only had 200 health left. In this situation, it was impossible to avoid the Mould Zombies in order to escape the swamp. On the other hand, the tombstones were only 100 metres away.

‘The problem is how to get there.....’

It wasn’t that easy to reach the tombstone. The swamp filled with poison was between Ark and the tombstone. Although there were stepping stones in the middle that he could use to move through the swamp, the dozens of Mould Zombies made a wall blocking him.

‘I only have 200 health left so if I fall into the swamp and become poisoned then it’ll be dangerous. In addition, I have to avoid the attacks of the Mould Zombies. But there is no room to go back.’

Ark pushed the zombies surrounding him back with Riposte and clenched his teeth tightly.

“Okay, this is an risky venture. Moon light shadow!”

A ring of blue light scanned Ark’s body up and down after he used the skill. Then the ring of light warped like pasta dough and changed into a person. Ark’s body had been scanned and a replica produced. Then the Mould Zombies suddenly flocked to the copy of Ark.

“Oh, is has quite a nice effect?”

Ark instantly made two more dummies and ran to the stepping stones. Most of the zombies had gathered around the dummies so only a few were blocking him. Ark pushed them back using Riposte and jumped across the stepping stones. Then one of the dummies which was being attacked couldn't endure anymore and disappeared in a flash of light.

Grrrrrrr? Grrrrrrr!

The Mould Zombies shrieked as they realized they had been deceived and rushed towards Ark.

'Damn, it was faster than I expected!'

Ark quickly jumped along the stepping stones.

"Ark-nim, hurry, hurry!"

"I know. Calm down and stop shouting wildly! That's it, I'm almost there.....huk!"

Ark only had a few stepping stones left. However, 10 Mould Zombies suddenly jumped into the swamp in front of him. That wasn't all. The Mould Zombies pursuing him from behind was rapidly closing the distance.

"Dammit, there's no point dying here. If this happens then I must rely on a plan of desperation!"

Ark threw his body and shouted.

"Jump!"

It was the 'Jump' skill attached to his item Wolf's Feet! Ark had only intended to use Jump to leap over the zombies. But was it because he made a mistake with the weight distribution the moment he jumped? When he used the skill, his thigh muscles momentarily swelled and he shot forward like a cannon. At the same time the 10 zombies quickly surged forward. Ark reflexively swung his sword.

Pepepeng!

Something unthinkable occurred. The addition of his enormous speed increased his attack power tremendously and a few of the zombies were sent flying. Thus Ark managed to cross the swamp and arrived at the tombstone.

“Whoa! B-brilliant!”

Buksil’s mouth dropped as he exclaimed excitedly. However, Ark was even more surprised than Buksil.

‘What, what the? This is no joke. I thought it could only be used to jump, but it could be used in such a method? No, now’s not the time.’

Ark turned his body and confirmed the Mould Zombies had followed.

‘They really can’t come here. The distance of that light is approximately a 10 metre radius? But why is this tombstone different?’

After verifying his safety, Ark examined the tombstone. Although it was bigger in size, he couldn’t see anything different between this tombstone and the others. But Ark could guess the reason after reading the writing on the tombstone.

-The saint ‘Betelgeuse’ lies here.

“A saint? Then the zombies can’t approach because of the power of the saint who lies here?”

But why was there a saint’s tombstone at all? He had those types of doubts but now wasn’t the time to think about it.

‘Although the crisis is resolved for the moment, the situation still isn’t good.’

They could rest and recover for the moment thanks to the tombstone's power. However, Ark and Buksil were still surrounded by 100 Mould Zombies. Although previously they had been slightly scattered, now the Mould Zombies had completely surrounded the tombstone where Ark and Buksil were resting.

‘I have to look for a way to escape while my health recovers.....’

He couldn't stay here forever. Ark's destination was the City of the Dead which was just beyond the swamp.

‘I'll have to experience this situation many more times while crossing the swamp.....’

If his opponent was an ordinary zombie then he could somehow deal with the unfavourable terrain. However, he had to find some method to take care of the spore attacks from the Mould Zombies.

‘If I'm affected by hallucinations again then I can just close my eyes and use ‘Mind's Eye.’ Although the ‘Numbness’ is troublesome, I can somehow handle it if I stay near the tombstone.’

The problem was the red mould. Before he escaped just then, one of the zombies he knocked down had scattered a red mould. It was fortunate that the zombie had been blown away thanks to Riposte, but it would be impossible to avoid being poisoned if it happened right in front of him. And the result was a 100% chance of death.

‘Although it is okay while I'm near the tombstone, I need some countermeasures if I want to move ahead through the swamp. But it can't be recovered using a general remedy.....’

Ark sighed before he had a sudden flash of an idea.

‘Wait? Do I have to use a general remedy? What did the information window say again?’

It couldn't be recovered using general remedies. In other words, he could treat it using special remedies. And what was a special remedy? Ark considered with a smile before getting up.

“Hah, why didn’t I think of that before?”