

## Ark Vol 16 C 9

### Chapter 9

#### ACT 9 Hwaryong Mountain

There was a small island located on the east coast of Seutandal. It was a seemingly ordinary rock island. However, there was a cave in the centre of the island where dozens of ships were docked. While the various ships had all types of crazy patterns like a motorcycle, they all had a skeleton drawn on their flags. Yes, this was the home base of the pirate's that had been attacking Seutandal. Not long ago, 40 battle ships from Seutandal surrounded the area and blocked the lawless port. However, the atmosphere of the pirate ships docked in the lawless port was so laid back it was enough to make someone sleepy. This was because the battle fleet couldn't enter the port due to the reefs and whirlpools strewn around like landmines.

"Heh, those guys are still relaxed."

JusticeMan pierced through the darkness and observed the lawless port through a telescope.

"But that relaxation will come to an end today!"

JusticeMan put away his telescope and unfolded a map. Complex lines were drawn on the scroll. Thanks to an 'anonymous informant,' he managed to obtain a chart of how to navigate to the lawless port. After obtaining the chart, JusticeMan made preparations and organized the troops. Finally, the fate of Seutandal would be decided in a decisive battle against the pirates on 'D-day.'

"We can now enter the lawless port with this chart! Now, spread all the sails! Divide the fleet into units and enter the lawless port! It's time to expel the outlaws from Seutandal!"

After JusticeMan gave the orders, the sailors busily moved around the deck. After tugging at the rope, the anchor was pulled up and the ropes bounding the sails released. Then the 40 ships anchored started to move towards the lawless port. While the ships were moving, the Baran clan on board drew their weapons. The rehabilitation members and Lariette who were the leaders of the autonomous group in Seutandal was present. There was also the assassin Shambala who had his profession quest 'New Killer' to change professions to 'God Killer' interrupted.

“How dare these guys trouble Isabel?”

Shambala prepared two daggers in both hands. Aside from the Baran, there were quite a few people from the Eastern Nation on board. In fact, the majority of the pirates included the Nakujuk clan, the Hermes alliance and chaotic players like Jepeteu. JusticeMan judged that the Baran clan would be insufficient against them so he persuaded Isabel that this mission was important for Seutandal.

-Pirate clean-up! (Seutandal Mission Quest)

In the few months since Seutandal rose, many heroes had helped defend against the threat of the Nakujuk. But in recent times, Seutandal’s peace is once again threatened by the appearance of the pirates. Fortunately the Military Commander had discovered the location of the lawless port but volunteer troops were needed considering the scale of the pirates. As the representative of Seutandal, Isabel is asking for assistance from the heroes in Seutandal. If you help the Military Commander of Seutandal kill the pirates than awards will be given according to the achievements.

\* Basic Compensation: All users participating in the operation will be given a ‘Golden Ticket.’

The mission quest gathered users like clouds. Aside from participating in the operation, it was also possible to obtain a golden ticket by hunting the Nakujuk commanders. In recent times, the number of Nakujuk surrounding Haman Fortress had decreased so there weren’t that many chances for users to obtain it. But there were quite a few users who would’ve participated despite the mission quest.

“Ughhh. When I think about my previous encounters with those guys.....”

“At that time they took my armour!”

“I’m going to pay them back this time!”

Most of the people participating in the operation had encountered the pirates before. In order to pay back the grudge from that time, they participated voluntarily. So the battle fleet had 4,000 people that

were all split into troops! They were all strong users level 300 or more. The Baran and Eastern Nation had a combined force of 3000 people. The fleet consisting of 7,000 troops advanced on the lawless port. However, the pirates scouting at the lawless port's watchtowers still hadn't grasped the atmosphere.

"Eh? Those guys are trying to enter again?"

"Heh, just leave them. They'll just be caught by the reefs and the whirlpools."

"Only the selected people can enter this place. Like us."

"Kukukuku, that's right. So let's just leisurely watch as they rush to their deaths."

When the battle fleet approached, the pirates just picked their noses and laughed. In contrast to the pirate's expectations, the battle fleet weren't caught by the reefs even after a long time passed. When the battle fleet came within a short distance, confusion spread over the face of the pirates.

"What, what the? What is going on?"

"There's something strange. The whole fleet is moving through the deadlock....."

"Hasn't it been a long time since they've entered the deadlock area? Wait? Don't tell me the information leaked?"

"What? Is now the time to be talking about this?"

"It is an emergency! We need to inform the headquarters!"

The pirates grasped the situation too late and hurriedly entered the cave to inform the headquarters.

"We've entered the range! The leader of each battleship target one watchtower respectively!"

“Mark!”

Lariette used holy magic to mark the watchtowers around the lawless port with different colours. And a ship at the forefront fired its cannons and started spewing flames.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The pillar of flame roared across the dark sky towards a watchtower. It received a simultaneous attack from four directions! All 10 watchtowers surrounding the lawless port was engulfed in flames and crumbled.

After the battle fleet neutralized the watchtowers, they entered the lawless port inside the cave. When they entered the cave, 30 pirate ships docked at the harbour could be seen. The pirates had noticed the situation too late and were only now boarding the ships. However, JusticeMan’s eyes were turned towards the gun turret inside the lawless port.

“There is no need to rush. The pirate ships docked at the port will require 5 minutes for preparations before it is ready to attack. Instead of the pirate ships, we’ll concentrate our attacks on the gun turrets for now. Attack!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The battle fleet lined up in the port fired without taking a break. The lawless port was enveloped in flames from the huge number of shells. Although the gun turrets also fired, it was no use against the battle fleet that had already invaded. The cannons which were shot in a blind rush weren’t effective.

“Mark, mark, mark, 1st unit the red target, 2nd unit the blue, 3rd unit the yellow!”

On the other hand, the battle fleet was attacking in an orderly fashion. Once Lariette marked a target and shouted, 10 battle ships would concentrate their fire on that target. Therefore the 20 gun turrets were all destroyed while only a few combat ships were damaged. The battle fleet then started cleaning up the pirates.

“All troops disembark in the lawless port. The fleet will seal up the harbour while the combat troops will take control of the pirate ships. Attack!”

“Wah ah ah ah!”

7000 users, Baran and people from the Eastern Nation came pouring out of the battle ships. The pirates screamed as the combat troops landed.

“Huk, what, what the?”

Originally the lawless port had a total of 6000 Nakujuk and pirates gathered. However, there weren't that many pirates in the lawless port at present. The pirates had been full of tension when the battle fleet surrounded the lawless port for the first time. But when the battle fleet couldn't enter, they had completely relaxed. Since the pirates couldn't do anything because of the siege, a lot of them had disconnected. Even the NPCs were partying and playing poker.

“T-these guys are from Seutandal..... How did they get in?”

“Run, everybody escape.....! Aaaack!”

So the 7000 combat troops swept through a relatively empty port. Furthermore, JusticeMan, the rehabilitation members and Lariette were the ones commanding them!

“Warrior's Willpower, Virtuous Vitality, Pure Light!”

Warrior's Vitality increased health and stamina, Virtuous Vitality recovered a certain amount of health for 3 minutes and Pure Light sped up mana recovery! When Lariette's buffs overlapped, the capabilities of the combatants rose tremendously.

“Batter the rotten pirates with the hammer of justice and smash them to death!”

Furthermore, the special qualities of JusticeMan's Guardian profession increased various stats. The morale of the troops rose to an absurd amount.

"Hahaha, finally a fight after a long time!"

"We'll settle the stress from training the Baran clan!"

But was that all? The rehabilitation members all had special profession qualities as a Guardian and added various bonuses to the troops. Thanks to the bonuses, the capabilities of the Seutandal battle troops doubled.

"Oh, my power has increased!"

"I've been waiting for the day I could get revenge on those who plundered from me!"

"I'll smash them quickly!"

The 7000 troops split up and stormed through the port. Meanwhile, an eerie aura surrounded the masked Shambala. Shambala flew like a bomb over the combat troops and landed among the pirates.

Kwa kwa kwa bang, flash-!

At the same time, a light which looked like a net rose from Shambala's body and spread quickly. When Shambala's net of light penetrated the pirates, they received enormous damage and there was a fountain of blood.

"What the, what is that?"

"The sword, no dagger is used so quickly that it looks like he is brandishing a net of light!"

Overwhelming strength! The pirates and even Seutandal's combat troops were entranced for a moment. Then 1000 masked people suddenly appeared at the pirate's back. The members of the Eastern Nation had waited for a chance and used 'Stealth' to approach the pirates from behind. The Eastern Nation unleashed their attacks, causing the pirates to scream and roll on the ground. The users stared at Shambala and the Eastern Nation with gaping mouths.

"A-amazing! They seemed like ordinary NPCs in Seutandal....."

"I heard they played an active part in the Seutandal War....."

"Now's not the time for this. We receive rewards for this mission quest according to our achievements. We can't let our achievements get taken away by that masked fellow!"

"Okay. We should group up and take care of one person!"

The users who participated more actively in the battle would receive more rewards. Thus the pirates of the lawless port were cleaned up in only two hours. 15 pirate ships were destroyed in the clean-up operation while 17 pirate ships were seized. And JusticeMan was also able to obtain the stolen goods within the warehouse worth 27,000 gold. When the value of the pirate ship was changed into gold, it was equivalent to 120,000 gold. Every user and NPC who participated in the operation was awarded according to their achievement. That left 50,000 gold left. A few days later, stolen goods worth 10,000 gold were delivered to Ark's Comprehensive Store in Lancel village.

---

Kiaaaaah!

A cry of distress rang out from the steep mountain slope battered by violent gusts of wind. A red warning message floated in front of Ark.

-The 'Hair-raising Scream' was used!

Currently overlapped 3 times: Attack Speed and Movement Speed decreased by 30%>

“Ouch!”

Ark flinched and looked at the sky with irritation. The wild wind also stirred up the rough sand, causing him to be battered by a sandstorm on the mountain. If he raised his head and peered through the sandstorm, a hazy silhouette which seemed like a mirage could be seen. It was the form of a female body with wings.

‘Encountering something this strange in a place like this.....’

Pabababa, pabababa!

While Ark was complaining, the woman stretched out a wing and a projectile flew at him. It was feather which was as sharp as an arrow!

“Damn, it’s starting again.”

Ark rolled and hid his body behind a rock while cursing. After escaping from the thieves in Bosaga village and eating the Necromancer’s Immortality Pill, Ark had been filled with motivation.

Although there were some minor problems, everything was put in order as planned. The only thing he had left to do was the quest! So Ark began to cross the magic kingdom of Bristania to the destination of his quest in the north. In fact, Ark hadn’t been that worried about the quest. was a quest he received from an item with a level 120 restriction. Of course, he couldn’t have confirmed the item when he first received it. So he delayed the quest and now Ark was over level 370. Who would be worried about a level 120 quest in such a situation? He was only worried that he would be wasting time completing the quest.

‘No, I still don’t know.’

But Ark soon shook his head. was from a quest item so it wasn’t an ordinary quest. It was a quest item from the Event Quest where thousands of people participated. That is to say, it was a unique quest

which only one person in New World could start! Then of course the reward would be a unique item. Even if the level was a bit low, a unique item would sell for a bit more than a level 300 magic item. The value of unique items wasn't their attack or defense but the special effect attached to the item.

'Considering the background of the quest, there is a chance that the quest will lead to one with a higher level of difficulty.'

When considering that point, he couldn't ignore it even if it was a low level quest. With his expectations of the quest, he was eager to start it. After living in the magic kingdom of Bristania for a bit, Ark's knew that the environment, buildings, NPCs and even the quests were completely different from Schudenberg and Seutandal. It really felt like he was on an overseas trip. Therefore Ark was really able to enjoy the feeling of the online game and travelled happily. It was only after arriving at the northern mountains that Ark started to become upset.

"Dammit, why did those monsters chose here of all places to inhabit?"

Ark glared at the feathers flying continuously and sighed. After travelling through Bristania for a week and arriving at the Hwaryong mountain range, Ark had encountered a level 350 monster the Harpy.

'Fortunately I can collect a lot of experience.....'

The quest had a restriction of level 120 so he had thought the monsters on Hwaryong Mountain would be low levelled. If the monsters were level 200 then he wouldn't receive any experience. Although he thought this, he wasn't really worried about the level 350 Harpy. But after he fought with the Harpy, Ark would've rather preferred a low level monster. The Harpy was a monster in the form of a woman with wings. But it absolutely didn't look like a pretty woman. With a deep blood skin colour and many wrinkles, it was a monster designed to look scary. However, the problem wasn't the Harpy's appearance.

Even though he would rather it not look like a woman, it was a monster so Ark didn't have reservations about hitting it. The reason for Ark's annoyance was not the Harpy's appearance but its wings. Wings..... Yes, the Harpy was a flying monster which Ark found the most troublesome. In fact, there were quite a few flying monsters in Bristania thanks to its geographical conditions. However, the users in Bristania didn't have any problems with that. Bristania was a magic kingdom so there were a high percentage of magicians. As magicians were experts in long ranged attacks, flying monsters were an easy opponent. However, Ark was a warrior so it was a nuisance for him.

'I have to avoid the flying monsters that inhabit this area as much as possible.....'

If he avoided the quest destination Hwaryong Mountain then it wouldn't be a problem. In particular, Ark was forced into a corner thanks to the 'Hair-raising Scream.' Just like its name, the 'Hair-raising Scream' sounded like fingernails scratching down a chalkboard. Thanks to that, Ark's motivation to fight fell. Furthermore, the technique was classified as a 'Sound' attack so it couldn't be avoided or blocked. Hunting flying monsters in that state wasn't easy. After hearing the 'Hair-raising Scream,' his body really felt sluggish.

Ark hid behind the rock and didn't move until the Harpy rushed through the sandstorm with its claws extended. It was an attack which fell vertically through the sky from 10 feet. It was a dangerous attack which had a high probability of being a critical hit if Ark was damaged by it. Ark rolled out from the rock and twisted his blade.

Chwararak, ttadadadang!

The Saw Blade separated the wind and subsequently dealt damage. The Harpy stumbled from the impact and lost its balance. Ark once again swung his sword. However, the Harpy instinctively perceived the crisis and flapped its wings quickly. Ark changed the direction at once but the Harpy had already escaped from his attack range. The flying speed of the Harpy exceeded imagination. On the other hand, Ark couldn't even bend properly thanks to the rough winds on the mountain. When the Harpy moved so quickly in such a state, he couldn't determine its location properly. The environmental effect gave Ark a considerable penalty while granting an advantage to the Harpy. Once the Harpy flew like that, not even the Saw blade that changed into a whip could reach it.

Kikikiki, kikikiki!

The Harpy smirked and teased him as it flew beyond his range.

"Okay. So you want to die?"

Ark stared at the Harpy before clenching his fist firmly and shouting.

“I’ll hit you this time you stupid old crow, ‘Lock on.’ Soul Extortion!”

At that moment, a transparent emerged from Ark’s fist. The Harpy flapped its wings and tried to escape. But Ark moved the translucent hand with his fist, tracking the Harpy’s movements before finally grabbing it tightly. Then like a rubber band, the transparent hand returned to Ark while holding something which vaguely resembled the Harpy.

-You have taken away a part of the Harpy’s soul using Soul Extortion!

“Huhuhu, this use of this skill is quite surprising.”

Ark laughed as he checked the message window. It was the newly learned ‘Soul Extortion’ that he gained after eating the Necromancer’s Immortality Pill. In fact, Ark had thought it was slightly regrettable when he first checked the information window of the Soul Extortion skill. But after he used it a few times, he thought that the information was slightly insufficient. When utilized in an actual fight, the effect was quite good.

While the skill only raised his Spiritual Power and no other stats, Ark’s favourite part of Soul Extortion was that it had a range of 30~40 metres. It was equal to the range of archers who had mastered Advanced Archery. Ark was able to deal with the Harpy thanks to Soul Extortion. Although it only did 50 damage, the effect was 100 times better than his beginner’s Archery. Furthermore, Soul Extortion was a skill which didn’t consume mana and had no cool down time. The only difficulty with using Soul Extortion was that he had to ‘Lock on’ to the target first. Lock on required a certain amount of time to be fixed onto the target but it wasn’t easy with the Harpy flying around in the sandstorm. So while attacking, Ark had to stare at the monster. But once Lock on was successful, it didn’t go away until the end of the battle.

“Now shall I start attacking earnestly? You are already screwed. Soul Extortion! Soul Extortion! Soul Extortion!.....No, it’s not enough. Soul Extortion!”

Ark ran after the Harpy and fired Soul Extortion blindly. The transparent hand shot forward like an arrow every time and removed a part of the soul. Since it was infused with the spirit of the monster, he felt a little ill absorbing it but he didn’t question it too closely. Eventually its health would fall below 10% and the Harpy would try to run away. It was a cowardly monster that would hide until its health was 100% again. Before escaping to a place he couldn’t reach, Ark had to reduce its health.

Kiiiiik, kiiiiik!

When the Harpy's health fell to 7%, as expected it instantly flew away up the rocky mountain.

"Now Racard. Dark Dash!"

"Okay!"

Racard who had been hiding behind the rock at Ark's order shot forward and impacted with the back of the Harpy's head. The Harpy who had been hit wobbled and shook. However, Racard was a ruthless bat. Racard soared through the sky and continued head butting the falling Harpy. Each hit was like a nail being beaten by a hammer.

"Make it descend so that I can finish this!"

Once the Harpy entered his range, Ark swung the Saw blade and wound it around the Harpy's ankle. When he flipped the Saw blade over his shoulder, the Harpy was flung and impacted with the ground. This was the method he devised to capture the Harpy who ran away. When he first arrived at the rocky mountains, Ark didn't know anything about flying monsters and used Racard and the Saw blade to fight. However, the Harpy was a monster which instinctively attacking the flying object first. No matter what Ark did, if Racard was visible than he would die first. Since aerial combat was often dozens of metres in the air, it was impossible for Ark to do anything. Racard's current ability was at a level 270 standard. No matter how trained his pet was, he had no chance of winning a 1 on 1 fight against the level 350 Harpy. Thanks to that, Racard had died many times in Hwaryong Mountain. So Ark didn't utilize Racard during the battles after that. He instead made in lie in ambush and only used Racard for the element of surprise against the Harpy.

Racard faithfully played the role this time.

Once the Harpy had been caught by the Saw blade and thrown into the ground, Racard started head butting it and stamping on its wings with fury. The Harpy was stuck on the ground. Even a flying monster wasn't able to easily get back up. Ark also realized this.

"Now it is time to finish this!"

Ark used Sprint and pierced the chest of the Harpy with his Saw blade. He could feel it as the sword penetrated the ribs. The Harpy's wings flapped a few more times until it couldn't last any more.

-Your level has risen.

When the Harpy collapsed, he received the wonderful message.

"Phew, I gained one level. The experience gained is quite good when comparing the time it takes to hunt."

Ark nodded as he browsed the character information window. Even though the Harpy was lower levelled than Ark, as a flying monster it gave 20% more experience than general monsters. Although it takes a lot of time to hunt one, the rate of experience gain is similar to hunting monsters of the same level.

"Character information window!"

Character Name Ark Race Human Alignment Good +500 Fame 2,365 (+500) Level 371 Profession Dark Soul Title Cat Knight, Caretaker of the People, Jackson's Hero, Great Adventurer, Magic Institute Member, Seutandal's Hero Health 6,965 (+225) Mana 7,155 (+25) Spiritual Power 407 Strength 757 (+38) Agility 947 (+110) Stamina 1,187 (+35) Wisdom 173 (+10) Intelligence 1,255 (+5) Luck 167 (+60) Flexibility 168 Art of Communication 69 Affection 134 (+10) Resilience 439 Dark Fog 24 Special stat: Knowledge of Ancient Relics 153 \* 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

\*

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

Wolf's Feet (Shoes): Agility + 40, Movement Speed +40%, Attack Speed +10%, 'Jump' is 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

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

Ark's Ring (Ring): Strength + 5, Agility + 5, Stamina + 5, Wisdom + 5, Intelligence + 5, 'Sudden Increase in Power' 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 50% in the dark

\* You have the ability to hide in the darkness (30 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.

\* Skill points: 80

“Not bad.”

Ark closed the information window with a satisfied expression. Ark deliberately only went to places on Hwaryong Mountain where the monsters were high levelled. Thanks to that, he managed to gain 5 levels in a week and was currently level 371. Of course, if he grabbed a good hunting spot than he could gain 2~3 more levels, but he never expected that much experience from this quest. However, it was quite annoying because Hwaryong Mountain had quite a lot of harpies.

“It seems like recently I’ve swept almost all of them up.....”

When he first arrived at Hwaryong Mountain, he had been attacked by quite a few harpies. Sometimes he would be attacked by three or four at once. But after walking around Hwaryong Mountain for a couple of days, it became difficult to see the Harpies. It had taken him 20 minutes to handle that previous Harpy.

“Now that the surroundings have been cleaned up, I should be able to climb up.....”

In fact, Ark hadn’t taken care of the Harpies on the slopes of Hwaryong Mountain because he wanted to. Although it gave 20% more experience, hunting Harpies took a while and it was quite tedious. And the japtem dropped wasn’t that good either. Since the sandstorm limited the topographic range of his map, he decided it was more efficient to hunt the harpies at the base of the mountain. While hunting the Harpies, he had climbed the mountain for two days. The slope was pretty amicable until halfway up the mountain. However, suddenly sheer cliffs were blocking the way and he couldn’t go any further.

‘When I received the quest, the destination was marked on the map as the centre of Hwaryong Mountain. In other words, it is the top of Hwaryong Mountain.....but no matter how many times I went around, it wasn’t possible to find a path to reach the top. There is one route where I can ascend.....’

Ark checked the map once again and looked at the hill on the opposite side. When the sandstorm stopped yesterday evening, he was able to confirm there was a route from the hill on the opposite side.

However, the hill on the other side was dozens of metres from Ark's current location. However, the bottom of the cliffs between the hills weren't even visible. So Ark had given up on the other hill and spent the next two days looking for another route but eventually gave up. He came to the conclusion that he had to go over the ravine.

"But how can I do that?"

Ark worried for a while but eventually acknowledged that there was no choice. Yes, Ark knew about a method to go over the cliff since discovering the hill on the other side. It was the hang glider method he used to escape from the vampire territory!

"While the hang glider can get me to the place I desire, it is not an aeroplane. Fortunately there are strong winds in this area. If I correctly guess the timing of the wind then it could take me to the hill. Yes, that is the only way left."

Of course, it wasn't going to be that easy to ride the hang glider and navigate past the ravine. But it wasn't possible to wander Hwaryong Mountain forever so he had no choice. If he used Slime's Time then he didn't have to worry about the fall damage. Of course, if he fell to the ravine bottom then he would have to wander again but the worst situation could be avoided. Ark made his decision and shouted towards a pile of rocks in the back.

"Buksil!"

Then Buksil who had been hiding behind the rock wandered out. After losing Baekgu, he was still depressed and looked shabby. The absence of Baekgu cast a large shadow on Buksil.

"Why?"

"We have to use the hang glider to move to that hill. Even with a good wind, I won't be able to reach the other hill with two people riding. So just place the eyeball on me and set up a campsite at the base of the mountain."

"Whatever."

“Don’t just play around when I’m not there and collect some ingredients. We only have a few left.”

“Okay, I understand.”

Buksil waved his hand like it was troublesome. While Buksil’s attitude was bad, Ark showed patience and held his tongue. These days Buksil was more aware of the game. In such a situation, a beating really might make him quit the game. If Buksil quit the game then it would cause significant problems for Ark. Because of that, Ark decided to maintain his patience. However, he couldn’t help feeling annoyed every time.

‘The weather is hot, the wind was blowing sand continuously for a few days and Buksil is acting like a damp rag..... It really makes my impatient.’

Ark stared at Buksil before speaking.

“Radun, hang glider.”

Ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak ssak!

Radun opened his mouth absentmindedly and spat out the hand glider. Ark grabbed the hang glider and waited for the wind direction to change. After the wind blew towards the ravine for a while, Ark used Sprint to run off the cliff and threw his body. While his body wobbled for a while, Ark eventually maintained his balance and the hang glider flew steadily on the breeze.

“That’s it. This should be enough to get me to the hill on the other side! Huh?”

Ark was just sighing with relief when it happened. When he had flown halfway, a gust of wind suddenly hit his side. The hang glider shook and lost its centre. Ark hurriedly moved his weight to catch the centre again but the blast had caused him to go lower than he wanted.

“Dammit, I’m screwed!”

Ark burst out as he raised his head and checked the distance to the other hill. The worst situation that Ark was worried about had occurred. To be exact, the flight of a hang glider was to descend. An aeroplane could rise whenever it wanted but the hang glider depended on riding the current of the wind.

“When I calculated the wind, I would’ve made it with a close distance.....”

Yet his height had decreased by several metres in the middle of the ravine. With his current path, he would be slammed into a cliff instead of reaching the hill.

‘Dammit, it’s a failure. Because I was annoyed by Buksil when calculating the direction of the wind, I departed a little late.’

Regret showed on Ark’s face.

‘If I slam into the cliff at this speed then I don’t know what will happen. I’ll probably die if I fall in this state. Should I jump down now and use Slime’s Time at the appropriate height?’

However, the problem wasn’t that simple. If Ark jumped down then the hang glider would impact with the cliff. It wasn’t durable so the hang glider would shatter with one blow.

“No! I struggled so much just to make this..... Something.....there must be another way!”

At that time, a Harpy flying from the opposite hill caught his eye. An idea sparked in Ark’s head.

“Racard, that fellow! Use Taunt to pull that guy here!”

“Huh? Why?”

“Shut up! Just do as I say!”

“U-understood!”

Racard hurriedly flew towards the other hill after Ark shouted.

“Hey, you wrinkled old crow! Where are you going?”

The Harpy shrieked and approached after Racard used Taunt. Racard avoided the attack and flew towards Ark. Then Ark wound his Saw blade around the Harpy’s ankle and shouted.

“That’s it. Now lead it back to the hill on the other side!”

“Aha, I understand now. Hey, you crow! Where are you looking? This way! Come and catch me~.”

Racard stuck out his tongue and used Taunt again. Once again, the Harpy’s instinct was to attack the flying object first. When Intermediate Taunt was also used by his low level pet, it was perfectly caught. The Harpy chased after Racard and forgot that Ark had his blade wrapped around its ankle. Ark had aimed for that. While he would have no chance with Racard who was the size of a mouse, the Harpy’s wings reached two metres so the altitude of the hang glider gradually increased. After a while, Ark managed to land on the opposite hill.

“Thank you Harpy! This is for you. Dark Blade!”

After putting away the hang glider, Ark laughed at the Harpy.

Kiiiiik? Kiiiiik?

The Harpy finally noticed that something was wrong. However, it was already too late. It eventually died flapping its wings and Ark sliced it up like chicken meat.

“Phew, that’s it. I found a way.”

After taking care of the Harpy, Ark surveyed the area. When looking from the other hill, he had seen that there was a path between the rocks. Ark hunted the Harpies who appeared and started to climb Hwaryong Mountain again. While the slope on this side was more gentle, it still wasn't easy. Ark wound his Saw blade around the rock like climbing gear and used Jump. How much time had passed? After climbing another 5~6 metres, Ark used Jump and landed on a rock. The sandstorm gradually subsided and revealed a wide plateau in front of him.

"Is this normal?"

Ark looked around the surroundings with a vacant expression. When he reached the top, it seemed like a new world. The plateau stretched out so far into the horizon that it really seemed to touch the sky. While a sandstorm raged underneath him, there was no hint of sand to be seen on the plateau. It seemed like a place that was just floating in the sky. Standing alone in that place really gave him a refreshing feeling.

"Is this the reason people like to climb?"

However, Ark's purpose wasn't climbing. The reason he ascended Hwaryong Mountain was to settle a quest. As soon as he reached the top, Ark found the quest destination. No, it wasn't that he found it. There was a large dome located in the centre of the plateau that reached dozens of kilometres that could be easily seen with one glance.

"That is absolutely the quest destination....."

Ark approached the dome emitting a black aura with eyes filled with curiosity.

"This fellow!"

Thump, thump, thump, thump!

There was a loud roaring and the earth started shaking. Ark turned his head with surprise and saw something he never expected. After confirming the approaching presence, his face stiffened.

“Huk, what, what the? That guy is.....?”

A huge monster reaching 20 metres was getting closer to Ark. The 20 metre monster also had black fire around its body! While the lower part of the body was a dragon, the upper part was in the shape of a man wearing red armour. Ark had seen that monster a long time ago in Jackson. It was the leader of the Army of Darkness who died by Ark’s hand! The name.....

“....Eek? No way.....Valderas?”

-----

“Sob, Baekgu.....”

Buksil cried as he descended the slope. After putting the eyeball on Ark, Buksil had no interest anymore. No, it wasn’t just Ark. After Baekgu died, Buksil had lost interest in the game itself. Among the large number of NPCs in New World, Baekgu was only one. Baekgu’s behaviour was just an illusion created by the artificial intelligence of New World. Buksil also knew this. However, it was different understanding it with his heart than with his mind.

.....When thinking about the feel of stroking Baekgu’s body and his smell, Buksil’s chest became pained from the memories. He thought it would become okay over time but that feeling only intensified when he connected to the game.

“Not even videos can interest me anymore. I.....if I hadn’t taken the video then Baekgu wouldn’t have..... Sob, everything is my fault. But if I quit the game then wouldn’t Baekgu’s death be useless? I should at least build the statue of Baekgu in Selebrid before quitting. Yes, I can’t quit the game until then. But.....but..... Sob, if I close my eyes it seems like I can still hear Baekgu’s voice.....”

Buksil sniffled and muttered.

“Master!”

Was Buksil sleeping? After separating from Ark, he could vividly hear Baekgu's voice. The thought made Buksil even more emotional as tears dripped from his eyes.

"Sob sob sob, Baekgu. Your voice is still so vivid....."

"Master!"

Once again Baekgu's voice could be heard. Then he had a thought. He definitely heard Baekgu's voice somewhere. Buksil suddenly raised his head and looked everywhere as he shouted like a maniac.

"Huk, what, what the? Baekgu? Is it really Baekgu? Where? Where are you? It's really Baekgu?"

"Master, I'm here!"

Then a blurry image appeared on the other side of the sandstorm. Buksil rubbed at the one eyeball left and froze. When he stared again, the image became clear. Something was running down the steep slope through the sandstorm. While the distance was still far and only the silhouette could be seen, Buksil knew with one glance. It was his pet dog who he would never forget, Baekgu! The Baekgu he thought had died was running towards him tearfully.

"B-Baekgu!"

"Master!"

Buksil ran down the steep slope so fast he almost fell. Then Baekgu jumped onto him and waved his tail while hugging and licking Buksil. Dog saliva was getting on his face but Buksil didn't worry about such things.

The dog he thought was dead had returned alive! He was at Hwaryong Mountain which was hundreds of kilometres from Bosaga village. If this was a dream or illusion then he didn't want it to break.

"Ohhhhh, B-Baekgu. I made a mistake. I should've never....."

“Sob sob sob, no Master. I didn’t properly protect Master.....”

Buksil and Baekgu embraced each other while brimming with tears.

“Ohhh, it really is Baekgu. Baekgu is really alive. Sob, thank you, you’re alive. But how did this happen? How did you get away from those villains? I don’t see any injuries.....”

“Huh? T-that is.....”

Baekgu scratched the back of his head and hesitated. Then a man exited the sandstorm after Baekgu and muttered.

“Hmm, what a good scene. The dog and his owner is like this. My nose is also dripping because I’m moved.”

Then the female elf following behind him declared in a curt voice.

“Bah, did we follow that dog all the way here just to see a good scene?”

“Huck, y-you are.....?”

Buksil’s face paled as he saw the huge man and female elf.

‘Those guys.....?’

It was the pair Ark and Buksil had least expected to be standing there.

Over 1000 kilometres away in the far south, someone else was in the same situation. It was the masked Shambala hiding himself in the dark using Stealth. After cleaning up the pirates from Seutandal a while ago, Shambala had arrived in Lancel village He had transported 20% of the stolen goods as Isabel promised however Shambala had another reason for going there. In order to finish his ‘New Killer’ quest

to change professions, he needed a ridiculous item and JusticeMan directed him to Roco in Lancel village who would have information about it. But Shambala encountered an unexpected event at Lancel village and changed his plans. No, it was because he saw an unexpected person.

'How is that guy here? If he is the ringleader of the events happening around Lancel village lately.....this problem might be more serious than expected. I can't solve this problem by myself.'

Shambala looked at the group and sneaked out of the cave.