

Ark Vol 17 C 5

Chapter 5

ACT 5 Devil's Identity

"I've found it!"

The gazes of the Fire Draconians concentrated on a hill as they heard someone's voice. Then one man appeared on top of the hill and hurled curses at them.

"Damn. Yes, it's me. What are you going to do? You stupid lizards! No matter how much your spirit has been eaten, how can you confuse me for the devil that trapped you? Huh? I'm a human! That guy called Lumines was whining so I came in to look for you!"

"Nonsense!"

"The fact that you entered here is evidence that you are the devil!"

"Kill him, get revenge for the Fire Draconians!"

The Fire Draconians immediately took out their weapons and climbed up the hill. When the herd of Fire Draconians came within 20 metres of him, the ground shook like there was an earthquake. Ark instantly turned his body around and ran off.

'These guys use blunt weapons. While Resilience will allow me to withstand it a bit, if I am surrounded by those guys then I would be stunned and it will be game over! I have to keep the maximum distance while luring them!'

But just maintaining the distance was difficult. If he got too far away from them then the combat state would be released. Ark's purpose wasn't to lure 1 Fire Draconian to his destination. If even 1 Fire Draconian fell behind then it would cause a problem. For Ark's plan to 100% succeed, all of them had to chase after him.

“Racard, if any of them fall behind or watches from a distance then use Taunt on them!”

“Okay!”

Racard flew to the side at Ark’s command. Then he cursed at any Fire Draconians that slowed down. The Fire Draconians became furious and caught up. However it wasn’t easy to lure 30 opponents. Ark controlled his speed and the Fire Draconians chased after him as one group. After about 10 minutes. The destination Ark was luring the Fire Draconians to was just beyond the hill.

“Racard, are there any Fire Draconians remaining?”

“Okay, I’ll check!”

“One, two.....all 30.....I’m certain.”

After finishing the personnel check, he lured them within a short distance and turned around. At the same time, the place covered with a hazy vapour appeared.

“That’s it, we’ve arrived! Ya, these stupid lizards! Try attacking me!”

Ark ran into the fog and shouted. Then he turned around and stared at the Fire Draconians chasing him. One of the Fire Draconians rushed towards him wielding an iron bar.

“Die, you demonic fellow!”

Ark quickly rolled to avoid the iron bar and pointed towards him.

“You’ve finally shown your true identity you devil!”

“W-what? Devil? Are you talking about me? The devil.....”

“You.”

Ark’s confident answer caused the Fire Draconian to flinch and stop moving. Ark stood slowly and said with a decisive voice.

“Yes, the devil. The one who trapped the souls in Dragonian and slowly chewed on the souls of the Fire Draconians like a parasite is you!”

“You’re talking nonsense.....”

“Nonsense? Heh, why don’t you look around before saying that?”

“.....?”

The Fire Draconian looked around with a perplexed face. Until then the Fire Draconians had been chasing Ark. But now the remaining 29 Fire Draconians weren’t in front of Ark. They were on the outskirts of the water vapour and looking around absent-mindedly.

“What, what is this? This guy.....”

“It is useless. They’re not going to come in.”

“What?”

“You still don’t understand? What happened to your cheerful expression?”

Ark tapped the ground and a noise like a splash could be heard.

“T-this.....?”

“Yes, it is water. To me more exact, it is the hot springs underneath Dragonian.”

Ark laughed and replied. That’s right. Ark had been digging in order to find the hot springs. The reason Ark thought of the hot spring was because he remembered his fight with Valderas. Hundreds of people fighting at the same time couldn’t defeat Valderas, but Ark managed to fight him along because he used the Fire Draconians weakness to water. Since the Fire Draconians were spirits of fire, just touching water would cause them massive damage. In other words, it was like poison to the Fire Draconians! If there was a place with water than the Fire Draconians would instinctively stop walking. But if it was the devil? If the devil had been hiding among the Fire Draconians for hundreds of years then of course it would be aware of their weakness. But the devil’s excitement meant that it would continue forward.

Therefore Ark looked for the hot springs because he thought it would reveal the devil. There had been many hot springs drifting in the chaos space. And those pieces of land had all fallen off Dragonian. Naturally he thought that a hot spring would be somewhere in Dragonian. The problem was that it would be difficult to find the hot springs in the ground in an area that was 4~5 kilometres.

But the problem was settled surprisingly easily.

‘Elemental sword!’

If there was water nearby then he could add an ice attribute to his sword. Then it was natural for it to be influenced by hot springs buried in the ground. So Ark ran around Dragonian and continuously used Elemental Sword in order to find water. Then he dug at a place which showed the strongest effect and.....bingo! The hot springs he was waiting for appeared.

“The fact that you entered here and didn’t receive any damage from the hot springs is evidence.

Now, how about it? Do you still have something to say?”

“Ugh!”

The Fire Draconian burst out with confusion and stepped backwards. Then it saw the group of Fire Draconians who had been gathered together and stopped. It scratched at its neck for a while before laughing creepily.

“Kukukuku, you saw through my act!”

“Hey!”

The crowd of Fire Draconians burst out with anger. The body of the Fire Draconian who entered the hot springs melted down and a black shape appeared. It was a slippery, black form that almost looked like slime. Maggots? Anyway it was a creepy, black monster with one red eye. Its name was Cell. Unexpectedly, it was only a level 300 monster.

‘Level 300? Is it similar to the wendigoes? Isn’t that strange?’

The look and level of the devil was completely different from what Ark expected. But he soon shook his head and concentrated on Cell.

‘This is a boss monster so I can’t be careless.’

“Kukukuku, this mischief ends here. You cheeky bastard! I’ll melt you slowly and make you wander around this place forever..... Nothing has changed even if you know my true identity. I’ll rip you apart and digest you!”

Cell shrieked and ran up to him. Then sharp projectiles rose from its skin. Ark threw his body out of the way and a wave of water rose into the sky as the projectile impacted with the ground. It was infused with tremendous speed and power. However, Ark was still composed. Ark rolled across the ground and stood up before shouting coldly.

“Hey, Pudding.”

“What? P-pudding?”

“I’ve already discovered your true identity. All the Fire Draconians also know.”

“Do you expect the Fire Draconians to help you? Those guys are scared of water so how can they come in here?”

“Oh, then you’re not afraid of water?”

“Kukukuku, scared of water? Does my appearance look scared? You sound like a fool talking.”

Cell’s whole body shook as he sneered at Ark. Ark’s body also shook like Cell’s and he scoffed.

“Kukukuku, you don’t understand the meaning of the word pudding. If you don’t want me to receive the help of the Fire Draconians then why don’t you come in deeper? You say that you’re not afraid of water? Let’s see if you can say that after a while. Racard, now!”

Ark shouted powerfully. There was a sudden bang and something approached at a tremendous speed. Kwa kwa kwa kwa! The roaring sound was a huge amount of water pouring down.

“Huck, w-water!”

The Fire Draconians screamed and stepped back. The hot spring water flowed down the hill into a pit that Ark had dug. Ark’s Excavation skill.....it managed to dig a hole 30 metres big. Both Ark and Cell were trapped in the pool of water.

“T-this is.....”

The slippery, slimy pudding like monster with maggots couldn’t swim in water. The pudding wriggled as it floated in the water.

“Now, shall I slowly release my resentment?”

Ark bit the 'Mermaid Scale' and laughed. Then Ark shot forward like an arrow. He didn't use any special skills. He just ran forward and swung his sword. Cell freaked out and tried to avoid it but all he could do was wriggle in the water. There was a splash as the sword fell and Cell was cut in the side.

"Kuak, y-you bastard....."

"Huhuhu, I'm slightly strong in water."

In fact, the place where Ark discovered the hot spring wasn't here but on the hill above it. However, Ark had been worried after finding the hot springs. Obviously he could reveal the identity of the devil using the hot springs. But it would be insignificant if he wouldn't 100% defeat the devil. The idea Ark came up with was to use a 'sacrificial rite.' He found water after such a long time so shouldn't he take advantage of it? The hot springs which appeared under the mountain was dozens of metres deep. By making a channel into the pit, he blocked it off to build a sort of dam. After luring the devil to the pit, he ordered the blockage to be broken which allowed the water to flow down from the top.

'If it is an underwater battle then I have confidence against any opponent!'

Ark was already an expert at fighting underwater. He had the Guardian Armour of the Merpeople which invalidate the water penalty by 100%. Thanks to that, there was no opponent who could fight equally with Ark underwater. Once the pudding was in the water, it couldn't even move let alone attack.

"You're screwed now!"

Kwa kwang, kwa kwang, kwa kwang, kwa kwang!

Ark hurled attacks at Cell like an evening shower. After a few minutes, Cell's health had already reached the bottom.

'What the? Even if it is a level 300 monster, isn't this too easy?'

Is this really the devil which trapped the Fire Draconians for hundreds of years? No, isn't there something strange?'

The battle was proceeding so easily that Ark made an upset face. Then Cell seemed to melt and disappear after being hit by Dark Blade. No, it happened when he thought Cell disappeared.

“What, what the?”

Ark’s eyes showed his shock.

Syu syuk, syu syuk, syu syuk!

Ark looked at the Fire Draconians. Cell had appeared among them. Its eyeball rolled around and it laughed in a grotesque voice before speaking.

“Kukukuku, I used teleportation while you were running wild.

You fool, it was impossible to beat me the moment you entered this place. Now do you want to wander eternally while your soul is slowly absorbed or you can choose to die immediately? If you die immediately then it will just allow me to absorb your soul quicker. Just like the stupid Fire Draconians.”

“U-unbelievable.....!”

Ark now noticed the subtle feeling of goose bumps. In New World, a warning message always popped up whenever a boss monster appeared. However, that message didn’t appear when he encountered Cell. In other words, Cell was not the real devil inside Dragonian.

“Aaaaack, you evil bastard!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

While Ark was thinking that, Cell started attacking the Fire Draconians. But Ark just watched with a soulless expression. No, to be exact he was looking at Cell’s body. While Cell wasn’t the devil, it was

obviously a part of the body. Unless the body was destroyed, Ark wouldn't be able to escape from Dragonian.

'If Cell is a part of the devil's body then the devil should be somewhere around here. Where the hell is it.....?'

Ark avoided Cell's attack and surveyed the situation until he had a sudden flash. He realized why his nerves had been subtly irritated. So far Ark had managed to walk around undetected by the Fire Draconians and the devil. Then how could the devil steal Ark's stats? Ark's stats were stolen while he was away from Cell who had been hiding among the Fire Draconians. In other words, the power of the devil worked inside this entire space. Yet Cell wasn't able to find Ark. That meant the devil was able to steal Ark's stats but it couldn't know where his location was. It wasn't logical.

"It was also strange when I entered Dragonian. I was looking for the entrance when I suddenly felt a sucking sensation and fell inside.....huck, don't tell me? Oh my god, if that's true then the devil has tricked us from the beginning!"

Ark raised his head at the thought and winced. The conclusion he came to seemed like nonsense. But this was a game so anything could happen. Moreover, Ark had already seen an existence like this before! When he realized this, Ark had to change the direction of his thoughts by 180 degrees. Yes, he absolutely couldn't win against Cell and the devil like this. From the beginning he couldn't defeat the devil and escape from Dragonian. Conversely, escaping from this place meant it might be possible to defeat the devil. Ark's thoughts inside his head turned at 700 kilometres per hour.

"Then the way to get out of this place.....?"

He pushed back Cell using Riposte and looked around. Ark had received fall damage when he entered. That meant the entrance was somewhere in the ceiling. Normally it would be impossible to escape that way but Ark guessed there was another method.

"Hey Fire Draconians!"

Ark shouted from the hot springs.

“You know that I’m not the devil. You might’ve forgotten but Lumines is the sole survivor of the Fire Draconians and he asked me to save your souls! But everybody needs to help me to accomplish this purpose!”

“Ack, w-what?”

The Fire Draconians asked while avoided Cell’s attacks.

“Your fire. Please work together to pour your flames into the hot springs!”

“Into the hot spring?”

“There is no time to explain! Please trust me and follow my instructions!”

The Fire Draconians were confused but they looked at the hot springs after hearing Ark’s desperate voice. They took a deep breath and blew out fire. The fire of 29 Fire Draconians hit the hot spring, causing it to heat up and exude a massive amount of water vapour. After a while, so much vapour had risen that nothing could be seen in front of him. Then the ground convulsed and shook. Ark ran out of the water vapour and stared up at the ceiling.

‘That’s it!’

Kukukuku, kueeeeeeee-!

A giant door seemed to open in the ceiling. With a roar, the surrounding water vapour was continuously pushed up to the ceiling.

“Now Radun. The hang glider!”

Ssak ssak ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak ssak!

“Razak transform into a sword, Racard ride the air currents and follow!”

Ark grabbed Razak and ran with his full strength before jumping. Then he pushed his hang glider and rode the air current to the ceiling. He was pushed by the water vapour and seemed to be flung at the ceiling. Ark rode the air current up through the doors until he turned around and landed on a nearby floating land. At the same time, a warning message flashed before his eyes.

-The soul predator boss monster ‘Soul Eater’ has appeared!

“Indeed.....!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The enormous stone mountain in front of Ark that contained Dragonian started to collapse. Once the rocks fell down, it revealed the huge shape of the devil which resembled a catfish. Just like its name Soul Eater, it was made out of a translucent material resembling gelatine and had a huge size. The forts, buildings and hot springs were all inside it..... Surprisingly, it was Dragonian before Ark. Yes, Ark and Dragonian had been inside the huge Soul Eater the whole time. If Dragonian was inside Soul Eater then everything started making sense to Ark. While he had been drawn inside Dragonian, the sucking sensation was similar to what he felt when he was swallowed by the White Whale Gallic. Since he was inside the stomach, the monster was able to absorb his stats.

‘Cell is just a parasite that lives inside!’

Yes, Cell was similar to the worm like parasites which lived inside Gallic. The difference between Cell and the worms was that Cell was mentally controlled by the catfish. The Soul Eater couldn’t look inside itself so it used Cell to keep an eye on the Fire Draconians.

‘The level 500 monster which swallowed Dragonian is the devil’s true identity!’

That was the reason why Ark used the hot springs to create water vapour. There was suddenly a huge amount of water vapour within the stomach. Naturally the Soul Eater would have to expel all the air. In other words, Ark made a situation where the Soul Eater would have no choice but to burp. He then used the hang glider to ride the air current from the burp and came outside.

“Heh, who would’ve thought the devil would look like this?”

-Kuaaak, you bastard!

The Soul Eater took off its outer shell and was completely exposed. Ark was overwhelmed by the colossal size of the Soul Eater. It was a monster large enough to swallow a 4~5 kilometre city! Gallic seemed like a child next to the humongous Soul Eater. It was to the extent that somebody didn’t even have to be on the battlefield to see the Soul Eater from a distance away. It was also level 500! Since the Soul Eater had devoured his stats, Ark was currently around level 300. It was a 200 level difference.

“M-Master.....”

Racard stuttered as he trembled away from the enormous size and the level difference. However, Ark’s eyes just shone with an eerie light as he stared at the Soul Eater.

“It is rice!”

“Eh?”

Racard made a stupid face at Ark’s cry.

“What nonsense are you saying? Did you suffer while inside that thing?”

“You idiot, please see straight. That guy is my meal!”

“Meal? It is a catfish. The pot isn’t big enough for the catfish. I think spicy catfish soup is too.....”

“That’s not it! Look at the translucent, gelatine like skin and how similar it is to the wendigos!”

“What are you.....hik! Master perhaps?”

“I’m going to devour it!”

Ark laughed crazily. Yes, the Soul Eater was just a huge monster with a soul body. And a soul body monster was like a pill giving Ark Spiritual Power. The level and size was all unnecessary. To Ark the Soul Eater was just a huge lump of Spiritual Power.

“That huge body.....how much Spiritual Power will it give me?”

Ark drooled as he stared at the Soul Eater. Then dozens of tentacles sprouted from the Soul Eater’s body.

Swiiiiik, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

When the tentacles stretched out hundreds of metres and struck a rock, it instantly turned to powder. Ark immediately threw his body and wrapped the Saw blade around a rock. Then he rose in a parabola and swung to another stone using his Saw blade. It was the whip action Indiana Jones used several times. Ark flew across the sky using the whip and stared at the Soul Eater. After a short time, an arrow appeared on top of the Soul Eater’s head.

“Lock on! Soul Extortion!”

At the same time, a hand stretched out from Ark and grabbed the skin of the Soul Eater. Normally the 200 level difference meant that his sword wouldn’t really hit properly. However, Soul Extortion which grabbed some of the soul was unrelated to the level. When the hand grabbed the skin, there was a loud tearing sound and the skin was torn. And the Soul Eater let out a pained scream.

“Eh? What the?”

Ark looked at the piece of Soul Eater’s skin with stunned eyes. With one single blow, several hundred metres of the Soul Eater’s skin had been torn. It seemed a little extreme for his level of Soul Extortion. But Ark soon discovered the reason why. The sections of skin were so thin that they were only a few millimetres.

“This guy, is he totally empty on the outside?”

Yes, the Soul Eater was a huge monster but it wasn't 4~5 kilometres. Its original size was only a few hundred metres. However, it was a soul body so it could be expanded or reduced freely. So it could inflate its body like a balloon to swallow Dragonian. That's why the skin was only a few millimetres thick. On the other hand, Soul Extortion was a skill which allowed him to rip out a certain amount of the opponent's soul. So he peeled off a wide but thin piece.

-Kuaaak, this human dares!

When a whole bunch of skin was ripped off, the Soul Eater swung even more tentacles at him. Ark swung his whip and ran away but the tentacles destroyed several pieces of land, making the places he could escape to disappear. When there was no longer any place to move then he would receive simultaneous attacks from the tentacles.

“Sheesh, is this a level 500 monster?”

Ark bit his lip and glared at the Soul Eater. It was so large that he could close his eyes to shoot an arrow and it would still hit. However, the range of Soul Extortion was only 20~30 metres. Once outside that range then Ark couldn't use Soul Extortion at all. By moving between different pieces of land, he couldn't stay within range.

“Besides, the pieces of floating land are quickly decreasing. If I'm hit by the tentacles then I will fall into the lava. Some way.....”

Ark looked around for a while before looking at the Soul Eater again and laughed.

“Aha, can't I use that as a springboard to attack?”

Then a tentacle separated the wind and fell. The tentacles turned a land mass to powder. But Ark didn't care about the land masses anymore. The Soul Eater rolled its eyes and surveyed the area. Then it found Ark unexpectedly hanging from a tentacle using the Saw blade. The moment the tentacle had hit the land mass, Ark had transferred to the tentacle. The Soul Eater roared and struck its tentacle into the

lava. Red lava flew up as the tentacles impacted with it. Ark used his flexibility to jump between the tentacles. When compared to the Soul Eater, the tentacles were 10 metres thick. Ark used 'Sprint' to run up the tentacles. When Ark ran up, dozens of tentacles instantly dived towards him.

"Hey, you idiot! Where do you think you're looking? Block his gaze!"

"B-but that guy is so large....."

"Do you think dying to him is better? Or do you want me to kill you?"

"Ugh, damnnnnn!"

Racard closed his eyes tightly and used Dark Dash at Ark's threat. And.....

Puk!

-Kuaaaaaaah!

The Soul Eater suddenly screamed and emitted a light. When Racard had used Dark Dash, he literally embedded himself into the Soul Eater's eyeball. The Soul Eater had swelled up several hundred metres like a balloon. Racard was just like a piece of dust next to it. However, even a piece of dust could make a big difference when stuck in the eyes.

"Eh? What? Isn't this plain water?"

-This flying bastard.....come out right now.....

"Fly? How dare a balloon demon like you insult a noble vampire? You, you!"

-Kuaaaack, come out!

The huge Soul Eater stumbled from Racard's attack. Racard swam around in the Soul Eater's eyeballs and punched away. The Soul Eater screamed painfully and tried to hit Racard with his tentacle, but all it did was hit its own eyeball.

"Okay, that's good!"

Meanwhile Ark had been travelling along the Soul Eater's tentacles.

"Huhuhu, there's no need to worry now."

Racard jumped around and used Soul Extortion continuously. Thanks to Racard poking around in the eyeball, Ark could jump around to tear off pieces of skin. Whenever it was hit, the Soul Eater would yell out and stamp its feet. The space shook and lava flew up everywhere. But that wasn't a problem for Ark since he was on the Soul Eater's body.

"Ooooooh!"

"That devil swallowed Dragonian....."

"He's eating! A human is eating the devil!"

The Fire Draconians who had fought against Cell in the stomach exclaimed. Since the rocks surrounded the Soul Eater had collapsed, the Fire Draconians were watching the battle through the transparent skin. And the scene was a small human overwhelming the hundreds of kilometres wide Soul Eater.

Syu syu syu syuk, syu syu syu syuk!

When Ark had torn nearly half of the Soul Eater's skin, dozens more tentacles appeared. But these tentacles were much easier to avoid. He didn't need to jump around the land masses and the Soul Eater couldn't see Ark so it couldn't hit him.

“Your mistake is inflated your body you stupid catfish. Soul Extortion!”

Ark avoided the recklessly flying tentacles and peeled off the skin.

-Your spirit has risen thanks to Soul Extortion!

-Your spirit has risen thanks to Soul Extortion!

His Spiritual Power gradually increased as the Soul Eater’s body disappeared. When Ark used Soul Extortion to eat the soul, one side of its head faded away. With the Soul Eater in that state, a part of Dragonian inside the stomach shook and emerged. It was like a goldfish swimming in excrement. While Ark was jumping around and peeling the skin using Soul Extortion, he was concerned as the piece of Dragonian fell into the lava. At the same time, the lava welled up hundreds of metres.

“Eh?”

It was at that time. The Soul Eater suddenly deflated and shrunk. After decreasing to 100 metres in size and Dragonian emerged. Fortunately, Ark who had been on the Soul Eater’s back wasn’t damaged by the fall.

“That fellow!”

“It is the devil who deceived us for hundreds of years!”

When Dragonian appeared from the devil’s stomach, Cell instantly disappeared. The Fire Draconians who had been fighting against Cell rushed towards the Soul Eater. Ark ran like the wind in front of them and shouted.

“Don’t touch! It is mine!”

“What does that mean? For hundreds of years.....”

“Mine!”

“Ack!”

He had to convert every last bit of the Soul Eater to Spiritual Power! Therefore he had to stop the Fire Draconians. The Fire Draconians flinched from Ark and retreated. Meanwhile Ark moved his eyes from the Fire Draconians towards the Soul Eater. The Soul Eater that had been several kilometres in size had decreased to 100 metres and it looked completely like a wet rag. When Ark approached it tried to swing its tentacles but they just dropped and crumpled like a wet rag.

-Kuuuuuu.....don’t come....stop.....!

Ark just hit the annoying tentacles with his sword and approached the Soul Eater. Then he raised his hands and said with a bright expression.

“I’ll eat well.”

.....His happy mealtime had started. Just like that, the Soul Eater which swallowed up Dragonian disappeared into Ark. When it only had 3% health left, a viscous liquid flowed out and the Demonic Seal information window disappeared. Ark glanced at the Soul Eater and stopped attacking.

“Demonic Seal.....should I make a cursed japtem or eat it? No, my Spiritual Power won’t rise that much with the remaining portions. And the cursed japtem has surprising uses so shouldn’t I create it this once? Demonic Seal!”

Ark used the remaining soul to seal into one of the swords he picked up in Oberium. At the same time, a stream of message windows appeared.

-You have received 30% additional experience for using Demonic Seal. -The source of the wicked power disappeared and the absorbed stats will be returned! -Your level has risen. -Your level has risen.....

When he defeated a level 500 boss he instantly gained 9 levels. Moreover, he had gained 170 Spiritual Power just from eating one Soul Eater. The gelatine like Soul Eater was a monster who gave him a bunch of nutrition.

“Now shall I check out the loot?”

A bunch of items were scattered around where the Soul Eater died.

-Nightmare Sealed Old Sword

Weapon type: One-handed sword

Attack: 7~10 (+60) Durability: 2

Weight: 45 User restriction: Level 250 and higher

A sword used by ancient warriors of Oberium. However, the sword has absorbed the demonic magic and changed its nature. The enchanted magic within the sword has enough energy to destroy an opponent. At the same time, the sword's durability has weakened because of the magic. In addition, the user will be affected by the curse and will receive constant damage until it is destroyed.

* Cannot be repaired, reinforced, enchanted or unequipped.

* Greater demon [Soul Eater] sealing effect.

When mentally attacking the opponent, there is a chance to deal 1~3000 damage to mana and there is also a 50% chance to steal a random stat from the opponent>

-Skin of a Greater Demon (Rare, Material)

(Number: 5)

“Oh, what is this?”

Ark’s eyes widened as he looked at the sword. It was a boss monster so he had expected a good effect. The result was a perfect bingo! An option he never imagined had appeared when he sealed the Soul Eater. Damage to mana and a 50% chance to steal stats from the opponent? When considering the absorption ability of the Soul Eater, it really was a cheat like option.

“But it only has 2 durability so just using it 10 times will destroy it.

Since the probability is 50%, I’ll probably only get between 5~10 points before the sword breaks. When thinking about it like that, the option is not that great. Damn, it would be an absurd sword if the durability was higher.”

Ark packed the sword with a regretful face.

“But what is this? Even though I defeated a boss monster.....”

Aside from the sword, it seemed like the Soul Eater only dropped one option. It was a rare material item. Ark had expected a lot more from a level 500 boss.

“Wait? Didn’t something seem to shine and fall when that guy died? This skin isn’t shiny. Then there is still something left?”

Ark looked around carefully. But he couldn’t find a special item not matter where he looked.

“That’s strange? Am I wrong?”

Ark asked as he tilted his head to one side.

Ssak ssak ssak ssak!

Ark looked around restlessly when Radun suddenly appeared. Radun entered a small gap in a rock and then an information window appeared in front of Ark.

-Radun has acquired ‘Burning Heart of the Fire Draconian.

“Oh, so it rolled in there! Well done Radun!”

Ssak ssak? Ssak ssak ssak!

Ark stroked his head while Radun shook his tail eagerly.

“Now please throw it up. I want to check out the information.”

Radun immediately opened his mouth at Arks’ order.....ssak! Throw up....ssak! Throw up....he couldn’t. No matter how many times he tried, the Burning Heart couldn’t be spat out. Ark thought something was wrong and tried to hold Radun upside down but it was no use. Then Radun was covered in dead skin and the information window appeared.

-Radun has absorbed the Burning Heart of the Fire Draconian.

Your pet Radun ate a special item which is producing changes in his body.

As an Alamone, the secret of growth for that species is still unknown. It cannot be confirmed what type of changes the item would bring but it will become evident when the ‘Burning Heart of the Fire Draconian’ will be completely absorbed. However, Radun’s current ability does not allow him to

completely digest the Burning Heart of the Fire Draconian. It will take some time until Radun can completely digest the Burning Heart of the Fire Draconian.

“Eh? What is this?”

Ark read the information window with a stupid expression. He had forgotten. Radun could grow using specific items. Then wasn't Burning Heart of the Fire Draconian similar to the Fruit of Basium that Radun ate before?

Ssak ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak!

After seeing Ark's expression, Radun dropped his head like someone who committed a sin and apologized. But Ark just laughed and shook his head.

“No, you did well.”

He couldn't think of another purpose for the Burning Heart of the Fire Draconian aside from as a growth item. The reason Ark bore a grudge against Radun when he ate the Fruit of Basium was because he couldn't use Radun's Item Storage. But this time there didn't seem to be such restrictions. Furthermore, he didn't need to find something else to assist the digestion of the Burning Heart of the Fire Draconian.

“Then there's no problem. Radun, since you've already ate it then try your best to digest it.”

Ssak ssak? Ssak ssak ssak ssak!

Radun's eyes sparkled as he received praise instead of hostility.

“Huhuhu, you cutie. My pet is too charming. Now everything is finished....eh, what the?”

It was at that time. He suddenly felt a pain as both wrists throbbed. Ark frowned and looked down with confusion.

“Eh? T-this.....?”

The pain he felt was from the tattoos on his wrist. It was the trademark of ‘Eternal Soul.’ The tattoos burned and a light was suddenly emitted from it. After a moment, cracks appeared in the tattoos and a piece broke off. A new information window then appeared when the broken tattoos sunk into his skin.

-A seal of ‘Eternal Soul’ has been released and you’ve acquired a new profession-specific skill. [Demonic Response II]: Eternal Soul stage 3 (Passive)

‘Demonic Response’ is a necessary stage to learn if they want to reach the enlightenment needed for Eternal Soul. When you find a demonic response, you will deal 20% additional damage against demonic monsters and the probability of resisting the demonic attribute will increase by 30%. In addition, you will be able to detect hidden demonic power within the bodies of monsters.

[Demonic Detection]: Eternal Soul stage 4 (Active)

A technique which can read the flow of demonic power. It is possible to read the flow of demonic power within a 100 metre radius in order to find the location of the demon. By cutting off the flow of demonic energy inside the body of the demon, you can deal fatal damage. Demons who receive a direct blow to their demonic energy will receive 100~1000 damage and have their defense temporarily reduced.

Spiritual Power consumption: 50>

“Eh? Eternal soul?”

He hadn’t considered that Eternal Soul would awaken. But Ark was able to understand most of the methods to awaken the Eternal Soul after this. It wasn’t surprising that Eternal Soul would awaken

whenever he dealt with monsters of the demonic attribute. And every time Eternal Soul awakened, one tattoo on each wrist would be unsealed.

“At first I thought it was a coincidence but now it is certain that two seals are released every time. One gives a passive skill which will increase my abilities while increasing my resistance to the demonic attribute. The other seal will give an active skill which such as Demonic Seal or Demonic Detection which could assist in fighting monsters. But now Demonic Detection.....”

Ark smiled wryly at the information window. It was a skill for detecting demonic energy and finding demons. If he had this skill before then he could've discovered the Soul Eater instantly. Wasn't that just a case of receiving the skill after the need was over? It also appeared too late when he was dealing with Karma.....However, he discovered that there was more to the skills learnt after the seals were released. In New World it was possible to change to the 3rd stage profession. In other words, there was still one profession left after Dark Soul. And Eternal Soul was probably the profession after Dark Soul. So releasing the seals quickly was a good thing.

“Anyway, has all my business here finished?”

Ark looked up at the clear, blue sky with a refreshed look. The black dome which had been present on Hwaryong Mountain for hundreds of years had disappeared. When the Soul Eater disappeared, Dragonian was also returned to normal. All the pieces of land which had been floating around the chaos space for hundreds of years re-joined with Dragonian. The lava now only circled Dragonian like it was an architectural feature. The reason for this was because the Soul Eater had broken the surrounding pieces of land when fighting Ark. When Dragonian returned to normal, Lumines instantly appeared.

“Existences born in the presence of fire, go to your eternal rest!”

Lumines used the purification power of his flames on the souls of the Fire Draconians and they disappeared. After ensuring that all the souls were gone, Lumines walked over to Ark.

“I really thank you.”

Lumines said with an expression mixed with sadness and joy. He was happy that the souls were freed after hundreds of years but felt grief when they had to leave.

"It is just lucky that I could help."

"It's regrettable but this will be the last time I see you."

"Huh?"

Ark asked Lumines who replied.

"I've been protecting this place for hundreds of years. I said I am the only survivor but I should've died a long time ago. But I couldn't bear to leave the souls of my kin enslaved by the devil so I used the holy power of the Oracle to live. Now that the souls of the Fire Draconians have been liberated, I will also move on to that place."

"Then the Fire Draconians.....?"

"We probably won't appear in this world anymore."

Lumines murmured with a sad expression. The Fire Draconian who had been waiting hundreds of years for the curse to be released also knew the whole time that it meant the extinction of his clan. But then Lumines shook his head and gave a small smile.

"Obviously the Fire Draconians will disappear from this world when I am gone. But I don't think it is the end of the Fire Draconians.

The will of the Fire Draconians will live on through you."

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

"I've been worried for a long time while looking at the wards. Even our enemies didn't care about this place until you came with Valderas' keepsake. And you used great strength and courage to free the souls of the Fire Draconians. You have shown me everything a true hero requires. As the last Oracle of the Fire Draconians, I have the responsibility to compensate you for what you have done."

‘Quest reward?’

Ark’s eyes lit up like a lantern. In fact, Ark didn’t really have any interest in Lumines’ extinction. To be honest, there was nothing he could do so why should he mourn? He had been worried about the reward for completing the quest while listening to Lumines’ words. But this atmosphere seemed like he was going to receive something.

“Come along.”

Lumines turned around and headed towards a castle in Dragonian.

‘What will he give? I’ve saved the Fire Draconians so shouldn’t the reward be pretty good? Of course it will be good. How much did I have to struggle before completing it?’

Ark was filled with anticipation as he followed. Lumines guided Ark to the centre of the castle where some stone statues resembling the Fire Draconians were lined up in a circle. Lumines indicated towards an altar in the centre of the statues and said.

“Step up to that altar.”

‘Eh? What? He’s not giving an item? Perhaps it is the ‘Blessing of Fire’ again?’

The atmosphere turned fiery. Of course, Blessing of Fire gave him extra fire and burn resistance. And he thought he would receive Blessing of Fire again when he had entered the wards. But it took almost ten days to complete the quest. Well, he did waste one week consuming the wendigoes. Anyway, didn’t he suffer a crisis in Dragonian from the decreased stats? If he went through such troubles then Blessing of Fire alone wouldn’t be sufficient. Then Lumines slammed his staff into the ground and shouted.

“Original fire, please bless this chosen hero with your sacred fire!”

It was at that time. The statues of the Fire Draconians lined up started to spin. They all faced the altar where their mouths opened and streams of fire emerged. He was subjected to flames from dozens of

statues! While Ark was in the midst of the flames, there was a white light and the information window popped up.

-Thanks to the sacred altar fire, you have learnt the 'Descent of the Fire Draconian' skill!

[Descent of the Fire Draconian]: Divine Skill

After being blessed by the sacred altar fire, you are the brave warrior selected who can use the Fire Draconian's ultimate skill. Descent of the Fire Draconian is a revered skill which causes an explosion of sudden power. This skill is only meant for one person to use. It has been passed down through generations of Guardians protecting the temple. When using Descent of the Fire Draconian, you will accept the holy power into your body which will cause an 'Immortal Fire Draconian' effect.

- * 300 Fire damage added to all attacks.

- * Attack speed, movement speed and Reaction rate will increase by 50%.

- * All enemies that attack will receive 10~100 fire damage.

- * Fire resistance increases to 500% and all party members' fire resistance will increase to 100%.

- * When activated, all enemies within the area will receive 1000 fire damage while 50% of the user's health will be restored.

-You have learnt a Divine skill.

The Divine skill is a high ranking skill passed down from ancient forgotten gods. The only way humans can learn this skill is through the ancient secret arts. In addition, tremendous energy is needed to use the power of the gods. Therefore humans can only use the Divine skill in special areas. It is the skill which can amplify the user's abilities, Area Declaration.

* Divine skill can only be used within the Area Declaration territory of your profession.

If you leave the area after using the Divine skill then its effects would disappear.

'D-divine skill!'

Ark's mouth dropped at the sight of the information window. It was a skill with 5 different effects. Moreover, the effects were so strong it was like an advanced skill. Especially the one where he dealt 1000 fire damage while recovering 50% of his health. There was also a 50% increase in all types of speed! And the additional fire damage! The fire resistance also increased for all his party members! Enemies who attacked him would also receive fire damage! It wasn't an exaggeration to say that he was almost invincible for the 10 minutes the skill was activated.

'It is truly worthy of being called a Divine skill!'

The Divine skill Ark had experienced before was the 'Indra's Lightning' that the Red Man had used. It was an enormous magic which took care of Ark, Shambala and Lariette with one blow! Just like the name 'Immortal Fire Draconian,' he was certainly immortal while the Divine skill was triggered. However, there was a fatal weakness in the Divine skill. It was only available within the territory of Area Declaration. That is to say, it was a meaningless skill if he couldn't use Area Declaration. If he knew that information in advance then he wouldn't have lost so badly against the Red Man.

'Even though a user might know the weakness, I can take advantage of it when fighting against monsters. If I'm fighting a really strong monster then I can use it to win.'

"Now it is like you are a Fire Draconian."

"I will use it wisely for the honour of the Fire Draconians."

Lumines thought for a short time after Ark's answer before talking again.

".....Can I ask you for one last favour?"

'A favour?'

Was his true colours revealed after giving Ark something? However, he always welcomed the request of an NPC. A request from an NPC meant a quest. Although he hadn't received any money from the Fire Draconian's quests, he did receive a lot of stat increase.

"Please say it. I am already a member of the honourable Fire Draconian clan."

"Thank you. You've proven your courage and capabilities through rescuing the Fire Draconians. I believe in your courage and capabilities so I want to ask this of you. The other day I said that Magura stole the Immortal Book which had been house in the Fire Draconian's temple. The Immortal Book is an ancient treasure of the Fire Draconians that I can't stand to see in Magura's hands. Please look for the Immortal Book."

"Magura.....I understand. Where is he?"

Ark asked with a questioning expression. But Lumines just shook his head and sighed.

"I do not know the details. The only clue is this slab left behind when Valderas returned to Dragonian. I've been trying to find clues using this slab but I still haven't figured it out."

Lumines took out a small stone tablet. An eerie aura surrounded it and it seemed like blood was flowing from the back. Lumines might not know the exact location but he did have a clue.

"I understand."

Ark nodded and the quest information window updated.

-The quest has been updated.

Souls of the Fire Draconians= Demon Magura!

The demon Magura was one of the demons who spearheaded the Dark Lord's attacks. Hundreds of years ago, Magura led astray one of the Fire Draconians which led to their destruction. You must find the Immortal Book that Magura stole from the Fire Draconians and take it back. If you find the demon Magura then you will also find clues to the Dark Lord.

-Bloody Slate (Quest Item)

A carved slate with ancient characters written using the blood of a demon.

<200 Knowledge of Ancient Relics is needed to confirm the item>

'A Lore quest!'

The degree of difficulty indicated that it was a lore quest. These quests were deeply associated with the history of New World. When he had previously completed Lore quests, he had been given stars as a special reward. Ark had currently gathered 7 of them. If he completed the Magura quest then he would receive 10.

'I don't know what kind of compensation will be given.....'

When considering the degree of difficulty with his Lore quests so far, the reward shouldn't be trivial.

'I have to settle this. But I can't find Magura until I can decipher the slate? I need to wait until I have 200 points in Knowledge of Ancient Relics.'

"I understand. I will be happy to solve the feud of the Fire Draconians!"

"I believe....."

Lumines sluggishly nodded at Ark's answer. Then his eyes closed. His body then turned to stone like the other Fire Draconians before there was a crack and the statue turned to powder. He was moving on just like he said. So all the missions were solved but the Fire Draconians had become extinct. Ark looked at the powder and clicked his tongue.

"Somehow there is a bitter aftertaste to this quest."

Ark murmured with an uncomfortable expression. While all the other statues had turned to powder and scattered, only Lumines' pile of powder stayed in one spot.

"Is he not leaving this place even after dying? Maybe Magura's curse on the Fire Draconians also had an effect on Lumines. Elemental sword, Wind attribute!"

Ark thought it was slightly pitiful and used his Elemental Sword wind attribute. He created wind using his sword to blow Lumines' ashes over Hwaryong Mountain.

"Now he's probably free. Uh? What the, this is?"

Ark tilted his head to one side as the powder flew away. When he blew away Lumines' powder, a large skull appeared. At first he thought it was a simple skull but when he approached closely he realized it wasn't ordinary. He looked at the information window.

-Fire Draconian Skull (Rare, Material)

'What the? A material item?'

Ark hadn't expected to find an item when Lumines had left. Anyway, Razak showed extreme interest when a bone was found. However, Lumines' skull was 3 metres. If Razak put on this skull then it would be impossible for him to move. Razak looked at the skull for a long time before sighing and shaking his head.

'Heh, even Razak realizes the bone can't be used. But it is a rare material item so it will probably become useful.'

Ark put away the skull and left Dragonian. Then Dragonian started to shake. Cracks spread through the ground and lava emerged everywhere. And it gradually sank into the lava.