

Ark Vol 20 C 6

Chapter 6

ACT 6 Sea Monster Extermination

“I’m really going crazy.”

A sigh naturally flowed out. The reason for Ark’s distress was Sid’s SOS.

“What? You dare say that now?”

Some time ago Ark’s voice had rattled through the lobby of Global Exos. He couldn’t help yelling.

“H-hik! L-Lariette-nim!”

Sid stuttered with panic and hid behind Lariette. The people in the lobby sent them looks as they wondered what was happening. But Ark didn’t see the eyes of those people. The news that Sid told him was too shocking. It was about the disappearance of Ark’s Gold Dream. Two days ago, he had completed his successful first deal in Seutandal and was heading back to Rueben Harbour when it had been eaten by an unidentified sea monster. All of Ark’s hopes and dreams were placed on Gold Dream.

Naturally he bought the fastest ships, and coating the hull with various types of magic protections in order to ensure safe and quick trade. All those expenses cost at least 40,000 gold. It was also loaded with tens of millions of gold worth of trade products from Seutandal. All that had become a meal for a sea monster. The news Ark had heard out of nowhere made no sense. Sid trembled from behind Lariette who looked puzzled but said.

“Calm down. It is not Sid-nim’s fault.”

“Yes, but.....”

Ark tried to say something else with an angry expression but then just sighed and nodded. That’s right. Like Lariette said, he couldn’t blame Sid. He had been sailing with no problems when a monster

appeared and swallowed the ship. Although Sid knew that monsters appeared in that area, until now he had never had of monsters showing up on that route. So Sid couldn't be blamed for the problem.

'There's no time to wonder about whose fault it is right now.'

Wasn't there a small bit of luck? Fortunately, there was still some time before Ark's Gold Dream would be finished. According to Sid, the monster was so huge that it swallowed Gold Dream in one bite. Therefore it was likely that Gold Dream had arrived in the monster's stomach in a perfect state. He had invested a lot of money on the magic coating so it should survive for a while in the stomach.

'In this situation, there is still a chance to take back Gold Dream!'

Of course, there was a limit to how long the magic coating could last in the monster's stomach. If Gold Dream was digested then that was 40,000 gold flying away. Sid had managed to survive but he had no method to contact Ark so he had to go all the way to Global Exos.

"I have to find it before my dream becomes that monster's excrements!"

He didn't pay any attention to Sid and Lariette anymore. Ark returned to his house immediately and entered the unit. While the exact identity was unknown, the sea monster that swallowed Gold Dream was huge. The place was also the middle of the ocean. No matter how urgent it was, how could he deal with it after swimming there? Ark needed to make his own preparations before facing the opponent. The moment he heard sea monster, the Seutandal navy came to mind.

The Seutandal navy had a lot of experience fighting against pirates. JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members were the leaders of the autonomous group so he could ask them for help. So Ark went to Isabel and asked for the help of the Seutandal navy. But a problem he hadn't thought about occurred. The water that the sea monster appeared around was in Schudenberg. If the Seutandal navy entered those waters then a serious diplomatic problem could develop. So he flew to Reuben port and asked for a direct conversation with the Lord to solve the problem. Since he was also a nobleman, he was able to meet with the Lord straight away. But.....

"I've heard about Sir Ark's reputation. Although I manage areas concerning the sea, I am really sorry. I would like to help you. But I'm not able to judge your request. The only person who can agree to allow foreign troops in these waters is His Majesty the King."

“Then could you ask the King for me?”

“Of course I can do that. But it is better not to expect too much. These days the political situation both domestically and abroad isn’t very calm. It would be difficult to accept foreign troops in territorial waters in this situation. Even if it is accepted, it has to be decided at a meeting between aristocrats and could take more than a week.”

Ark instantly became gloomy after hearing Reuben’s answer. No matter how much magic coating he placed on Gold Dream, it was impossible to endure the monster’s stomach for more than one week. It had already been two days in reality so didn’t he only have a few days left? Furthermore, there is no guarantee that the result would be positive. Ark was worried for a while before he made a suggestion.

“Then what about the troops from Reuben? As the Lord in charge of nearby waters, wouldn’t you also have a navy? The sea monster is within a dozen nautical miles (1,852 metres) of Reuben so there is no guarantee that it won’t attack the harbour.”

“Of course we will fight if that happens. But.....”

The Lord of Reuben placed a weary finger on his forehead and replied.

“Based on the news, this problem isn’t just occurring at sea. After the black obelisks appeared on the continent, unidentified monsters have been infested Schudenberg. A lot of villages and people have received serious damage. We’ve stopped the damage from sea monsters for the moment but that isn’t the case on the land. So most of the Reuben troops have been dispatched to the attacked villages.”

The black obelisks and unidentified monsters that the Reuben Lord talked about had also been mentioned by Ho Myung-hwan. Once again he realized that the bug had a huge impact on New World. Anyway, the continent being overturned wasn’t important to him at the moment. The most important thing for Ark was to recover his Gold Dream before it was too late.

“Do I have no choice but to let go?”

Ark thought with despair as he exited the Lord’s castle.

-Ark, how was it? Is it done?

He had arrived at Reuben with Isyuram, and he received a whisper from him after Isyuram finished disposing of the japtem from the secret dungeon at the merchant's guild.

-No. There's been a little problem.

-Really? I thought so. Based on what I heard from the merchant's guild, the continent isn't ordinary these days. I thought it wouldn't be easy to allow the Seutandal navy into these waters or to borrow troops from the harbour. But there's no need to do that.

-Huh? There's no need?

-It is difficult to describe so just come to the merchant's guild for the moment.

Ark listened to Isyuram's words and visited the merchant's guild. After Seutandal rose, Reuben became the centre of trade so there was an especially large merchant's guild. The building of the merchant's guild was several times bigger than the warrior's guild and the Magic Institute next to it. But when he arrived at the merchant's guild, there were strangely a lot of warriors and magicians gathered in front of the building like a cloud.

"Ark, you came?"

Isyuram pushed through the crowd and waved his hand.

"Yes, but why are there so many people? And what do you mean by there is no need to request help from the navy?"

"If you look at that then you'll understand."

Isyuram pointed towards a bulletin board in front of the merchant's guild. It was the bulletin board the merchant's guild used to give information about the current prices of surrounding areas. But now a completely different type of notice was stuck on it.

-Commission to investigate the disappearance in the Uldun Mountain Range.

Two days ago, there was a report that a guild leader Berdin disappeared in the Uldun Mountain Range. Based on the report of the inspector dispatched to the mountain, several unidentified monsters had appeared and seem to be raiding several places. Therefore the merchant's guild Midus is hiring mercenaries to investigate this incident.

* Hunters with tracking and detection skills as well as thieves have top priority.

Difficulty: ???

Number of Personnel to be Recruited: 60 people (Currently 52 applicants)

Pay: 30 gold (Successfully kill the boss +10 gold)

-Commission to investigate the transportation fleet that disappeared.

Yesterday a transportation fleet from the Midus guild left Bristania only to disappear at 85 degrees latitude in the north. Currently no information related to the disappearance of the fleet has been confirmed. The merchant's guild determined that it is likely seized by pirates. So headquarters is organizing an armed fleet to investigate the disappearance and wipe out the pirates if necessary. Recruiting warriors to help the merchant's guild.

* Seamanship or the knowledge to steer ships is a plus.

Difficulty: ???

Number of Personnel to be Recruited: 800 (Currently 785 applicants)

Pay: 40 gold (Success +15 gold)

'I see!'

Ark's eyes flashed as he confirmed the mercenary recruitment. Ark had overlooked an important part of the confusion caused by unidentified monsters suddenly appearing throughout Schudenberg and around Reuben. The one who would receive the most damage was the merchant's guild that operated in various places on the continent. The surprise attack from monsters came out of nowhere so most villages only had the minimum defences. And the fleets also had no protection. Thanks to the appearance of the monsters, various fleets and carriages related to the merchant's guild disappeared. Normally the Lords of the related territory would've been petitioned and they would've taken care of it. But currently the Lord were preoccupied with the subjugation the monsters attacking the villages. The merchant's guild would lose a lot of money so they hired mercenaries to solve the case. And Ark noticed the on the bulletin board.

'85 degrees latitude to the north is near the place where the sea monster attacked Sid!'

The merchant's guild seemed to think they lost contact with the transportation fleet because of pirates. But after hearing Sid, Ark was convinced that the disappearance of the transportation fleet was related to the sea monster. No, such a thing didn't even matter. If he participated as a mercenary in the armed fleet then couldn't he strike against the sea monster?

'Besides, they've already gathered 785 applicants. They'll probably leave after a few more minutes!'

Ark immediately visited the NPC in charge and asked for an application form. After the NPC checked the submitted application form, the NPC stared at Ark with surprised eyes.

"A-A nobleman?"

"Yes?"

“Why is nobleman doing the work of a mercenary.....?”

The NPC looked at him with confused eyes. This was a game but the situation would’ve been absurd in real life.

‘What the? Is there a penalty when applying for something like this as a nobleman?’

Ark was anxious about this so he explained.

“Actually a ship I own went missing from near here. I’ve asked for help from Reuben’s navy but at the moment they can’t promise me anything. So I’ve decided to apply after seeing the merchant’s guild recruitment advertisement.”

“Ah, I see. Um.....please come with me.”

The NPC said after thinking for a while.

“Then I’ll go.”

“Yes, be sure to find it.”

Ark then parted from Isyuram. Isyuram had wanted to go with Ark but he had promised to meet the criminal organization who was meeting again. Ark separated from Isyuram and followed the NPC towards the dock dedicated to the merchant’s guild.

‘Amazing!’

Ark’s mouth opened absent-mindedly as he saw the dock. Eight battleships were anchored at the dock. But the eight battleships were a completely different standard from the ones Ark had seen so far.

“This is the new armed fleet of the merchant’s guild. It is 1.5 times bigger than ordinary battleships and the endurance is 30% more. The exterior walls are also made of padded steel sheets so it won’t even be scratched by weak attacks. When just sailing normally, it won’t even get a scratch. The ships also have a separate magic engine that can be used in emergencies.”

The NPC looked at the battleships with pride filled eyes. Then the voice of another NPC could be heard from the back.

“Hey hey. You will continue exposing all the secrets if you keep on chattering like that.”

A youth wearing a flashy badge on his armour approached. Then the NPC coughed and introduced the person.

“Ah, this is the admiral of the fleet Wagner-nim.”

Then he approached Wagner, pointed towards Ark and whispered something. Wagner looked at Ark and smiled pleasantly.

“Ah, you are an aristocrat of Schudenberg kingdom. Well, then there is no problem if you know confidential information about the armed fleet.”

“Confidential?”

Ark couldn’t understand what the person was saying. Wagner just laughed and explained.

“Actually, this battleship is a joint project between the Schudenberg navy and the merchant’s guild. These battleships took several years to make.”

That’s right. Then battleships in the dock were Schudenberg’s next generation battleships. No matter how much influence the merchant’s guild had on the continent, they weren’t powerful enough to build such strong battleships. Anyway, the battleships anchored at the dock had been completed not long ago. Now the only thing left was to test out the performance of the battleship. Then the incident with the missing transportation fleet occurred. So the Schudenberg navy decided to test the performance

through this search operation. That was why an aristocrat of Schudenberg was the admiral. But several problems had occurred at this point. The ships were newly built so there was a lack of sailors. So they had to hire mercenaries to solve the problem and the captain of the battleships was responsible for them. So not anyone could be the captain.

“Normally the merchant vessels will have someone from the merchant’s guild in charge of them. But entrusting the battleships to merchants is a little worrisome. Now we don’t have time to find a qualified person.”

Wagner sent the NPC an arrogant look and muttered. Then he moved his eyes back to Ark and the arrogant expression faded away.

“Shouldn’t an aristocrat of Schudenberg have the honour of such an important task? You became an aristocrat through your military exploits so please take control of the battleships.”

“Huh? Me?”

“An aristocrat has the obligation to maintain the glory of the nobility. So how can a Schudenberg aristocrat possibly work like a common mercenary?”

Wagner was a human who believed that status was everything. Frankly, Ark disliked that type of personality whether they were users or NPCs. But now wasn’t the time to question it closely. Ark’s purpose in participating was to rescue his Gold Dream and the shipment. It was the reason he flew to Reuben.

‘If I participate as a simple hired soldier then it will be difficult to get an opportunity to recover the ship.’

That was the part Ark was worried about. But that wasn’t a problem if he was captain of a battleship.

“If you believe in me then I will do my best to return your expectations. Wagner-nim!”

Ark grasped Wagner’s hand and replied. There was a ringing sound and the information window appeared.

-You have accepted the request from Admiral Wagner to become the temporary captain of a ship.

As a captain, you have decisive power over the corresponding battleship. All soldiers on the battleship will be automatically added to Ark-nim's attack party. In addition, as captain of the battleship you have a variety of skills able to be used.

'Okay, things are being arranged better than I thought!'

He was delighted about being able to become captain thanks to his barony.

"Hahahaha! Are you worried about suddenly becoming a captain? There's no need to worry. You just have to obey my orders. The pirates are called losers of the sea so defeating them is as easy as peeling off a woman's underwear in bed."

Wagner laughed roughly and struck Ark's shoulder.....Ark suddenly felt like beating him up.

'I'm really going crazy.'

A sigh flowed from Ark's mouth as he sat on the dock. As Ark expected, the remaining mercenaries were quickly gathered. With so many gathered then the fleet could also depart early. After distributing the troops between each battleship and arranging the necessary supplies, they finally departed. Until now there had been no problem. The actual problem was the bat sitting on Ark's shoulder.

".....Hahahaha, this is so great I want to die. You are an aristocrat of Schudenberg. No matter what kind of situation it is, you must not despair and fight with honour. After all, your life is trivial when compared to an aristocrat's honour. No matter how injured your body gets, you must not defile the honour of the nobility when righting pirates.....hey, are you listening?"

“Ah, yes yes. I’m listening.”

‘Damn! This is complete torture!’

Ark scratched his head with irritation. But who could he blame? This whole situation started from one mistake.....

The bat sitting on his shoulder and making noise wasn’t Racard. The existence of the bat occurred while Ark was invading the secret dungeon. Ark had found a lot of magic ingredients that he had never seen before. At that time, he had needed Racard’s help with scouting more than Razak or Radun. Therefore he had concentrated on making food for Racard. Thanks to that, Racard’s stats reached an equivalent of level 380.

-Your summon Racard has manifested a new vampire ability.

Racard has absorbed Karakul’s strength and abilities and has been reborn as a high ranking vampire. However, Racard lacks the ability to properly absorb Karakul’s blood flowing through his veins. When this blood is perfectly absorbed then Racard will obtain all of Karakul’s power and knowledge.

Once Racard reaches a certain level, he is able to awaken some of Karakul’s abilities.

+ Summon Stud: The vampire is able to summon his blood relatives who made a contract with him.

Spiritual Power Consumption: 50 per summon>

Once Racard’s abilities reached a certain level then he would absorb more of Karakul’s blood and sometimes a new skill would occur. Then skill that occurred was random and depended on certain conditions. There was a reason Racard developed the Summon Stud skill. In fact, during the secret dungeon invasion Racard had been the busiest person. Reconnaissance and contacting the different troops scattered around had been entrusted to Racard. So Racard had really been busy flying all over the dungeon. Naturally Racard was dissatisfied so he had created the Stud Contract skill. The Summon

Stud skill allowed a high ranking vampire to summon lower ranking vampires from their territory. All of Racard's lower ranking relatives signed the contract and were summoned into the cave.

'What is this? The bats are only level 20 so what use will they be? Furthermore, summoning just one costs 50 Spiritual Power? Doesn't that mean I can only summon 15? Is this a joke?'

It was so pitiful that Ark couldn't even laugh about it when the skill first occurred. However the summoned bats were surprisingly useful.

"Count!"

"One, two, three, four....fifteen!"

"Okay, now everyone move to your positions and stay faithful to your role. Go!"

"Yes Lord-nim!"

The bats scattered all over the dungeon at Racard's command. Ark had thought they were useless just by looking at their levels but the bats had their own specialties. It was the remote communication. Even if they were far away, the bats were able to communicate with each other through something like ultrasound waves. If Ark placed the bats with the leaders of each unit then he didn't need to use Feather of Whispering to communicate. The bat with Ark could communicate with the bats near the unit leaders. They were like living mobile phones!

This had been weighing on Ark's mind with the armed fleet departed. Currently communicating between ships required using flag signals or voice amplification magic. However, the flag signals couldn't give detailed information. In addition, voice amplification magic wasn't really audible over cannon fire and if the ships were really far away. The movements of the fleet would have to slow down. This wasn't a big problem if the opponents were ordinary pirates. However, wouldn't fighting sea monsters be difficult with a slow response?

"Using the Feather of Whispering would solve that problem but I can't give one to every person. It also can't be used with NPCs."

Ark was the only user that was a captain so he couldn't communicate with the other ships via Feather of Whispering. That's when he remembered Racard's Stud contract. So Ark had placed on bat with the captains of each ship. Of course, Ark had to ask Admiral Wagner first. In fact, Ark hadn't thought that Wagner would easily accept his proposal. But surprisingly Wagner had easily accepted.

'I should've noticed then.....'

At the time, Ark had thought that Wagner was just a person who listened to people's opinions. It was a huge mistake. Wagner had accepted Ark's suggestion for another reason.

"In the end I broke the necks of all the pirates and returned grandly. Can you believe it? I cleaned up 500 pirates with just 100 people. It would be impossible for people other than me. The King even honoured me with the title 'Conqueror of the Sea' and put me in charge of building the next generation of battleships with the merchants. Ah, I've done the work of fifteen people. I was also a knight candidate....."

The reason Wagner accepted Ark's suggestion was to brag to someone. Wagner's self-praise was really endless. Wagner didn't stop talking in the 24 hours since they left Reuben harbour, which was like three days in the game. He heard about Wagner facing several hundred people by himself, challenging a dragon, the many times he became a hero in Schudenberg and Bristania, etc.

'Did he solve all the problems in the world by himself?'

Hyun-woo thought as a huge lump rose in his throat. But Wagner was the Admiral of the fleet and he would be in charge of all decisions in a battle. He couldn't afford to anger Wagner. There were other reasons why Ark had no choice but to accept Wagner's nonsense.

"I still haven't seen any signs. Maybe I should....."

Wagner finally muttered after chattering for ages. Ark suddenly asked him through the bat.

"Ah, I heard about your exploits defeating some pirates. After hearing your earlier talk, can I ask a question?"

“Uh? Alas, that saga. Hahahaha, good. Educating yourself is only an aristocrat’s important mission. An aristocrat who has a lot of achievements like me will be a good role model. You may ask me anything you like.”

Wagner yelled after praising himself. The reason he was doing this was because Ark still hadn’t found the sea monsters. Sid had been eaten by the sea monster which was how Ark knew there were some in this area. However, Wagner still thought the transportation fleet had disappeared due to pirates. Therefore he just moved to other areas to search when he couldn’t find any traces of pirates. If that happened then Ark’s reason to come here might disappear. Therefore Ark desperately made an effort to listen to Wagner’s bragging and desperately tried to turn his attention to other matters. Meanwhile Racard had been using satellite surveillance mode to look for signs of a sea monster.

‘Damn! How long do I need to listen to this guy talk? Racard!’

“I haven’t seen it yet.”

But he couldn’t find any signs of the sea monster.

‘I’m really going crazy. It will be difficult to keep Wagner talking. I have 10~15 minutes at most before moving to another place.....’

He really couldn’t think. Ark had thought the sea monster will show up when he neared it. But contrary to what he thought, the sea monster didn’t appear.

‘Do I have to enter the ocean to look for it?’

That was Ark’s thought after enduring for so long. Using the Mermaid Scale and looking under the water was 100 times better than listening to Wagner’s bragging any longer. But if he did that then things would become more complicated. Under like areas, the waters here were so dark it seemed black. It didn’t matter how large the sea monster was if he couldn’t distinguish it in the water. He had no choice but to hope the sea monster appeared first.

‘I have to find it before Wagner moves the fleet.....’

Ark thought impatiently as he bit his lip.

“Eh? What’s that?”

Racard suddenly wondered while flying through the sky. A brilliant object was shining in the dark water. Racard thought it might be an object from the missing transportation fleet so he flew closer.

“What? Is that a fish?”

Racard confirmed the object with a disappointed look. The shiny object in the ocean was the scales of a fish.

“It is so shiny even after it died....it looks strangely delicious.”

Racard laughed as he looked at the fish. The sight of the fish floating in the ocean had stimulated his appetite. Racard was hungry after hours of searching with satellite surveillance mode.

“Shall I eat it in one bite? I’ll eat well!”

Snap!

Racard drove his teeth into the fish. Suddenly the ocean started to shake. It was just a light ripple at first before it gradually grew to huge waves.

“What, what the? What happened?”

Racard avoided the wave with a puzzle expression and flew into the sky. All of a sudden the fish started to rise into the sky. Then a giant pillar of water soared up. The water then fell back into the ocean like a snake shedding its skin. It wasn’t just a pillar of water.

“M-Master!”

Racard cried out after looking at an object in the ocean. But Ark and the sailors in the fleet were already looking at the object.

“W-what is going on?”

“Huge.....snake?”

That’s right. The pillar of water which rose up was an enormous snake. It was a sea snake 20 metres thick. When the huge snake craned its neck and looked at the dark water, Ark had an eerie feeling. It was just the beginning.

Chwa, chwa, chwa, chwa!

At that moment another 4 pillars appeared around the snake. After the water poured down, four more identical snakes had appeared. Five huge sea snakes had risen from the ocean! A red warning message appeared in front of Ark.

-The boss monster, Devil of the Sea ‘Leviathan’ has appeared!