

## Ark Vol 21 C 2

### Chapter 2

#### Act 2: Pabiun Fortress

“Steel Knights, go around the right side of the valley and attack!”

“Blackbird Knights, go around the left side of the valley and attack!”

“Units 2, 3 and 4 will break through the canyon from the front!”

“Waaaaahhhh!”

The soldiers pulled out swords and spears and charged forward. They breathed roughly as they sank up to their knees in the snow before entering the huge canyon which looked like a scene from hell.

-You have entered the sphere of influence of the ‘Jinn Demons!’

The Jinn clan are one of the rulers of hell and their presence has distorted the area. The distortion of this space thanks to the ‘demonic’ influence has corrupted the environment and turned it into a hell space. Naturally the demons are a lot stronger inside this distorted space.

It was the identity of the black fog covering the Sinus Principality. Any soldiers that entered the black mist would instantly be surrounded by thousands of monsters. Their red eyes shone with greed and malice! They were the hellish demons that appeared out of the darkness. It was a chimera like monster with the upper body of a human, the lower body of a lion and the head of a bull. Some monsters also had 5 heads or 8 arms.....

It was similar to a monster exhibition hall. These weren’t ordinary monsters but ones that had been deformed by the demonic influence. When the soldiers entered their line of sight, the monsters licked their exposed fangs with their tongues.

-Kuraka, kuraka, nohun! Arkra mojaham!

The thousands of monsters cried out and flocked simultaneously. The large number of monsters caused the ground to shake! The leaders of each unit immediately ordered their troops.

“Leading warriors, use Rush!”

“Wahhhhh!”

The soldiers at the head of the unit raised their shields and simultaneously rushed forward. There was an intense sound as the two groups pressed against each other. But after a while, the enormous monsters pushed the soldiers onto the ground from above and trampled them.

“Priests, concentrate your holy power on the leading unit!”

“The great god Ares, let the power of your light help their willpower! Holy Sword!”

“Gracious Goddess of the Earth, breathe life into your children.....Revival!”

The thousands of priests in the back used their holy magic. Thanks to the thousands of holy magic, there were bursts of intense light. The intense light caused the dark presences to moan after being blinded by the light and they hesitated.

“Now send them back into the darkness!”

The soldiers who had their health restored with holy power instantly poured a shower of violent attacks on the monsters. The monsters shrieked and ran forward. The sound of iron clashing spread through the area. Dozens of warriors ran up to the monsters over 10 metres and defeated them. But before they could even sigh with relief, they were stepped on by other giant monsters and became a bloody rice cake. The constant slaughter on the snowfield was like pouring red paint onto a white surface.

“Kuaaaa.....!”

A warrior in the middle of the battlefield moaned with distress. He was the 3rd assault captain of the 1st unit, James. He had charged in bravely with his troops when the battle began before becoming isolated after a while. Since it was the end of a long battle, his equipment had become ragged and his potions had disappeared. In this situation, he couldn't expect any help from the priests or the main forces!

“.....Is it going to end here?”

James looked around at his surroundings. In the nearby area there were only 10 people and they were surrounded by dozens of monsters.

“If I can get a few supplies..... But it is impossible in this situation. Damn, if it's like this then I just have to kill some more before dying! It is the desperate resolution of the 3rd assault captain.....!”

It was at that moment. A loud sound could be heard in the area. When James turned around, he saw one man approaching like a storm. His whole body was protected by a thick fur.

“Who are you?”

“A supply warrior!”

“Supply warrior? Shouldn't you be in a supply unit? Don't tell me you came here alone?”

“Yes, I'm busy so I'll give you the detailed explanation later. Did you send a supply request a while ago? What do you need? Was it a repair tool box, recovery potions and food?”

“Yes.”

“I have 50 remaining of each item. Radun.”

Ssak ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak ssak!

The snake around the man's waist opened its mouth and spat out 50 repair tool boxes, potions and military provisions each. James stared with shocked eyes as the man pushed something close to his face.

"Now, sign here to indicate that you've received supplies from me."

"Sign? In such a situation?"

"Hurry. Shouldn't you recover before the monsters attack?"

"U-understood."

Once James signed the form, the man grabbed his hand and said.

"It's hard but hold on a little more. The expedition army is currently entering the canyon. The main body has seen the signal flare that James sent a short time ago so assistance should be coming soon. It should take around 10 minutes so you have to hold on until then."

-Roaaaaar!

Then some monsters suddenly shrieked and charged towards the man. The man turned around and shouted.

"Flash!"

The man moved around the monster like a flash of lightning. When the ray of light swept past dozens of monsters, they quickly lost 15% health. The man who showed such extreme power pulled down his scarf and laughed.

"This is a service. And I'm quite busy. Moonlight Illusion!"

A light wrapped around the man and three clones were made. When the three bodies fled, the monster shrieked and chased after it. Meanwhile, the man used Sprint and escaped to another battlefield.

“T-that person is.....”

James who had received the supplies looked at the man’s back with stupid eyes. Then someone in his unit who was also looking at the man said.

“Captain-nim, isn’t he ‘that person’ from the rumours?”

“That person?”

“What, you haven’t heard about it? Whenever a person surrounded by monsters requests supplies, that person will show up and deliver the supplies before leaving. He is called a moving shop.....”

“Then is wasn’t just a rumour?”

James’s expression turned even more amazed.

‘Hihihi, one more person!’

After delivering the supplies to James, the man ran through the battlefield while avoiding monsters. He would show up like the wind whenever there was a supplies request, a moving shop! That’s right. This person was Ark.

There was a reason Ark was moving around the battlefield and delivering supplies. Ark participated in the expedition as the military supplier but there was nothing for him to do once the war actually started. The raccoons and Baran clan were the ones producing the munitions. JusticeMan, the rehabilitation members and Dark Eden were in charge of moving the troops while Sid was a merchant so it was more efficient for him to handle any documents related problems. With all his staff taking care of the work, there was nothing for the president to do.

'Then should I rake in some achievements on the battlefield?'

While he didn't care because of the exclusive trade rights, Ark had also accepted the quest. Since Ark didn't have to worry about the munitions supply then he should aim for the question compensation. And he participated in the battle. As the battle went on, more troops were being isolated. Those people couldn't get support from the main army and needed supplies above anything else. However, it was realistically impossible for the supply unit to help all of them. Then Ark suddenly heard the voice of a commander in his ear.

"Damn, one of the search units has been cornered on the western mountain ridge! There are too many monsters so the supply unit can't approach. Anyone is fine. Is there any soldier willing to deliver the supplies to the soldiers for the supply unit?"

"I'll do it!"

Ark was searching for suitable work so he immediately delivered the supplies to the troops. At the same time, a message window appeared in front of Ark.

-Your mission to deliver supplies to the isolated unit has been accomplished.

Thanks to accomplishing your duty, the survival rate of your allies has improved.

'300 achievement!'

Ark's eyes widened at the message. On the battlefield, killing monsters only gave 5~15 achievement depending on the level. Since so many soldiers gathered and attacked the same monster, most the time he could only get 1~5 achievement points. Yet he received 300 achievement points just from handing supplies to an isolated unit. Since many people needed supplies on the battlefield, it felt like a huge windfall for Ark. Anyway, Ark thought quickly after receiving the 300 achievements.

'Wait? If it is this easy to get achievements then what am I going around the battlefield for? I can just give supplies to the isolated troops. Then.....?'

Ark went to meet the supply office Nadin and said.

"A lot of soldiers are losing their lives in vain because supplies can't get there in time."

"Dammit! I already know that! But the supply unit isn't enough. In addition, the supply unit can't enter the deep places of the battlefield. If the supply unit encounters monsters will moving to the isolated troops then there will just be even more damage. I'm going crazy!"

Nadin shouted nervously. Then Ark smiled and made a suggestion.

"That's why I suggest having just one person spread supplies to the isolated unit. The places the supply unit can move on the battlefield are limited but if I'm alone then the restrictions will disappear. Well, it might be more dangerous.....but I'm willing if it is for the expedition force."

"Are you really sincere?"

"Of course. However there is one condition. Apart from the military supplies, I've also joined the expedition force. If you want me to spread the supplies to the unit then I need 120% of the market price for the supplies."

"What? Isn't that 50% more than the price you delivered it to us?"

"My life is important as well. Think of it as a danger allowance. On a battlefield, supplies are like the life of the soldiers. Even if money is important, is it more important than the lives of the soldiers fighting?"

.....Ark was shamelessly trying to profit from the lives of the soldiers. But Nadin wouldn't receive that much damages. The value of an item was determined by the need. On a battlefield it was even more important. If the supplies weren't delivered in time then they wouldn't even be worth 1 copper. If the supplies were delivered on time then 120% wasn't that expensive.

“Okay. Make sure that the unit commander signs that the supplies were received or else you won’t get even 1 copper.”

“Of course. Isn’t building up trust in documents the basics of business?”

Thus Ark changed from a soldier to a supplier of goods. As a supply warrior, he received quite a bit of profit. Not only did he raise his contributions more quickly than others, he was also able to receive 50% profit from the goods he handed over to the soldiers. And.....

Ssak ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak ssak!

Radun who was flicking his tongue around suddenly struck. A message window appeared in front of Ark after Radun entered the snow.

-Radun has obtained ‘Kalkin’s Spear!’

This was another benefit he could get as a supplier. The place where the expedition and monsters were fighting was a snowfield that went up to the knee. In the confused fighting, there were quite a few places where loot was buried in the snow so soldiers couldn’t spot them. While Ark was fighting along with the soldiers, he didn’t have much opportunity to collect these loot. But that changed after he became a supplier. Radun could use Stalking to find items buried in the snow. It was indeed killing two birds with one stone!

“Okay. Well done Radun!”

Ark praised Radun and stroked his head after he returned.

“Master, there is a supplies request signal 500 metres away at your 3 o’clock! And another request at your 8 o’clock.”

Racard suddenly communicated to him.

“Which side is more urgent?”

“Although the signal appeared later, the 8 o’clock direction is more serious. There are a lot of soldiers who survived but their weapons are so tattered that it will break any minute. Some of them are already weaponless and only have their shields left.”

“I understand. I’ll move in the 8 o’clock direction. Direct me!”

“The right side has reinforcements on both sides so the battle is extremely crowded. There is a gap in the rocks with a path to escape approximately 200 metres from where you are. If you go around where the monsters have already been taken care of then you can get there within 3~4 minutes.”

“Okay, tell me if there are any changes!”

Ark ran across the battlefield while receiving Racard’s real time traffic reports. This contributed to how he could be a supplier by himself. Racard had a panoramic view of the battlefield and he could also use satellite surveillance mode to catch the supply requests quickly. His directions also allowed Ark to move to the troops quickly and safely, so his mobility couldn’t be compared to the supply unit. Sometimes he even delivered the supplies faster than the supply unit who were right beside him.

‘I have to arrive first in order to receive 120% of the price!’

So he focused on mobility but that wasn’t everything.

‘It is also important that the soldiers survive. I can’t delay at all!’

So Ark had to go a little bit faster even if there was more danger. It wasn’t just because fellowship between soldiers were common in war movies. All the soldiers in the expedition were Ark’s customers. If his customers decreased then wouldn’t his income also decrease? The soldiers had to survive and fight for a long time in order to gain the maximum profit. Of course, the expedition’s ultimate premise was to save the continent. If the expedition forces were destroyed then Schudenberg Kingdom would be in danger.

‘The survival of the soldiers is important to me!’

“Thank you. The 4th unit is moving here so just hold on for a bit.”

Ark once again explained the war situation after delivering the supplies. This was an effort to raise the survival rate of the soldiers. Just as he was turning around to go fulfil another supply request....

“Gripper! The Gripper unit has appeared!”

The shout came from their military camp. He turned his head and saw some enormous shadows appearing in the canyon.

Clink, clink, clink.....

The giant shadows were over 20 metres big and dragged chains which made a metallic sound. With their eyes and mouths sewn shut and chains wrapped around the body, the monster called Gripper appeared carrying huge stone pillars. As soon as they showed up, the allied camp fell into a state of chaos.

“Block them! Stop those guys before they get here!”

“Concentrate all large weapons on the Grippers!”

“Simultaneously fire flames and electricity to stop the Grippers!”

Hwiiiiing, tu tu tu tung, tu tu tu tung!

At the same time, several shots of flames were fired from something which looked like a beehive in the allied camp. It was the weapons that the raccoons had developed. Naturally Ark had sold the next generation of weapons to the expedition force. Numerous catapults as well as Fire Barrage Crossbows were sold. The stones from the catapults flew across the space and slammed into the Grippers.

-Kuaaaa!

When hit by dozens of projectiles, a Gripper made a strange sound and knelt.

-Bakuram, bakuram, puraibata, bakuram!

When the Gripper fell, the armoured unit and calvary unit gathered around it. Of course the rest of the expedition army didn't just sit and watch. All the troops marched forward and created a barrier consisted of several layers of the armoured unit to prevent the onslaught from monsters.

“Armoured unit, attack without stopping! Do whatever it takes to stop those guys!”

The commanders shouted again while the large weapons fired a volley of projectiles. Two Grippers collapsed from the tremendous firepower. In the meantime, several troops were destroyed by the violent attacks from the monsters. After three consecutive attacks, the Grippers managed to arrive at the place where the troops were.

-Kuaaaa!

A Gripper raised the stone pillar and swung it down vertically. The 10 metres long stone pillar became stuck in the ground. Then the Gripper who planted the stone pillar in the ground scraped the skin of its chest with its claws and tore out its heart. The Gripper howled into the sky before its body was blown apart like a bomb. Ark, the soldiers and even the monsters were hit by the shock wave. When he raised his head, an information window was floating in front of him.

-The Gripper has invoked the 'Earth Blast!'

The Gripper has sacrificed its life and used the huge stone pillar to spread the impact of the curse through the earth. Those who receive the impact will be deprived of their power and won't be able to oppose any more evil spirits. Those who receive the impact will take 24 hours to recover their power. Meanwhile, the evil curse will strengthen the demonic influence within 2 kilometres and the monsters will become stronger.

Duration: 24 hours>

“Ack, again.....!”

“It is vexing but there’s no more hope!”

The commanders moaned as Earth Blast was used. All allies had their stats decreased by 50% while the monsters had it increased by 50%. In other words, there was now a huge difference between the soldiers and the monsters. Fighting in these circumstances was suicide. The expedition army had only one choice left.

“Retreat! All troops retreat!”

The Schudenberg expedition was forced to retreat. Deep inside the canyon they retreated from was a huge fortress engulfed in darkness.

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“Dammit!”

Haverstein yelled as he slammed his fist onto the table. After the Earth Blast from the Grippers, the expedition force had immediately retreated from the canyon. But retreating from the battlefield wasn’t as easy as it sounded. Thanks to the Earth Blast, there was an incredible gap between the abilities of the soldiers and the monsters. Around 1,000 people were killed before they could retreat out of the range of the demonic influence.

“How many more soldiers do we have to sacrifice?”

Haverstein bit his lips as he stared at the commanders gathered in the tent. The question wasn’t directed towards them but towards himself. In order to understand why Haverstein was made, the situation needed to be explained.

After 10 days ago, the Schudenberg expedition had finished all their preparations and departed towards the Sinius Principality. While marching and destroying the obelisks, they finally arrived at the Schudenberg border after a week. Although they hadn't initially planned for such a quick march, the darkness had encroached on the continent quicker than expected. When the expedition force left Selebrid, they heard information that the darkness was pushing against the border region. When they arrived, the darkness was already encroaching on the northern region of Schudenberg. They could no longer blindly enter the Sinius Principality. Haverstein's response was to divide the expedition army into several troops.

"If the expedition army enters the Sinius Principality then the troops protecting Schudenberg will vanish. So 30,000 troops will use this place as a base point and destroy all the obelisks in the northeast and northwest to prevent the darkness from spreading. The rest of the 30,000 troops will enter the Sinius Principality and meet up with the Bristania expedition at the promised location."

So the war between the expedition forces and the dark army began. But there was one difficult part about this. The border region between the Schudenberg and Sinius Principality was filled with mountains. The mountain range was famous for its steepness so only a certain number of troops could travel through it. The only possible way to lead the troops across the border was through Pabiun Canyon. Since the relations between Schudenberg and the Sinius Principality had been hostile for a long time, they had built an impregnable fortress in the Pabiun Canyon. It was Pabiun Fortress that was annoying Haverstein right now.

"For mere monsters to occupy and use Pabiun Fortress.....!"

At first Haverstein had thought there were no officers in charge of the monsters. However Haverstein belatedly realized his mistake after entering the canyon.

'I've never seen so many monsters emerging from the fortress in waves.'

Previously the monsters haven't used strategic fighting. The monsters must be stationed at Pabiun Fortress in order to stop the Schudenberg expedition.

"They're obviously under someone's control."

“Yes, the battlefield looks chaotic at first but important moves are actually being made. It is impossible for the battle to progress like that without someone commanding them.”

Someone said with a concerned expression.

“Then someone has emerged from the darkness to take control? To be able to control so many different types of monsters.....Don't tell me the Dark Lord has been resurrected?”

The unit commanders' faces turned pale as they heard the words 'Dark Lord.' Dark Lord was a word which had a type of destructive power to the NPCs of New World. Of course, there were also NPCs with common sense who didn't suffer from those words.

“The situation would be a lot worse if the Dark Lord was revived.

The Dark Lord wouldn't be concerned with stopping us here and there are still the black obelisks.”

Haverstein unrolled a map and pointed a finger towards Pabiun Fortress. Dozens of triangle shapes were drawn in the spot he indicated. The main difficulty in capturing Pabiun Fortress was the 'Black Obelisk Forest.' The person who discovered the Black Obelisk Forest was Ark. The expedition army had killed 20,000 monsters during the week they spent here.....it was similar to the number of monsters confirmed at the fortress. But as the battle continued, the number of monsters was the same as before. Haverstein had thought it was strange and had scouts infiltrate many times but they couldn't find any information. However, Ark had accidentally stumbled upon the reason when using Racard to survey the terrain.

Several kilometres on the other side of the fortress was a huge number of black obelisks. It was the Black Obelisk Forest. That's right. There were 50 obelisks on the other side of the fortress. The black obelisks had the function to resurrect monsters like the Quartermaster for users. It was why the numbers didn't decrease no matter how many monsters were killed. In order to capture Pabiun Fortress, they needed to destroy the black obelisks. But they had to pass through the fortress in order to get to the black obelisks. Then the only remaining method was to wipe out the monsters before they could resurrect again.

Haverstein had used various strategies to capture the fortress during the week but it was useless. The Grippers would appear whenever there was a crucial moment. And the duration of Earth Blast was 24

hours. While the expedition retreated and waited for the skill to finish, the monsters would be restored. So despite fighting without breaks for one week, the result was just a standstill.

“Should we recall the 30,000 troops that we sent to the other areas?”

A leader expressed this opinion but Haverstein shook his head.

“Pabiun Canyon is a long and narrow terrain. Even if there were more troops, the number of soldiers that can actually engage with the enemy is limited. In addition, the monsters can be spawned in other areas covered in darkness and we can be attacked from behind. It’s because we can’t predict where the black obelisk will appear.”

The leaders once again started worrying at Haverstein’s words.

‘It doesn’t matter to me.....’

Ark was the only exception. No, the current situation for the expedition force was Ark’s ideal circumstances. Unless they captured Pabiun Fortress, the expedition force couldn’t enter the Sinus Principality. The war would have to continue. And war was just a battle of attrition. The number of military supplies that Ark could sell would grow.

‘Moreover, the battle over Pabiun Fortress is just a skirmish. From the expedition leaders’ point of view, it was unreasonable to risk the expedition on a skirmish. So to reduce as much damage as possible, they would have to invest more in potions and supplies.’

But there was even more. This battlefield wasn’t in Schudenberg Kingdom. After the expedition force entered the Sinus Principality, the supply lines would become longer and more risky. But Ark had a somewhat secure way to transport supplies. In other words, he could provide a lot of munitions supply safely. If the route was short then he could reduce the expenses.

‘If this state is maintained for a few months then my business can become a conglomerate!’

In fact, Ark had initially wished for a quick resolution to this situation. If the martial law was over then his triangular trade route could resume. But after observing the situation for a week, he had changed his mind. Every time the expedition fought against the monsters at Pabiun Canyon, Ark received an income of at least 2,000 gold. This level of profit was higher than what he would receive from the triangular trade that was just beginning.

'Well, I want the war to continue as long as possible but.....'

Ark was eating up money from the Schudenberg treasury.

'Although the kingdom might be lacking a bit of money, this much won't make it go bankrupt.'

Ark was thinking that when something interrupted him.

"Commander-nim, I just received an urgent report!"

A messenger plunged into the tent with a desperate expression.

"What is going on?"

"Yesterday evening, the Bristania expedition arrived at the southwest border of the Sinus Principality. The monsters were caught off guard by a surprise plan and they successfully defeated them in the Sumire Mountains. Now they are advancing to meet us at the Silrinad area!"

"Already?"

"Is that true?"

The leaders looked surprised by the messenger's report.

“Yes, the Bristania expedition has 80,000 people. That’s why they departed later than us. And they also have the foreigners who spearheaded the surprise attack, the warrior Bread and the female magician Redian.”

“.....That is a problem.”

Haverstein and Ark both muttered as they received the information. Despite saying the same words, Ark had a different meaning from Haverstein. The reason Haverstein said it was trouble was because the expedition was a joint initiative between the two kingdoms. They had left first yet the Schudenberg army was still stuck at the border. But as soon as they entered the war, the Bristania forces were already advancing to the Silrinad area beyond the border.

This in itself wasn’t bad news for the Schudenberg expedition. The two kingdoms decided to meet at Silrinad because it was a strategically important area. If the Bristania expedition occupied the area then they could attack behind Pabiun and destroy the Black Obelisk Forest. Then the Schudenberg expedition could enter Pabiun Fortress with minimal damage. But it wasn’t good to receive help from Bristania at such an early stage. When the war in the Sinius Principality was over, then Schudenberg kingdom would have to give a large amount of the compensation to Bristania. The biggest goal of the expedition was to repel the dark forces so they had poured huge amounts of money into it. Since Haverstein was the commander, he had to pay attention to that part. But Ark was worried about a different problem.

‘I assumed that Bread and Redian were in the expedition after they didn’t contact me for a while. Damn! They got in the way.....’

Ark muttered inwardly as he bit his lip. Once again, Ark would continue to receive a huge benefit if this current state continued. But that balance was broken with the entry of the Bristania forces into the war. It was impossible for him to be happy about it. Ark was simply greedy. But after that his thoughts were the same as Haverstein’s.

‘We can’t stay at the border forever. I can only change the military currency to cash after the war ends. But if the war persisted then the Schudenberg Kingdom has to set the tone for the war.’

It was important that Haverstein and the expedition force takes leadership in the war. The two expeditions would eventually join together.

'If the Bristania expedition takes leadership then the Schudenberg forces might not get the chance to come forward. In the worst case scenario, the Bristania might use their supply unit to spread goods!'

This was the part Ark was worried about. Both kingdoms were going to get significant gains from entering the Sinius Principality. The expedition force that had more achievements would be able to request more compensation. If the Bristania expedition took leadership then they wouldn't give as much chances to gain achievements to the Schudenberg army. They would intentionally remove them from important battles.

'If the Schudenberg forces don't fight fiercely then how much supplies will they consume? If the chances to fight decreases.....'

It would mean less consumption of supplies. That meant his income would decrease. Ark had gone through all that trouble to secure supplies from the Underground World and Seutandal. He even set up 24 hour production lines to secure a significant amount of goods. So far the consumption had been perfectly balanced with the production. What would happen if the consumption suddenly plummeted? And the war ended before he disposed of all his stock? In the worst case scenario, Ark would have goods worth thousands of gold to dispose of.

'A-absolutely not! If all my funds are tied up in the goods when the war ends then it would take a long time to resume the triangular trade!'

But the problem didn't end there.

"There.....and a command has also been sent."

The messenger hesitated as he looked at Haverstein.

"What is it?"

"If the Bristania expedition arrives at Silrinad first and takes away the leadership then the nobles will have to appoint someone else to replace you as commander."

Ark felt his heart drop at the words. Replacement commander? What kind of talk was that?

'It must be Duke Sarkin who planted the idea. Marquis Halben and Daltin recommended Haverstein so it is impossible for them to mention replacing him. If Haverstein is replaced then it would be with Duke Sarkin's candidate. Then.....'

The reason Ark could receive the exclusive trading contract was because Haverstein was the commander. If Haverstein was replaced then Ark would also be replaced as well. Duke Sarkin was the one who tried to make Ark fail before the expedition departed. Wouldn't Duke Sarkin have one of his subordinates replace Ark? Then it wouldn't simply be the problem of selling his remaining stock. Currently Ark had goods worth hundreds of thousands of gold piled up and if he couldn't sell them then Ark's Corporation would become broke. That was Ark's thoughts.

"Even this will be taken away."

Haverstein muttered with a bitter smile. Then the leader of the 1st unit said with a dissatisfied look.

"It's really frustrating. They don't know about the battlefield conditions. The Bristania border is completely different from ours. Their mountains have a gentle slope so they can easily move a large army. The black obelisks are also easier to destroy then. They only see the results yet they still want to replace the commander....."

"It is ineffective even if we say that."

Haverstein spoke in a calming voice.

"We can't worry about the decision from the meeting now. The biggest purpose of this fight is to repel the dark forces. But repelling the forces is only 50% of our work. Like His Majesty said, this battle doesn't just involve the Schudenberg Kingdom but the continent as well. If Bristania grabs the early initiative then we have to cooperate with them."

"That is true however....."

“Although the Bristania army crossed the border, it will take them 5 days to reach the Silrinad area. We’ll just have to capture Pabiun Fortress in a few days. So our problem is to think of a way to capture Pabiun.”

But it was impossible for that to happen. In the end, the leaders could only sigh as they left the meeting. The expedition army couldn’t enter the canyon until the effects of Earth Blast wore off the next morning.

‘Is there another way?’

“Hey, why does your face look so down?”

He suddenly heard a familiar voice from somewhere. When he raised his head, he saw with surprise that it was Shambala.

“Eh? Shambala? Why are you here?”

“Eh? What is with that ‘eh?’ Aren’t you the one that called me?”

“Me? Ah, that’s right!”

Ark made a stupid expression before belatedly nodding his head. He had forgotten that he summoned Shambala thanks to this incident. Ark had called Shambala not long ago. After becoming a supplier, Ark knew how much profit there was in supplying goods to soldiers on the battlefield. And he came up with an idea to maximize the profits.

Not everyone could become a supplier like Ark. They had to be able to evade thousands of monsters while running around the battlefield. So a certain level and capability was needed. The person who came to Ark’s head at the time was Shambala. Shambala was a user who had the same extraordinary skills as Ark. He could go around the battlefield and sell supplies like Ark. Ark immediately contacted Shambala after coming up with the idea. However Shambala’s personality wasn’t the type to willingly go along with Ark.

“You eat too much.”

Shambala had refused as expected. But Ark had one way to get Shambala to agree.

“Hmm, is that so? Then I will use the ‘1 time Shambala use’ coupon. Surely you won’t break your oath in front of Isabel?”

“.....You bastard!”

Shambala regretted it but it was already too late. Ark had received a ‘1 time Shambala use’ coupon. Shambala has issued this coupon to Ark because of Seutandal. While the black obelisks had appeared on the continent, they still hadn’t showed up in Seutandal. But it wasn’t completely free from the threat of the black obelisk. There were various black obelisks in the neighbouring waters so sea monsters had begun attacking Seutandal. That was a serious problem for Ark as well.

“We would like to produce the munitions and industrial material that Ark-nim requested. But the sea monsters are invading continuously so there is no time to make them.”

Isabel said when Ark visited with the contract for munitions. But the production capacity of the Baran clan was indispensable to Ark’s plan. Yet it wasn’t possible to produce the goods because of the sea monsters.

‘Is there a way to stop the sea monsters?’

Ark was busy contemplating when an item entered his head.

-Parasite’s Egg Sacs

The egg sacs of the Parasites living inside Leviathan. They will hatch once placed underwater.

He had been unsure about where to use such an item. Even if they were hatched, they were still monsters. Wouldn't he also have to raise their levels after they hatched? But this item was unexpectedly useful when combined with the special ability of the Baran clan. The 'monster taming' ability of the Baran clan! That's right. Couldn't the hatched parasites be trained by the Baran clan to be used in the military? Plus, the Parasites were just hatched so they would be easy to train. Then the thousands of Parasites could join the Seutandal navy. No, one egg sac could hatch thousands of eggs so the navy could have tens of thousands of trained monsters.

'The number of Parasites hatched could deal with the sea monsters. Then the Baran clan will be able to concentrate on their production.'

So Ark made a bargain with Isabel as soon he made the plan. As expected, there really were no useless items in the game. Ark would provide a method for Seutandal to deal with the sea monsters and the price for the war materials would be 65% of the market price. Shambala who had been watching Ark snorted and muttered.

"You really are an unpleasant fellow."

But his words dug his own grave. Ark immediately added another condition.

"65 percent of market price for the military supplies.....and a '1 time Shambala use' coupon in exchange for the Parasite eggs."

"What? Am I a thing?"

Shambala jumped with surprise but he inevitably agreed once Isabel looked at him.

"Kikiki, be careful in the future."

Ark laughed at Shambala who looked like he wanted to kill Ark.

He had carelessly forgotten about the coupon being used so Shambala frowned and shouted.

“Ah, that’s right? Are you playing with me now?”

“Shut up, I’ve been busy so I forgot for a moment. I can’t afford to quarrel with you now. Damn, the slightest slip and the military supplies.....”

“What’s the matter?”

Then a woman walked out from behind Shambala.

“The problem? Nothing. Just.....eh? L-Lariette-nim?”

Ark flinched and closed his mouth. The woman who had appeared from behind Shambala was Lariette. Shambala saw Ark’s face and instantly smiled.

“Oh, didn’t I tell you? We left together after you contacted me. Well, it is good. Since you have women assisting you everywhere. How about it? Aren’t you thankful?”

‘This guy.....!’

Ark glared at Shambala. In fact, the situation between Ark and Lariette was quite stressful these days. Many times he had thought about having a serious talk but he had been too busy. And Lariette had also noticed Ark’s thoughts. So it had become increasingly awkward whenever they met. The fact that Shambala took her along.....

His intention was clearly to discomfort Ark.

“Is it a problem that I came?”

Lariette noticed their expressions and said. Well, it was a problem. A large one. But how could he say those words in front of a woman?

“Is there such a thing? I’m just happy since it’s been so long since we’ve met.”

Ark answered with an obviously awkward expression. Therefore the atmosphere quickly cooled. Shambala was trying to hold back his laugh that he was close to tears. Since the atmosphere was quite uncomfortable, Lariette quickly changed the subject.

“But what we you saying before?”

“Before? Ah, that’s right. Actually.....”

Ark remembered and quickly explained the situation with the expedition. Shambala erased his playful expression and spoke in a serious voice.

“Hmm, it doesn’t seem to be going as well as I thought.”

“It’s not going well. Haverstein will lose his position after a few more days. Then I will lose my exclusive trading contract. This isn’t a situation where you can also stay calm. If I go bankrupt then Isabel will have to bear the costs of the stockpiled materials as well.”

“If that happens then my sword will always be aimed at your back.”

Shambala raised an eyebrow and spoke in a bloody voice.

“Are you really going to act like that? When your friend might be going bankrupt?”

“Can I really call you my friend after those words?”

Ark and Shambala started to argue with each other. Lariette who seemed to be pondering something carefully suddenly asked.

“That.....if you can’t attack the fortress from the front then how about striking from behind?”

Lariette's words stopped Ark and Shambala's argument. Then they both sighed and shook their heads.

"That..... If it was possible then we wouldn't be worrying."

"If you look then you'll understand. The mountains are blocking the border between the Schudenberg and Sinius kingdoms.

The only way is to pass through Pabiun Canyon."

"Isn't there another route that crosses through the north of Pabiun Canyon?"

Lariette asked. She looked through her memories before explaining.

"I don't remember correctly since it was in the early days when I started the game. Um.....While I was playing with some other candidates, I received a quest to find a hidden dungeon in the Sinius Principality."

She avoided mentioning names but it was the days that she played with Alan. But in those days it was impossible for users to cross the border checkpoint. So Alan had paid a considerable amount of money to a minstrel in a tavern for information on how to cross the border. It was a secret route which bypassed the Pabiun Fortress.

"Therefore it was possible for me to enter the Sinius Principality with my colleagues."

"Please explain more!"

Ark said as he suddenly grabbed her hands. But he quickly became surprised and removed his hands.

"I-I'm sorry."

“Ah, no.”

Lariette blushed at Ark’s reaction and avoided his eyes. After seeing the atmosphere between the two people, Shambala smiled and whistled.

“It was worth bringing Lariette along intentionally.”