## Ark Vol 21 C 5

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Chapter 5
Act 5 Inventor Wormer
There was a reason Ark had escaped to the canyon. Before leaving for Smuggler's Pass, he had investigated Pabiun Canyon and determined that it was full of dozens of complicated passages. If he entered then he could use the terrain to somehow outrun the monsters.
'The problem is Alan.'
Normally an ordinary monster would give up after a certain distance and time had passed and their battle states would disappear. But if Alan was controlling the monsters then they wouldn't give up. They would follow until the end.
'If Alan continues chasing after me then it will be impossible to destroy the Black Obelisk Forest. Damn, I need to figure out a way to run away from AlanBut now there's no choice. I have to somehow lose Alan using the terrain of the canyon and then go to the Black Obelisk Forest'
Ark was thinking that when something interrupted him.
Syuuuuuu, pepepepeng!
Suddenly a flash crossed through the sky. The flash came from the village where the special forces were just at.
'What is that flash? Did Alan shot it? Then is it a signal flare? Perhaps?'
Ark intuitively felt uneasy when he saw the flash.

"Master, it's serious! Herds of monsters from all over the place.....!"

Racard screamed from above him. Ark's misgivings became a reality. A huge number of monsters were moving from every corner of the canyon.
'Oh my god, there are so many monsters gathered in this canyon!'
"Ah, Ark-nim, what should we do?"
Lariette asked with uneasy eyes. But Ark couldn't think of a good idea to escape. According to Racard's report, monsters were in all the passages that exited the canyon. Of course, if the special forces battled desperately then they might be able to escape in one of those passages. However Alan and hundreds of monsters were chasing behind them. If they engaged with the monsters then Alan would catch up.
'Is it going to end here?'
Ark sighed and felt like he was about to collapse. Suddenly there was the sound of the wind and a message floated in front of him.
-Wormer-nim has applied for a whisper using [Secure Communication].  'Huh? Wormer? What is this?'
Ark accepted the whisper with a bewildered expression. Then a voice violently shook his eardrums.
-There's no time to explain. You guys, do you have food?
-Food?
-Do you, do you?
-I have enough for several days

-Good. Are you guys in danger now? I'll help you. Do you see that narrow passage at your 3 o'clock direction? Run to that spot immediately. I'll tell you in advance that I can't help you if the group of monsters follow you. So hurry before the monsters spot you.

The user called Wormer then cut off the communication. Ark's head was full of complicated thoughts. He didn't know who Wormer was and his reason for whispering to him. And what was with those words about food? But Ark didn't think for long. Even if Wormer had malicious intentions, he had no other options.

"Everybody head to the passage visible in the 3 o'clock direction!"

Ark led the special forces to the place Wormer indicated. However, they were forced to stop 3 minutes after entering the passage.

"What is this? Isn't this a dead end?"

There was a cliff in front of him. Ark made a confused face.

Ku ku ku ku, ku ku ku ku!

Then the whole area started to vibrate. And the ground they were standing on suddenly flipped over. It was like a pot lid being turned upside down. Ark and the special forces vanished in an instant. And the floor returned back to normal.

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"Did we miss them?"

The Dark Elf complained with pouted lips.

"No, all of passages exiting the canyon are blocked. There's no way out."

Alan answered in a firm voice. Alan, the Dark Elf and the monsters they were leading had arrived at the canyon just after Ark disappeared underground. But the floor had returned to normal so they could find no traces of Ark and the special forces anywhere. Alan and the Dark Elf couldn't think of a reason why they had suddenly disappeared.

"There's nowhere for them to go. If it was just one or two people then they could hide but it is impossible with more than 100 people. They can't just sprout wings and fly into the sky."

"This has happened once before. It was also in this area."

There were actually two reasons why Alan was in this canyon. One reason was to control the monsters stopping the Schudenberg expedition and the other was to find 'something' the Red Man needed to accelerate his plans. Not long ago he had chased the people related to that 'something' to this area only to have them disappear. They had been running away and vanished just like in this instance.

'The same thing occurring twice can't be an accident. I'm missing something.'

Alan suddenly dug out his own eye with a finger. The Dark Elf frowned at his distorted features.

"Yuck, doesn't that feel really awful?"

Alan didn't answer as he just removed his eyeball. And the eyeball started to float in front of him. It was Buksil's technique, Vampire's Eye! Alan had used the 'Predator of Demons' ability to acquire the Vampire's Eye skill. That's right. The eyeball which popped out of the snow when the special forces passed through Smuggler's Pass belonged to Alan. Alan hadn't known that Ark would find out about the Smuggler's Pass. He expected that the Schudenberg expedition would use the Smuggler's Pass so he had hidden one eyeball there beforehand. Then he discovered Ark and had hastily gathered monsters together to cause him to Nuran village.

'I had a separate plan to ruin that guy but I can't let him go now that he has entered my sight. That guy and Lariette has wounded me. I can't forget it. I'll let him know what it feels like.'

Alan turned as his eyeball returned without anything.

"They're obviously hiding somewhere here. The canyon has been blocked for several days even before they appeared. This is our number one priority. Inform all you colleagues."
All the monsters surrounding Alan bowed and left. Then the Dark Elf frowned.
"It doesn't matter if we leave Pabiun Fortress to the monsters but we still haven't made any progress with 'that.' The Red Man said 'that' is our priority"
"It is impossible for the demonic monsters to capture 'that' now that it has changed to a defense formation. Andel is also having a difficult time. So I've already requested support from the Rwigenberg. That problem can be set aside since the most important thing for me is to catch that guy."
Alan answered without even having to think about it.
"Okay. I only joined you because I like you."
The Dark Elf played with her sharp ears and nodded. Alan quickly folded his arms and said.
"I have no interest in another woman. Got it?"
"Are you joking right now?"
"Do I look like I'm joking?"
The Dark Elf pouted at his words. Alan unfolded his arms and looked at the Dark Elf with an uncomfortable expression.
"What, what the?"

"What on earth is going on?"
"Who? Where is the light?"
"Ah, sorry. The stone was turned off."
A voice rang out in the darkness. The special forces were all piled on top of each other like a pile of trash thanks to the floor flipping. Luckily the height of the floor wasn't enough to deal damage but it the special forces were crushed under the weight of their members. Ark also felt the strenuous weight of everyone on top of him.
'Damn, it feels like my internal organs are going to pour out of my mouth.'
Ark grabbed his throbbing ribs and crawled out of the human pyramid. Then both of his wrists started to throb.
'Eh? What? Why?'
Ark looked at his wrists with a baffled expression. Sure enough? The tattoos that needed a special criterion to unseal for Eternal Soul had lights around it. The light spread like a crack and then broke. Then an information window appeared.
-A seal of 'Eternal Soul' has been released and you've acquired a new profession-specific skill[Demonic Response $VI$ ]: Eternal Soul stage 7 (Passive)
'Demonic Response' is a necessary stage to learn if they want to reach the enlightenment needed for

Eternal Soul. When fighting against a monster with the demonic attribute, you will deal additional 40% damage and resistance to the demonic attribute will increase by 50%. In addition, you will be able to

detect hidden demonic power within the bodies of monsters.

-[Magi distortion]: Eternal Soul Stage 8 (Active)

Demonic Distortion will release the demonic energy sealed in the cursed equipment and this will make the space distort. The user can control the flow of demonic energy to distort the space, and it is possible to change the position of friends and foes in a 500 metre range. The amount depends on the level of demonic energy sealed in the equipment.

The equipment with a higher level will emit stronger demonic energy which can move more enemies. Typically one equipment can exchange 10~30 people. This skill can be used to help besieged allies or to strategically attack an enemy camp. You also can't exchange friends and foes if there is an obstacle in the way.

He never thought that Eternal Soul would awaken. Why? Why did Eternal Seal awaken all of a sudden. The quest was on Ark's mind as he read the information for Demonic Distortion.

'It can help any allies that have been surrounded by enemies to escape.....'

Eternal Soul needed different conditions and situations to awaken the skills. In order words, it wasn't possible to awaken Eternal Soul without experiencing the required situation. There had to be a reason Eternal Soul was unsealed this time.

'Did it awaken due to being surrounded by so many monsters and almost dying?'

Well, it wasn't a comfortable awakening.

'But.... Isn't Demonic Distortion quite useful?'

Ark read the information window with shining eyes. He could use Demonic Distortion to exchange the position of enemies and allies. It didn't deal any damage to the enemy so it seemed useless, but it could be utilized to great effect in various situations. If something like the previous situation occurred when

they were surrounded by enemies then it was possible to use it to escape. It was a skill that could be used for offense and defense.

'The problem is that Demonic Distortion requires equipment sealed with demonic energy.

When he first started using Demonic Seal, he didn't have to worry about the number of equipment he had. But the situation changed now that 5 equipment was needed every time he used Demonic Manifestations. And Demonic Distortion was also a skill which consumed demonic sealed equipment. According to the level of the equipment, each one moved 10~30 people. In other words, didn't he have to sacrifice 4~10 equipment just to move 100 people. Equipment was money so always needing to have cursed equipment prepared was quite a burden.

'Having both Demonic Manifestations and Demonic Distortion will be useful. But now I don't have that many left...... Damn, I have to use Demonic Seal every chance I have from now on. If I run out of equipment then I won't be able to use the skills.'

Then he heard Shambala's voice after he escaped from the human pyramid.

"When did you crawl out?"

"A while ago. Were you just playing under there?"

".....Ark-nim."

Lariette approached with a worried expression and pointed to one side. Ark turned around and reflexively narrowed his eyes.

'Who are these people?'

The human pyramid was currently in an underground square. And there were 60~70 gathered around the underground square while gawking at the special forces with worried looks. While some were ordinary NPCs, most of them weren't. Many of them were covered with white fur with black streaks. With tails emerging from their hips, the NPCs looked like human shaped tigers.



'Alan? Then the dots on the machine are indicating the people outside? Ark looked at the machine with astonished eyes. Ark was currently underneath the canyon. Yet now he could figure out the outside circumstances from underground? It had the correct number and movement, and even their names? "Okay. That's it!" The man laughed as he looked at the machine and stood up. Ark was now able to confirm the man's appearance. He was a bearded dwarf wearing work overalls instead of armour. Ark wondered why a dwarf and beast clan members were gathered in the underground square. But he was even more curious about the machine. "This machine allows you to know the situation outside?" "Ah, you saw it? That's right, I invented a life detection radar. It searches for any life forms within a 200 metre radius and even the name shows up on the machine. I figured out your name from the radar which is how I was able to send you the whisper." "Invented?" "Yes, I am the Inventor Wormer. And this place is my base." Wormer smacked his protruding belly and laughed. "So those people are.....?"

Wormer looked at the NPCs and answered Ark's question.

"Ah, those people?"

"They're residents of a nearby village called Nuran."
'Nuran village?'
Ark felt refreshed by Wormer's words. Nuran was the name of the village that Ark had been searching a short time ago. The inhabitants of Nuran village had information for his quest!
'I thought it was too late after encountering Alan but they're survivors from Nuran village! That means I really don't have to give up the quest?'
The situation might still be bad but one problem was gone.
"How did people from Nuran village get here?"
"That is"
Wormer scratched his head. Wormer's profession was 'Inventor' and he was a dwarf from the Sinius Principality. Just like the name, Inventor was a profession which created different machines and objects. Therefore Wormer started looking for a quiet place where he could concentrate. He discovered the underground square and converted it into an underground base. He bought various supplies from Nuran village and spent each day happily. 10 days ago, Wormer had been in Nuran village buying necessary supplies when the sky was suddenly covered in black fog and a huge number of monsters appeared. Wormer sensed the situation wasn't ordinary and urgently fled to the underground base with the residents.
"At first I thought the problem would be settled immediately because we're near Pabiun Fortress. But 10 days passed and the monsters are still there. No, they actually kept increasing. And I learnt about

"Beast clan? Ah, those guys that look like tigers? No. I hid them after those guys were chased by monsters a few days ago. But they haven't talked to me so I don't know why they came to a place like

what was happening in New world from the internet."

"So the beast clan are NPCs from Nuran village?"



"Ooh, rice! Rice!"

Wormer immediately shrieked and ran up to Ark when he pulled out some food. He frantically grabbed the food and shoved it into his mouth. He was starving but couldn't a user find food in reality? The reason was that users felt a sense of hunger despite it being a game. No matter how much a user ate in reality, it wouldn't fill their stomach in the game. So users had no choice but to eat food in the game to lose the feeling of hunger. Anyway, the village residents and beast clan watched Wormer eating with desire in his eyes. They were also starving.

"I'll leave the minimal amounts of food and hand out the rest. These supplies actually belong to the military expedition but I'll pay them when I return."

Ark smiled as he looked at them and said. Then Shambala frowned like he was swallowing phosphoric acid.

"You still want to engage in business when these people are in such a situation?"

"Business? What are you saying?"

"It's not business? Then what is the reason you're giving them food?"

"What? You're so strange. What do you see me as?"

"Stingy, conman, thief..... Do you want me to say anymore?"

Well, those words actually suited him. That's right. Ark wasn't the type to help people for free. Yet he just paid for food that would feed 70 refugees out of his own pocket. The reason why Ark acted like these was because they were residents from Nuran village and a beast clan. The beast clans were associated with Hero Maban so he didn't know what type of help he could get from them. And the Nuran villagers had information about the quest. So it was necessary to increase his intimacy with them.

'If they're suffering from hunger then the easiest way to raise intimacy is to give them food.'

It was why his behaviour was different from usual. Of course, Ark's current most important goal was the quest. But he couldn't be too impatient. There were still two days left so he should watch the movements of Alan and the monsters. If he watched carefully then a chance would certainly come. As expected, the looks on the refugees' faces instantly turned favourable when he gave them food. Ark waited until they finished eating before speaking to an old man who looked like the village mayor.



Ark answered after briefly thinking. The beasts and Nuran residents looked at Ark with shocked eyes. The beast clan seemed to carry on a conversation with their eyes before one of them asked Ark.
"The revelation of the stars? What is your name?"
"I am Ark."
Then the beast clan member jumped up and shouted.
"Ark! You are Hero Maban's chosen descendant, Ark?"
"You know about me?"
This time Ark was the one surprised. Ark's eyes widened as a beast grabbed his hand and said.
"We know! We've learnt all about the things you've done through the Hero Stars."
"Hero Stars?"
"You mentioned the revelation of the stars. We call it the Hero Stars."
A beast clan member replied. Before Ark received the quest, 10 stars had emerged from his body and disappeared somewhere. It must be the Hero Stars that the beast clan mentioned. They said that they were aware of Ark's existence through the stars. Then information about Ark must be in the stars. If the beast clan knew that information then they were?
"Do you belong to the prophet clan?"
Ark asked with an expectant voice but the beasts shook their heads.

"No, we're the White Tiger clan and we are the guardians of the prophet clan."
"Why are the guardians of the prophet clan in a place like this?"
"That"
A white tiger sighed and the Nuran residents lowered their heads. The white tiger looked at them before continuing.
"In the past some residents of Nuran have been born with the power of prophecy. The prophet clan gathers those children."
In other words, the Nuran residents had a kindred relationship with the prophet clan. But then the prophet clan discovered that the Sinius Principality was going to be attacked by the dark forces. So the White Tiger clan was dispatched to rescue the Nuran clan and bring them back to the land of the prophets, Shangri La before the darkness attacked. However, the darkness attacked quicker than expected and Nuran was already in ruins by the time the White Tiger clan arrived. The White Tiger clan was also attacked by monsters and rescued by Wormer.
"Shangri-La!"
They had been listening to the circumstances of the White Tiger clan. Then Lariette shouted with a surprised expression after hearing that the Prophet's clan lived in Shangri-La.
"What's wrong? Do you know that place?"
"No, that is Become coming here, I received"
Lariette was able to say something when she noticed everybody's eyes on her and she immediately shook her head.

"It's nothing. I'll tell you later."
Ark was interested in Lariette's reaction but he had no time to think about it now. Ark thought for a moment before saying.
"You wanted to evacuate the Nuran residents there so Shangri-La is still safe. So they must have a way to stop the attacks of the demonic monsters. Then it is imperative that the Nuran residents are moved to Shangri-La. But how can we do that when the canyon is sealed off by monsters?"
"It is already too late."
"Too late?"
"The land of the prophets has a defense system."
"Defense system?"
"Shangri-La is always prepared for the dark forces so they have several protection devices. Once the defense system is activated, it is completely blocked off from the outside world."
"Blocked? But you haven't returned yet."
"We've been outside of Shangri-La for more than 10 days already. And this whole area is occupied by demons. The prophet clan would've judged that we failed in our mission."
"Isn't it called the prophet clan? Shouldn't they know that you're still alive?"
"The prophets can't see everything in the future. They can only predict events that have an impact on the history of the continent. In fact, even the prophet clan couldn't foresee the emergence of this darkness. This means the history of the continent has already become twisted. They can't predict

anything anymore. And it will be the same even if they find out that we're alive. If the entire Sinius

Principality is engulfed in darkness then the first place they will attack is the prophet clan. That is why they can't possible slow down or turn off their defense system."

'Eh? Isn't something strange?'

Ark noticed something strange in the white tiger's words. Just like the name, the prophet clan was one that predicted the future. Well, they could probably only predict when a new episode would be activated......Anyway, it was natural for a clan with such power to be attacked by dark forces. But the prophet clan couldn't predict his dark event. It meant they could no longer foresee what would happen in the future. It was natural. This incident happened because of a bug so of course the NPCs couldn't predict it. Despite that, why would the prophet clan still be the dark forces' highest priority? When he asked that question, the white tiger sighed and replied.

"The reason they're targeting Shangri-La is due to the Ark of the Covenant."

"Ark of the Covenant?"

"Yes, a long time ago an artifact was found and placed in the ark. The person who gets their hands on this ark will receive a strong power. It is the biggest threat to the dark forces so they want to attack Shangri-La to obtain it themselves. But their purpose isn't to simply destroy the ark."

"What does that mean?"

"Despite being filled with light, the Ark of the Covenant can also be filled with darkness. If an evil person obtains it then the attribute will change to darkness. The darkness will become even more powerful."

The white tiger closed his eyes and talked about a past event.

"In fact, a long time ago the 7 heroes entrusted the Ark of the Covenant to the prophet clan and gathered their power to install strong protection wards. And Hero Maban asked our clan to protect Shangri-La."

Ark now understood the situation. There was another reason other than the terrain as to why the Bristania expedition had an easier time crossing the border. It was because there were more demonic monsters gathered at Pabiun Fortress. Ark had been thinking that the strategic movements of the monsters was incomprehensible.

'What if there is a reason the demonic monsters are here?'

And that reason was the prophet clan. If the Schudenberg expedition continued crossing into Sinius Principality then they would encounter the prophet clan. If the Schudenberg expedition got their hands on the power of the ark then they would be a big threat to the demonic monsters.

'Then the reason Alan is here.....'

It was obvious that Alan was somehow linked to this. Alan's purpose for coming to this place was to seize the Ark of Covenant.

'Then the list of things I have to do has increased by one. I have to succeed in the task to ensure that the Schudenberg expedition captures Pabiun Fortress. Then there is visiting the prophet's clan to complete the quest. And finally I have to prevent Alan getting the Ark of Covenant.'

It was becoming an increasingly higher mountain. If this war ended with the victory of the demonic monsters then Ark would become a beggar. He had to do everything possible to win the war.

'Well if the Schudenberg expedition manages to capture Pabiun Fortress and kills the demonic monsters then the remaining problems will be easily solved. I can't receive the help of the prophet clan because Shangri-La is locked but the White Tiger clan can help.'

He could also meet the prophet clan if Pabiun Fortress was captured. He just had to complete one task and the rest would melt away. While Ark was busy thinking, Wormer rubbed his stomach and muttered.

"I have a way to go to Shangri-La."

"What?"

"Hihihi, I actually made an amazing invention a few months ago. I assure you. If you use that invention then it will be possible to go to Shangri-La."
"Really?"
"Really. But there's one problem. The invention requires strong magic to power it. It is a machine which requires an absurd amount of magic energy."
"Magic energy?"
Ark asked and Wormer took out a small crystal ball.
"This contains the magic energy. It is used like a battery. My hidden secret weapons requires at least 5,000 MG of magic energy to work. Charging that type of energy will take at least one month."
Wormer explained as he picked his nostril with his finger.
'Is he teasing me?'
Ark's face hardened at Wormer's words. One month? Was he joking? Even excluding the other problems, the special forces only had enough food o last 2~3 days. If they stayed here for a month then they would all die. Then Wormer scratched his head and murmured.
"There is a way to charge the energy within a short time"
"Within a short time?"
"I can extract magic energy from magic items. The magic items won't be useable anymore but it is a solution to the problem. There are other methods but that is the easiest way. Like I said, if I gather the necessary MG then it won't be a problem to go to Shangri-La."

The faces of the white tigers brightened at Wormer's face.

"If there is such a method then it is necessary to use it. We ask you. The Nuran residents are the blood relations of the prophet clan. It is our obligation to protect them and bring them back to Shangri-La. If it requires magic items to charge the MG then we willingly given you all the magic items we have. Will you also help us?"

The White Tiger clan asked Ark. Of course, Ark also had a reason to go to Shangri-La. The problem was Alan.

'Alan won't give up easily. We also disappeared so suddenly that he is still looking around. Apart from the required MG, it will be difficult to use Wormer's invention to go to Shangri-La while avoiding detection. Somehow I have to stop Alan from following me......'

Ark thought frantically. Then he came up with an idea.

'Wait? There is a high chance that Alan is abusing the bug. Then ..... That's right, there is that method! If I use that then I can bury Alan!'

"I understand. I'll be happy to somehow take you to Shangri-La."

Ark grabbed the hand of a white tiger and said. Dududung, a quest information window popped up.

-Shangri-La!

You have met the Nuran residents and the White Tiger clan on the outskirts of Pabiun Canyon. They are in an isolated situation after running away from the forces of darkness. Currently the only safe place from the darkness is Shangri-La.

Find a way to escape the canyon filled with monsters and escort them to Shangri-La.