

## Ark Vol 23 C 1

### Chapter 1

#### ACT 1 Hell Door's Defensive War

'Huk huk huk.....dammit!'

Ark bit his lip and sighed. After entering the secret dungeon using the quantum machine, Ark had developed a plan to handle the present circumstances. He used Wormer who renovated the 59th floor to delay Alan and the demons while the Nagaran allied forces recaptured Silvana. Of course, holding out against the 10,000 demons and Avenger guild for a few days wasn't easy with such a small number of troops. However, the special attack unit used the complicated terrain of the 59th floor and the traps to conduct guerrilla warfare. Ark thought utilizing those methods would be enough.

'Meanwhile Nagaran's allied forces will conquer Silvana and enter the secret dungeon. Presently all the monsters in the secret dungeon are gone thanks to Alan and the demons. Furthermore, there is no reason for JusticeMan ajusshi to get lost when he has grasped the terrain perfectly. They could advance all the way to the 60th floor in one day. I just have to somehow hold the 60th floor until then.'

If the combined forces reached the 60th floor then the situation would end. That was Ark's plan and it was proceeding as planned. However, an unexpected problem had occurred. Right.....

"How about it? Don't I look different from before?"

A proud voice was heard from nearby. It was Curio leaning against a nearby stone wall with an arrogant posture. He was showing off his form to Radun and Purital.

"Huhuhu, of course I look different. It is natural that I'm different. You guys might not know but I am different from yesterday. I am high pureness vampire. Do you know what that means?"

Ttadadadak, clack clack?

Ssak ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak ssak?

“I’m not an ordinary summon like you anymore.”

Curio spat into his hand and ran it through his bangs.

“Heh, well I have a right to act like this. Like I said just now, my social status and face has improved so you should respect me a bit more. Because I am a high pureness vampire. Yes, a high pureness vampire. Doesn’t that word feel good? I brought it up in conversation but.....”

“Don’t go overboard, eh?”

“What do you mean? Are my words wrong?”

Curio pouted with discontent at Ark’s sharp words. After looking at Curio, his irritation rose from 100% to 120%.

‘Damn, my plan was useless. Because of this guy.....’

That’s right. The problem that occurred in Ark’s plan was this bat. Ark had cancelled all his plans for Alan after Curio became absorbed by Infector. In order to rescue Curio, he had split up the rehabilitation troops. This led him to lose 200 members and for Alan to reach the 60th floor quicker than expected. All his plans had perished because of one bat. Despite that, Curio couldn’t grasp the atmosphere and continued bragging.

‘His nature is still the same!’

That feeling wouldn’t go away even if the bat was boiled in a soup. But unfortunately he had no time for that now.

“Ark-nim, those guys are coming again!”

A voice coming from the watchtower was heard. Ark who was watching Curio flinched and turned his head. Between the dark red rocks that formed a valley, thousands of pairs of red eyes were approaching

over the swamp. The smell of beasts came from the valley. It was them! The thousands of demons that Alan commanded! 600 Avengers and 8,000 demons had entered the 60th floor. That was 1,000~2,000 more monsters than Ark had expected. On the other hand, Ark only had 2,000 troops to defend with. He was losing in the numbers game.

‘But.....’

“Every unit go to their positions!”

The soldiers quickly dispersed at Ark’s command.

-Kuaaaah!

By the time the soldiers got to their positions, the demons were already a short distance away.

“Damn, there’s no time to rest. Curio, Purital, move to the strategy area!”

“Sheesh, making me do this.....”

Curio complained and flew into the air. Meanwhile, the Tallons came running first. The Tallons raised their spears and axes as they ran across the muddy ground and into the stone wall. In the middle of the valley, rocks were stacked to form a wall that looked like a dam. It had a height of 10 metres. The Tallons climbed up and reached the middle of the wall.

Ark’s eyes flash and he yelled.

“Defense system operation, change the fortress to B type!”

Chelkong, chelkong, chelkong, chelkong!

There was a mechanical sound and the wall was covered with sharp thorns. Hundreds of spears had emerged between the rocks making up the wall. The spears pierced through the bodies of the Tallons

climbing the wall. The hundreds of alive Tallons struggled and shrieked while they were like insects stuck on a stick.

-Kurak, nomarad panaram!

After the first assault unit was skewered, the high ranking demons yelled. And several thousand demons once again gathered to attack the wall. Ark just sneered and shouted.

“Bah, not a chance. Launch!”

Kiririririk.....tu tu tu tung, tu tu tu tung!

It was the sound effect of something being fired! At the same time, hundreds of spears exploded from the wall.

The demons screamed and tried to run away as the spears descended. However, the valley was naturally narrow in front of the wall. There was no space to hide. The demons sunk into the swamp as the spears plunged into their bodies.

“This is the castle that I erected. There is no place for them to hide. Continue your attacks!”

“I understand. Engineers keep on loading the catapults!”

The voice of the unit commanders was audible throughout the place. The raccoons scurried all around the walls and loaded several equipment. They were equipping the spears that they Meow and Wolrang standing next to them were holding. The machine automatically worked and new spears flew outside the wall. It was similar to a work simulation being repeated many times.

“Launch!”

Tu tu tu tung, tu tu tu tung!

Hundreds of spears once again flew. Ark marvelled once again over the power of the spear as he watched from the fort's wall.

'It's terrible.'

The strength of the spears being shot from the machine was absurd. It flew 100 metres and pierced through 2~3 demons at once. Of course, the demons wouldn't die from one hit no matter how powerful the spears were. But they lost at least 10~20% health.

'Even so, I can exterminate the demons after the attack repeats a few times!'

That's what Ark was thinking.

-Kurak, kurak, banum!

100 large demons lumbered ponderously towards the front. Wearing thick armour and shield, it was the Heavy Walkers.

With their heavy defense, even the spears which boasted overwhelming power would bounce off the Heavy Walkers! If those guys defended in the front then the demons wouldn't be hit by the spears anymore. Ark clicked his tongue in irritation as the spear attack was blocked.

"Sheesh, those guys..... But the spear attack is just the beginning. Now, it is time to clean the water. Open the floodgates!"

Ark tapped his finger and shouted. One part of the wall opened and huge amounts of water was poured out. Since the 60th floor of the Abyss consisted primarily of deep swamps. But if the water was drained away then it would just be a muddy ground. That was why Ark built the fort in the middle of the valley like a dam and the water was collected. Of course, he didn't make that function just for fun.

Ku kwa kwa kwa kwa, ku kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The water poured out of the floodgates in a rough, rapid stream. And it swallowed up the valley like an angry beast. The demons were naturally swept away by such a rapid torrent of water. But Ark wasn't satisfied with just that.

"Chain attack, water grinder movement!"

"Wah ah ah ah!"

The coalition members shouted and poured something from the wall. They were stones as sharp as a knife blade. The tons of gravel that poured down were sucked in by the rapid stream. The rapid stream which emerged from the floodgates had overwhelming power but it was ultimately just water. It wouldn't deal the demons direct damage. But it was different if sharp stones were mixed in with the water. The water swirled violently while holding the sharp stones!

Ka ka ka ka, ka ka ka ka, ka ka ka ka!

The demons cried out as the rapid stream hit them. The fiercely spinning water and sharp stones ripped through the flesh of the demons.

"It really is effective."

That's right. Ark was trying to get this effect when he blocked up the water. The torrent alone wouldn't cause much damage to the demons. However, that situation changed with the presence of the sharp stones. Adding the stones to the water had the effect of a grinder. And the actual effect was more than expected. The demons caught by the torrent of water became tattered rags in an instant. The torrent was dyed red because of the demons' blood. In particular, it dealt catastrophic damage to the Heavy Walkers.

"It was a good thing that I stocked up on those stones."

Ark laughed as he saw the water dyed red from the blood. Other demons were pushed by the water to some degree and were hit by the stones. However, the Heavy Walkers were wearing heavy armour which weighted a lot! Therefore they weren't lightly pushed by the approaching water. They had no choice but to be hit harder by the stones. Armour and shields were no help against such attacks. The

armour and shields which became tattered fell off the Heavy Walkers, leaving them naked and at the mercy of the sharp stones. That's why Ark named it water grinder! It was literally a grinder made with water. Thanks to the rapid stream, the demons gathered in front of the fort were swept away. However, he couldn't afford to sigh with relief.

-Kuram, kuram, baradram!

A voice resonated through the valley and the demons once again gathered at the swamp. Along with the Tallons and Heavy Walkers, there were also gargoyles flying around. It was a nightmare like situation where they were attacked by land and air. A moan flowed from the mouth of the coalition members who thought they had finally interrupted the attacks.

"Oh my god.....!"

"They won't stop coming!"

Then Ark shouted towards the coalition members.

"Everybody steady your spirit! It's not anything new. We knew from the start that we had the disadvantage in numbers. That's why we didn't sleep for a few days to make the fort. Now it is time to test the performance of the fortress that you spent many days struggling to make. First, use the anti-aircraft engine!"

"Yes. The gargoyle will attack from the sky. G engine operation!"

Ku ku ku ku, kwa kwa kwa kwa, kkikikiki, tung tung tung tung!

A mechanical sound rang out and various devices started operating. The coalition members ran around and cut dozens of ropes, causing a pole around 10 metres high to spring up. A steel lattice was stuck to the end of it like an enormous fly swatter. And it hit the gargoyles flying in the sky like swatting flies in a swamp.

“Okay. From now on we will deploy the engines of the fortress. Each leader will operate the engines depending on the situation! Don’t forget. If you allow those guys to enter the fort then all your efforts will be wasted! We are the last defense line to protect Nagaran!”

“Ohhhhhh!”

The coalition members shouted and ran around the walls after shotting down the gargoyles. There were various mechanical sounds as the engines within the fort began to operate. Lava flowed down the wall that the demons were clinging to while rocks flew over the wall and crushed the demons. That’s right. The reason Ark was able to stop the 8,000 demons with only 2,000 troops was because of this fortress. While Ark and the attack unit were delaying Alan on the 59th floor, Wormer had used the Meow, raccoons, Wolrang and the Eastern Nation to build the fortress. It was a fortress created by the genius inventor Wormer and the gifted raccoons! When those engines were used, even the thousands of demons were helpless. The number of dead demon bodies just accumulated in front of the fortress as time passed. Despite their numbers, the coalition members were clearly superior when looking at the military situation. However.....

‘Why?’

Ark looked at the surging demons with an uneasy look. There was one part he couldn’t accept. Now he would clarify the situation.

The demons had to pass through the fortress to reach the Hell Door that led to the Hell River. If their plan was successful then Silvana along with Nagaran would be flooded with the Hell River. He confirmed in Shangri-La that the demons would gain a significant advantage if the Hell River flooded. In fact, this part was very subtle. The records in Shangri-La didn’t tell him the advantages the demons would get in detail.

‘But there is no doubt that it would have a devastating impact on the Demonic War.’

Ark was convinced of that. At first, Ark had simply regarded this event as Alan’s revenge. But he changed his mind after talking with the rehabilitation members before gathering the allied forces. It was clear that this event was aimed towards Global Exos by Alan and some villains. It wasn’t different from an attack on a big business. And depending on the results, Alan could either be a criminal or a tycoon. Alan wasn’t just moving with the intention of getting revenge on Ark.



‘The Red Man is clearly acting behind Alan.’

That’s right. The Red Man! When looking at the context so far, there was no doubt that he was the one pulling the strings. He was a user causing problems to a big business on an international scale. Ark couldn’t fathom how he came up with the idea. But considering the astronomical amount of money Global Exos poured into the online game.....The person must have huge funds and exceptional organizational skills. Depending on the outcome of this event, hundreds of billions of won could be moved by an international criminal organization. If Alan was connected with such an organization then he could move selfishly.

‘This means the incident with Silvana is the result of a long plan!’

Ark reached that conclusion. The demons in the Sinus Principality were currently on the defensive thanks to the Bristania and Schudenberg expeditions. Yet they had removed 100,000 troops from such a situation. This meant that the flooding of the Hell River was strategically more important than the Sinus Principality.

‘Despite the fortress’ incredible defense, the demons are just attacking like crazy and receiving huge damage. But.....’

The genius inventor Wormer and the raccoons had created all types of devices to block the Hell Door on the 60th floor. Despite the demons having 4 times more troops than the coalition forces, it wasn’t enough when taking into consideration the fortress. And the 8,000 demons have been blocked for 24 hours. In the meantime, at least 1,500 demons had died. Meanwhile the coalition only lost 200 people.

‘Why are they blindly attacking despite knowing that they can’t capture the fortress? Why are they attacking so excessively?’

This was the part Ark wasn’t convinced about. Of course, they were demons. They were still monsters. How could monsters come up with a clear strategy? However, currently Alan was commanding the demons. So he couldn’t understand why they were blindly attacking the fortress. There had to be a reason Alan was rushing. It all started a few hours with JusticeMan’s emergency communication.

-Ark, what is your situation now?

-I've somehow blocked Alan on the 60th floor.

-Is that so?" Everything has been put in order here.

-Huh? Everything has been cleaned up?

-Yes, we've destroyed the black obelisks and regained Silvana.

It was felt like it suddenly rained in the middle of a drought. If the allied forces recaptured Silvana then they could enter the secret dungeon! If the allied forces entered the secret dungeon and exterminated the demons then everything would end.

Of course, there was still a mountain to cross before that happened. Ark had to stop the Alan until the allied forces reached the 60th floor.

—Alan has already disposed of the monsters so you should have no obstacles in the dungeon. JusticeMan ajusshi has also fully grasped the terrain of the dungeon which will reduce a lot of time. When taking that into consideration, it would only take a day or two. With the fortress that Wormer and Dark Eden created, we will somehow be able to endure for that time.

Ark was optimistic about the situation. Then JusticeMan said with a concerned voice.

-..... By the way, there is a bit of a problem.

-A problem?

-It has been weighing on my mind.....as you know, we've recaptured Silvana. We checked that there were 40,000 demons before our last attack. But when fighting the demons, I noticed the number was reduced by 10,000. Thanks to that, we recaptured Silvana faster than expected.

-There were fewer demons?

Ark's face was filled with confusion for a moment. Then he instantly understood the situation. And JusticeMan's next words convinced him even more.

-We've already entered the dungeon and discovered traces of movement that is a few hours old.

Ark felt his heart drop at the words. This was the worst case scenario for Ark. The demons on the defensive by the allied forces' attack judged that it would be difficult to protect Silvana. Therefore they abandoned the castle early to send reinforcements to Alan. While the allied forces had captured Silvana immediately, the demons were already ahead by a few hours. If the monsters were still in the secret dungeon then those few hours wouldn't be a problem. However, all the mobs in the secret dungeon had been cleared by Alan. With the obstacles gone, it would be difficult for the allied forces to catch up with the demons. And if the demons arrived at the 60th floor before the allied forces.....

'10,000 demons would be added to Alan's 6,500 troops!'

While the allied forces would arrive a few hours later, Ark's group currently only had 1,800 people. There was no guarantee that could hold the fortress against 16,500 demons for even a few hours.

-It is still too early to be disappointed. Despite Alan learning how to navigate the dungeon, the demons descending haven't experienced that yet. Even if the demons are a few hours ahead, if the fast-moving task force is organized then they can reach the 60th floor before the demons. Then the combined forces can delay Alan until the allied forces catch up.

-But.....

Ark started to talk before sighing and shaking his head. Like JusticeMan said, if they organized a task force then they could catch up with the demons. Even if there were no monsters, the secret dungeon was a complicated place like a maze. Even if Alan sent them a guide, this wasn't an easy place to memorize. The demons that entered would have no choice but to wander around a lot. On the other hand, Ark and the allied forces had completely memorized the construction of the secret dungeon. They could take the shortest course while the demons were wandering and overtake them to arrive at the 60th floor first. However, overtaking the demons was different from stopping them.

'The secret dungeon has complicated passages that didn't move. Yet there is only one way to go to the next floor. If those demons aren't stopped then won't they keep on steadily advancing?'

In the end, the task force wouldn't be able to tie up the ankles of the demons. Eventually the thousands of demons would join Alan. Ark didn't mention this because JusticeMan also already knew it. None of the dirty tricks or schemes he tried to think about would work.

"Damn, do we just have to sit here and watch as it happens?"

Shambala muttered in an annoyed voice after he was told the contents of the communication. Ark thought about something and shook his head.

"No, the situation is not that bad."

"What?"

"I told you. The task force can catch up with the demon reinforcements."

"But isn't there any way for the task-force to stop the demons?"

"That's right. It means that every time the task force catches up, there will reduce the number of reinforcements. When considering the level of the monsters, the task force should consist of 2,000 troops. In other words, if the task force catches up 2~3 times then they can reduce the number of reinforcements by 4,000~6,000."

"But if they join forces with Alan then we will still be dealing with 10,000~12,000 demons. We don't even have 2,000 troops at the moment."

"That is why we had Wormer and the raccoons build the fortress."

"But this sloppy fortress can't even stop 6,500 demons."

"H-huh? You bastard, what did you say? It is thanks to the fortress that you're still alive....."

Wormer who was the architect of the fortress jumped up and exclaimed after hearing Shambala's words. Then Ark raised his hand, restrained Wormer and said.

"The fortress is still in an unfinished state."

Ark said in response to Shambala. That's right. In fact, the fort built on the 60th floor was still unfinished. Wormer designed the fort to be constructed in three days. So Ark and the attack unit were supposed to gain 3 days on the 59th floor. However, Curio's crisis had unexpectedly destroyed that plan and Alan broke through the 59th floor in only 40 hours.

"Hoh, you already know it. That's right. The original fortress was designed to block Alan and the 10,000 demons. But you guys didn't buy the right amount of time on the 59th floor so it is only 50% completed. If the fortress is 100% completed then the demons won't be a problem no matter their number!"

Wormer snorted and said. Even if it was 100% completed, how much of a difference would it make? However, Wormer had designed the fortress to withstand 10,000 demons. If they had the 3~4 days to complete it then it could last against the 10,000 demons. In other words, if the fortress was completed then enduring against 12,000 monsters for a few hours wouldn't be a problem. Shambala also realized this and asked.

"Then.....?"

"Yes, it would take the demon reinforcements at least a day to reach Alan. If we finish Wormer's design then we can hold out until the allied forces arrive."

"But we only have 2,000 people. To prevent the attacks and build the fortress....."

Shambala muttered sceptically until he trailed off as he realized something. Then he gave a look like he was confirming it.

".....That's right. Isn't Alan oblivious to the fact that the fortress is unfinished?"

“Exactly.”

Ark grinned and nodded.

“Alan knows that this fort won’t be easily captured with 6,500 monsters. So he sacrificed Silvana to bring reinforcements. And he only has to wait a day for thousands of reinforcements to arrive. In such a situation, there is no reason to waste troops by attacking the fortress. Alan will definitely rest until the reinforcements arrive. In other words, we have at least a day.”

This was the only solution Ark came up with. No, it was an analysis of the situation rather than an idea he conceived.

“In the meantime, if all forces work on it then we can increase the fort’s completion rate to 80%. It should be enough to endure the attack from the reinforcements for 2~3 hours until the allied forces arrive. If it is 80% completed then the fortress can last against 10,000 monsters. No, we have to use every possible method to make it endure!”

“Of course!”

Wormer exclaimed while touching his chest. So Ark’s troops started the fortress construction without any breaks. But the situation didn’t go as he imagined. In the beginning, Alan had stopped attacking like Ark expected after receiving the notification that the reinforcements were coming. After 5 hours had passed, the demons unexpectedly stirred and started making their way to the fort again. It had been 1 hour since then. Despite the demons receiving enormous damage, they just relentlessly continued to attack. He couldn’t understand Alan’s behaviour.....

Ark bit his lip as he recalled the memories.

“There’s only one thing I can think of.”

Alan had used the gargoyles to spy on Ark and noticed that they were constructing the fort. And he immediately knew Ark’s strategy.

“Dammit!”

He cursed at the unpleasant thought. Now Ark only had one choice left. The fortress couldn't be constructed anymore so they had to reduce the number of demons as much as possible before the reinforcements arrived. That was the way to survive. But that also wasn't an easy task.

‘The loaded equipment can't be used forever.’

That's right. The devices on the fortress could be used repeatedly but they couldn't be used randomly. For example, the engine that discharged the water couldn't be used again until enough water had built up. It was the same for the lava flow along the walls. If the demons continued attacking around the clock then some devices would become unnecessary. A long battle without any breaks was also a problem for the exhausted soldiers who hadn't rested for several days.

‘If we continued fighting like this then we'll be too exhausted when the reinforcements show up.’

Ark was thinking that when something interrupted him.

“Ark-nim, Cyclops are approaching from the demon camp!”

“Cyclops!”

Ark flinched and paid attention. Huge monsters were walking through the valley. They were one eyed giants with huge, muscular bodies, the Cyclops. Those guys approached while carrying huge objects in their hands. Then they swung their arms and the huge objects began to fly towards the fortress. Ark looked panicked.

“T-this.....block it! All magicians focus their magic on shields!”

Wormer's fortress was armed with various devices. However, this fortress also had a fatal weakness. It was vulnerable to long distance attacks from ranged weapons. This was the reason why installing traps on the walls weren't used in regular sieges. No matter how many traps were on the walls, it would become obsolete if destroyed by a siege weapon.

“My will shall be a strong shield.....Bounce Shield!”

The magicians simultaneously cast shield spells. But among the 2,000 troops, 1,500 of them were NPCs such as the Meow, Wolrang, raccoons and Eastern Nation. Among the 500 users, only 40 of them were magicians. It would take more than 40 magicians to shield an entire wall. Furthermore, the Cyclops had thrown dozens of massive objects.

Kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

With a roar, the rocks tore through the shields of the magicians. There was no way the fly swatter could block dozens of rocks. Once again, the Cyclops was a huge 20 metres monster with enormous strength. But they weren't a tricky opponent. Despite their destructive power, their movements and reaction rate was low so it was easy to deal with them. However, that was in a conventional battle. In a situation like this, the Cyclops could use its incredible speed to throw huge rocks across hundreds of metres. They were the worst opponent in a siege.

“Ark-nim, we've suffered serious damage on the left wall!”

“The attack just now destroyed 10 spear launchers!”

Not surprisingly, the situation became confused from that one attack.

“Dammit! Engineers, hurry and repair the damage!”

Dozens of engineers rushed towards the damaged walls.

“The necessary materials....huck! What, what the? T-this.....”

One of the engineers surveying a crushed device stepped back with a pale face. The engineer saw that the huge object thrown was moving. The object moved and twitched. And something protruded from the object.....



-Grrrrrrr!

“Huck, it isn’t a rock. T-this is.....”

“It is Kurak! These guys are Kurak! Run....kuaaaack!”

The engineer screamed before his body was cut and a fountain of blood spurted out. The one devouring the engineer’s upper body that was cut was a huge maggot called Kurak. That’s right. The huge objects that the Cyclops’ threw were the maggots Kurak. The Kurak moved had been thrown past the walls and attacked the engineers.

“This is.....damn, the aims of these fellows are the devices!”

Ark shouted in an urgent voice.

“If the devices are destroyed then the fortress will instantly collapse. The Meow will protect the raccoons and lure the Kurak to the rear defenders. The Wolrang and attack unit will exterminate the lured Kurak. Hurry!”

“Nyaaaaa. This way you maggots!”

Hundreds of Meow clawed the Kurak and provoked them.

“Now’s the time. Attack!”

After the Meow lured the Kurak to the right position, the Wolrang and special attack unit lying in wait jumped out.

Despite being only level 300, the Kurak’s shell was hard as steel so its defense was enormous. However, they had received quite a bit of damage after being thrown 100 metres by the Cyclops. When the Meow, Wolrang and special attack unit poured their attacks then the monsters deflated like a balloon. But 10 more Kurak flew as the first ones were wiped out. One small part of the wall collapsed as the Kurak flew

in. The thrown Kurak dealt damage to the fortress and attacked the engineers and the devices. The dual attack of the Cyclops and Kurak caused chaos.

“Concentrate all iron arrows on the Cyclops!”

Tu tu tu tung, tu tu tu tung!

Hundreds of iron arrows were shot from the walls. However, the iron flew over 100 metres and lost the power to penetrate the Cyclops’ thick skin and muscles.

The leader who was dealing with the Kurak shouted breathlessly.

“We can’t deal with the Kurak if they keep on coming in!”

“I know!”

Ark shouted angrily. Suddenly he heard Curio’s voice in his ear.

“Master, I’ve arrived!”

“Okay, Curio. Get started. This is a chance!”

“Sheesh, saying the same thing.....”

Curio grunted and muttered. Then one of the Cyclops suddenly winced. And it hit its own body like hitting a mosquito.....

Ark’s mana was sucked out and a message window appeared in front of him.

-Curio has successfully used Blood-sucking on the Cyclops.

\* The secondary effect of skill absorption has failed!

\* The secondary effect of skill absorption has failed!

\* The secondary effect of Blood-sucking, 'Confusion' has been successful!

"It's a success!"

Ark laughed and muttered. That's right. This was Ark's trump card against the Cyclops. Confusion was the secondary effect of Blood-sucking that Curio acquired after evolving! The Cyclops was the epitome of 'strong but stupid.' Their power was so strong that they could throw large rocks hundreds of metres but they were so stupid they couldn't learn skills. And Curio's Confusion had a higher chance of working the more stupid the opponent was. It was unnecessary to say but weren't they easier to incite because they were stupid? So Ark attacked the Cyclops and made them move near the entrance of the valley where Curio was waiting. While they were focused on the fort, Curio used Blood-sucking several times until the Confusion effect was applied.

"Hehehe, these oversized but stupid monsters. Become the body of the high pureness vampire. Now! One eyed monster, let's get started!"

Curio hit the head of the confused Cyclops with his wing and shouted.

-Roaaaaar!

The Cyclops shrieked and attacked another Cyclops. The Kurak it was about to throw fell and was stepped on. The Cyclops belatedly realized the situation and swung its fist. But Curio quickly flew around the Cyclops and sucked its blood like crazy. In fact, Blood-sucking wasn't easy to use against general monsters. So the probability of Confusion being triggered wasn't high. However, it was different when dealing with a 20 metres large Cyclops. There were a lot of places to bite and the danger was low thanks to its slow reactions. Moreover, their intelligence was probably in the single digits so it easy to trigger Confusion. On the other hand, if successful then they could get a large demon to work for them.

“There is no way you can hit this body!”

Suck, suck, suck, suck!

After a few times, another Cyclops fell victim to Confusion. Curio whose stomach became swollen from the blood laughed and raised his voice.

“Kekekeke. Now, these Cyclops. Feel free to run wild!”

The demons in the area fell into a state of chaos. The Cyclops under Curio’s control started rolling on the ground while fighting other Cyclops. The Cyclops randomly crashed into the valley while fighting and caused a hail of rocks to fall. The demons near the Cyclops were crushed by the huge bodies and falling rocks. The entrance of the valley was filled with screams and blood.

-Kuram, kuram, baradram!

In the end, it became a situation where the demons killed their fellow colleagues.

“Kekekeke. Good, good. I’ll have you guys fight and die among yourselves.....eh?”

Curio who was flapping his wings and watching from the ceiling flinched. His eyes narrowed and he frowned until he raised his voice.

“Master, it is Alan!”

“What? Alan?”

Ark who was dealing with the Kurak along with the Meow and Wolrang suddenly raised his head.

“Where?”

“Near the place where the Cyclops are running wild!”

Ark leapt onto a wall and used Eyes of the Cat to look at the area Curio indicated. But even if he used Eyes of the Cat, it wasn't easy to spot Alan from hundreds of metres away through thousands of monsters. Ark gave up checking himself and asked Curio.

“Curio, check it again. Are you certain it is Alan?”

“Do you think I wouldn't recognize him? I'm certain! It is Alan!”

“Is there anyone else around him?”

“Including the Dark Elf and magician we saw before, there is approximately 100 people.”

‘The Dark Elf and magician is Timosi and Jewel, so the person they're accompanying is without a doubt Alan!’

Ark's forehead wrinkled at Curio's answer.

‘Why did that guy appear?’

It had already been a day and a half since Alan and his troops entered the 60th floor. Yet Alan had never directly appeared on the battlefield. Currently the fortress was blocking the exit of the valley so there problems stopping Alan from conducting the problem. Wormer and the raccoons had also installed various traps scattered around the fortress so there was no reason for him to take a risk.

‘However, this is the first time that Alan appeared on the battlefield.’

The all-out assault of the demons wasn't a burden on Alan. Just a little more and he had a chance for success. But he never expected that the Cyclops would become confused and started attacking each other.

‘He must be trying something different. Anyway.....’

A cold smile spread on Ark’s face as he organized his thoughts.

‘.....This is a chance!’

Ark knew that the current military situation wasn’t that good. His troops had tirelessly sneaked through the secret dungeon to install traps and they also constructed the fortress. They could barely concentrate on the battle and swing their swords because of their fatigue. But was that all? The demons continuous push meant that quite a few devices were damaged.

‘It might not even hold until the allied forces and demon reinforcements appeared.’

But there was a way to quickly reverse the military situation. It was Alan’s death! That’s right. The person commanding the thousands of demons was Alan. If Ark dealt with Alan then the person commanding the demons would disappear.

‘Of course, dealing with the demons still won’t be easy.’

He had confidence that he could win against Alan. After his encounter with Alan in Pabiun Canyon, he had gained all of his Animal King set as well as the legendary sword, ‘Shining Darkness.’ Alan wasn’t an opponent easily dealt with but Ark had confidence he could win. The problem was that Ark would have to reach the place where Alan was. Even if he managed to deal with Alan, there was a chance he would be killed by the demons. However, Ark and Alan’s importance was different.

If Ark died, there were still a number of users that could be left in charge including Wormer and Boramae. They had the ability to command the units if Ark died. However, the demons were different. Alan was a unique commander within the demon army. In other words, Alan’s death meant the demons would just degenerate into a group of monsters. No matter how tired the troops were, they could deal with the disorganized demons.

‘I have a lot more to gain from this gamble. So there is no reason to hesitate!’

“Shambala, gather 400 people from the coalition and have them gather in the back.

Ark shouted after quickly grasping the situation. Shambala sensed that the atmosphere wasn't ordinary and quickly organized a detachment of soldiers. Ark left the defense of the Hell Door to the coalition members. Ark registered the people as a separate attack group and shouted.

“Demonic Distortion!”

Ark's bag opened and black equipment flew into the sky. It formed a large pentagram and exploded before a message window appeared.

-You have used Demonic Distortion.

The released demonic energy from the equipment will distort the space, changing the location of allies and enemies.

Please designate an enemy target when changing locations.

“Curio!”

“300 metres to your 3 o'clock!”

“The demons 300 metres away at my 3 o'clock!”

Ark shouted after hearing Curio's words. At the same time there, the space warped around Ark's group. Then Ark was sucked into thin air and flew away to the specified place. Alan, Timosi and the Avengers immediately appeared in front of him. That's right. Ark used Demonic Distortion to appear in front of Alan. The valid range for Demonic Distortion was 500 metres. Alan had appeared within 500 metres of the fort so it was a perfect opportunity for Ark.

“Now! Don't worry about the surrounding demons. Concentrate all your offensive power on Alan!”

Shambala and the detachment instantly ran towards Alan. The Avengers belatedly realized their appearance and hurriedly gathered around Alan. However, Alan's convoy only had 100 people. There were thousands of demons around but they weren't trained so they wouldn't respond promptly to sudden situations like this. Besides, the demons were still in chaos because of the confused Cyclops. Meanwhile, the 400 elite detachment penetrated through the Avenger's defense line.

Kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwang!

There were clashing sounds and dozens of Avengers collapsed. Alan became flustered and tried to retreat as his guards collapsed. Ark was convinced of his victory by those reactions.

"It is already too late! Shambala, go!"

"Ark and Shambala narrowed the distance before attacking Alan from both sides. The black light and red light intersected and went through Alan's body. Alan's health quickly fell to 50%.

'What the? This guy.....why is he so weak?'

Ark was baffled as he used Eyes of the Cat to check Alan's health. Even in a 1 on 1 fight, he wasn't able to guarantee the chances of success against Alan. Even if it was a surprise, one attack had really decreased his health by 50%? No, what on earth was that crude movement just then? Furthermore, he is running away after one hit? Alan wasn't the only one. Shambala had tried to attack Timosi but she was also running away.

"What is this? Do you think I will miss?"

Shambala shouted angrily and moved like the wind. Ark noticed and also chased after Alan with Sprint. The demons belatedly realized the situation and stepped in front of Ark and Shambala. But they moved systematically and the detachment stopped the demons, making it possible for Ark and Shambala to catch up with Alan.

"Kkiiiiik! Kkiiiiik!"



When Ark ran in front of him, Alan let out a bizarre moan. Shambala muttered with a disgusted expression.

“What the? This guy, has he suddenly turned into a monkey?”

“Kkikik!”

Then Alan turned and ran towards Shambala.

“What’s this? Just try it! Torrential Sword!”

Shambala laughed as he blocked Alan’s clumsy attack and brandished his dagger. At the same time, dozens of daggers pierced Alan’s body. Alan instantly fell to the ground. He got to his feet and tried to run away again. No, it was when he tried to get up.

‘Why is he like this.....?’

“Who would’ve expected this situation?”

Ark laughed as he pressed his sword to Alan’s neck. And Ark’s sword went vertically through Alan’s neck.

“Kuaaaah!”

Alan screamed with distress as his health reached the bottom. The commander of the enemy had been defeated in the middle of enemy territory!

“What the hell? That Alan.....maybe he stayed up a few days and fell asleep in the unit?”

Shambala murmured after dealing with Alan so easily. But Ark had no interest in Alan's circumstances. The important thing was that Alan was killed. Now that the demons lost their commander, their organizational ability would quickly collapse!

"Okay. Now we just have to return to the fortress."

Ark muttered while looking down at Alan's corpse before his face suddenly stiffened. A mysterious phenomenon was happening to Alan's body. Alan's body that was lying on the ground warped and turned into pieces of dough. The face also cleared and became as smooth as an egg. What was going on? Ark used Skill Penetration and the unexpected message window appeared.

-Doppelganger's special skill: Steal a Face

A doppelganger is a mysterious demon who existed since ancient times.

The doppelganger is a relatively weak demon but it has the uncanny ability to steal faces. Although the technique is called 'Steal a Face,' it actually copies everything about the target. When Steal a Face is used, the doppelganger perfectly replicates the target's information and even their habits. The doppelganger uses this skill to lure friends of family members so that the demons can devour them. In ancient times, the doppelganger even committed terrible crimes and caused a witch hunt to spread.

Even though the appearance is copied, it isn't possible to gain the abilities of the target.