

Ark Vol 23 C 3

Chapter 3

ACT 3 Flood, Hell River (II)

Kwa kwa kwa kwa, kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The rocks surrounding the Hell Door fell down into the Hell River. A huge spray of water rose and poured over the temple.

The water from the Hell River was filled with the forms of the cursed evil spirit. Every time a drop filled with evil spirit fell on the soldiers, it caused an electric shock.

-You have touched the Hell River.

If you touch it then you will lose 100 health per second>

A red warning message floated in front of Ark's dumbfounded face. Ark realized that he had forgotten something important.

'The coalition members!'

That's right. The coalition members were fighting against the demons on the 60th floor. The Hell River contained deadly poison that was like hydrochloric acid. If the Hell River poured from the Hell Door to the 60th floor then all the coalition members would be dissolved in moments. Furthermore, he had only brought users along with him to fight Alan. In other words, the 1,500 Meow, Wolrang, raccoons and Eastern Nation were still protecting the fort..... They were the NPC members of Dark Eden. And the NPC members were the main axis of Dark Eden!

'But it'll be too late even if I give the order to escape now.....'

It was only a matter of time until the Hell Door collapsed. Once it did, the Hell River would flow out to the 60th floor. No matter how quick the coalition members were, there was no way they could escape

from the 60th floor in time. With how quickly the Hell River would rise after entering the 60th floor, they wouldn't be able to escape the secret dungeon at all. Weren't there also thousands of demons blocking the front of the fortress? Then Ark thought of a brilliant idea.

'I don't know if it's possible but it is the only way!'

Ark instantly sent a whisper to Boramae who was the commander of the fort.

-Boramae, it is an emergency!

-Ark-nim, what was that shock just now?

-There's no time to explain. Give up the fortress and retreat immediately!

-Retreat? We're retreating? Retreat to where?

Boramae asked in an amazed voice after hearing Ark's order.

-In the underground closed room.

-The closed room? The place we made when we were hiding?

-Yes, retreat to that room right away with the troops. Make them blow up the entrance to completely seal it off. Don't let even a single drop of water enter. Do you understand?

This was the best course of action that Ark could come up with. Ark had previously commanded them to make a closed room on the 60th floor. It had a narrow passage in a rock wall which led to a wide stone room. The length of the passage was approximately 20 metres. In other words, the room was surrounded by 20 metres of rock walls. It was possible to avoid the Hell River in there. Of course, this was just a temporary solution. If the 60th floor was flooded then the closed room would eventually be as well. No, if the entrance was blocked because of that then they would suffocate from a lack of oxygen

first. Anyway, if the Hell River wasn't sealed then all of Nagaran would disappear. Then he wouldn't have to worry about the alliance members anymore.

-Blowing up the entrance.....

-There's no time to explain!

-.....I understand.

Boramae answered after hearing Ark's desperate tone and cut off communications. Now the life of his alliance members depended on how fast Boramae ran.

'I have to regain the Hell Stone and reseal the Hell River!'

But finding the Hell Stone was an even more confusion situation. Due to the shaking of the crystal temple, everybody was jumbled up like a cocktail had been shaken. Not only did the 900 soldiers fly away in every direction, there was no way to even tell where the Hell Stone was. Pieces of the crystal temple had broken and small crystal pieces were scattered all over the place. The temple was made of black crystal while the Hell Stone was also black. Looking for the Hell Stone in a pile of crystals was like finding a needle in a desert. However, this wasn't bad for Ark.

"Radun, find the Hell Stone!"

Ssak ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak ssak!

Radun dropped down from his waist and looked around with glittering eyes. He flicked his tongue from side to side before pointing towards one side.

-Radun's search target: Hell Stone search mode.

“Okay, let’s go!”

Ark instantly ran to a pile of crystal that Radun indicated.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

However, he had only taken a few steps before the temple started shaking uncontrollably. Then the floor suddenly inclined at a sharp angle.

‘The Hell Door has broken!’

That’s right. In the end, the Hell Door wasn’t able to withstand the pressure any longer and broke. The Hell River quickly rushed out after the Hell Door broke. The Hell River pushed out like a swirling storm into the secret dungeon! The crystal temple was located in the centre of the swirl, just like the eye of a cyclone and it was embroiled in the torrent that rushed out the Hell Door. Therefore the crystal pieces and soldiers all fell to one side. Most of them grabbed onto the cracked ground or pillar but some unfortunately soldiers were thrown out the crystal shrine into the Hell River.

“Waaaaah!”

“Huck! S-save me!”

The evil spirits flocked around the soldiers that had fallen into the river. After a few seconds, the soldiers became pieces of bones like piranhas had attacked them. The fearful scene showed how toxic the Hell River was.

“This.....?”

Ark looked around as he held onto his sword that he plunged into the ground. The Hell Door was built directly in front of the fortress that contained thousands of demons. After the coalition members hid in the underground like Ark commanded, the demons had immediately entered the fortress. But before they could even enjoy their victory, the Hell River swept over the fortress like a tsunami. The demons fell into a state of panic and shrieked while running away.

-Kiri, karam, keurama!

-Nohun, bakirama, kurara!

However, the demons were like fleas running around the 60th floor.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa, kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The Hell River enveloped the demons in one huge breath. The fate of the demons caught in the swirl was gruesome. The thick leather that prevented the demons from being pierced with a knife was no use against something like this. The demons caught in the swirl seemed like they were caught in a grinder and shredded into chunks of meat. The Hell River became a deep red colour from the blood of thousands of demons.

“There it is! The Hell Stone!”

Then he heard someone’s voice near him.

Ark who had been looking at the bloody Hell River flinched and turned. A pile of crystals had collapsed from the impact just then and the Hell Stone rolling out caught his eyes. The Hell Stone was also tumbling around everywhere thanks to the shaking of the temple. The soldiers would rush towards it whenever the Hell Stone rolled in their area. But the temple was still at a 30 degree tilt. The temple would shake again every time the river collided with the valley. Thanks to that, the soldiers rushing towards the Hell Stone lost their balance and died. Some of them even pulled the Avenger members with them. And they became minced meat. When the situation was like this, the soldiers and Avengers couldn’t easily move. It was a strange confrontation between two groups over the Hell Stone.....

However, those circumstances didn’t last long. The movement of the Hell River suddenly changed. The river had completely submerged the 60th floor and there was a moment of silence. Then a fierce geyser of water shot up near the crystal temple. And it started drilling a hole in the ceiling.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

There was a violent roar and the ceiling broke. It was like a scene where the demons of hell clawed through the ground with their claws. A groan flowed from Ark's mouth at the unimaginable situation.

'Oh my god, this is.....!'

Ark had thought the Hell River would flood from the 60th floor to the 59th floor to the 58th.....the secret dungeon would gradually fill up and head towards the outside. Considering the Hell River's speed, it would take at least a few hours to reach the outside. But if it penetrated through the ceiling then it would take less than an hour.

'There's no time!'

He couldn't afford to relax now. Since the Hell River had calmed, the tilted temple returned to a flat position. While rocks still fell from the ceiling, it was better than when the temple was 30 degrees tilted.

"We can't blindly chase after it. It will become too messy."

Ark raised his body and shouted.

"All warriors rush and seal the movement of the Avengers! Meanwhile the archers and hunters should quickly seize the Hell Stone. The magicians in the rear will attack the Avengers searching for the Hell Stone!"

Based on his previous experience, blindly chasing after the Hell Stone wasn't the right answer. In such confused circumstances, the soldiers would definitely have the disadvantage. The soldiers had 100 less members than the Avengers. Even if the altar was repaired, everything would be finished if they couldn't get the Hell Stone. There was also no meaning if someone placed the Hell Stone in their bag and died. On the other hand, the Avengers could place the Hell Stone in their bag and win. It really was disadvantageous to the soldiers in every way.

'But Alan and the Avenger members are confused because the quantum transmitter didn't work properly. This is the only chance to obtain the Hell Stone. The game starts now!'

This was the quick conclusion Ark came up with. The soldiers immediately organized themselves according to Ark's order.

"Hap, hap, hap, hap!"

"Go!"

When the signal rang out, they simultaneously ran towards to Hell Stone. Meanwhile, the soldiers moved towards the Avengers. "Warriors block them from both sides and secure a path!" The warriors followed Ark's instructions and stopped the Avengers from mobbing. The sound of hundreds of warriors clashing rang out. While the warriors were stopping each other, the archers and hunters rushed towards the Hell Stone. But this was different from a football game.

"Damn, stop them!"

Dozens of magic blasts flew from the other side. At the same time, a 100 metres area became wrapped in a black aura.

-You have entered the influential range of 'Blackout.'

* Due to the magical smoke screen, the vision of all life forms within the 100 metres area will be limited.

* There is no way to expand the limited view using magic or skills.

* The effect will only be displayed at night or in a dungeon.

The message window appeared in front of all the soldiers. The Avengers saw the soldiers' methodical movements and used Blackout to prevent them from finding the Hell Stone. Thanks to the dense smoke screen it was impossible to distinguish between rocks or the Hell Stone. Contrary to Ark's intention, once again it became a scene of confusion and disorder.

“I got it! The Hell Stone!”

“Bah, not a chance. Rush!”

“Ugh, this bastard.....ah, my hell stone!”

“Kukuku, I caught it!”

“Don’t be ridiculous. Heroic Strike!”

Shouts poured out from the smoke screen. Dozens of skills flew around in the vicinity of the Hell Stone. Whenever someone grabbed the stone, a skill would be used to stop them. Therefore the Hell Stone switched hands between the soldiers and the Avengers many times.

‘.....We’re being pushed!’

Ark looking at the situation he could see through the smoke screen with irritation. It was 400 against 500. The numbers were against them but Ark thought they could win if they faced the Avengers. The reason was due to his level. While Ark was distracting Alan on the 59th floor, he had looked at the Avengers using Eyes of the Cat. Their level was between 330~350. On the other hand, the allied forces and Dark Eden had an average level of more than 350. He judged that the level difference would make up for the extra 100 troops. However, the actual results were unexpected. When facing them 1 on 1, the Avengers showed no sign of being pushed.

‘There can only be one reason. When I encountered Alan at Pabiun Canyon, I was pushed despite obviously being high levelled than him. Alan and the Avengers must have something to raise their stats!’

But now wasn’t the time to ponder the mystery. The problem was that his soldiers were dying.

‘If we’re pushed during these circumstances then it is the end!’

“Radun, use Stalking and secure the Hell Stone!”

Ssak ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak ssak!

Radun shook his tail and went into the smoke. Ark also followed Radun in the scuffle and shouted.

“Summon Demon, Purital! Clad Armour!”

Clack clack clack, clack clack clack clack!

Purital was summoned to the area behind Ark. As soon as Purital appeared, his bones were taken apart and reformed around Ark. The ribs split to cover his upper body while the skull covered his head like a helmet. The leg and arm bones twisted strangely and stuck to Ark’s gloves and shoes.

-You have used Clad Armour.

* Damage will increase by 17~22.

* Defense will increase by 98.

* Health will increase by 1,866.

“Hook Explosion!”

When he used the skill, 4 hooks shot from Ark’s body. The hooks wound around a pillar and he flew into the smoke screen.

“Eh, what the?”

“Ark! Kill him!”

When he entered the smoke, the Avengers ran to him immediately.

“These children.....Dark Dance!”

Ark’s body disappeared like a ghost. It wasn’t easy for someone to catch Ark when he used Dark Dance in broad daylight. It was impossible in a dark dungeon filled with smoke.

“Huck! W-where is he?”

The Avengers said as they lost sight of their quarry. But before their confusion could disappear, a dark blade shot through the darkness and dealt a critical blow to an Avenger member. It was like an invisible ghost holding a blade was mocking them. He used the chain skill of Dark Dance and Dark Blade. With Ark helping, the battle in the smoke screen instantly tilted to the side of the soldiers. Ark yelled out when he had taken care of all the surrounding Avengers.

“That’s it! Radun, find the Hell Stone!”

Ssak ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak ssak!

Radun crawled on the ground and licked it with his tongue. During that short time, he had sensed the Hell Stone within the smoke.

‘Okay, the Avengers are unaware of Radun’s presence because of the smoke.’

Ark was thinking that when something interrupted him. All of a sudden he had his health sucked out? At the same time, a warning message flashed before his eyes.

-Your pet ‘Radun’ has been forcefully recalled to the Netherworld.

You have received 50% of the Familiar's health as damage.

"What, what the? R-Radun.....?"

Ark burst out after seeing the perplexing message. Suddenly there was a flash through the smoke screen. Ark reflexively turned his body towards the flash. In the midst of the smoke was someone wearing shining black armour. But Ark's eyes weren't looking at the man. He was looking at the snake pierced through by the sword the man was holding. It was Radun. He had been looking for the Hell Stone and encountered the man! Ark slowly looked at the dead body before it disappeared. And he glared at the man in black armour.

".....Alan!"

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The crystal shrine started rising along with the Hell River. The river was like a giant creature digging through the ground. The river rose through the penetrated ceiling and had already submerged half of the secret dungeon. The crystal shrine also received large amounts of damage. While the river was blasting through the ceiling, it was pouring down rocks onto the crystal shrine. Every time the ceiling opened, a huge rock would fall and break a part of the temple's floor. The situation became even more confused inside the temple. The whereabouts of the Hell Stone became unclear.

Once again, finding the black Hell Stone among the rocks and black crystal pieces was like finding a needle in a desert.

Meanwhile, the magicians continually feared that someone from the opposite site would find the Hell Stone and continually used Blackout. Thanks to that, the crystal temple became completely enveloped in a dense smoke screen. The hundreds of people entangled in the smoke screen could only see 4~5 metres around them. The screams and iron clashing sounds that came from everywhere meant he couldn't accurately grasp the war situation.

Jjang!

A violent metallic sound was heard from the smoke. Two blades collided with each other and caused constant flashes. Once one flash occurred, a different one occurred several metres away from the first. When that flash disappeared, another one would occur in a different place so that it seemed like dozens of people were taking a photo.

After a long time.....

Ka ka ka kang, chaechang!

The intense flash of light occurred when two people conflicted. Wearing black armour and leather armour, the two people were Ark and Alan. The two of them had only been clashing swords for a few minutes. However both of them looked like they had been fighting for a couple of hours. Their mantles were ripped to shreds while the armour was also covered in small tears. Their swords that collided without any rests seemed like they were going to break. It was possible to guess how intense the 5 minute battle had been from that alone. Their two swords clashed and pushed against each other, causing Alan to pant out breathlessly.

“That Ark bastard.....”

“Huck huck, don’t call me names. Don’t you know it makes me feel dirty?”

“.....I’ll kill you.”

“Can you really say that when you lost your breath like a puppy?”

“You’ll see soon.”

A black aura exploded from Alan’s body. He instantly felt an enormous pressure on his sword. It felt like he was being pushed with enormous pressure! Ark was forced to his knees from Alan’s tremendous power as his sword was pushed downwards. Eventually Alan’s sword slid off Ark’s and struck the ground with a large spark.

Kwajajajak!

A thick crack spread on the ground and crystal debris shot from the ground. The sharp edges of the crystal tore the skin and fresh blood splattered. But Ark and Alan didn't blink once. They knew that looking away for one minute could mean the difference between victory or defeat.

"Evil Insight!"

A ray shot from Alan's eyes. Ark rolled on the ground and avoided the ray.

"Inferno!"

Alan followed Ark's movements while shooting flames from his mouth. Ark hurriedly placed his hands on the floor and kicked upwards, hitting Alan's jaw. Alan's jaw was pushed upwards and the flames gushed towards the sky.

'This is a chance!'

Ark moved his body like a squirrel and rolled under Alan's foot. He felt a pain in his side the moment he tried to kick Alan.

At that moment, Alan lowered his sword and attacked. Thanks to the unexpected attack in his side, Ark was hit by Alan's counterattack and he fell. He rolled several metres before finally raising his body. However, he had no time to catch his breath. A sword with a black energy was descending on his head like a lightning bolt. Ark hurriedly lifted his sword and the shock felt like his shoulders had been hit by a hammer.

"Ugh!"

A moan flowed from firmly closed lips. However, Ark who was lying on the ground kicked out and hit Alan's leg. Alan lost his balance and stumbled. Meanwhile, Ark grasped Alan's leg and rolled along the ground. Thanks to Ark rolling on the ground while grasping his foot, Alan naturally fell as well. It was a chance to attack Alan!

"Alan! Matanyi Shooter no. 1, Devil Penetrating Arrow!"

Then a black shadow appeared dozens of metres away from Ark. It was the Dark Elf with black hair that fluttered like a cape! The Dark Elf Timosi! Ark reflexively turned to look at the voice. Then an arrow flew through the smoke to hit his shoulder. Alan instantly raised his body during that gap. Timosi shot another arrow at the same time.

“Matanyi Shooter no. 2, Devil Chasing Arrow!”

The arrow launched was the ones that would chase the target until it hit! Ark popped up in front of Alan the moment the arrow was shot. Then Alan who had got up swung his sword. Ark instantly used Dark Dance and rotated around Alan, changing their locations. The arrow that had been chasing after Ark lodged itself into Alan’s shoulder.

“Kyaaak! A-Alan!”

Timosi was startled as Alan was hit. Alan blocked Ark’s follow-up attack and shook his head.

“Ugh, I’m fine! Timosi, don’t worry about this battle!”

“B-but.....”

“Can’t you see? Your arrows aren’t helpful in this situation. Pay attention to the altar.”

“Altar?”

“Yes, I’ve left the altar to Jewel but then I got involved in the fight and haven’t contacted him. Leave me and dispose of the guy repairing the altar!”

“I understand!”

Timosi nodded and turned her body. When Timosi disappeared towards the altar, Alan pulled out the arrow from his shoulder and laughed.

“Come Ark! What will you do now?”

Ark’s eyes shook as he breathed harshly. In fact, the altar had also been weighing on Ark’s mind. In this confused situation, there was no way to predict who could get their hands on the Hell Stone. But there was a way for Alan to achieve his goal even if he didn’t obtain the Hell Stone. It was the Hell Altar! If anyone got rid of Wormer who was repairing the Hell Altar then it didn’t matter who obtained the Hell Stone. With the whereabouts of the Hell Stone unclear, the battle had started focusing on the altar. Now Timosi had received the assassination order and was heading towards Wormer. It was the most unbearable situation in Ark’s view. But a small smile still spread on Ark’s face.

“Let’s see? Will it really be as easy as you think?”

“That pig, I’ll catch you! Matanyi Shooter no. 1, Devil Penetrating Arrow!”

Then Timosi’s sharp voice was heard over the noise of the battlefield. He couldn’t see because of the smoke but Timosi had approached Wormer at the altar. But the next moment.....

“What, what the? That abnormal bastard.....!”

“I knew this female would appear again.”

Alan’s face warped as he heard Shambala’s voice. That’s right. The reason Ark wasn’t worried about the altar was because of Shambala. The altar was one of the two keys required to stop the Hell River. How could he leaving Wormer who was repairing such an important key alone? Ark was able to roam the battlefield freely because he had placed Shambala who was the most reliable person to guard Wormer. This was the reason why Shambala hadn’t been fighting in the meantime.

“Matanyi Shooter no. 3, Devil’s Stabbing Arrow!”

“Torrential Sword!”

Although it wasn’t intended, once again it became a confrontation between Shambala and Timosi. Ark raised his sword and laughed.

“Now, shall we start again? Or do you want a little break?”

“.....This impertinent brat!”

Kwa kwang, kakakakak, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

‘Damn, this bastard.....’

Ark breathed roughly and glared at Alan. In fact, Ark had been confident that he could beat Alan. That confidence didn’t come out of nowhere. In the past Ark had been pushed back by Alan. But they were almost equal after using Purital’s Clad Armour skill. And he also had the legendary sword Shining Darkness. Once again, upgrading weapons in battle had a profound effect in games. That was why users would risk their lives to gain a stronger weapon. And Shining Darkness was the highest ranked sword, a legendary weapon! Of course he would gain the upper hand with the legendary sword. However, the results weren’t much different from the previous fights. Just like Ark gained the legendary sword, Alan had probably gained a new ability.

‘This is really irritating.’

Alan must’ve come here thinking the same thing. The situation really was very irritating. Alan must be in the same position.....Thus the frustrating and unyielding match between the two of them continued. But after a while, the balance collapsed in a way he never imagined.

Kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwang!

The Hell River once again swirled and rose through the ceiling.

“Rocks are falling! Scatter!”

There was a violent roar and the crystal temple shook. At the same time, small and large rocks fell like hail. Although most of the rocks fell into the Hell River, around 100 of them struck the crystal temple. It

just caused the battle between the two opposing sides to become even more confused. However, rocks weren't the only things that came pouring in.

Patter, patter.

A drop of water suddenly fell onto Ark. At first he thought it was the river water. But when he saw the stain on Alan's face, he realized that it wasn't a simple water drop.

.....Blood! Blood was dripping from above their heads. Ark wasn't the only one surprised by the situation. Alan's face also looked surprised after seeing the wet blood on Ark's face. The two of them raised their heads at the same time.

'What the, that is?'

Pukakakaka, pukakakaka!

The Hell River was swirling at a fast rate around the temple. And a large number of demons were being grinded into mincemeat in the water?

'Demons? What.....?'

Ark belatedly realized the identity of the demons. It was the demons that entered the secret dungeon just before Silvana was recaptured! After contacting Boramae on the 60th floor, he had also talked to JusticeMan and told the allied forces to retreat. The allied forces wouldn't be able to help with the Hell Altar and they hadn't entered that long ago so they were able to escape from the secret dungeon. But the demon reinforcements had entered the secret dungeon a few hours earlier. While running through the dungeon, the ground had opened and they fell into the Hell River. That's right. The blood of demons was pouring over the crystal temple! The site of thousands of demons bleeding above them was a terrible scene. However, the truly horrible situation happened afterwards.

-Kuram, kurama, kuram!

-Bahoguram, norun, kararara!

The voices came from among the rocks falling from the ceiling. They were the red eyed demons. 100 demons falling from the ceiling were fortunate enough to avoid the Hell River and fell onto the crystal temple. 10,000 demons had entered the secret dungeon but only 100 of them had fallen onto the temple. Alan had calculated up to here which was why he hadn't ordered the demons to retreat.....Anyway, both Ark and the soldiers battled were shocked. Meanwhile Alan smiled at the sight of the demons.

"Exterminate them!"

-Kurwarwarwarwa!

The demons began to rampage after hearing Alan's order. Although the falling demons avoided the swirling water, they still lost between 30~50% health thanks to the fall damage. In particular, the Heavy Walkers that wore a lot of armour lost 70% of their health. But there were still 100 demons. That normally wouldn't be a problem. However, the present fight between the two opposing sides had been almost equal. When the 100 demons appeared, that balance was broken. It was the same for Ark.

"Dark Strike!"

When Ark swung his sword, a demon interrupted in front of him. Alan stepped out from behind the demon and attacked Ark.

"The Devil's Fang!"

There were three different ways to fight an opponent. Locking weapons together, avoiding the opponent or close combat. The opponent could then avoid the attack or chose to attack back. But when the demons interrupted Ark's attacks, his movements weren't smooth anymore. Alan would take advantage of that gap to strike back. Of course, the demons weren't at a level to really interrupt the battle between Alan and Ark. But with the interference of the demons, Ark had no choice but to be hit by some attacks. And this had devastating consequences to Ark.

-Purital's health has been consumed and Clad Armour will disappear!

Purital will be forcibly recalled and you will be damaged by 50% of his health.

* Purital's 30% defense, attack and health bonus will disappear.

The bones around Ark disappeared as the message window appeared. This was the reason Ark had tried to avoid being hit. The 30% bonus that Purital's armour gave to Ark made him equal to Alan. But if the 1,544 health given by Clad Armour was consumed then it would automatically be released. When that happened, Ark wouldn't be a match for Alan anymore. That wasn't all.

'Dammit, nearly 4,000 health flew away!'

Clad Armour disappearing meant that Purital would be forcibly recalled. And Ark received 50% of his pet's health as damage when they were recalled. Purital currently had 5,720 health. When Clad Armour turned off, Ark lost the extra health bonus as well as 2,860 health. Clad Armour was released and he received 2,860 damage. This was a deadly penalty against an opponent like Alan.

'Dammit.....!'

Ark was continuously pressed by the attacks of Alan and the demons. Once Clad Armour disappeared, all of Alan's attacks felt like a hammer were beating on him. The soldiers were also being pushed back by the demons and the Avenger members. With their health already low, 100 soldiers quickly died.

'This is ridiculous! I rallied tens of thousands of people to save Nagaran yet we're going to be defeated because of 100 demons?'

It was an exhausting thought.

'But I won't die like this! If I die then I have to take Alan with me!'

Ark's eyes flashed and he shot forward.

“Heh, is this the last desperate struggle? The Devil’s Fang!”

Alan snorted and attacked. However, Ark’s goal wasn’t Alan. Ark used Dark Dance to avoid Alan’s attack and plunged his sword into a demon before shouting.

“Demonic Seal!”

Kuwaaaaaaaah!

The body of the demon crumpled and was sucked into the sword. Originally Demonic Seal was a skill to seal the demon into an item. But this time the demon wasn’t sealed in a common item. It was the legendary sword Shining Darkness! When Demonic Seal was used, the black aura strengthened and a message window appeared.

-Shining Darkness has been charged with demonic energy.

* A minimum of 10 demons is needed to use the Shining Darkness skill.

That’s right. This was the method Ark came up with. Ark hadn’t used Shining Darkness yet. He didn’t know how powerful the unknown skill was. However, this skill was an option attached to a legendary sword. Furthermore, the skill had to be charged with demons before it could be used. There was no doubt that it would exert a tremendous power. Of course, it wouldn’t reverse the situation no matter how powerful the skill was. But couldn’t it take care of Alan?

“You coward, are you running away?”

“Bah, it is a strategic retreat. Demonic Seal, Demonic Seal, Demonic Seal!”

Ark dodged Alan’s attacks and sealed the demons into the sword. After a while, the message window he was waiting for finally appeared.

-Shining Darkness has been charged with demonic energy.

* Shining Darkness can be used.

“That’s it!”

Ark confirmed the message and turned around while shouting. He brandished his sword and yelled. No, just as he was about to yell.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

There was a tremendous roar and the crystal temple suddenly fluctuated uncontrollably. There was a flare of brightness like all the lights had been turned on in a dark room.

-The effects of Blackout have been destroyed by the sun’s rays!

‘The sun’s rays?’

Ark hurriedly looked around. He grasped the situation a bit too late and his face darkened.

“U-unbelievable.....! O-outside!”

When the Blackout effect disappeared, he could see the mountains and plains. That’s right. In the end, the Hell River had risen through all 60 floors. The shock just then was Silvana’s earth collapsing. The Hell River and crystal temple shot dozens of metres out of the ground like a water fountain.

“Huck! T-the Hell River!”

“We failed after all?”

“Ah ah ah, it is the end of Nagaran!”

Confused voices could be heard as the Hell River rose. It was coming from JusticeMan and the allied forces who had escaped the secret dungeon. Ark heard their voices and also despaired. No, the moment he was about to give up!

“The Hell Stone!”

Someone cried out. And Ark’s eyes caught the Hell Stone. The Hell Stone had fallen into a crack between a large number of black crystal fragments. It was impossible to find during the Blackout stage. But once the Blackout effect faded and the temple started shaking, all of the crystal fragments and the Hell Stone were swept to one side. Ark saw the Hell Stone with incredible timing and his hope was revived.

‘Yes, now.....I might not be too late..... I can stop the Hell River!’

“Wormer!”

“The repairs are finished!”

Wormer yelled towards Ark. Ark’s body then flew like an arrow towards the Hell Stone. However, one person had moved to the Hell Stone before Ark.

“Hate Aura!”

The person surrounded by a black aura and rushing forward at extravagant speed was Alan. Hate Aura increased Alan’s movement speed by 30%. Alan overtook Ark and reached the Hell Stone. Ark let out a distressed cry and swung his sword.

“Ah, no. Shining Darkness!”

Flash! Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

At the moment, the black aura surrounding Ark's sword exploded. It was so utterly pitch black dark that nothing could be seen! The darkness shot out in front of it like a huge tsunami and swallowed everything. A chain explosion occurred and Alan was also swallowed up.

"Kuaaaaak!"

Alan screamed as he was caught in the explosion and blasted dozens of metres away. Shining Darkness was the knockdown technique of the legendary sword which dealt a critical hit and ate 40% of Alan's health at once. That wasn't all. The demons and Avengers caught in the explosion were torn to shreds and also flew away, causing a radiating pattern around Ark. The destructive power was enough that the Avengers and demons caught in the explosion turned to dust.

A giant crater was created in the area where Shining Darkness was used. It was like a nuclear bomb had been dropped.

"T-this is....."

Ark stuttered with a stunned look.

While he was astonished at the incredible power of Shining Darkness, the reason he was stunned was because the area where the Hell Stone was located had also been caught in the explosion. At that moment, the hundreds of people left in the temple looked on in unison.

Tuk, tuk, tuk, tuk.....

A black stone fell from the sky and rolled away. The Hell Stone! It had been caught in the blast and blown away. And.....

Snap!

Someone picked up the Hell Stone as it rolled to their feet. Ark, Shambala and the soldiers all stiffened as they saw the person.

“Jewel.....!”

A moan emerged from Ark’s mouth. That’s right. The person who picked up the Hell Stone was the magician Jewel. Hundreds of eyes looked at Jewel as he picked it up.

“Ugh! J-Jewel.....Hell Stone.....throw it outside the temple!”

Alan who was a piece of rag on the ground tried to get up while shouting. All of Ark’s hope disappeared. Everybody expected Jewel to obey Alan and throw away the Hell Stone. However, everybody watching the scene became stunned in the next moment.

“W-what is this.....?”

Jewel had thrown the Hell Stone towards Wormer at the Hell Altar. Everybody was surprised at Jewel’s rogue actions. Then the distinctive form of a bat appeared from Jewel’s hood.

“Kekekeke, the person who always settles a situation is me!”

“Curio!”

Ark exclaimed. Ark finally understood everything. During the chaos of Blackout covering the temple, Curio had used Blood-sucking on Jewel many times. In the end, he managed to successfully ‘confuse’ Jewel and hid in his hood. It was the reason why Jewel didn’t obey Alan’s command to attack Wormer. In fact, during the battle Ark had received a message stating that Curio had successfully used Confusion. However, he was battling with Alan and couldn’t check the name. Therefore he thought that a random Avenger had been confused. He hadn’t expected Curio’s action to be such a big influence.

“Wormer!”

Ark burst out.

“S-stop! Stop him!”

Alan’s cry rang out and the demons and Avengers rushed to the altar. But it was already too late to stop Wormer. Wormer placed the Hell Stone on the altar and pulled the switch.

Dduk.

All the noises around him suddenly disappeared. The Hell Altar shook and a lightning bolt struck the temple. The lightning bolt pierced through the temple and hit the Hell River. When it struck, the Hell River that was rising from the secret dungeon stopped moving. An earthquake simultaneously shook Silvana.

Jjajjajjang, jjajjajjang!

A splitting sound continuously rang from the secret dungeon. It was soon possible to know what the sound was. Clear ice was quickly covering the Hell River and coming upwards. The river spouting from the ground suddenly turned into ice pillars.

-The Hell River has been sealed.

“W-we did it. It is interrupted.....”

Ark muttered at the sight of the message in front of him. At that moment, the ice turned to sand and the crystal temple crashed to the ground.

“Huk! I-it is falling! Everybody prepare for impact!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The crystal temple plunged into the ground dozens of metres from the entrance to the secret dungeon. There was a huge shock and the crystal temple split. When the temple crashed, huge damage was applied to the users and demons. Most of the users barely survived while the demons died from the impact. Ark also had low health but he barely managed to survive. Then the demons and Avengers who survived around Ark unsteadily got up.

“Ugh, do you want to see this through to the end?”

Ark was unsteadily raising his voice when he heard it.

“The Hell River has been sealed. Attack and exterminate them!”

JusticeMan’s voice was heard from behind Ark. At the same time, tens of thousands of allied forces rushed into the temple.

That’s right. It was the allied forces who had been watching the situation from Silvana. There few remaining demons and Avengers inside the temple were no match.

“Dark Strike!”

Ark who received recovery magic also jumped back in the fray. Now that almost everything was cleared up, he wanted to handle Alan. But no matter how hard he looked, Ark couldn’t find Alan or Timosi. At that moment he heard Curio’s voice over his head.

“Master, those guys!”

And he looked where Curio was pointing.

“.....Alan!”

Curio was pointing towards Alan, Timosi and some Avenger members who were flying away on gargoyles. When the crystal temple was falling, those guys had quickly escaped into the sky using gargoyles.

“Shoot them down with magic and arrows!”

At JusticeMan's command, the allied forces fired off magic and arrows. But Alan was already more than 100 metres away. Most of the magic and arrows failed to even hit them. Alan looked at the magic and arrows flying under his feet before flying away with the gargoyles.

"Damn.....!"

Ark cursed as he watched Alan. Then he sighed and turned away. At the moment, a loud cry shook his eardrums.

"Waaaaahhhhh!"

"We did it! We protected Nagaran!"

"Hooray Nagaran's allied forces! Hooray Dark Wolf!"

Silvana erupted with the loud cheers. But Ark didn't hear the loud cheers. With all the tension and barely sleeping for the last 10 days, Ark just looked at the allied forces with dumb surprise and collapsed from exhaustion.

"Ark-nim!"

The allied forces flocked to the fallen Ark. The long battle to defend Nagaran had finally ended.