

Ark Vol 24 C 5

Chapter 5

ACT 5 Idea Maze (II)

‘What the? That guy, he wasn’t just an ordinary NPC?’

Ark became upset after seeing the spider like form that Maseutyu had transformed himself into. However, a smile spread on Ark’s face after examining his information with Eyes of the Cat. Surprisingly Maseutyu was level 800. However he wasn’t an elite boss. No matter how high levelled the boss was, he wasn’t a match for 800 elite soldiers. Ark laughed and lifted his fist.

“Let’s start. It is 800 vs. 1.”

He opened his fist and headed towards Maseutyu.

Syu syu syu syu, syu syu syu syu!

A continuous stream of light appeared from behind Ark. They were hundreds of magic arrows. Fire, ice, lightning, poison, etc. All types of magic arrows flew in an arc towards Maseutyu. No, as soon as it was about to hit!

“Teleport!”

Maseutyu invoked a high speed incantation and chanted his spell with extravagant speed before disappearing.

“.....Is he trying to buy time?”

Ark muttered with a frown. Magicians who used that magic couldn’t be easily caught. Furthermore, ‘Teleport’ was different from ‘Warp’ where the location could be designated. However, Ark had a magician slayer that could destroy Teleport!

“Do you think you can escape? Burning Soul, use Stalking to keep track of Maseutyu’s location!”

Kurarara, kurarara!

-Burning Soul has used Stalking.

“The rear! All archers concentrate on shooting 100 metres away in the 6 o’clock direction.....”

Ark shouted before flinching and closing his mouth. Maseutyu had teleported to the place where the attack squad was crowded. If arrows were shot blindly then the attack squad members would become like hedgehogs.

“But having some smarts doesn’t change the fact that this is your grave. All nearby soldiers surround him and use Shield Stroke to cancel the spell!”

The soldiers flocked like vultures towards Maseutyu after hearing Ark’s command. Maseutyu just laughed and shouted.

“.....Run out of control, demons! Shout, devil subordinates! Devil Explosion!”

A black sphere floated about Maseutyu’s head. Dozens of chains shot from the black sphere and tied up the members of the attack squad. The sphere exploded at the same time and the explosion ran down the chain, dealing rapid damage to the soldiers. All attack squad members within 20 metres of Maseutyu received a critical hit and became paralyzed. As the other squad members ran up, Maseutyu just giggled and said.

“Kukukuku, Teleport!”

“Oh my god, what is this?”

Ark's mouth dropped open as he saw Maseutyu's battle style. While Teleport was a nuisance spell, it couldn't actually be used for combat. The reason was that Teleport required 1 minute to chant the spell. Even if he used high speed incantation, it still required 30~40 to finish the chant. Furthermore, Teleport wasn't an attack magic. Even if he chanted the spell within 30~40 seconds, it would only teleport him a few hundred metres away. So Teleport was only a magic that could be prepared before the battle began. Yet Maseutyu had solved these issues because of his two heads. One head used Teleport while the other one used Devil Explosion. While Devil Explosion blocked the attack squad members, the other head finished chanting the Teleport spell. That gap was only 10 seconds. Devil Explosion took care of all the obstacles while the other soldiers wouldn't be able to reach in time. Thanks to the two heads chanting Teleport and Devil Explosion, it was like twice the amount of magic.

"Damn, I can't attack even if Burning Soul knows the location of the teleportation!"

Devil Explosion had an attack range of approximately 20 metres. The only way to stop Devil Explosion was using magic and arrows. However, Maseutyu always teleported among warriors so he couldn't shoot the arrows and magic. Devil Explosion blocked close ranged attacks while Teleport blocked long ranged attacks.

"Hahaha, you stupid fellows! Devil Explosion!"

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Maseutyu appeared among the soldiers like a fish in water and used Devil Explosion. Devil Explosion wasn't powerful enough to kill the soldiers in one blow. However, the warriors surrounding Maseutyu were paralyzed so they couldn't use Shield Stroke. As soon as Maseutyu used Teleport to escape, the attack squad members would instantly receive recovery magic. That's why nobody had been killed despite receiving several attacks.....

'That guy's purpose isn't to kill the soldiers. He wants to waste time.'

That's right. There was no reason for Maseutyu to risk danger by fighting the attack squad. There was only 2 hours and 40 minutes left until the Dark Lord's resurrection. As long as he tied them up for 2 hours and 40 minutes then the world would be engulfed in darkness. If this situation kept on continuing then it was highly likely that would happen.

‘But there is no way to stop him if he keeps teleporting between the members.’

Ark bit his lip and stared at Maseutyu. It was a simple but effective tactic.

‘Wait? He is appearing where the soldiers are gathered. Then.....’

An idea popped into Ark’s head. He turned around and shouted towards Roco who was singing the Song of Recovery.

“Roco, use that!”

“What?”

“The skill you used to trick Jewel in Lancel village!”

“Ah!”

Roco’s eyes sparkled at Ark’s words. Then she began to strum away at her harp with tremendous speed. Suddenly the 800 people multiplied and the area was filled with thousands of people. That’s right. It was the Illusion Sonata that made Jewel and the bandit group wander around trying to find Lancel. It was the secret technique that she learned from the ghost Melody.

“Hahaha, Devil Explosion!”

At that moment, Maseutyu appeared in an area crowded with soldiers and used Devil Explosion. The black sphere floated over his head and chains appeared all over the place. However, the chains just went through their body into the ground. They were the illusionary soldiers.

“What, what the?”

“Huhuhu, why are you so surprised? It is tightly stuck.”

Ark smiled as he raised a finger. The archers simultaneously fired their arrows.

“Huck! T-tele..... Waaahhhh!”

Maseutyu rushed to use Teleport but the arrows were faster. Maseutyu looked like a hedgehog as he was pierced by more than 100 arrows. And.....

“There’s another round. You stupid spider. Launch!”

Syu syu syu syu, syu syu syu syu!

Maseutyu had appeared in a place where the soldiers were created using Illusion Sonata. Burning Soul had predicted the location using Stalking so the archers had been prepared in advance to shoot hundreds of arrows. Maseutyu received the shower of arrows and 70% of his health quickly flew away. It was a natural result since Maseutyu wasn’t an elite boss and he was also a magic that was weak to weapons.

“Kuuuuoh, these guys.....! They dare to use such tricks.....”

Maseutyu gnashed his teeth as he was hit by another shower of arrows. But Ark just smiled and retorted.

“A spider like you dared to call such tactics cheating?”

“You..... Don’t think it will end like this. Kuwaaaaaaaah! Come out!”

Maseutyu’s body shook as he shouted. Maseutyu who had transformed into a spider suddenly shot thousands of fist sized spiders into the sky. They showed sharp teeth and headed towards the attack squad members. Maseutyu’s intention was clear. The spiders would pass through the illusionary members and attack the actual soldiers. He would then teleport to the place where there were a lot of spiders.

“What? Damn, he still had a surprise like this.”

Ark murmured as he stared at Maseutyu. Then Shambala and Bread shouted in desperate voices.

“Now’s not the time to stare stupidly!”

“Yes, the illusions will be destroyed by the spiders.”

But Ark just laughed and took a deep breath. And he roared into the sky.

“It’s been a while. Spirit of the Cat!”

Nyaaaaa!

At that moment, the form of a black cat appeared above Ark’s head. Its eyes shone gold and it let out a large cry, making the spiders stiffen and fall to the ground. Spirit of the Cat was a skill Ark learnt in the beginning that made all small monsters in the vicinity paralyzed.

“I-it’s a scam!”

“You’re saying this? Salvo!”

Syu syu syu syu, syu syu syu syu!

A huge amount of arrows headed towards Maseutyu.

“Ugh, Teleport!”

Maseutyu fired the prepared Teleport. He appeared among the attack squad members again but Maseutyu didn't use Devil Explosion. Thick cobwebs shot out from his hip and shot towards the maze. He realized that he was at a disadvantage and was trying to run away into the maze.

"Not a chance! Matanyi Shooter no. 1, Devil Penetrating Arrow!"

Timosi kicked the ground, jumped up and fired some arrows. The arrows flew like a flash of light and cut through Maseutyu's cobwebs. The body that was surrounded by the cobweb fell to the ground.

"Now. Archers and magicians, attack!"

Hundreds of arrows and magic exploded from the attack squad members.

"Kuooh..... H-how annoying. But..... You guys will never get away from here. This is where you guys..... You grave. Kukukuku. Hahaha, kuaaack!"

As expected, the boss muttered some unlucky final words before screaming and collapsing from the wave of arrows and magic.

-Your level has risen.

"Boring bastard!"

Ark muttered as the message surfaced in front of him. This was the archbishop of the dark church yet Ark only gained 1 level from defeating him? Furthermore, his experience had already been at 80% so Ark actually only got 20% experience. Even the attack squad members didn't level up that much. Despite not being an elite boss, he should've gained more than 1 level.

"Damn, even the loot he dropped isn't that great."

Ark's face became even more offended as he examined the items.

-Holy Bible of the Dark Church

-Church of Darkness' Staff (Rare)

Weapon type: Staff

Attack: 30~38 Durability: 55/90

Weight: 50 User Restriction: Level 350 or more chaotic black magician.

The staff used by Maseutyu, the archbishop of the dark church. The original staff of the dark church had a tremendous amount of dark power concentrated on it. The dark power allowed an archbishop of the dark church to summon strong demons. But it became lost when the dark church was destroyed by the soldiers on the continent. This staff is just an imitation of the lost staff.

The Holy Bible of the Dark Church was just an ordinary book that could be seen anywhere. And the Church of Darkness' Staff was just a rare staff that only level 250~300 magicians users would use. However, the item restriction on this staff was limited to level 350 chaotic black magicians.

'Well, the loot isn't that important.....'

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

All of a sudden the floor started vibrating and a warning message appeared.

-The magic maintaining the 3D maze has disappeared and the Idea Maze is melting.

“It is collapsing?”

“Ark, over there!”

He heard JusticeMan’s voice on the outskirts of the square. He turned his head and saw the outskirts of the 3D maze were slowly collapsing. However Ark didn’t panic. There was no need to panic. The attack squad had already arrived at the exit. This must be the meaning of Maseutyu’s final words. There was 59 minutes until it collapsed. It was plenty of time to open the exit and leave. There was no need to worry about escaping from Idea Maze.

‘The final battle will start the moment that door opens.’

That’s right. The Dark Lord hadn’t been resurrected yet but the Red Man and demons would be gathered on the other side. On the other hand, there were 800 attack squad members still remaining. When considering the enemy, 800 wasn’t a lot of people. But he couldn’t expect any reinforcements because of the shield so he had to make do with these troops.

‘Then we should at least be in our best condition!’

“The exit is already secured so there is no need to hurry. If we leave the Idea Maze then it is likely that the battle will start straight away. This might be the last opportunity for a rest so we should recover our health and mana to 100%.”

The soldiers nodded and sat down to recover. In order to prepare for the final battle, the magicians and priests used various buffs while others rearranged their bags.

“I guess I should prepare to.”

Ark muttered as he watched the other members. Ark didn’t know how many enemies would be waiting after they exited the maze. But there was one thing he could be sure of.

'The Red Man!'

That's right. The source behind this event was the Red Man! He already knew how strong the Red Man was after fighting him in Seutandal. Of course, he had only been level 300 at the time. After fighting in the Demonic War, he had reached level 497 and even changed to a 2nd profession. His battle sense had also improved. Even so, Ark wasn't sure that he would be able to overpower the Red Man. At that time the Red Man had showed overwhelming power.

'But I had no information at that time and also wasn't prepared for the combat. It won't be so easy this time.'

In fact, Ark had been worried about it from the moment he left for Kwarian. And he came up with a countermeasure.

'I didn't want to use this method again if possible..... But it is the best method.'

Ark sighed before looking at Curio.

"Curio, come with me."

"What? Why?"

"Stop talking nonsense and just follow!"

Curio immediately shrunk back with a scared expression. However, Ark just grabbed Curio's wing and pulled him to a corner.

"Eh? Eh? Eh? Why?"

Curio looked like a freshman being dragged to the restroom by a senior but.....

“Kikikiki, Master should’ve said it sooner. I would welcome it at any time.”

“Damn, have some moderation. Huck huck huck.....”

The frightened Curio soon became overweight after a few minutes. Ark was actually the one returning with a pale face.

“Ark-nim!”

“Ark oppa!”

Lariette and Roco both looked aghast as they saw the returning Ark. They both flinched and looked at each other before averting their gaze. Ark refused to notice the atmosphere and quickly spoke.

“It’s not a big deal. Are all your preparations finished?”

“We’re in the best condition!”

“Okay, then let’s go. Brace yourselves.”

“Yes. Let’s depart!”

“Ohhhhhh!”

The attack squad members shouted excitedly. That sword that was repaired shone with a bright light while the armour and shield regained their forms. The shining equipment made them look like nobles! A light of hope appeared in the eyes of the 800 soldiers. Now was the final step to stop the Dark Lord’s resurrection and rescue New World.....

“Eh?”

Confusion emerged from Ark’s mouth as he approached the red iron door. Red sparks appeared all over the door the moment a hand reached out to touch it. He was hit by some pain and a warning message appeared in front of him.

-You have received damage from an unknown spirit.

500 damage!

The attack squad members muttered noisily in front of the closed door.

“What the? What’s going on?”

“Is there a problem?”

“Hey, this isn’t a joke. There’s only 30 minutes left until this space completely disappears. Now there is a problem?”

JusticeMan and the heroes’ descendants were also disturbed.

“Ark, what is going on?”

“This..... It won’t open.”

“It won’t open? What does that mean? We killed Maseutyu.”

“There must be some other problem.... My hand can’t even touch it.”

Ark muttered with an uneasy voice. That's right. The person who trapped them in this maze was Maseutyu! Ark was convinced that the Idea Maze was resolved because they killed Maseutyu. And he thought it was possible to exit the exit at any time. Therefore it was possible to have some leeway to rest and recover.

But when he tried to leave, his hands couldn't even touch the door.

"Is a key or something necessary?"

"No.....there is nowhere to insert a key."

Ark replied while Maseutyu's last words popped into his head.

'You'll never be able to escape the Idea Maze even if I die!'

He thought it was just the nonsense of a person dying. However, he couldn't think of it as nonsense anymore now that he couldn't open the door.

'Does that mean I'll never be able to open it?'

His heart dropped at the thought. Ark shook his head and denied the idea.

'That is ridiculous. This is definitely the only exit in the Idea Maze. There is no other reason for Maseutyu to be watching it. And there has to be a way to open the exit. If there is a way to enter then there is also a way to exit. That is the rule of New World. Even the Red Man can't ignore New World's rules!'

He had already confirmed that with Rwigenberg's shield. Ark thought the shield was able to withstand the concentrated force of the expedition because the Red Man was a hacking program that ignored the rules of New World. But the shield was just due to the recovery rate and the ancient sacrifice magic. The Red Man was more powerful than others because he knew all the secrets of New World and took advantage of it.

‘Yes, this is the same as the shield. Just like an unbeatable shield doesn’t exist in New World, there is no door that absolutely won’t open. A way to open the door has to exist. This is why Maseutyu risked his life to buy some time. The problem is finding it.....’

“Get out of the way!”

Ark was using his brain at full capacity when there was a sudden yell. Bread had rushed towards the door from behind him and swung his greatsword.

“I will crack it open! Gate Destruction!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The greatsword hit the iron door. Players who used a greatsword can perform Gate Destruction. When attacking gates, this skill gave an additional 200~500% damage. But an unimaginable reaction occurred. The greatsword was engulfed in a red aura and bounced back like a rubber ball. At the same time, the red aura covering the door formed sharp points and shot towards the attack squad.

Syu syu syu syuk, syu syu syu syuk!

“W-what is this?”

“It is a trap! Defense formation!”

The soldiers gathered near the door screamed and raised their shields. However, the red sharp points penetrated their bodies before they could completely switch to a defense stance. The warriors lost 20~30% health despite wearing heavy armour. Fortunately they had recovered their health to 100% so none of the warriors died from the attack.

“T-t-this is not.....”

“You idiot, think a little before you move! Are you just a dog? Do you only understand after being bitten?”

Redian rolled along the ground and snapped angrily at Bread after getting up. Bread scratched his head and said.

“Then what should we do? There’s no time and the door won’t open.....”

“But you shouldn’t just blindly bash at it.”

“Wait!”

The Ark raised his hand and interrupted Redian scolding Bread.

“Maybe Bread had the right idea.”

“What do you mean?”

“.....Look at this.”

Ark pointed to the bottom of the iron door. In fact, Ark had carefully looked over the door. But he couldn’t find anything. After the red aura reacted to Bread’s attack, several parts of the redness became thinner and he could see the iron door. Ark was pointing towards some strange characters carved on the door. It was an iron plate hidden by the red aura!

‘.....This is it!’

Ark intuitively sensed that this was associated with the method to open the iron door. JusticeMan and the other descendants nodded at Ark’s explanation.

“Certainly.....”

“Huhuhu, you see? Did you see? My action was a good thing.”

Bread puffed out his chest and said. The problem was that the iron plate was covered in the red aura.

‘But the strength of the redness changed after Bread’s attack just now. This means the amount of red aura covering the door is limited. In other words, if we make the attacks stronger than the red spirit will disappear, even if it is only for a little bit!’

“Leave it to me! Gate Destruction!”

Bread swung his greatsword at the door without any hesitation. As expected, the red aura exploded outwards from the impact. At the same time, the rest of the red aura became thin and a part of the iron plate appeared. However, there still remained some red aura in front of the plate. And the red aura went flying towards Bread. At that moment, Lariette and Redian simultaneously yelled.

“Pure Shield!”

“Elemental Shield!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa, kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The red fragments impacted with the two shields and caused a crack. Then Bread moved through the shield and brought down his greatsword.

“Now, let’s do it again. Gate Destruction!”

When it impacted with the door, dozens of red fragments extended again. It was a continuous attack of red sharp fragments! Meanwhile the red aura over the iron plate completely disappeared. However, it would only last for a few seconds.

“Now! Jump!”

Ark used Jump and headed towards the iron door. Ark lost 40% health the moment he entered the range of the door's attack. But he didn't pay attention to the damage. Ark used Dark Dance the moment he landed on the floor and rushed towards the door. His hand reached out while the red aura tried to cover up the iron plate again.

'It's a success!'

His palm touched the cold surface of the iron plate! At information window surface in front of Ark at the same time!

-Great Creator, Destiny's mother.....

She carved parts of her own existence to create lives. The world was created thanks to her sacrifice but it was also the birth of the dark god. She is the only key to the exit of this dark world.

-The 'True Statement' was discovered.

You have obtained information about an ancient relic. The 'True Statement' you found is the only way to escape the Idea Maze. However, the 'True Statement' is firmly locked by strong cursed magic. It is a powerful enchantment caused by the dark god of this world. But even if the dark god denies all the presences in New World, Destiny's Mother is enough to breathe life into them.

The name of Destiny's Mother is the only way to open the true door. You have acquired information about the 'True Statement.'

Pajijjik!

The iron plate was covered with the red aura again and Ark flew back. JusticeMan and the heroes' descendants instantly approached and asked.

"Ark, did you find something?"

"Yes. I roughly know what to do."

Ark laughed while sitting in the dirt. In fact, the words on the iron plate didn't tell him how to open the door. But the information window which immediately appeared afterwards caught his eye. It said that the name of the Creator, Destiny's Mother was required to open the iron door. Didn't that mean the Creator's name was needed to open the door?

'Then the person who will know the answer.....'

"Larlette-nim, do you know the name of the Creator who is also called Destiny's Mother?"

Yes, Larlette!

Once again, Larlette's profession was an affiliation of a priest. After changing to an Innocence Knight, and now a Saint Knight, she had read relevant books on theology to raise her faith and intelligence stat. After Seutandal rose, Larlette had read an absurd number of theology books in the underground library of the Cathedral. It was why she didn't take part in a lot of action after Seutandal rose. If she read that many books then of course she would know the Creator's name.

"Huh? The name of the Creator?"

However Larlette's reaction was unexpected.

"The theology books that I've read have many references to the Creator and Destiny's Mother. But there are no books that go into detail about her. And the original name is written in the books. When praising the Creator's achievements, the only reference is 'the glory of the Great Creator'."

‘What does that mean?’

Ark became confused by Lariette’s words. All the holy bibles of this world were contained in the Cathedral at Selebrid. Even Lariette who read all the bibles didn’t know the name of the Creator?

‘If the name isn’t listed in the bibles.....wait?’

The book that Ark had just picked up popped into his mind. The Holy Bible of the Dark Church!

‘Yes, that makes sense. The Creator’s name wasn’t listed in any of the bibles of the light. Then maybe the key lay in the book of the dark church..... The holy bibles in the Cathedral praised her achievements and erased her name so it might be recorded in the bible of the dark church!’

Ark reached this conclusion. Usually a problem in New World always had an answer nearby. Then the key to exit the Idea Maze must be somewhere in this dungeon. So Ark took out the Bible of the Dark Church and read it.

‘.....Nothing!’

Ark’s answer was half correct and half wrong. As expected, the Creator was referenced a few times in the dark bible. However, the dark bible also didn’t provide her name.

“Cade, Elliana, Casellian.....!”

The upset Ark tried to shout a few names but the iron door didn’t even tremble.

“Ark, there’s only 20 minutes left!”

JusticeMan’s voice was heard from behind Ark. Ark flinched and saw that the 3D maze was rapidly melting. Cracks were spreading while some fragments of the maze disappeared without a trace. After a while, the square where the attack squad members used to be gathered broke and crumbled into pieces.

‘We came all the way here in vain.....’

Ark let out a devastated moan. Suddenly he discovered something in the swirling space. Floating in the dark space were some memory crystals! To be exact, he hadn’t discovered it now. He saw it when they first entered this space but he hadn’t paid it any attention. After being trapped in the maze, they had suddenly been attacked by the Evil Thoughts so he had no time to be interested in the memory crystals. But in this situation, he felt refreshed as he saw them. And he recalled the information window that appeared the first time he entered the maze.

-If you want to escape from the Idea Maze then you should find the hidden truth.

‘A secret truth is hidden in the darkness!’

The memory crystals floating in the Idea Maze contained the dark memories. And the iron door said that the Creator was an existence that the darkness couldn’t deny. Then wouldn’t the name of the mother of the world be recorded in the memories?

‘If there is a problem in New World then a clue is always hidden nearby.’

This was true. However, the hint wasn’t the bible Maseutyu dropped but the dungeon itself. Ark thought about throwing away the Bible of the Dark Church and shouted.

“Burning Soul, transform into Pendragon!”

At the same time, flames engulfed Burning Soul and he turned into a dragon. JusticeMan asked with confusion as Ark got on Burning Soul.

“What the? What is it?”

“There’s no time to explain!”

Ark just flew away on the back of Burning Soul. Finding the memory crystals wasn't a problem if he flew on Burning Soul. He delayed after Maseutyu died and 40 minutes passed before he discovered a password was necessary. Now there was only 20 minutes left. There was no guarantee that he could find the answers from the memory crystal.

"But I can try. Burning Soul, fly at maximum speed!"

Kurarara, kurarara!

Burning Soul shot flames and flew through the space. After a few minutes, he found the first memory crystal floating in the 3D maze. Ark narrowed the distance and grabbed the memory crystal.

-Kuwaaaaah!

The memory crystal swayed and gave a weird shriek. A vast number of Evil Thoughts with wings appeared in the maze. At the same time an information window appeared in front of Ark.

-The existences created by the dark god won't allow intruders to learn the dark secrets.

'Damn, what does that mean?'

Ark frowned. If he knew that Evil Thoughts would appear when he accessed the memory crystal then he would've been more careful. Well, it was too late to regret that face. The problem was that the Evil Thoughts were elite monsters. Ark was level 497 but he couldn't deal with them alone. No, he came here along so he had no chance of dealing with the Evil Thoughts.

"Burning Soul, circle to the right side!"

Burning Soul rapidly turned his body and moved to the right flank of the Evil Thoughts. The Evil Thoughts gathered together and rushed towards Burning Soul. Ark waited for the moment the Evil Thoughts extended their claws and shouted.

"Riposte!"

Ku ku ku kung!

The Evil Thoughts at the front were pushed back and pushed the ones behind them as well. Once a flying demon lost their centre of balance, it took time for them to recover. While the demons were busy recovering, Ark grabbed the memory crystal. Then some haze images appeared in front of Ark.

‘.....Eh? What’s this?’

Ark just became even more baffled. This was the area created by the dark god. Naturally the memories in the crystal would be about the dark god. Therefore Ark had expected a memory about hell or something similar. The video that surface was different from expected. It wasn’t about hell or even New World.

‘This is.....reality?’

That’s right. The video from the memory crystal was surprisingly of the real world. Ark immediately realized it was reality because of the background in the video. With white walls, a white bed and countless beeping machines, it was the familiar sight of a patient in hospital.

‘.....Why is a video of reality appearing from the memory crystal?’

A woman sitting on the bed appeared in front of the confused Ark. The background was that of the ICU and the woman was clearly sick. She wore a hat to cover the shaved hair from surgery and her lips were a pale blue. Even Ark with no medical knowledge knew that death was imminent. However, she sat down and continued typing something in the laptop despite sweating heavily. She had a fierce determination in the face of death. Then Ark heard an eerie voice filled with anger in his head.

-Dammit, dammit!

The video started shaking roughly. Another message window appeared in front of Ark.

-You have gained information hidden in the ‘divine dark memory’ using knowledge of ancient relics.

“What the, this is? What is this? This is a divine dark memory?”

Ark’s thoughts wandered down an even more complicated labyrinth after watching the memory crystal. Why on earth was a video about the real world shown in the memory crystal? What the hell was going on?

-Kuwaaaah!

Then the Evil Thoughts that had recovered flew towards him.

“Damn, I don’t know what this is. Burning Soul, magic sword.”

Ark suddenly made Burning Soul turn. Burning Soul spat out a magic sword and Ark shouted.

“Take this! Blade Tempest!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

It seemed like magic exploded from Burning Soul’s mouth. The Evil Thoughts were circled by thousands of blade fragments and pushed back several metres.

“Burning Soul, move to the next memory crystal!”

Meanwhile Ark flew towards another memory crystal on Burning Soul. He might be confused by the first memory crystal but he still hoped to find the password from it. If the memory crystal wasn’t important, why was the Evil Thoughts protecting it? There was 16 minutes left so he couldn’t afford to waste time. If he couldn’t find the correct answer from the memory crystals then only death remained!

“Dark strike! Riposte! Blood Tempest!”

Ark gradually escaped the Evil Thoughts and checked the memory crystal. But the result was the same after checking 3~4 memory crystals. A woman sitting in the ICU smiling at a video of a flower field, listening to test results from a doctor and the atmosphere when she learnt the disease was fatal. The last video showed someone shedding tears in front of a new grave. Those were the only images that appeared when he grasped the crystals. And there was nothing related to the Creator in the videos.

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

By the time Ark stood in front of the last memory crystal, 90% of the maze had collapsed. There was only 6~8 minutes remaining. If he didn't do anything then the attack squad would be buried with the dark space.

“Dammit, what can I do? What should I say?”

-Kuwaaaaaaaah!

Ark who was cornered turned his head at the scream. Dozens of Evil Thoughts had almost caught up to him.

“Huck, when did these guys.....Burning Soul.....!”

Ark shouted with surprise as an Evil Thought ran into Burning Soul's side. Burning Soul wobbled against the memory crystal after being pushed. The memory crystal grazed against Ark's hand and a video played. Ark felt his heart jump.

“What, what the? The video showed up in this situation when I'm confronting the monsters.”

Ark was complaining petulantly when he suddenly closed his mouth. An unexpected scene caught his eye. This video also showed the sick woman. Normally she was always typing on a laptop but this time she was watching TV. The problem was the commercial that appeared on TV. It was the advertisement

for New World that was broadcasted before the game was published! After the commercial finished, the woman turned her head and grinned. And she spoke through cracked lips.

-It's now finished. I'm satisfied with this.

Once again the angry voice spoke in Ark's head.

-That's it? What does that mean?

You dedicated every day of your remaining life to creating this game. And what happened to you? What kind of game is it that you dedicated your life to it, making you suffer and leaving you on the verge of death? Why? For who?

For the irresponsible people going to play the game? Or the publishers receiving this game? No, it can't be! No matter what you say I can't forgive it.

Those damn users and publishers taking advantage of the game that sucked your life.....I'll smash them! I will break that game with my own hands!

'Wait? Perhaps this is.....?'

Ark had a sudden thought. Ark had misunderstood until now. The video only showed the video so he thought she had taken the video. However, the video in the memory crystal wasn't that simple. It was someone's memory! The person the memory belonged to was watching her. The voice that rang through his head was the owner of the memory. The person she was looking at wasn't Ark.

'This isn't a video but someone's memory..... This means that it is impossible for the person to be a general user. Then I can only think that the memory belongs to someone from the publishing company. And the fact that the memory is left in the dark world..... It is created by the dark god.....'

".....Park Woo-seong!"

All the questions that were running through his mind after entering the Idea Maze were answered.

“.....Park Woo-seong!”

“Oh my god, is it like that”

Ark was wrong to think that the Red Man and Park Woo-seong was the same person. The Red Man was an auto program created by Park Woo-seong. Park Woo-seong was the creator so his existence surpassed the publishers. Then he was definitely the creator of the Dark Lord and the demons. That's right. The Idea Maze reflected Park Woo-seong's spiritual world! Then why was Park Woo-seong trying to destroy New World? Ark had secured the flash drive from Park Woo-seong's villa but he still couldn't understand the reason. The flash drive contained fragments of the notes written by Park Woo-seong.

-I can't forgive New World who drove her to her death!

That was a note Ark found imbedded in the flash drive. That's right. This was the reason Park Woo-seong wanted to destroy New World. But Ark didn't know who had died.

He finally started to understand after connected all the memories scattered in the maze.

'Let's think clearly and organize it.'

Ark was able to guess the relationship between Park Woo-seong and the woman after watching the memory crystal. She was one of the creators of New World and the woman Park Woo-seong loved. She caught an incurable disease but didn't stop working until New World was completed.

'Park Woo-seong wanted her to stop the work and concentrate on medical treatment. But she still continued to push herself and worked on her sickbed. Park Woo-seong couldn't understand the reason why. And after a while he realized why.'

A number of bad posts appeared on the website about New World that she managed! New World was the face of Global Exos so it received a lot of information from the planning and creation stage. In order to implement a perfect virtual reality, they delayed the release several times. The users' interest in the

game was big so there was a flood of complaints every time it became behind schedule. Park Woo-seong just shut himself in his laboratory so he wasn't bothered by the complaints. Then he found the file of curses stored on her laptop.

-It was this!

Park Woo-seong firmly believed it. This was the reason she kept on working despite suffering from her illness! No, she probably caught the disease because of stress from the curses! The commercialization of New World happened at the same moment she died so Park Woo-seong was filled with rage. She got sick because of the millions of users in New World.

-I will challenge all the users of New World!

This was the notice Park Woo-seong sent after the funeral and he disappeared. Of course, Park Woo-seong's vengeful determination might just seem like stubbornness. However, Ark could understand Park Woo-seong's fury. Ark also loved his mother who suffered from illness. And if..... He would hate to think about what would happen if..... He didn't know what he would do if his mother died. He would probably want revenge on anyone connected to his mother's death. Ark also wouldn't have been able to endure it. Park Woo-seong's target was New World. But there was still one point that didn't make sense to Ark. If Park Woo-seong wanted to destroy New World then there must be an easier way. Park Woo-seong was the main person in charge of creating New World. Couldn't he wreak havoc on the main system with one press of a button? So why was he proceeding with such a complicated way?

'Is there a reason he can't do that? Maybe he lost his access privileges after disappearing..... Or maybe his revenge could only be satisfied by winning in a confrontation with the users of New World? But that wasn't the important thing now!

He could examine this information later. The important thing was finding the password to open the 'Truth Statement.'

"There is one truth that can't be denied even if the dark space. The Creator carved out her life to make New World..... All of this leads to one password!"

The thoughts flashed through his head after watching the information.

“Burning Soul, magic sword, Blade Tempest!”

A magic sword shot from Burning Soul’s mouth and exploded. Then Ark grabbed the horns and shouted.

“There’s only 5 minutes left so there is no time to delay. Burning Soul!”

Kurarara, kurarara!

Burning Soul flew across the dark space. But even Burning Soul couldn’t lose the Evil Thoughts using ‘quick.’

-Kuwaaaah!

A number of Evil Thoughts escape from the blade storm and chased him. A few of them caught up to Burning Soul’s tail in an instant.

“Damn, Moon light illusion! Lure all of them!”

Three or four clones of Ark appeared and the monsters gathered around them. They quickly died but by that time Burning Soul had already extended the distance to dozens of metres. But Burning Soul was surrounded after being chased for 1 minute. The number of Evil Thoughts had increased by 20 each time he touched a memory crystal! If they attacked simultaneously then it would be difficult for Burning Soul to avoid them.

“Ark!”

“He’s being chased by Evil Thoughts!”

“Attack! Support Ark with magic and arrows!”

He heard the cries of the attack squad at that moment. That's right. Burning Soul had already arrived at the area where the attack squad was waiting. A shower of magic and arrows interrupted the Evil Thoughts. Ark's eyes flashed and he shouted.

"Burning soul, charge! Dark strike!"

Ark swung his sword and pierced through the siege. Thanks to the magic and arrows, there was a large gap where Ark could pass through. But Ark wasn't looking at the Evil Thoughts anymore. There was only 2 minutes remaining so the area where the attack squad was gathered was starting to collapse. If he was even a little bit late then the attack squad would be buried in this space. Ark rushed towards the iron door and shouted.

"Yuna!"

That's right. Yuna. It was the name of Park Woo-seong's lover that appeared dozens of times in his notes. When Ark cried out the name Yuna.....

The firmly closed iron door trembled and emitted a brilliant, glowing light. The Evil Thoughts heading towards Ark hardened like stone from the glow. And their black bodies gradually turned to ashes and scattered. Ark flew to the door as it opened and shouted.

"Everybody escape to the exit!"

"Let's go!"

The attack squad hurriedly flocked to the exit. The square collapsed the moment the last member's body jumped through the exit.