

Ark Vol 5 C 2

Chapter 2

ACT 2 Take control of the raccoons

“Right? Right? Foreigner?”

Ark gave an awkward smile and nodded. The raccoon boy excitedly beat the ground with his tail.

“I see! Wow I’ve never seen a foreigner before.”

Ark had also never seen a talking raccoon.

“But you.....?”

“I’m from a raccoon warrior clan, Popo”

Popo proudly replied. Well he looked more like a big, warm friendly mascot than a warrior, but Ark nodded anyway.

Raccoon clan.....Ark realised that they were the residents of the Underground World.

Needless to say, he had been very tense and imagined them as a violent group of Beasts. However, what he ultimately found was a chubby raccoon. He felt vaguely disappointed, even though one of his objectives was to find the Beast residents.

“I am Ark.”

“Eung, you’re called Ark.”

Popo nodded with an excited look.

“In fact, I really like the foreigners.”

“What? You’ve seen foreigners other than me?”

“No, never. But I speak to a lot of adults. The foreigners are not content to live in one place and travel around the continent fighting against a large number of monsters. It is really great! It sounds like a manly life! One day I want to live just like that. Unlike the other adults in this place, I’m not going to hide down here my entire life.”

Popo sounded like a countryman who wanted to visit Seoul.

“Arc-hyung too? Did you enter the Underground world to track down that tree monster?”

“.....That could be a possibility.”

“I knew it.”

Ark roughly nodded. Of course, Ark’s purpose was not only to fight monsters. The most important thing was to find the Three Marvels as well as a way outside. However, even if he told such an important thing to Popo, the little raccoon was unlikely to be much help.

'I must find the village of raccoons in order to collect information.'

So Ark thought that he would ask Popo to guide him to the village.

Popo struggled for a short time before nodding his head.

"Ok, I'll show you. But if other people catch you it could be dangerous."

"What? Why?"

"That.....I'll gradually tell you. Once you wear this."

Popo passed him clothes made of woven twigs.

It was a cloak with a hood and other similar forms of clothing.

When Ark wore the woven clothes, Popo immediately shoved grass into his lower back. With his face hidden by a hood and a plump stomach, at first glance he could be mistaken for a raccoon.

The disguised Ark followed Popo out of the cave. After 10 minutes had passed, Popo pointed in front of him and said.

“Here’s our town”

It was a large underground space.

Enormous torches were placed in many areas around the cavern with NPCs crowded around it.

They were all beasts, with their appearance resembling a raccoon, therefore a raccoon clan.

The village of raccoons was rustic, unlike the mermaids who preferred flashy splendour.

Scattered around the rock walls were raccoon houses nestled in caves. Most of the caves were of considerable size however there were no colourful decorations.

On the other hand, the market was large enough to account for more than half of the village. There was a large range of workshops and shops line up on both sides of the market.

Ark remembered what he heard from the Meow Elder Hassan.

‘Which reminds me, didn’t the beasts of the Underground World have good craftsmanship? Where would he see the rest of it?’

Ark curiously glanced at items displayed in front of workshops.

Just like in Nodelesse, the items crafted by the raccoon clan were made of materials he had never seen before. The high performance design and craftsmanship was worthy of its name.

[Rainbow Rings (Magic)Item type: RingUser restriction: Level 70The ring with 7 of the most beautiful gems in the world inlaid.It's even more special with the powers of the seven gems are amplified.{Rock, Light, Flower, Water, Earth, Wind, Mind. Resistance to these 7 properties +10}Price: 2,400L]

[Sarita's Boomerang (Magic)Weapon type: Throwing weaponDurability: 50/50Attack: 15~25Weight: 10User restriction: Level 100A giant bird that only lives in the underground world. The Sarita Boomerang was made from its bones. It is a throwing weapon that will return to the owner's hand after dealing a blow against the enemy.A precise processing technique was used to hollow Sarita's bones. When it flies through the wind, a sharp high frequency occurs. If you have low resistance, then there is a high probability that the high frequency would cause Fear.

{If the level is lower than the users, there is 20% probability of causing Fear}

Price: 3,500L]

'As expected, the prices are horrible.'

If you look at the experience of selling items in the hidden village, their performance was amazing. Just like the mermaid tribes, the village was also true to the raccoon family.

All of the properties of resistance in the ornaments were hard to even find in items outside. The same goes for throwing weapons. It was mainly warriors who used throwing weapons, but the supplies would eventually run out. However, Sarita's Boomerang was a throwing weapon that you could infinitely use.

There were items that a magician or warrior would freak out about if they saw.

However, the price was far above the performance of the item. Just like the mermaid tribes, the raccoon clan who was cut off from the outside had their own form of currency. Right, LFor the first time, Ark spoke about the ores that he saw when he entered the Underground World.

"The raccoon clan would occasionally use ore that fell from the sky to obtain more money. The ore debris is a material that is used in many craftsmanship, so it is a necessity for the raccoon clan."

It was Popo's explanation.

'3,500L.....Because it was between 20 ~40 silver for one ore. In terms of gold it was worth 700 to 1,400 gold!'

When converted to gold, it was a colossal price.

Even if Ark used all the money in his bag, it would only be possible to buy one of the expensive items. The shops selling food and ingredients were also the same thing, with high prices.

‘Damn, it is just like a pie in the sky.’

At that time, an idea came to Ark’s head.

‘That’s right. The mermaid tribe and raccoon clan were all Beast races that were cut off from the outside world. Then just like the mermaids, the raccoons won’t understand outside items either!’

Couldn’t he sell his japtan to the raccoons at an expensive price just like he did with the mermaids? To confirm his idea, Ark quickly pulled out some items from his bag and showed them to Popo. However, Popo’s reaction was not impressed.

“The efficiency of that item is zero. The raccoons will not take things like this. I have sharp eyes because we are the race of craftsmen after all. And we can go outside to obtain these things.”

A disappointing answer was returned.

Then Ark noticed something weird in Popo’s answer.

“Go outside? So there is a method to go outside from here?”

“Of course. The raccoon family has continued to live by trading with humans. However, when we go outside we obviously have to hide our identities before engaging in trade. So gold is also used, but the L currency is the only one that satisfies the raccoon clan so get rid of any idea of using gold. Or your true identity would be discovered.’

“No, no. It’s not thatI just want to ask if trade with the outside world is not hostile then why all the trouble. Why am I not allowed to be discovered as a foreigner?”

“That.....in the past, a problem occurred in Subarutalp.”

Popo hesitated for a while before he sighed and replied.

The raccoon clan said that Subarutalp was in the depths of the Underground World. The original Norse mythology states that the black elves live in the underground world.

Subarutalp was as big as the outside world. The raccoon world in Norse mythology contained the holy water, with Yggdrasil in the centre dividing the the world into 10 villages, with each living peacefully.

“But then ‘he’ came and Yggdrasil changed.”

“He?”

Popo ground his teeth together and nodded.

“Yes, a human with red hair came here ten days ago.”

“A redheaded man!”

At the moment, Ark felt as though cold water had been poured on him.

The man with red hair. Using a group of thieves, he had stolen the Heartsoul Bead from Giran before heading to Cairo. Ark never imagined that he would head to the Underground World one step ahead. He couldn't understand how he came to the Underground World and ran into a quest related NPC.

Ark had been the first person to discover the underground labyrinth and its contents. If the opponent was a NPC, then coming to the Underground World without leaving a trace wouldn't be difficult.

'Then the Heartsoul Bead is related to the Underground World?'

Everything was complicated and entwined.

If so, what is the purpose of the red man.....?

Popo's following words were even more shocking.

"He said he was the Truthseeker."

"What? Truthseeker?"

“Eung, the raccoon clan is not human but the Truthseeker was our friend. Any raccoon family would happily meet him. And according to an ancient vow, we guided the Truthseeker to Yggdrasil.”

“An ancient vow?”

“A long time ago, the adults of the raccoon clan made a vow with the Hero Maban that when the hero returned to the Underground World, we would guide him to Yggdrasil to receive a test.”

“So? He got the test?”

Ark asked Popo who hastily shook his head.

“I don’t know. But not long after he left something terrible happened. A red light rose from where Yggdrasil was and our wooden statue of Yggdrasil started attacking us. And every raccoon clan was attacked by Yggdrasil..... It changed them into monsters that would attack their own people.”

“Monster?”

“Originally, there were no monsters living in Subarutalp.”

What does that means?

Ark looked doubtful before asking again.

“Then.....what about the monster that attacked me?”

At Ark’s question, Pope angrily snapped.

“That’s right, Yggdrasil caught a raccoon clan. The raccoon clan caught by Yggdrasil changed into a Kanggeul or a Plant Golem. And it started to attack villages at random. I also lived in the village with those guys.....”

'Oh my god, was this the disaster Shannon was worried about?'

Now pieces of information were connected.

The man who stole the Heartsoul Bead from the Magic Institute of Giran would no doubt be the same red man. In other words, the Red man's destination was not Cairo but the Underground World.

Shannon had warned that the Heartsoul Bead had an ominous power that could cause disasters. That's right. The fact that Ark met monsters with such absurd levels was because of that.

Ark confirmed his idea with the quest information window.

[Quest has been updated. Find the Heartsoul Bead II = Find the Heartsoul Bead III You have tracked the trail of the Red Man to the Underground World. And you have obtained a clue about the Red Man from the inhabitants of the Underground World. Not long after the Red Man came to the Underground World, its patron Yggdrasil went on a crazy rampage. The Underground World which was once peaceful had become a dangerous place filled with monsters, with everyone in the Underground World suffering. No doubt this would be related to the Red Man who stole the Heartsoul Bead. You have to combine these clues and find the Heartsoul Bead. {Difficulty level: C+}]

Ark's jaw dropped after checking the information window.

The combination of all the clues for the Heartsoul Bead seemed to lead to Yggdrasil. And Yggdrasil was the culprit that threatened the Underground World by changing raccoon clans into monsters. Of course, there would be Kanggeul around level 150 and Plant Golems around level 250 roaming the place.

With Ark's current power he couldn't even head to Yggdrasil while taking them out.

Degree of difficulty C+! The difficulty for the Event Quest was C++, which was the highest level of difficulty that Ark had ever gotten.

Even if he could organize an attack, he didn't know if it would be possible with that level of difficulty.

'And besides this quest I also have to find the Three Marvels.'

He couldn't think. The raccoons had a vow with the Hero Maban that when the Truthseeker came, they would escort him to Yggdrasil to receive a test.

It is likely that Yggdrasil's test would give a fragment of the Three Marvels to the Truthseeker. Eventually the piece of the Three Marvels in the subterranean world should enter his hands.

'Damn, do I have to be an alternative to the Red Man?'

Anger welled up in Ark.

If it hadn't been for that fellow, it might have been easier for Ark to receive the Three Marvels. However, because he turned up with the Heartsoul Bead the difficulty level dramatically increased? Of course, he wouldn't have found the Underground World if it wasn't for that guy.....

‘Anyway, now I can’t complete the quest at this level.’

Ark sighed before he remembered something and asked.

“You said that you traded with humans? So, that’s to say you can go outside? When this place became so dangerous, didn’t you think to flee outside or ask for help from the humans?”

“The only path to the outside world is inside Yggdrasil.”

Popo’s answer made Ark despair.

For or the time being he knew the location of the Underground World. And he had hoped for a lucky way to go outside. Ark had thought that he could go outside and raise his levels before coming back in.

However, if the path was associated with Yggdrasil didn’t that mean he couldn’t leave?

“The adults are all cowards!”

Then, all of a sudden Popo spoke in an incensed voice.

“The other villages have already been swallowed up by Yggdrasil. Together with thousands of kin. The raccoon village where I lived had also been abandoned. This is the only place left. Nevertheless, the adults are not willing to fight anyone. They blocked the entrance but I was able to stealthily dig a tunnel. Knowing this situation, it would eventually reach here too!”

The village that Popo had lived in was close to Yggdrasil. Because it was only a step away from Yggdrasil, Popo was the only racoon remaining.

“But I’m different from the adults. I’m going to fight even if alone. Will Hyung as well? Because Hyung is different from the cowardly racoon adults and a brave foreigner! Will Hyung fight with me? Just like when you fought the Kanggeul earlier?”

Ark began to realise why Popo tried to show a good impression since they first met.

“Of course I have to fight. But.....”

Ark took a moment to answer.

Excitement showed in Popo as a raccoon was pushed to the left.

The raccoon clan suddenly staggered back as he grabbed his chest.

“Eh? What’s up with that? Ajusshi, are you okay?”

“Yuck, keuuuuk, kueaaaa!”

Popo stared with surprised as the other raccoon’s body starting spasming. After a while, vines sprang out from the body and completely covered it.

“Kanggeul!”

In an instant, a raccoon had changed into a monster.

The raccoon clans that had gathered in the market screamed and fled everywhere. Popo also stepped back with a scream. However, Kanggeul's body wound dozens of stems around Popo and hoisted him up.

"Ah, Ark-hyung!"

"Holy shit!"

Ark pulled out his sword.

Boooooom, Ark swung his sword like lightning at the vines. Then Ark changed his target to Kanggeul.

The vines poured out continuously. Ark quickly rotated his body for continuous kicks and damaged the vines.

"Grrrr, Kkago, Namiru!"

Kanggeul was stunned and retreated.

Kanggeul's level was 150, but it was only one opponent.

In addition, there were no crickets and no weapons. And unlike the vines of the Plant Golem, the attack and speed of Kanggeul was not intimidating.

'This opponent is not that difficult!'

Ark damaged a vine using Dark Blade before running forward and cornering it with kicks. After 5 minutes. Kanggeul fell into a critical condition and tried to retreat. However, Ark's movements were several times faster.

"Don't miss!"

Ark ran and threw his body forward.

And quickly followed with a double sidekick! He hit the back of the head with his foot and Kanggeul fell to the ground. At the same time, Ark swung his sword down to get a double critical chance, causing Kanggeul to lose all its health.

“Am-amazing!”

“He defeated Kanggeul all by himself!”

After he defeated Kanggeul, the raccoon clans gathered and buzzed around Ark who had shown incredible skill. However, the raccoon clan quickly withdrew, surprised.

“Foreigner!”

“How did a foreigner get here?”

In the wake of the shouting voices, Ark’s oops was covered.

As a result of his fight with Kanggeul, the clothes made of twigs that Popo had given him were torn.

Ark didn’t know what to do and wore an embarrassed expression as he was surrounded by a group of raccoons clad in leather armour.

They looked between Kanggeul and Ark with surprised eyes.

“That.....”

Without saying anything, the raccoon soldiers lifted up their spears.

“Don’t move! You’re under arrest!”

“Damn, let me go!”

“Do not move!”

“What did Ark-hyung do wrong?”

Popo swore and struggled.

At that time, an old raccoon on the opposite side angrily shouted.

“Be quiet!”

Popo flinched and looked down dejected.

‘I guess that old raccoon is the elder of this village.’

Ark looked around in silence.

Ark and Popo were dragged by the raccoon soldiers from the market to a large cave.

It seemed to be the Town Hall. Around 10 elderly raccoons were gathered inside the cave. Among them the oldest racoon stared at Popo with angry eyes.

“I specifically told you that you weren’t to go out there.....not only did you disobey me but you also brought a human along? Do you know what you’ve done? This town could be in danger because of you!”

“Haeng!”

“Do you still not understand? Why Subarutalp changed? It is because they believed the human. That human brought disaster her! This guy will also do the same! ”

“Ark-hyung is different. He defeated Kanggeul!”

“Stupid! He is probably a friend of the Truthseeker called to betray us further. How can you believe everything this guy says? He managed to come here after it had been hidden for hundreds of years. It is clear that he has some other purpose. Everyone, immediately confine Popo and the human while we decide their punishment!”

“Yes, they need to be punished!”

The other raccoons shouted with their tails beating the ground.

“He is not the Truthseeker.”

It was then that Ark opened his mouth.

The eyes of the elders widened.

“What? What are you saying?”

“I’ll say it again. The red haired man isn’t the Truthseeker. He tricked all of you.”

“What do you know.....”

“How did you recognise the Truthseeker?”

Ark interrupted the elders.

“To become the Truthseeker, you must first kill the Black Bear Mouse and be acknowledged by the Meow, the descendants of Hero Maban. However, in the past hundreds of years only one person has been recognised as the Truthseeker by the Meow. And, of course the Truthseeker was not the man with red hair.”

“How do you happen to know this?”

“Of course I would know. For the past hundreds of year, I was the only Truthseeker recognised by the Meow.”

“Wha-What!”

The elders burst out with a surprised expression.

“Ah, Ark-hyung?”

Popo couldn't believe it and looked stupidly at Ark. He was not the only one. The raccoons gathered in the Town Hall looked at his other and muttered. However, it seemed that the elders couldn't believe as they shook their head.

“Unbelievable! Even if he isn't the Truthseeker you might be lying as well, how can we tell? Where is the evidence that you are the Truthseeker?”

“This is the evidence. Elders, could you examine this?”

Ark pulled out a small carved stone from his bag.

Elder narrowed their eyes and sat down while staring at the stone.

“St.....Star Fragment”

Yes. Ark had found one of the Three Marvels in the underwater world. It was a Star Fragment.

It was an item that was nearly impossible to get in his hands.

“Do you acknowledge it?”

Ark was confirmed as the elders nodded.

Then Popo pushed the soldiers as he shouted.

“Hyung! Ark-hyung is really the Truthseeker! Elder grandfather, see? Ark-hyung is the Truthseeker! A friend of the Beasts, he is the hero that inherited Hero Maban’s will!”

“Is that so?”

The elders touched their foreheads with their hands as they blew out a sigh of relief. And looked at Ark with weary eyes as they muttered.

“We recognise that you are the Truthseeker. But that doesn’t change anything. Obviously in the past we made a vow with Hero Maban. However, it is too late. Yggdrasil is already corrupted and we don’t know if we can even survive, let alone fulfil the vow. Therefore we won’t charge you with the crime of infiltrating the village without permission. But with Yggdrasil corrupted, you can’t leave here. Nothing has changed.”

“What are you saying? Don’t you understand? Ark-hyung is the Truthseeker! Now is the time that we must stand up and fight for Subarutalp to be peaceful again!”

“Shut up! We’re not children!”

The elders shouted at Popo who flinched and stepped back.

He wasn’t easily scared.

Popo couldn’t believe the elders and kept on shooting them looks as he said.

“The other villages are already gone. And no matter how much you hide, eventually you’ll be noticed. Elder grandfather knows it as well! Kanggeul showed up at the market. That means they’ve learnt how to come here.”

“Umm.....”

A heavy silence filled the Town Hall at Popo’s words.

So far, the raccoon clans in the surroundings muttered with low voices.

“ButThis situation started from Yggdrasil. Yggdrasil.....is our patron. If we fight Yggdrasil it would be impossible to win.”

“Besides Kanggeul and Plant Golem are also our own people.....we would be killing them too.....”

“Lies!”

Popo yelled wildly.

“Tell me honestly. You’re just too scared to fight. Cowards! So go ahead! Just continue hiding until Kanggeul and Plant Golem finds the town! But I’m different! I will fight even if I die!”

Popo pushed the raccoon soldiers and left the Town Hall.

“Why are you just standing there? What are you doing? Catch him!”

Two raccoon soldiers hurriedly chased after Popo.

Ark silently looked at the sight in front of him. He had wanted to intervene but had no idea how. But thanks to Popo he was able to understand the general situation. At the same time, he now knew what he had to do.

‘That’s right, it’s not only my problem!’

Ark realised that he had taken something for granted.

It was common sense that a quest was a structure only for the user.

However, there was no reason to think that.

‘New World is not an old RPG game.’

When considering the games in the olden days, it was really astonishing.

Those games often used the scenario of the Devil being resurrected at the end. If the Devil was resurrected then the world would end. Even so, he had met a number of NPCs in the game, even the NPCs that were formerly heroes couldn’t participate in the game directly.

‘What if?’

‘Please help me.’

But they would do absolutely nothing and just talk.

And it was natural for them to leave the fate of the world in the hero’s hands.

The NPC could actively move but not through artificial intelligence, instead the NPC’s behaviour was computed using a CPU that calculated its performance.

However, New World was the perfect game of the future. The game allowed infinite degrees of freedom for the user. And that degree of freedom was also relevant to the NPCs.

Of course, although it is not a user, the NPC could also think for itself and have the freedom to act. Just like when Jackson's Lord gave privileges to the ex-convicts on Ark's advice.

'This is the key to solve this quest.'

If the Underground World is destroyed, then that would also be bad for Ark. He would lose the three marvels and also the way to solve the quest.

But anyway, Ark was a user.

It was possible to look for other ways. But not for the raccoon clan. The raccoons think of the game as reality where they either live or die because of the destruction of the Underground World. It dampened their will to fight.

'If I try to do it alone, I won't be able to handle Yggdrasil. But it might be possible to win if I can incite the raccoon clans to fight together.'

Ark came to that conclusion.

He had already identified in Jackson that users could fight together with NPCs.

‘Yes, for sure. This is the only solution.’

Ark looked at the atmosphere and slowly opened his mouth.

“To be honest I agree with Popo.”

“What?”

“I’ve listened to Popo talk. The other towns in the Underground World have already been attacked and annihilated. And even if the subterranean world is wide, it is limited. No matter how much you hide you will eventually be found and when that happens, you’ll be involved just like Popo said. ”

“We know that. We also know there’s no chance.”

An elder said a nervous voice.

“Since we were born, we are a species that hasn’t had to fight. Do you know why we live in the Underground World? In order to avoid conflicts. We’re just a race that knows how to make things.”

“But

“It is done. I don’t want to talk about the problem.”

No matter how many times Ark tried to talk to them, the elders did not want to hear it.

After all Ark had just entered the village of raccoons. In addition, their relations had been hostile until just now. Fortunately, the misunderstanding was resolved and the relationship wasn’t hostile anymore however their intimacy was still low.

It would be impossible to incite the raccoons to fight with a few words. There was also the risk that intimacy would fall instead.

‘Let’s withdraw and find another method.’

“Ark-hyung.....”

Popo approached from the side as he exited the Town Hall.

He had made a gesture to run away and hide around here.

“You see? Wasn’t it like I said? The adults are all cowards. They make excuses but in the end they don’t have the courage to fight the monsters, unlike a foreigner. But Hyung is different? The Truthseeker is the one that receives Hero Maban’s will. Will you fight against the monsters?”

Tears were heard in Popo’s suddenly young voice.

Ark looked at him in surprise as Popo wiped his eyes with his sleeve and said.

“They’re dead. Dad, Mum.....everything.....I.....cannot remember anything.....I know. The village where I lived was the first to be attacked. Obviously my mum and dad are dead or they have become a Kanggeul. But I will never die like that. I will find the exact cause of the corruption and regain my village. Hyung.....will you help me?”

A feeble ache revived in Ark's chest.

He had forgotten.

Popo had lost his parents merely 10 days ago.

Why hadn't he noticed? NPCs are also alive.

At least that's what Ark thought. And who doesn't understand the grief of losing a parent?

Ark was like that as well. When he lost his father and his mother was hospitalized, Ark couldn't cry. He had forced down his grief but going on a nightlife spree. He was grieving, but he was so sad that he couldn't feel the grief at all.

Ark kneeled down beside Popo and stroked his head.

"Yes, I will help. But no matter how I try, it is impossible for with my strength alone. You actually know that don't you?"

Popo swallowed his tears and nodded.

“So I’ll have to convince any raccoon clan. The adults will understand if I talk calmly. If that doesn’t help.....then you and I will join forces and find a way. So just believe and trust in me for the time being.”

“Thank you, Hyung.”

Ark laughed and lightly patted Popo’s body.

He also felt like a brother.

" Now, that we've said that.....'

Once Ark calmed Popo down, they organized the situation in a deserted alley.

He easily spoke to Popo, but he actually thought it was hopeless.

The raccoons were different from the other beast species that he had met. By default, the Meow and Mermaid species were warriors.

In the same situation, even if Ark tried to stop them the Meow and mermaids would raise their arms and go out.

However, the raccoons were craftsmen and were afraid to fight.

'The most likely way to incite them is to raise my intimacy.....'

The problem was how to raise intimacy.

In the past, the mermaid species was completely isolated from the way so when he sold them some outside items, their intimacy quickly rose. However, even though the raccoons were isolated, there could secretly trade with humans on the outside world. He didn't look at his japtem.

He also used survival cooking with the mermaid clan.

Tasty food was somewhat effective but unlike the mermaids, the raccoon clans were used to fire and would not freak out about it.

When they ate something once or twice then they would quickly tire of it.

The other way to raise intimacy with to complete quests. But it was impossible to receive a bunch of quests from the raccoons in this situation.

‘But what other methods could be used to raise intimacy.....’

Suddenly a brilliant idea popped into his head.

‘Only? What about food? The foodperhaps.....No, it is the only way. I have no choice but to try it, even if it is a hit or miss.’

Ark quickly took out his pot and placed ingredients in.

And he mixed up the ingredients to create new dishes. As always, one dish was barely a success after dozens of failures. Ark put the successful dish in a pouch for the time and immediately made a new dish.

He spent the whole day cooking.

Although he was dozing halfway through, his hands mechanically combined new ingredients. Suddenly, a loud sound battered his eardrums.

Kwadang, delgureok, bugulbugul!

The half-asleep Ark quickly lifted his head. Inside the pot, a black liquid was bubbling like crazy.

“What, what the?” What’s up with that? Why is this?”

Ssak ssak ssak!

Then Snake flicked its tongue and licked the floor.

“Eek? Don’t tell me I just shoved in the pot.....?”

Ark quickly woke up as he turned his head.

Next to him was a pile of ingredients and japtem intertwined. He had laid out the ingredients to make a dish. Apparently.....he thought only ingredients had been taken out. However, he had mixed in a few japtem in his sleep. And while he was dreaming, he had unknowingly put a few japtem into the pot.

“What the? What on earth did I put?”

Ark hurriedly opened his bag and checked the list of japtem.

All of the five weapons are there.....armour items as well.....other japtem also roughly correct but the number.....what did I put in? Eh? Which reminds meHuck, don't tell me?’

Ark rummaged around and belatedly found what items were missing. The ‘Essence of shining slime’ that he had obtained from the Polluted Slimes in the underground labyrinth.

[Essence of Shining Slime (Ingredient)]The Polluted Slime only exists in very special environments. Although the slime ecology is still unknown, only one in a thousand would produce these special crystals in their body. These crystals have a unique magic that would make Magicians and artisans drool over the

expensive material item. You can use the essence of slime as a magic reagent or you can use it to create magic items.]

Although you couldn't tell from the explanation, but it would've been a large source of money for him.

Because he was unable to send it to Sid, he left it packed on one side of his bag.....only now he placed it in the pot while he was sleeping. It wasn't an ingredient but a general item! The result was so unstable it seemed like the pot was having stomach trouble.

"I can't believe I made this mistake while sleeping!"

'No, I don't know whether the essence of slime had completely melted yet.'

Ark picked up the pot. And just before he flipped it over! Suddenly there was a belch and thick smoke rings rose from the pot.

Ark flinched and looked down stupidly into the pot. The bubbling black liquid that was overflowing had just disappeared like a lie. And black lumps like jelly fell into the pot.

"Wha, What is this?"

Ark picked up the jello with a bewildered expression.

At the same time, a message window popped up.

[You have found a hidden Survival Cooking dish. In New World, there are monsters that have survived for a long time and built up a lot of experience. A monster with these attributes and experience sometimes forms an 'essence.' Essences are sometimes used as an advanced ingredient in the production of various general items, but it also has another hidden use. One of the uses is making a Survival Cooking dish with it. When combined with several herbs in survival cooking, the essence can be formed into a jelly dish. When mixing them with other unusual ingredients then jello with special properties can be made. An advanced survival cooking chef would be able to instinctively grab the materials required to make it.]

['Slime's Immortality Pill' Recipe Essence of Glowing Slime Jelly 1/1

Unicorn horns 0/1

Corrupted Fairy Wings 0/100

The roots of a Mandragora that has received moonlight 0/100

Tooth of a hook bat 0/100]

Ark looked at the information window with a stupid look. For a while he couldn't understand what had happened.

'A hidden survival cooking dish?'

It was a result from a mistake he made in his sleep.

The problem was that he hadn't determined if the result was good or not. Until the result was complete, he wouldn't have any information about the slime inner edge.

However, Ark's advantage was his optimistic personality. After he contemplated, Ark determined that it was a good thing.

'This means I can't get rid of the slime essence for the time being. And I'm tied. From unwritten game rules, it should provide a huge benefit in the game! And because the materials required to complete it seem fairly difficult, the result should be beyond my expectation. Uhehehe, Yes, that's right. It's obviously an extravagant prize!'

Ark placed the slime jelly in his bag and smirked.

Survival cooking was involuntarily learnt in the novice town, and he had learnt the skill with the idea that he could save money by using it to cook rice and eat cheaply, however the skill had more uses than that. It was fun to think of what other methods there could be later on.

It was a mistake that happened while he was asleep, but if the result was this sort of thing then it was welcome at any time.

He had discovered information that other people didn't know yet. It will soon be connected with huge profit.

'I would love to see the complete recipe now, but because the materials aren't things that you could just ask or look for, it can keep for the time being. Okay, it is a good atmosphere. Should I make an effort and cook more new dishes?'

Ark had an excited expression and immediately began to make a new dish. And finally 24 hours had passed and he could summon his pets again.

With a serious expression, Ark summoned Skull.

"Skull, are you prepared?"

Clack....Clack clack clack!

Skull moved back and forth as he made his resolution.

Then Ark started feeding Skull the dishes that he had made.

Skull fainted straight away with dark rings that looked like he struggled with over drinking on the docks. However, the food also had a positive effect and raised his ability. However, it wasn't what Ark was hoping for.

'It's great to see, but this is not the effect that I wanted.'

Ark shook his head and made him eat another dish.

Eventually the food made of new combinations of ingredients had almost disappeared.

"This is it!"

Once again, the positive effect of the food raised Skull's stats. Thanks to that, Skull's stats were raised by 7 and he instantly reached level 47. However, that was not the reason that Ark had cheered at Skull. It was due to the additional effects of Skull eating cookies.

'This is it! This one is the key to the quest!'

Ark created a bunch of cookies with delight. And he put it all in a leather pouch and headed towards the Town Hall.

“What is going on? If you have something to say about earlier.”

As soon as Ark entered, the elder welcomed him with a troubled expression. However, Ark had a friendly smile as he approached.

“No. I have a different request today. Sometimes I go out and come to think of it, I experienced a new situation when I was there. When I find a new place, the elders always offer me a glass of water. So today, I have prepared cookies to apologize for my previous mistakes.

“Cookie? There’s no need. Please leave.”

The elder said coldly. However, Ark didn’t listen and took out the leather pouch.

“Eh, why are you so shy? There’s no need between comrades. Just have a taste. I made elaborate cookies.”

Ark opened the leather pouch and a sweet scent drifted around the Town Hall.

The seductive scent was made using a large variety of different spices!

“If you think it is necessary? Hurry, and take it out!”

The elder made an effort to turn his head and look away. However, Ark was convinced that he had caught the elders in a trap. His nose was twitching and his tail swinging up and down without stopping.

‘Huhuhu, in the end he is still just a raccoon.’

They can’t hide their beastly instincts.

“Come, come! Stop what you’re doing for the time being and just eat.”

“Heh, that’s truenowhere else to be so yes”

The Elder couldn’t pretend and took one cookie.

Ark’s eyes flashed.

‘It took It took. A raccoon is snagged!’

That was Ark’s plan.

Once he ate one, the elder tried to shove as much as possible into his mouths. The other elderly raccoons in the Town Hall also did the same. Although they had no interest in the cookies at first, they wanted to eat it after seeing him cramming a bunch in his mouth with both hands.

An elder exclaimed as he was buried in cookie powder.

“Yes, the cooking skill is amazing. In my lifetime, this is the first time I’ve tasted such delicious cookies. More, anymore?”

“Of course there is enough.”

‘Game over.’

Ark handled the leather pouch with an evil smile. Within a few minutes the leather pouch had been emptied and the elders had satisfied looks on their faces.

“Okay, it’s really brilliant. Are you going to make it again?”

“It’s now!”

Ark then exposed his true colours.

“Of course. But before that.....I’d like to talk about the earlier topic?”

“What we were talking about earlier?”

“Yes, I’ve been thinking about it. I also think that the elders’ idea is a bit wrong. Of course I understand your view. After a lifetime of making things, of course you’re going to be afraid to fight monsters.”

“I am afraid? You mean someone else!”

The elders shook the table and shouted.

“There’s nothing to be afraid of, it’s just a little monster. Our talent isn’t just making things. Instead, we can arm ourselves with excellent armour and weapons. When mobilized, we can deal with any number of creatures.”

“Yeah!”

The other elderly raccoons also beat their tails on the ground as they shouted in unison. He fixed an expression on his face that seemed like he couldn't understand anything and muttered.

"Then why are we hiding in a place like this?"

"That's right. Why the hell would we think that the monsters are scary."

"Our patron Yggdrasil turned evil because of a curse. Isn't now the time that we should get up?"

"Yes, the time has revealed itself. Arm the residents immediately, we must release Yggdrasil from its curse. It is not the time to be hiding."

He noticed that the attitudes of the raccoons had undergone a 180 degree change.

'The effect of the medicine was accepted.'

A satisfied smile appeared at the corners of Ark's mouth.

The reason why they changed was because of the cookies Ark had fed them.

The raccoons couldn't fight because they didn't have enough courage. Because they knew that the monsters would eventually reach the village, they couldn't bring themselves to fight. That's when Ark thought about one of his ingredients.

The Nurunma leaves that he found in the thieves' lair.

The Nurunma leaf was a drug, but a long time ago it was also used to stimulate warriors. Therefore, if he cooked the Nurunma leaves it might have the same effect. With that crazy thought, Ark combined a variety of ingredients with the Nurunma leaves to create new dishes. Then he used Skull to confirm that it was the food that he wanted.

[The Warrior's CookiesThe Nurunma leaves are the main ingredients in this cookie. If a person without excitement eats the cookie, they will feel a desire to fight. Also they won't lose their fighting spirit even if they are injured. The excitement gradually decreases with every battle the person enters.However, when the effect disappears, the subject will be in a weakened state for a long period of time due to withdrawal effects.{Fraud +100, In battle it decreases by 1 every 2 minutes}{However when the effect disappears, for 4 hours resistance -50%, which is recovered when eating a cookie.}]

Thanks to that, the elders' morale was raised and once the taste goes away they would blame it on drugs.

"Come on, let's quickly prepare the residents for action."

“Then I’ll gather all the inhabitants.”

Ark left the town hall and conveyed the gathering orders to the residents. Of course, he didn’t forget to distribute a bag of cookies as a gift.

The raccoons took the cookies without any suspicion. And soon became racoons that were addicted to the stimulant.

Therefore, the situation was easily solved.

“.....Therefore, we should take back Subarutalp with our own hands! Come on, get up. Kinsmen arise!”

“Ooh oh oh oh!”

The elder’s speech delivered the taste to the crowd. The crowd of 300 raccoons gave a shout of joy and aligned themselves with the taste. And started war preparations at an absurd speed.

Popo looked at Ark with a strange expression.

“Ah, Ark-hyung. How on earth.....”

“Sincerity is said to be a way to connect with people.”

Ark grinned and stroked Popo’s head.

Ark continued smiling wickedly at the steady progress. However, this degree of wickedness was only the tip of the iceberg. When they finished the war preparations, the elders and residents flocked to Ark.

“However you. Is it possible for you to make more cookies?”

I feel like eating a cookie for some reason.”

“Oh, you mean this? Well, there is still an excess.....”

Ark shook the bag containing the cookies before taking one out. Then the raccoons forgot and followed the cookie with the eyes and mouth drooling. He shook it lightly for the poisonous effect to activate. Then Ark put it back in the bag and said.

“By the way. Before I do, isn’t there a problem to be addressed?”

“What, what is it?”

“Once the troops are gatheredyou’re not going to just randomly and recklessly attack the monsters are you? Doesn’t someone have to command the troops? I’d say I have the experience necessary to lead the troops.”

“Oh, that? Then I’ll leave commanding to you.”

As if it was troublesome, the Elder transferred the command immediately.

This is why drugs are horrible. Once you are addicted you could even sell your daughter for drugs. Of course, it wasn’t so much the cookies that were addictive. But anyway, the only person with combat experience was Ark. Even if he thought about it calmly, the right person to be commander was Ark.

Ark was satisfied as he grinned and nodded.

“I understand. Although I am insufficient, I will lead the raccoon clans.

“Yes, yes, so a cookie

“It is 1L for a bag.”

“What? One bag costs money?”

“Oh, it’s because I don’t have that many ingredients. This means that I can’t make it indefinitely. And now I can only create one bag at a time. But if the elder doesn’t want to buy this then I will be forced to sell it to someone else.”

“Ah, no! 1L did you say? Here it is.”

The surprised elder pulled out an ore and calculated quickly.

The number of Nurunma leaves used to make a bag of Warrior's cookies was one. He also used other ingredients and spices but those were readily available in the raccoon village. In the end, the actual cost of the ingredients was one Nurunma leaf. Ark calculated that it was approximately 10 silver for one leaf.

By selling the cookies for 1L, the ore was worth at least 20 silver which meant that his profits would double.

After all, it was a drug. No matter how lawless the city, he was worried about finding a proper place to sell it. But now additional money was received so it was a windfall!

All this because he mixed a drug's effect into a cookie!

Of course, more addictive cookies would raise the price from now on. However, when it came to money it couldn't be sold recklessly. Ark only prepared 1,600 Nurunma leaves. He had to steadily supply 300 raccoons while they were fighting.

Sort of.....it was possible to call him a clever demon.

'Huhuhu whenever I see Nurunma leaves, I can just smell money drifting off them.

Ark smiled with satisfaction as a new information window showed up.

[You used excellent communication and clever tricks to discover the 'Lore' quest.

The Lore quest exists in several areas in New World. If it isn't possible to receive a quest in the normal way, a Lore quest occurs when special conditions are satisfied. The quest rewards given for Lore quests are different from those given for general quests, as it is an important key to understanding the legends and history of New World. However, if unsuccessful you may be subject to a substantial penalty.

{Wisdom + 10, Art of Communication + 10}}

[Reclaim the peace in the Underground World!]

After a lot of trouble you have finally entered Subarutalp, a world hidden in the depths of the earth. However, the Underground World wasn't a peaceful place like you imagined. Currently, the Underground World and its residents the raccoons are on the verge of annihilation. As the Truthseeker, you are obliged to help the Beast residents. Fortunately, you managed to convince them to put in an effort and reclaim the peace of the Underground World together. You must lead a group of raccoons to Yggdrasil to get rid of its curse and bring back peace to the Underground World. You will also find the Three Marvels that you are searching for once you deal with the curse on Yggdrasil.

{Difficulty: ☆ ☆ ☆ Quest is limited to: Dark Walker}}

"As expected, the correct answer was to persuade the raccoons."

Ark checked the quest information related to the Three Marvels and was convinced that his choice was right. In the end, the goal was the same but he had to look for the Heartsoul Bead as well as the Three Marvels.

Of course these two objectives were registered as different quests.

'But a Lore Quest? Is the degree of difficulty special? What the hell does it mean?'

While Ark was thinking, an elder had studied his face and asked.

"So what should we do?"

"For the time being....."

Ark replied with a wide grin.

"It has to be training."

In the afternoon of the same day, Ark gathered 300 raccoons together to commence training.

The Warrior's cookie was limited. If he wanted them to battle without losing moral, there was no time to waste. However when he gathered the raccoons together, a sigh naturally flowed out.

The Kanggeul was level 150, but the average level for a raccoon was level 70. In addition, they had never been in battle before and didn't even know how to hold their weapons properly. But Ark soon shook his head.

'It's not. The most important thing is not the individual's level but group combat. How quickly and accurately the commander can lead them is the key.'

He had already experienced the importance of commanders in Jackson. First, he had to arrange the army regulations and then show that the ability of the commander was 100%.

Therefore, Ark dealt with them severely from the first day.

"There, the raccoon that was gossiping come out!"

Ark pointed to one of the foot soldier raccoons.

And after he made a horrible soup medley, fed him the awful food.

Ark who was in command also switched the cookies sold to a distribution system. Because there were limited resources, he must appropriately manage the quantity dispensed. Thanks to that the raccoons were always struggling with cookies. Ark was holding the cookies, so of course there wouldn't be any raccoons that would disobey him. Also soldiers who performed well would have the right to buy more

cookies. Ark introduced a reward and punishment system that a raccoon would feign death at Ark's words.

A perfect dictatorship was born.

Ark seized the raccoons and separated them into branches of service based on their quality. The elders had said that the raccoon species didn't understand battle at all but Ark soon shook off that notion. Of course, there was no battle related skill for the raccoons. However, he was able to take advantage of the NPCs by applying the characteristics of craftsmen to battle. When the father of all the races created the species, they had something in mind. It goes without saying that equipment plays an important role in battle. In particular, Ark paid attention to the portable artillery weapons. The cannon had a slow charging speed but its range and power far exceeded that of an arrow. An additional bonus was also applied when used against a large monster, which increased the offensive power by 10 times. The problem was the price of the bullet for the cannon as it was 1L or 20 silver. However, Ark didn't care. Anyway, the military funding came from the pockets of the raccoons.

'Until now, I couldn't have such weapons.....'

If he thought about the outside then he wasn't motivated.

Anyway, the raccoon clan that produced weapons and armour all boasted considerable abilities. Unfortunately, the ingredient supply wasn't satisfactory because they had been hiding. Therefore, they couldn't produce a significant number of equipment items.

'I guess I have to divide the branches of service based on the equipment available.'

“OK, from now on I’m going to divide the branches of service. The first group will be lieutenants.”

Ark pointed towards the group of raccoons that had a higher level and stamina. And ordered them to be given the best armour and weapons. That number was approximately 120.

The 2nd group was chosen based on their high agility. They were given armour with high defense and artillery. And the 3rd and last group was the rear support engineers who took exclusive responsibility for cave destruction using the raccoon only racial skill.

‘Wasn’t it quite fascinating to equip NPCs with items?’

The elder raccoon NPC supplied a war chest that was quite generous. It was public money that Ark couldn’t take because who knew when he would have to buy an item necessary for battle.

So the raccoons were clearly divided. Without sleeping, Ark began to train the raccoons in the different divisions. As practice gradually continued, the raccoons rushed back and forth as they followed the training system. After 6 days had passed in game time and it was the second day in reality, practice finally finished. Ark gathered the soldiers around him and began to speak.

“Everyone had suffered. Maybe there would be some who said bad things about me. However, the trouble hasn’t left. Hopefully you guys remember this as we head to Yggdrasil to rescue your kinsmen

and regain peace. In addition, it is common sense that training harder would reduce casualties in battle. It is my duty to ensure that you are ready for it, even if I had to push you.”

It was sincere. There was no chance of doing this quest twice.

If the raccoon troops were wiped out then his quest for the Heartsoul Bea