

Ark Vol 6 C 3

Chapter 3

ACT 3 Hidden Power of the Rehabilitation Stage?

Chaotic NPC 'Rehabilitation' complete.

-Your level has risen.

"Hyung-nim, we've finished rehabilitating all 30 people."

"Hu hu hu, the nearby neighbourhoods are also clear."

JusticeMan looked at the thieves with a heart-warming smile. JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members had a rewarding day today, implementing social justice.

JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members were a single group. But thanks to them focusing on one thing, they often lost sight and the original goal and wandered off. It was the same even now. The reason that had left Jackson was to earn some fame at the Evil Silrion in order to become an autonomous police force. But their purpose changed once they met Lorenzo in Cairo. The purpose had changed to punishing the thieves that used to be Lorenzo's hyungs. There were a lot of thieves who had the idea to hide in the vicinity of Selebrid. JusticeMan didn't expect to discover them, since he didn't have enough hints to search around.

'Just like Ark said, to the NPCs this is the real world. In the long run, the users and NPCs in New World.....no, the user and NPC is different as the NPCs lives may be more precious. Still, since the thief was born as a thief, it wasn't fair for them to die!'

But if left alone, the thieves would live a dismal life until a user happens to pass by and kills them for experience. They weren't monsters, they were NPCs that were similar to the village residents. Yet they were born as thieves just for the purpose of giving experience.

'The only people that can help them is us.

JusticeMan mistakenly thought of himself as a saviour and burned with motivation.

'If the rule of New World is that a thief was born to die, then I will change the rule!'

It was like the Roman emperor and the Lord, a dictator and a revolutionary warrior facing off against each other.....the Korean ex-detective had doubts about the system in New World and vowed to change it. This brought out unexpected results in the game system.

"Isn't this a hundred times better than hunting?"

Jjak-tung asked after he confirmed the information window. JusticeMan, the rehabilitation members and the thieves were all around level 70. If they hunted a level 70 thief, they would only gain 1000 experience. But once they rehabilitated him, they would receive 5000 experiences, which was five times as much.

JusticeMan and the rehabilitation group was able to earn experience without killing the thieves. Thanks to that, JusticeMan was level 87. The rehabilitation members also had an average level of 70. But was that all? The NPCs of New World were simple. Thus, the inevitable result was that once the NPCs were confined, intimidated and tortured as well as being brainwashed by the rehabilitation group, there was a 100% success message and the thieves completely became new men.

"We've finally realised our mistakes."

In fact, it wasn't only the result of the system. The NPC thieves had also thought about walking away. But the only thing in their memories was persecution and sorrow.

They wanted to stop being thieves, but they had never been treated with hospitality by other NPCs and were only treated like thieves. Users would chase after them to earn some money and not even the guards who were NPCs like them would help. They weren't welcomed by users or NPCs. But it wasn't possible for them to be a monster.....that was the thieves' sad fate. But JusticeMan's party was different. Even though they were tortured, the thieves knew that the effect was for them. It was the first time that a user looked at them like they were NPCs, not experience or items! It was the earnest expression that they had never received in their whole lives.

“We will earnestly serve you for the rest of our lives.....”

“I didn’t realize that you wished for someone to scold you.”

“Please call us Hyung-nim!”

“You are our saviours hyung-nims.

Rururu, Lalala.

If there was appropriate music, it would be like a touching scene from a movie. Thanks to that, JusticeMan’s enthusiasm gauge was rising every day.

‘This is it! This is it! If you have a large heart then you will be rewarded. That’s the world that I want!’

Back in his criminal chasing days, how many times had he put a criminal in prison only for them to commit the crime again after they were released? Even if they were persuaded, how many criminals were stabbed with a knife and died because they tried to change? But this place was different. If they sincerely repented then they were seriously reformed. But was that all? Weren’t they also rewarded with experience points. For the first time, JusticeMan felt that something was truly worthwhile.

“These guys, they finally recognized our sincerity!”

JusticeMan shouted as he hugged the thieves and cried.

“Hyung-nim!”

“Now you really are new men and you should live trying to help the world.”

“Please lead us all the way!”

“Okay, from today you guys are my brothers! I’ll take responsibility for you until the end!”

Aaah, it was a really emotional scene that couldn’t be seen without tears.....however, there was a very serious problem.

“JusticeMan ajusshi!”

During the emotional scene, a fierce voice was heard. Jump! JusticeMan and the rehabilitation group flinched and swallowed their saliva. Even if dozens of thieves ran up to them with sashimi knives, JusticeMan and the rehabilitation group didn’t even blink. But there was an existence that scared them. She was holding a lute and staring with sharp eyes, the ultimate weapon of the rehabilitation group Roco. JusticeMan smiled awkwardly and turned his head.

“Eh? Hahahah, Roco, you came?”

“What did I say before I left yesterday?”

“Eh.....you said.”

JusticeMan avoided her gaze and sent uneasy looks to the rehabilitation members. SOS! Rescue requested! But the rehabilitation members looked at the distant mountains and pretended ignorance.

“Hey, isn’t that mountain wonderful?”

“Indeed. We should climb it later.”

‘Those, those traitors.....!’

JusticeMan ground his teeth together as Roco approached.

“Did you decide to increase the guests staying in a person’s home for a while? Didn’t you?”

“That, I did do that. You sound so severe. It was needed.”

“You can’t help it if it’s for justice. Is that right?”

“That, yes. Justice! It’s for justice!”

JusticeMan nodded and said. However, he became silent as Roco said some cold words.

“Is justice going to feed them?”

“.....”

Yes, that was a serious problem. Over the past few days, JusticeMan and his party had rehabilitated 100 thieves around Selebrid. Well, it was good up to that point. Aside from the experience, more than anything it was about contributing good to world peace. But the problem was that JusticeMan didn’t think about the overall situation. The thieves were chaotic NPCs. So naturally they couldn’t live in the town. But since they were rehabilitated and couldn’t steal any more, there was no way for them to make a living. JusticeMan hadn’t thought of the thieves’ situation. He accepted them all as colleagues and provided them room and food. He was apprehensive at first but they managed fine.

The rehabilitation group also had a lot of money and there weren’t that many thieves. When the thieves were rehabilitated, they also participated in future battles adding to the offensive power. However, after the numbers reached 50 and began moving to 100, they encountered a serious problem. The hardships of life!

If it was a dream then it would be possible to live, but New World was an entirely different situation! Of course, money was needed to live. At first, the rehabilitation party made the thieves recycle mouse, fish and shellfish. However, after the thieves increased to 100 people, it was normal to make them watch wheat bread all day. Although the rehabilitation members initially provided money, after two days they stopped. For 100 people, they needed at least 300 bread per day even if they didn’t battle. Of course, the rehabilitation group immediately ran out of money. However, JusticeMan and the rehabilitation

members were poor with matters regarding economics. They were men who could only use power. It wasn't a desirable condition and their satiety would soon decrease.....In addition, they still had their old habits from living in the darkness, and even if they didn't have money to buy wheat bread, they would spend it on drinks and ladies. After a few days, it would be a situation where the rehabilitation group and the thieves would have to skip a meal after a battle. But if they thought about the penalty when satiety falls below 50%, it was just like committing suicide.

'Only Oppa still doesn't believe it!'

Roco had finally felt a sense of crisis.

'If we aren't prepared, everyone will starve and die!'

The economic crisis of the rehabilitation group made the girl's talent bloom. In reality, Roco was a girl from a respectable family. Until now, she hadn't suffered from following JusticeMan and the rehabilitation group, but this situation was different. Moreover, it wasn't possible to separate from the rehabilitation group since that would mean separating from Ark.

Even in the middle of a crisis, her mind was still on Ark.

'Even if dirt enters my eye, I will never ask Ark oppa for money! I must protect Oppa's assets!'

Roco made up her mind while thinking about Ark.

"JusticeMan ajusshi and oppa have no concept of economics. It is necessary for us to save our money. I will manage all of our money from now on. Everybody empty their purses."

Roco took control of their finances.

"Ha, but Roco, this....."

Of course, there was resistance at first. Heh, it was a strange resistance.

“Huk, Oppa doesn’t believe in me? I’m just worried about oppa. I believe that I can do it. Are you not trusting your money with me because I’m a woman?”

“Ah, no. Does it seem that way?”

The rehabilitation members were surprised and quickly emptied their pockets. The rehabilitation group’s weak point was a woman. Just like that, Roco seized control of the group’s finances and gradually expanded her power.

“I like that you’re rehabilitating the thieves. But what will you do after you’ve rehabilitated them? How will they survive? Bring the thieves along when monster hunting. But they need to obtain money from leather and meat! Because there will be no rice for those who don’t fulfil their quota.”

So JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members lead the thieves to hunt and obtain a rice meal. But there was one complaint. Roco holds all of the party’s finances. In addition, if they didn’t listen to what she had to say then she would threaten them with her ultimate weapon, tears. Anyway, Roco’s housekeeping skills was superior to theirs.

Pickpocketing, wild animal meat, skinning leather and so on.....

The rehabilitation members could use their various skills to increase the profits from the hunt. Every time they used their skills, they would hide some of the meat. But if Roco was watching then leather would be skinned and meat sold and the pay divided.

In addition, they used fraud and intimidation to reduce spending as much money as possible. Under Roco’s dictatorship, their financial conditions gradually improved. That was because Roco wasn’t exploiting the rehabilitation members and the thieves.

“Because today’s earnings were decent, we can eat meat instead of wheat bread.”

Fortunately, JusticeMan’s party could have meat soup with rice once every two days. But was that all? Apart from income, armour and weapons were also split between the thieves. It was inevitable. The thieves that accompanied JusticeMan were ignorant and would sometimes die while hunting.

“Why is it hard to hunt? A good armour would make it a little bit safer.”

“Oh, give these to the thieves as a warm consideration.”

“A saint! This person is a saint!”

The thieves were especially thrilled as they had never received the warmth of a woman. Thanks to that, Roco had now established herself as the hidden power in the rehabilitation group. Roco even retained control over JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members. But that was only when Roco was logged on. When Roco wasn't at her desk for even a short while, JusticeMan and the rest of the group got out of control. Without worrying about the budget, they would increase the number of rehabilitated thieves, which was the situation right now.

.....Roco sighed.

“I told you before leaving. All the money has gone into changing the thieves' armour. That's why I told you to take the other rehabilitation members and thieves hunting while I was gone.....at this rate, I don't know how all these men will survive. I will keep repeating it even if it makes me the bad person.”

“That is.....I'm sorry.”

JusticeMan patted her shoulder with a grumpy face.

“It isn't possible to keep on doing that. You must promise instead not to rehabilitate any more thieves from the capital. Until our livelihood improves a little bit, we're only going to concentrate on hunting.”

“We'll do as you said.”

JusticeMan replied, scratching his head with an embarrassed expression.

“In fact, the guys that we rehabilitated this time knows the location of the hyungs that we were looking for. Can’t I rehabilitate just that guy? It would make it easier.”

“Ajusshi!”

Roco shouted, causing JusticeMan to flinch.

“Jeez, you know that thing is difficult. Understood.....If we move immediately then we’ll be able to return to Selebrid to watch Ark fight in the tournament. Ark is also spending a while in this map.....”

At the mention of Ark, Roco’s expression relaxed. After she pulled out her bag and checked the balance, she shook her head.

“Okay, I’ll allow it one more time.”

“I see. Understood!”

“Then please take off those clothes for the time being. Ayu, it smells. That was from one day? Jjak-tung oppa, please collect all the thieves clothes as well.”

“Huh? Understood. Hey you guys, take off your armour!”

Although she washed out her eyes, while looking after JusticeMan, the rehabilitation members and the thieves, her housekeeping skills blossomed. Cooking, laundry, cleaning and so on.....

And in the online game, additional effects were added for those skills. Roco was especially skilled with laundry. If she washed any cloth or leather armour, its defense would increase by 5% for up to 4 hours. Of course, that was a side effect of her doing the laundry. Because it was a too realistic game, she had to do the laundry in order to get rid of the bad smells. Although she didn’t say anything, deep down it was hard for her to bear.

“At any rate, men are similar to children and women.”

Roco pouted as she headed to the stream with the laundry. A person tilted his head to the side and asked sullenly.

“By the way, doesn’t Roco seem exceptionally excited these days?”

“Huhuhu, I know why.”

Jjak-tung replied with a laugh.

“Roco is also a woman.”

At that time, Ark had an 8 game winning streak and was in the quarter-finals. Obviously, the fights became increasingly difficult. Even though he had some PVP experience, there was still a variety of professions Ark hadn’t fought against yet. In his fights against Anael, Hargen and Leo, all of them were warriors. Since every profession has unique skills, he would get lost every time. In addition, the pairs match wasn’t a simple 1 on 1 fight. That means he would have to deal with both opponents instead of just one. The combination of professions people could select in a multiple profession RPG game was a very important factor.

By themselves, a warrior would be able to face 5 monsters, but if they were joined by a cleric then they would be able to fight against fifteen or even twenty monsters. The charm of an RPG game wasn’t ‘1+1=2,’ but it was more exciting if it was times time that and reached 100. And there was a combination of professions that were most effective in a pairs match.

The combination of warrior and necromancer in the first fight was one of the most common. The warrior-priest, warrior-archer, magician-priest, magician-thief.....Due to the number of combinations,

there were infinite strategies available and the users should research and develop their own strategies. One combination that was particularly hard to deal with was the combination of magician-magician they met in the top 16. The damage of the magician that was over level 100 was enormous. When their advanced fire magic, 30% of his health was lost with one blow. But the true threat with a magician-magician combination was the 'Willpower Exchange.'

'Willpower exchange' was the sharing of magic among the magicians. When 'Willpower exchange' was activated, mana could be shared among the magicians and the spell damage was also doubled. The horrible fire magic which decreased his health by 50% with one blow was created. Thanks to that, Ark and Shambala were in a critical condition.

If Ark tried to use 'Riposte' in a moment of crisis then he would just be completely roasted. On the other hand, the match became less tricky once Ark used his nursing skill.

Their main weapon was the mental-based magic. However, Ark used his nursing skill to increase their resistance to the mental magic and received a 'Heart of the Caretaker' bonus. The nursing skill had a surprisingly powerful effect on the match. When nursing was used, the strength and willpower of the receiver would rise. Although it didn't directly recover health, an increase in willpower would strengthen their natural resilience. When the resilience increased, it was similar to receiving an overall stat buff.

A combination that was even trickier was the warrior-warrior pair they fought in the next match. Just like Justin, they doped themselves just before entering the stadium. When looking at them, he instantly thought of the phrase 'money is power.' They spent dozens of gold on potions which they stacked up 3 times, and appeared in the tournament with huge bodies. In order to reach the top 8, they probably invested hundreds of gold. But after Ark had met the doped up warrior from the first round, he made his own preparations. The system allowed for Ark to use his survival cooking and raise his stats in the match. First of all, Ark and Shambala were good to each other. The two of them had a good impression of each other from the first time they met and that applied to when they fought together. It was like their hands and feet were well suited together. At first, Ark thought it was because Shambala had trained in martial arts just like him, but in the tournament he realized it wasn't so simple. He had met many people in the Evil Silrion who also learnt martial arts. Indeed, the tournament format tended to have higher odds for people who learnt martial arts. However, they didn't match well with Ark and Shambala.

Although they only learnt it later, but it was the influence from their two professions.

Dark Walker and Saint Assassin. They were two professions with similar skills and characteristics, and there were many times when their function strangely complemented each other.

For example.....

“Petrification of Blood!

Shambala used his ‘Petrification of Blood’ skill. When the skill was used, red spots would appear it was possible to stun the opponent for 20 seconds. But their defensive power at the time was at 500% so it wasn’t possible for him to do any damage. It was a skill that was used so that he could deal with a large number of enemies. However, the situation was different when Ark followed up with an attack.

“Dark blade!”

An attack that ignored defense and landed a critical hit! In the end, the 500% increase to defense was like a sandfish. They suffered continuous critical hits in their petrified state. Was it only that? Above all, the degree of harmony for the two of them was the best for basic skills. Ark learned Sword-Hand combat, which was a technique that took advantage of any gaps in the enemies attack. On the other hand, Shambala used Kung Fu which had the effect of creating a gap in the opponent’s attack. Their natural battle system was that Shambala would create a gap which Ark would take advantage of to attack.

Of course, it wasn’t easy to use this battle system in the Evil Silrion where the fight was always changing every moment. But using Shambala’s Kung Fu skills, it wasn’t difficult to overcome those problems. In fact, Shambala’s standard was quite high and it wasn’t easy for Ark to follow in the early stages. As the fights continued, Ark gradually managed to match Shambala’s pace.

‘Honestly, I hate to admit it.....’

Lee Myung-ryong’s training showed no effect on the outside. But sparring with boxing, wrestling and taekwondo developed his ability to adapt to circumstances.

“Now, Ark!”

Shambala shouted as he stabbed the warrior with his dagger. Ark used Shambala like a stair case and flew forward. The warrior was astonished and lifted his sword above his head. However, Ark stepped on the shield and landed behind him, turned and then kicked the warrior in the head.

“No way!”

The warrior stumbled as he received a critical hit. At the same time, Shambala’s and Ark’s eyes were glittering. Afterwards, Shambala attacked with a whirlwind.

Ark continued with a spin kick. Shambala’s attack had the possibility of stunning the opponent. Abnormal conditions could be caused by Ark’s kicks, but the probability was quite low. However, when the opponent was hit by two different attacks, the probabilities increased. Once they were trapped, it was impossible for them to escape. Thus, it was named ‘Whirlwind of Death.’ In the end, the warrior’s body shrivelled like a balloon because the doping effects disappeared and died.

The magic eye had been watching while holding his breath and finally shouted.

-They did it! Dark Wolf and Blue Sword! They defeated the favourites, who were like monsters thanks to the various medications, using surprising acrobatics and advanced to the top 4! As expected, the last winning combination was the Whirlwind of death!

“That’s it! I paid the expensive entrance fee to see that combo today!”

-Ohhh, Blue Sword was great, but the biggest event in this tournament right now is Dark Wolf. Who would have expected? Everybody is talking about the unknown Dark Wolf who appeared for the first time in this tournament! Combined with Blue Sword who has won several times in the solo tournaments, they have quickly broken through the top 8! There is a sold out crowd every time they have a match! Bravo!

“Wahahah!”

“Dark Wolf and Blue Sword are the best!”

Under thunderous applause, Ark and Shambala returned to the waiting room.

‘Huhuhu, this feeling is surprisingly good?’

Ark had a satisfied smile. The sound of thousands of spectators applauding was quite inspiring for his mood. At first, it was just frightening but after he adapted, it became exhilarating pleasure.

“You’re now quite a decent partner.”

“Grrrr, good? This much is perfect.”

“Don’t be too giddy. There are still two matches left.”

“Grrrrr, I know.”

“Anyway, the tournament has ended for today. Let’s separate for the rest of the day.’

“Grr? Where do you go so busily every day?”

“There is something I must discover in Selebrid. It’s information related to my profession so you don’t need to know the details. Anyway, don’t be late to the match tomorrow.”

Shambala said as he changed his mask and mantle in the waiting room. He changed his mask and mantle so that people wouldn’t recognize Shambala. Of course, since Ark could transform his face he didn’t have to worry about that. However, once he transformed he couldn’t reuse it for 24 hours. When they left the waiting room, they had to leave separately.

“Look, it’s Dark Wolf!”

“Wah, his force is really different!”

When Ark exited the Evil Silrion, people’s interest was immediately concentrated on him. Normally, their attention would be a burden but at the moment, he had changed into a wolf form. If people continued to be interested in him while transformed then there was no need to be worried about his normal state. He didn’t have to worry about other people’s gaze while doing event quests.

‘I’m also depending on it to compete safely in the Evil Silrion.’

Ark smile warmly. At first, he hadn’t been happy about participating in the Evil Silrion since it didn’t give any money or experience. However, as he continued fighting in the matches he discovered a unexpected effect.

‘My skill proficiency increases several times faster!’

During a fight, his skill proficiency would go up considerably. When thinking about it, it was the inevitable result. In New World, skill proficiency wasn’t affected by how much it was used. The important thing was how intensively it was used. Because of that, the skill always increased faster when fighting against a monster that he had met for the first time. When fighting something for the first time, he is always much more concentrated. However, no matter how difficult the monster, they would become easy after killing them several times. This was because they had a certain pattern of attack so the growth of his skills would slow down. In the Evil Silrion, he was always fighting opponents with new styles. In addition, his opponents weren’t ordinary monsters.

They were users armed with a variety of skills, just like Ark! When he fought against someone of high standard, of course his skill would grow at a tremendous speed. Thanks to that, his Sword Mastery increased to the advanced level.

“Skill check!”

Sword-Hand Combat (Advanced, Passive 316/500):You have become an expert in Sword-Hand combat. You are able to use any kind of swordsmanship and the destructive power would also increase. You will receive additional damage on every type of sword as well as knuckles, and your evasion rate and critical hit probability would increase.

* Additional effects: Chance of a kick hitting a small monster 8%, medium monster 5% and 2% chance of causing an abnormal status on a large monster. When difficult techniques succeed, the probability of causing an abnormal status increases.

Increasing his basic skill raised his general attack power. Furthermore, the probability of triggering an abnormal state also increased. That was the reason that the Whirlwind of death was possible in the last match.

His adrenaline and counter attack skills also increased to the intermediate level. When adrenaline rose, his reaction rate in a critical condition also rose, and the chances of a successful counterattack also increased. Naturally, his chain skill Riposte became more powerful as well. It was even possible to succeed when the warrior was further than 10 metres away from him!

‘There is no other great place to raise my skills.’

Ark also experience situations where the skill growth would stop and that was useful information.

“Master, I’m here.”

Then, someone called from the side alley. It was Dedric who was transformed into a small boy with slicked back hair. Ark laughed as he approached Dedric.

“Grrrrrr, how was it? The odds are?”

“Because you’ve kept winning, the odds fell a little bit. This time it was 1.2. Here is 76 gold.”

“Kukuku, the upper limit is high and the earning is better than before.”

In fact, this was one of the reasons why Ark didn’t summon Dedric during the match.

It was a tournament where people could bet money on the pair that would win. Of course, the gambling part of the Evil Silrion had a few limitations in order to prevent fraud. First, users and NPCs could only bet on the user's victory when the match was a user versus a monster. This was intentional so that they wouldn't rig a game against the monster. And for the tournaments where it was user against user, there was an upper limit that existed when betting money. The first match 10 gold, second match 20 gold.....It also wasn't possible to double the amount of profits received. In addition, participants were unable to participate directly in the gambling. But Ark couldn't miss out on the chance to make money. Before the tournament started, Ark summoned Dedric in order to make money. Of course, he had every intention of winning the bets. In the first round, he scraped all his money together from selling japtem and bet 10 gold. The odds for the first round were 1.8. It was quite high. Shambala was a strong favourite even though Ark was unknown, and Justin and Dior were also well known names so the dividends were raised. Thanks to that he made 18 gold, and the odds in the second round was 1.5 so he made back 27 gold. The increased awareness of Ark meant that the odds kept on getting lower. But because the upper limit restriction rose, he could still earn money and he made at least 10 gold with every match. When there were two or three games a day, he earned an average of 20-30 gold.

'Although I'm not completely satisfied, the earnings are acceptable.'

'Where there is a will then there is money.'

That was Ark's motto. Ark laughed while holding the purse, and when he noticed Dedric asked.

"Master, you feel good right? Am I not a good person because of I made you money? So give me some money so I can buy food."

"Grrrrrrr, what the?"

Ark's countenance immediately stiffened. In Selebrid, there were thousands of street venders where users gathered. Merchants who have learnt to cook would make tempting snacks and sell them. Although Dedric claimed to be 300 years old, his appearance was that of a young boy.

"Grrr, I don't always make disgusting food!"

"Ugh, how is that food? It's torture."

“Noisy, the outer appearance is not the only thing plausible about food. Isn’t it known that food that is good for you tastes bitter? Instead of talking, you should eat the food I give you.”

“Sometimes I also want to eat tasty food! It’s unjust money! Since you came by the money unjustly, can’t it be used sometimes? I even went to the Evil Silrion and did some unfair gambling for you.”

“Grrrrrr! Unjust money?”

Ark snorted and said.

“What do you think all our money is used for? Your master has fought with blood, sweat and tears to make money. Don’t you know I did that in order for us to live and eat well? Do you know how money was used to make you grow well?”

“Sheesh, and now you want pocket money What about clothes? The cost of the ingredients also wasn’t free.”

“I bought expensive spices and ingredients and poured it into the food you ate.....doesn’t that also cost money? And I also wasted a lot of money and sweat educating you guys. Man, tears are obscuring my sight. Nevertheless, haven’t I still been earning money for you? Yet you want to make me a beggar?”

“Sheesh, is it that difficult for you to part with 5 copper?”

“When copper is gathered it becomes silver and then silver becomes gold.”

This was Ark’s unchanging view on life. In the real world, Ark would never spend money on anything except the minimum calories needed to survive. Even if the weather became chilly and the roadside stalls sent him tempting looks, Ark never succumbed to the temptation. But now his pet was trying to tempt him to part with money? Over food? Although he was frugal with his money, he was happy to buy a fruit basket for his mother.

“Then do you want me to make a similar food for you?”

“Whoa, it’s dirty and black. I won’t eat, don’t make me eat it! Damn, I met the wrong master!”

He got annoyed with Dedric and returned him to the Netherworld.

‘Hmm, is it time to discipline those guys again?’

Deimos had become distracted with bones while Dedric was openly rebellious.

‘Since I have a lot of time these days, should I discipline them?’

Ark was seriously contemplating it. Suddenly someone’s voice was heard from inside the alley.

“Are you really certain?”

“Don’t worry. This tournament is a joke for us.”

“Only two people are needed.”

The voice spoke from somewhere. Since it was a dark night, he was cautious. Ark hid his body using ‘Stealth’ and peeked inside the alley.

‘Are they.....?’

Inside the alley were users from the Evil Silrion. It was the user wearing the mask with a five star design. It was the two pioneers that were eager to fight Shambala. Three hooded people with large builds were confronting them. The three of them observed the surroundings before taking a large breath.

“Although we recruited players using our information network, all of them have fallen. Now you two are the only ones remaining.”

"I told you so from the beginning. Other people aren't needed if we're there. Thanks to that, the number of matches increased and thousands of hours wasted. You morons."

"But....."

"But if the identity of the secret map is correct, then we would have the money to hire as much people as we want. You wouldn't be so eager for an ordinary treasure map. Did you obtain some useful information?"

"That, I can't tell you that. It is top secret information....."

After he was pressed, the person inside the hood used confused words. Then, the eyes of the pioneer Jewel narrowed.

"Well, that's okay. We aren't particularly interested. Only a beginner cares about treasure maps. But about that earlier price you promised."

"Yes? What is it? Didn't we already sign a contract with the NPC?"

"We did. But we did so thinking it wouldn't take that much time. You didn't believe us and hired more guys so it has taken twice as long. Naturally we should revise the agreement. Don't you think? After looking at the situation, I think it should be twice as much. An extra 1000 gold to the promised 500. So 1,500 gold in total."

"We don't have that type of money!"

One hooded person took a deep breath and exclaimed.

"If you don't like it then we can just cancel the agreement. And I'll search for other people to buy the map. Well, we could also search for the treasure directly."

“If you break the contract.....”

The penalty of breaking a contract didn't only apply to the merchant who made it. If a contract was signed and received, then the penalty applied to everyone involved. But strangely, Jewel just laughed and said.

“We're pioneers. Do you think we're scared of something like that?”

“.....It isn't useful to you. But 1000 gold is important for the person that would lose it.”

“That's our requirement.”

Jewel spoke in a firm tone. Of course, Jewel had no thoughts about treasure hunting. But there was a reason the people that hired her wanted that specific item. Perhaps it had information about enormous profit or was related to a quest or profession. Therefore, she had no intention of transferring it obediently for the agreed upon price. Ark who was hiding also nodded.

‘Hmmm, Jewel knows how to make a deal.’

In this situation, it wasn't possible to assume that Jewel was bad. Rather, the weakness that the hooded person showed was bad. Therefore, it was natural to attempt to get as much profit as possible. Anyway, the hooded users exchanged worried glances. But in the end they were forced to agree.

“Okay. 1,500 gold.”

“Good. Have it prepared for when the two matches end tomorrow.”

Jewel spoke in a satisfied look and disappeared out of the other side. The hooded figures immediately cursed.

“Sheesh, they're like robbers, 1500 gold for one tournament!”

It's times like these that I feel like I chose the wrong profession. Hyung-nim."

"Although it's regrettable, we have no other choice. We have to believe in those guys."

"But it is 1,500 gold.....wouldn't we be struggling as soon as we lose all that money?"

"You don't have to worry."

The man they called hyung-nim muttered in a low voice.

"This is the quest that a Grandmaster from one of the top guilds gave directly. The other day, I heard that one person who received a grandmaster quest took two months to complete it. The compensation he received was a rare skill and an additional 4,000 gold. In other words, the reward for this quest would be a minimum of 4,000 gold."

The eyes of the rest of the hooded figures turned to gold. It was an obvious response. 4,000 gold! That was 40 million won!

"But for now we must sell our items and make 1,050 gold. Those guys don't appear likely to help us without that."

One hooded figure rummaged through their pockets before sighing.

"We still have time before the finals. We'll find a way to raise the money in the meantime."

"Hukhukhuk, does that mean an additional debt?"

"Don't cry. It's not good to become too indebted. But think of it as an investment. It is really lucky that I have received the Grandmaster's quest. No matter what happens, we have to seize this opportunity to live. We're betting everything on this."

“Yes, I understand. But even if we obtain the supplementary prize, the other 2 items are in those guys hands. What is your plan?”

“Hu hu hu.”

The man called Hyung-nim wore a wily smile.

“That’s why this supplementary prize is especially important. If we are holding one of the three clues then those guys can’t find the treasure. It would become useless to them. Then, you offer them a deal for a sneak peek.”

“Would they easily accept the deal?”

“That’s our specialty. We’ll persuade them and have the contract be stamped with a seal. Well, we can also use other methods. The important thing is that we have one of the clues. If we don’t then there is no chance for us.”

“As expected of Hyung-nim!”

“Huhuhu, that’s right.

“Huhuhuhu. It’s like that.”

The hooded figures laughed sinisterly.

‘What the, this is?’

Ark stared blankly from directly behind them.....