

Ark Vol 6 C 4

Chapter 4

ACT 4 Finals

‘How many quests does this item overlap with?’

Ark’s mind became complicated. When he received the quest, he didn’t think it was that serious. He expected some decent compensation. He decided that it was only a little bit better than normal quests. But that wasn’t the case. Whenever there was a quest where a specific item was needed and there were no limitations on the number of that item, then there would be many people who have received the quest. If one restriction of the quest was friendship points, then the items couldn’t be shared. Several people would receive the quest and consequently most of them were bound to fail.

‘In order for me to receive the quest, it was necessary to have a lot of friendship points with the Magic Institute. Shambala received the quest from a quest item. As the items couldn’t be shared, one of them had to give up the quest. But there were also other people who received the quest?’

Furthermore, the place where they received the quest wasn’t ordinary. Last night, Ark shadowed the three people. But he soon lost them in a restricted area. The place where they went to was Midus, the merchant guild.

‘They said they received the quest from the Grandmaster. Then.....?’

The Grandmaster was probably from the Merchant Guild. Ark’s employer was also the Grandmaster of the Magic Institute. In other words two of the top three guilds, the Magic Institute and the Merchant Guild were involved. So let’s think about it. The NPCs of New World don’t move abruptly without any justification. This was the justification of the Grandmaster of the Magic Institute. Since Magaro was a member of the Magic Institute, the research materials that he left behind belonged to them. Therefore, it was justifiable to regain it. Then what about the Grandmaster of the Merchant Guild? There was no obvious reason at the moment. However, he had a small idea. Magaro was a well-known genius alchemist. The research from his later years would therefore be worth a lot of money. Even if it wasn’t directly used by the Merchant Guild, it was possible to use it in political negotiations with the Magic Institute. That was the rough idea that he immediately thought of.

'The three big guilds are political rivals. Naturally they would spy on and try to outmanoeuvre each other. And the movement of the Magic Institute was trying to discover Magaro's lost legacy. Then the Merchant Guild quickly took action. If so.....Shambala finding the diary might be 100% due to chance, but the appearance of the secret map in the Evil Silrion shows that it might not be a coincidence. The Merchant Guild is probably behind this tournament in order to discover the other users who have found clues.....'

Perhaps it wasn't only the Merchant Guild.

'While normally 100 people participate on average, this tournament had more than 1,000 applications. Many large guilds are also gathering to go to Nagaran.'

The hooded figures hired some players, but it was impossible for them to have hired 900 people. In that case, maybe other powers have intervened in the quest.

"Then out of the three guilds, the one with the highest chances of intervening is the Warrior Guild. The quest is probably something similar to bringing them the injury prize from this tournament.....if that is the case....."

The situation was becoming quite interesting. Of course, Ark wasn't interested in something like the three guilds' power struggle. He also wasn't didn't want to compete with other users for the quest. The point that Ark found interesting was that the Merchant Guild made its move following the Grandmaster of the Magic Institute's action. This meant that there was likely to be a huge reward!

'If the guy who received a quest from the Grandmaster was rewarded with 4,000 gold, then the compensation for this quest would be at least that much!'

Without a doubt, it would be a large amount of money! Indeed, the hooded men were willing to pay 1,500 gold to Jewel for the secret map. Money was the most important thing to a merchant. If the rewards for the quest was uncertain, they wouldn't have been willing to part with that amount of money. In other words, this quest was guaranteed to have a large profit!

'I could get thousands of gold from one quest!'

Ark's pupils turned to gold. If he did well then he might be rewarded with rare potions or scrolls as well as gold.

'Huhuhu, unexpectedly I received some good information. I'm lucky that I transformed myself. While I can guess their real identities, they can't guess mine. I have the upper hand.'

Ark hid the information from Shambala. Shambala still didn't know how large this quest was. Since he had already received the quest, he only wanted to complete it if it was possible. However, if he knew about the huge reward then he might change his mind.

In the worst case, he might require more in exchange for the diary.

'That's not possible. This is my quest! My money!'

And Shambala couldn't afford to listen to such talk. The semi-finals and finals were on the same day. 1 hour ago, Ark and Shambala had won in the semi-finals and now they were waiting for the next match in the waiting room.

In the meantime, Shambala sat down with crossed legs and closed his eyes. The posture of a person who learnt Kung Fu and was concentrating his mind was remarkable. Thanks to that, Ark was unable to breathe properly and sat a distance away. Then, a shout was heard along the suddenly loud passages.

-The opponents for the winners of the previous match, team 14 Blue Sword and Dark Wolf have been decided! It is team 89 who defeated their opponents in only 3 minutes with overwhelming skill!

Now the only match remaining is to determine the final winner. In 5 minutes, a special match will be held and then it will be the final match of the hotter than ever 186th Pairs tournament!

Shambala's eyes flashed in response to the televised announcement. His eyes moved to Ark."As expected, the final opponents are the pioneers."

“Arc, this time we’ll fight separately.”

“Grr?”

“Among the pioneers, the magician Jewel is mine. I have to pay back my debt. With my own hands.....”

“Is this because of what happened the other day?”

He had surprisingly childish parts to him. Ark asked with a smile. However, Shambala spoke seriously with no signs of a laugh.

“That’s not the reason. Because this game was not the first time that I’ve seen the ID Jewel.”

Once he looked in his eyes, Ark realized that there was another serious matter. If it was an NPC, they would kindly listen but if it was a user then they would question it closely. But if it didn’t have anything to do with the quest or the money then he wasn’t interested. When his 40 year old uncles would drink alcohol and recite history, he had no interest. Fortunately, Shambala didn’t make a fuss with his story.

“Anyway, in this tournament let’s go with individual combat. I think even Jewel intends to fight this way.”

“Grrr, I also prefer it like that.....”

Even though simple, a magician’s magic could vary widely depending on the type they studied. Therefore, magic had the largest scope of study.

If someone prefers dealing elemental damage, they would become a sorcerer that has a lot of magic to deal with many opponents. There was also a wide variety of magical buffs but the one that was used by two or more magicians ‘Willpower exchange’ was particularly outstanding. That’s why magicians favoured being in a party the most. Meanwhile, the Warlock was a dark magician that specialized in PVP. Warlocks had no magic to help in a party. Instead their buff or protective magic could only be used on

themselves, and they were often clad in something to increase their damage. In New World, the warlock was the ultimate damage dealer.

“Grrr, are you sure you can beat her by yourself?”

“I honestly don’t know.”

Ark was slightly amazed at Shambala’s answer. He thought that Shambala was confident about winning. Naturally, the pioneers were strong. But if it was the confident Shambala saying this, then his partner wasn’t behaving boldly anymore.

“Are they that strong? The pioneers?”

“I fought them one month ago. I clearly remember the memory from that time and used it for image training. The amount of victories was 7 to 3. It wasn’t unexpected for Jewel who had been fighting for a month. So at that point it was considered 5 to 5.”

“Grrr, it’s the case where I wouldn’t be able to understand until I see it in person.”

Shambala silently nodded.

“That’s right. I haven’t fought against a warlock yet. Therefore, individual combat might be easier than fighting together. Since I don’t know how great the pioneers are, let’s just go out and try it.”

Then, after the special match ended the loudspeaker made an announcement again. The final match will begin in 10 minutes. After Ark heard the broadcast, he immediately took out his pot.

“The only thing I can do is prepare for some bleeding. Okay. Bleeding is released. Snake, please give me the materials for ‘Racing Cocktail’, ‘Hot Syrup Cake’, and ‘Drink with refreshing taste.’

Ssak ssak ssak!

At Ark's command, Snake spat out a handful of ingredients. It was quite annoying looking through his bag every time he wanted to make a dish. Therefore he made Snake remember each recipe off by heart, so that it could spit out the ingredients just from the name of the dish. Thanks to that, the time hunting for ingredients was reduced and he could grasp the different flavours of the dish.

'What happens to the pets also depends on the master.'

The price of Snake's effort was a simple stroke on the head sometimes. Anyway, it was already the final match. If they lost then all his efforts so far would be in vain.

Ark also used ingredients that weren't easy to find in his dishes. The cocktail increases the reaction rate, the cake boosted power while the drinks boosted magical resistance and so on.....they were rare dishes without any side effects. Of course, it was less effective than the drugs that the warriors would dope themselves with. However, doping drugs were often only for warriors. Maybe because the effects of the drug were strong, but the warrior's physical strength was needed to resist it completely. On the other hand, his dishes had no restriction on the professions and the duration was also longer than the drugs. And it was much cheaper. If Ark wanted to make a dish with a similar effect to the drugs then it would cost him 100 gold. Even so, the sight of a black wolf squatting down to cook was.....a little strange.

"Grrr, it's done!"

Anyway, Ark instantly produced a buffet style meal. It was ten medicinal dishes that Ark had carefully selected.

"Shambala, I'll do my best to help you with your revenge. So eat to your heart's content."

"Thank you."

Shambala picked a dish and looked impressed before eating it. Ark's eyes flashed at the sight.

"I'm also a person. Because it's hot, the price is half off. One dish is 5 gold."

“.....”

Shambala coughed as he was caught and stared at Ark. Was he really trying to get money from this? His glowing eyes seemed to ask. Ark silently nodded his head.

“Catering is expensive you know? But that’s between you and me. Since I took of the labour costs, shouldn’t you be thankful?”

Shambala was at a loss for words.

Putt putt pow!

The tournament had spread out for a long time over six days and it was finally time for the final match. As expected for the finals, the stage and special effects was really different. When Ark and Shambala entered the stadium, colourful fireworks were lit up and the stadium had been divided into four arenas which had the attention of as many as 10,000 spectators. Because there were an unprecedented number of participants, users and NPCs flocked like bees. There were even VIP seats at the stadium, where the nobility NPC stood out.

-Now, they have come! The brave black wolf warrior who has heated up the Evil Silrion even though he is new, Dark Wolf! And the undisputed leader of the solo matches who won many times, Blue Sword! Please give a huge round of applause!

“Wah ah ah!”

“At last. Please give us an excellent show!”

“I bet 100 gold on you guys!”

The crowd screamed as they gained momentum.

-And confronting them are Jewel and Duke. Surprisingly, they were the first strangers to walk on this land and are known as the first foreigners, a pioneer. They also showed amazing ability and finished every match within 3 minutes. A fight with the rising newcomers against the pioneers! No one can expect what kind of match will occur when the old and new warriors clash.....Oh, as expected the odds are even at 1.5-1.5 each!

The pioneers Jewel and Duke were introduced by the magic eye and appeared on the opposite side.

-Now, these warriors who have defeated numerous enemies to reach the final match stand confronting each other. Do I need to say anything more? Let's start the match immediately. First, let's select the arena.....

The eyeballs of the magic eye rolled around. Its eyes turned silver and looked like a slot machine.

'Pandemonium!'

A vague smile spread on Ark's mouth. Pandemonium was an arena that he had already experienced. It was a place where the ancient ruins of the game were spread. It was laid out like a complicated labyrinth, making it difficult to remember the way. But the most extraordinary aspect of this fight was the roof. Roof.....That's right. Pandemonium was crafted like a dungeon!

'Luck has followed me.'

A battle in the darkness was something that Ark naturally desired. As a Dark Walker, Ark received a 40% boost to all his abilities in the darkness. Thanks to that, he was around level 140 without any special doping. It was also possible to use 'stealth' in this situation. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that this arena seemed especially crafted for Ark. In addition, Shambala was a Saint Assassin and assassins also received various bonuses in the dark that was equal to Ark's. Then Jewel muttered in the distance.

"If it's Pandemonium.....do you remember fighting here in the past? That match where you became like a dust cloth?"

"Grr?"

Ark looked at Shambala in surprise after the unexpected words. Shambala muttered with an expression that looked like he was chewing poo.

“Jewel’s profession is a Dark Stalker among the warlocks. The bonus that she gets from the dark is just as good as ours. And there are many powerful spells that can be used only in the dark. The dungeon arena won’t give us any advantages.”

Damn, his excitement was quickly released.

“But it doesn’t matter. Since it’s like this, I can return the favour.”

When the arena was determined, the magic eye was so excited that its blood pressure immediately increased.

-Oh, as expected the warriors refuse to budge in this battle of nerves. However, it will be decided by who is stronger, not their words! So, begin!

“Go!” Bang bang double bang! The arena shook with loud vibrations. Pillars sprung up and the dark and massive ruins were created. Of course, the voice of the magic eye and the spectators couldn’t be heard any more from the interior. But those watching from outside the arena had no difficulties viewing the interior.

As soon as the match started, Shambala used Blink to reach Jewel.

“Huhuhu, this punk. Don’t be hasty. There’s no time limit so let’s do this slowly.”

Jewel laughed and scattered like fog as she flew to one side. It was the rare skill of the Dark Stalker that was only available in the darkness. It was Mist. The body changed into fog and it was a skill which increase speed and dramatically raised the evasion rate.

“Your opponent is me. The other guys don’t matter.”

“Ho oh, is this a 1 on 1 match? I have no reason to refuse. Warp!”

“Dark Wolf, I’ll leave Duke to you!”

Jewel used spatial movement magic to move Shambala to a different area. In order to use spatial magic, it required at least 7 circles of magic. It was barely even possible for magicians that used ‘Willpower exchange.’ The person who used such magic calmly was his opponent.

It meant that the lowest level possible was a level 160 magician. Additionally, what was even more important than the level was the type of magic used. Levels were insignificant to magicians.

‘When it is to that degree, it is impossible to guess whether Shambala would win or not.’

However, it wasn’t the time to be worried about Shambala. An arrow suddenly flew at him from the darkness.

‘Archer! Duke was an archer?’

Ark was surprised and avoided the attack by rolling his body.

‘As an opponent, archers aren’t that difficult!’

Ark stood up and held his position. After measuring the timing of Duke’s movements, he swung his sword like lightning. Riposte! The arrow returned to Duke at a faster speed than it had flown earlier. If he was good enough to enter the finals, then arrows of that degree were easily avoided. Ark expected Duke to dodge the arrow, and aimed for the moment when he would dodge. Then Duke’s lip stealthily raised.

“Nice move. Has your skill been trained to return this many arrows?”

Tu tu tu tung-!

Incredible rapid fire! Duke whipped out dozens of arrows and fired them at a dazzling speed. Ark managed to return 3~4 of the continuously firing arrows while the rest were flying at him. In a moment of carelessness, 1 arrow was driven into his shoulder.

“Ugh!”

-The arrow has caused a critical hit! 300 damage! Your attack speed will decrease by 10% for 30 seconds.

Even with his increased defense thanks to the dishes, he still received 300 damage.

The only penalty to long distance attacks was that the archer's attack speed was slow. However, Duke was faster than the sword. It couldn't be that high because of the archery skill level. He probably had various passive skills that would increase attack speed.

‘He is also a pioneer.....!’

However, Ark just tediously tried to face the archer. Luckily, there was a weak point to rapid fire. The speed was so quick that accuracy fell. The arrows flew over 10 feet, and only some of them got within 1 foot of Ark.

‘Then I don't have to be afraid of blind arrows!’

Ark stopped the arrows that reached him while using appropriate avoidance measures with the rest. And little by little he narrowed the distance between them using explosive acceleration. Duke realized and protested with an arrow! The chances of striking a critical hit was the timing.

‘Got it!’

It was at that time. Suddenly light emerged from Duke's shoes and he slid back a few metres. Thanks to that, Ark attacked in vain and was hit in the side by an arrow shot by Duke.

‘Ugh, that, that was.....!’

“Kukukuk. Magic shoes of this calibre can’t be seen anymore.”

‘Shoes? You mean that just now was an item effect?’

Ark looked at Duke’s shoes with surprised eyes. The reason that an archer wasn’t able to fight directly with a warrior was their stance. Warriors could wield a sword from any position. However, archers had to hold their position to draw the bow. Of course, it wasn’t possible to do a proper attack when the warrior’s sword was swinging at them.

However, Duke’s shoes ignored that penalty. Gliding didn’t move his feet, so he could still hold his stance and shoot while avoiding attacks. That’s right. That was the scary point of the pioneers that Shambala pointed out straight away. While unusually high skills was a problem, the real worry was about their items. The pioneers had already hunted in the high-level areas in the early stages and selected all sorts of rare items. Duke smirked and shouted.

“The core of online gaming is the equipment.”

Ark ground his teeth together. Of course he knew. Equipment was very important to online gaming. But Ark believed that it wasn’t everything. If equipment was everything, wouldn’t that mean that a person who started late wouldn’t ever be able to catch up with them? He didn’t ever want to admit that. That was why he carefully raised his skills from the bottom up and never skipped exercising every day. No, equipment wasn’t everything in New World!

“Damn, Dark Dance!”

It was the skill that significantly increased his evasion rate! Ark stepped on the red footprints that floated on the ground and disappeared like a ghost. At the same time, Duke again used rapid fire. However, Ark swung his sword at all the arrows at an incredible pace. Duke began to look puzzled as his evasion movements continued.

Crunch, tu tu tu tung, bang, tu tu tu tung! Duke slid back with the magic shoes while using rapid fire. Ark moved like a ghost using Dark Dance and wielded his sword. He didn’t even look up at the fighting magician that was randomly using warp.

He was able to understand the two locations using the sparkle of the sword and the arrow in the darkness. Naturally, Ark and Duke confirmed the opponents with their eyes and attacked. If he could intuitively grasp the path of the opponent, then he would be able to break through the barrage of attacks. And this was Ark's specialty.

"Ugh, this guy."

Thanks to Dark Dance, Duke retreated with a groan. Ark attacked between arrows, so Duke was hit three or four times with the sword. However, Ark was the one confused. Even with the various dishes and a bunch of bonus darkness attribute stats, only 10% of Duke's health was decreased even though he was hit three or four times. Either his health was ridiculously high, or his armour was loaded with defensive stats. No, if he was a pioneer then both reasons were probably applicable. Still, he couldn't make any attacks with Dark Blade. But Ark soon braced himself.

'If it's this much, then it is worth doing!'

"Hmm, a frontal confrontation is troublesome as expected. It's better to enjoy myself my way."

Duke slipped around the corner and went into hiding. He was trying to use guerrilla warfare that the terrain was suited for. That was also Ark's specialty, but it was disadvantageous against an archer. If he was showered with arrows from a high place like a balcony, there was no way for him to avoid all of it.

"You must be quite concerned about me if you're trying to leave."

Ark turned the corner. However, the figure of Duke did not appear. It was a large square so no matter how fast he was, he wouldn't have been able to hide himself in time. Then?

'Don't tell me that Duke can also use Stealth?'

Tu tu tu tung!

It was at that time. There was a mechanical sound and countless arrows started falling from the sky.

-You have activated the Poison Arrow trap. 300 damage received.

“Hu hu hu, have you finally noticed?” “Tr-trap? If he can use stealth and traps then.....Ranger!”

His laughter was audible in the darkness. Learning stealth and archery, as well as tracking and using traps was one of the most difficult jobs in the archer profession, the Ranger! That was Duke’s real profession.

Once Duke showed the characteristics of his profession, Ark was immediately backed into a corner. Duke would hide himself with ‘Stealth’ and when Ark got stuck in a trap then he would shoot arrows before running away again. Yet Ark couldn’t follow blindly. That was because he would intentionally invite him into a trap. In the end, it wasn’t possible to do it in this state. But there’s even more. The weak point of ‘Stealth’ was that he couldn’t move without Ark hearing the sound. But since the sound of the shoes sliding were light, Duke couldn’t completely eliminate the sound of his footsteps. So Ark tried to capture the sound.....

Waeeng!

-A Siren’s trap was activated.

Duke overwhelmed Ark in terms of equipment, skills and every other way. Because the level was fixed to 100, the difference was shown even more. Ark’s clothes became wet and he steadily losing health. He also didn’t have an effective way to discover the traps. The traps that Duke used didn’t simply do damage. There were also traps that could bind and stun. If would take falling into just one dangerous trap for him to be defeated. Duke was a pioneer and had already found a way to overcome the weakness of ‘Stealth.’

‘I should have done everything I could in the beginning.....I took it too lightly.’

Ark also had a bag of tricks. His poisonous pet snake. However, if was a huge burden for him to use so early so he didn’t. It was a mistake. He should’ve used it early to make the opponent’s health decrease even more. He missed the timing, and now the circumstances meant that he couldn’t use it easily.

'If I summon my pets now then they won't be any help. Deimos can't avoid the traps, and Dedric was vulnerable to arrows so he would just receive damage instead. And there is no chance to attack with Snake's poison.....'

He was contemplating for a moment before something flashed in Ark's head.

'Pets, poison! Okay, maybe.....!'

"Snake, Paralysis!"

Once his health was reduced to 60%, Ark finally pulled out a trick from his bag.

Ark coated his sword with Snake's poison and walked to the corner where Duke had disappeared, sticking closely to the wall. Then while Deimos was summoned, he hid using 'Stealth.'

"Summon Demon, Deimos. I can only believe in your defense!"

Clack clack clack!

Deimos rushed forward vigorously. Duke had laid out a bunch of traps around the corner.

There was a large roaring sound before visually frightening dust flames and smoke began to spread. Deimos had advanced using his body as a shield. It worked for a while before Deimos was bound in a trap and targeted by arrows.

"Did that stupid guy give up?"

Duke appeared at that time. In the passage shrouded by thick smoke, Deimos was easily mistaken as Ark.

"It's now. Dark Dance!"

Ark quickly rounded the corner and rushed at Duke. He poured a shower of kicks on him.

Duke who had been trying to shoot an arrow never expected the barrage of attacks. He confirmed that it was Deimos a step too late and tried to run away but Ark had barely managed to catch him. Ark used Dark Dance to move around Duke while kicking and swinging his sword. His sword was stained with paralysis poison and his kick could also cause abnormal conditions! Meanwhile, Deimos had also managed to escape from the trap and went behind him to block Duke's attack.

'I have to end it here!'

But Duke's defense surpassed his imagination. Although he was attacked non-stop for 30 seconds, his health did not fall below 50%. But the paralysis condition was stacked up every time an attack hit and was also layered over with other abnormal conditions.

"Damn, this was expensive.....Warp trap!"

Duke installed a trap at his feet using quick hand movements. Then Duke activated the trap and disappeared before appearing 10 metres away. The moment they were in a desperate situation, the pioneer's experience showed its power once again. The warp trap was a trap that allowed him to move to an area where another trap was laid out. The user could also use the traps as a combo on himself. It was a method of escaping that couldn't have been imagined by Ark.

'But his health is already at 40%. I am more advantageous!'

"I will not forgive you!"

Duke protested and pulled out a bunch of arrows that flashed. It was the magic arrows that cost 40 silvers for 1. In addition, it was level 140. It was a high level archery skill where the arrow would explode once it connected with something. When it was shot, a huge explosion immediately occurred in the area. Rocks fell down as flames rose from all sides.

Clack clack, clack clack clack!

Suddenly, Deimos pushed Ark out of the way at a desperate moment. He received all the falling rock and fire damage! He was a pet that overflowed with loyalty. However, Ark wasn't thankful for the loyalty shown.

-Your pet 'Deimos' had been recalled to the Netherworld. You have received 50% of the Familiar's Health as damage.

The problem was that thanks to evolving in the Underground World, Deimos had 1000 health so Ark received 500 damage. He had put all that effort into making Duke's health 40% and now Ark's health was also 40%. Deimos' health was low from the traps so he was forcefully recalled with that last attack.

"Ugh, this, this guy.....!"

Duke had already hidden his body using 'Stealth.'

"Hu hu hu, now your shield has disappeared entirely. Rest assured however. He's not the only one I will kill. I'll slowly crush you."

Duke's voice was heard in the darkness. When he used it, the skill was useful but if it was on the other side then it was an annoying skill.

'Damn, I didn't realise a ranger was this difficult.'

Since then, the same situation was repeated. When he moved to avoid traps, magic arrows would fly from behind him. If he tried to focus on the arrows then a trap would be triggered. After all of that, Ark's health fell to 20%.

-Shambala has used the 'Trill' skill on you. Would you like to accept?

'Shambala? Maybe he managed to defeat Jewel? '

Ark accepted Trill with an expectant look.

-Ark, what is your situation?

-Honestly, not very good. You? Did you perhaps defeat Jewel?

-.....Wrong.

-What?

-That Jewel is even stronger than before. I was trapped in the passages where she used magic I've never seen before. I've managed to reduce her health to 40% but I'm in a critical condition.

-.....Damn it! Are we going to lose to them after all?

Ark ground his teeth together. Even though it was a dark dungeon, it only acted as a penalty to them so far. This was because Jewel and Duke were also of the dark attribute. Even if they had the same dark attribute, their skills were entirely different. Ark and Shambala were close combat specialists. But they were professionals at 'hunting' with all the magic and traps. It was obvious that something like a maze of darkness would be beneficial for close combat and hunting.

-I'm sorry. I shouldn't have proposed an individual battle.

-.....

Ark was silent for a moment. Shambala was already half-way to giving up.

However, Ark had no intention of giving up. If he gave up here, then all his efforts in the last six days would've been worthless. And Magaro's secret map that might show the location of huge amounts of money would be given to the unidentified merchants.

The merchants knew the value of the map so he wouldn't be able to obtain it with money or intimidation. Of course, there was still Ark's fight with Duke remaining. However, if Shambala was

defeated by Jewel then it would be useless. If Shambala was defeated by Jewel then Ark wouldn't be able to handle her as well as Duke.

'If Shambala dies then everything is finished. But Shambala is in a different area. In order to defeat Jewel and Duke, we must join forces.....'

At that time, a thought flashed through Ark's head.

-Shambhala, didn't we previously have a fight in this cave? It was made clear that the ruins were symmetrical. And there is only one pathway that joins both sides.

-So?

-That's it. Let's use it.

-Let's use it? How?

Shambala asked Ark who began to tell him the plan. Then Shambala thought for a while before replying.

-Certainly.....Yes, there is a possibility that it will work.

-We have no choice but to try it. We have to grasp the feeling, because timing is essential for this strategy. If one of us doesn't make it, or the timing is off by even 1 second then the whole thing will fail. Do you understand?

-I know. Then let's apply your strategy for the last match.

-Let's forward it to exactly 1 minute later, I'll see you there!

Once Ark disconnected the communication, he immediately triggered Adelaine's necklace.

It was a method of recovering mana in an emergency. However, this time Ark triggered the necklace for the 40% increase in defense option. With his defensive powers increased, Ark stepped on the traps that he had avoided previously. There was a ringing sound and Ark's body was tied to a tree trunk.

The Chain Trap was activated.

Once the trap worked, Duke immediately appeared and showered him in arrows. Even if he was chained up, he could still move his arm. Ark tried his best to hit all the arrows. However, his health quickly decreased from the rapid fire of the magic arrows. Even though his defense had increased by 40%, by the time the chains came loose he was in a critical condition."Ha ha ha, I finally caught you!"

"This bastard, you're planning to continue as a coward!"

Duke had immediately done a hit and run.

"Hu hu hu, what's the point of a frontal confrontation when you're already in a critical condition? It's nonsense. But did you just intentionally step on a trap? Kukukuk, how stupid! Do you think that I'm so stupid that I wouldn't notice you have something planned? Rangers have to be vigilant until the end. You should taste the hell of the traps again!"

"Even if I die, I'll bring you with me! Summon release, resummon Dedric!"

Ark had been waiting for his spiritual power to recover to 100%.

"Ugh!"

Dedric appeared with a scream. Ark had summoned Dedric to the stadium. Ark had originally summoned Dedric to gamble on the matches in the stadium. Because he was outside, there was no way to communicate with him. However, when he summoned him in an emergency then his former shape was shown. Dedric had looked like a little boy holding the hand of his father, therefore a young boy holding a megaphone appeared in the arena. In addition to that, he had a large piece of bread stuffed in his mouth. While his master was fighting and almost dying, he was just having a snack!

“M-master! A kind ajusshi gave this to me. Really. I would never use the money from the dividends to buy food.”

Dedric couldn't even think of a good excuse. It was like a fish was left to a cat.

Since he had earned quite a lot gambling in the Evil Silrion.....

Ark couldn't enter the gambling place as a participant. Therefore, he used Dedric as a smoke screen who ran around buying snacks with the money. Although he wanted to throw it away, now wasn't the time.

“Shut up and pursue that fellow immediately!”

“Then, this never happened.....”

Damn, more time was being wasted thanks to his cheap tricks.

“I get it so hurry up before that guy gets away! If you lose him then you'll die!”

“Allegiance! Hurray Master!”

Dedric turned into a bat and caught up with Duke. ‘Stealth’ couldn't be used if someone was looking at them. That was the trump card that Ark came up with. When Duke couldn't use ‘Stealth,’ he shot his arrows with a puzzled expression. But who was Dedric? In terms of his summons, he was the second in terms of combat ability!

“Heung, I'm not afraid of arrow! My master is more scary!”

Dedric used the pillars as shields and stared until his eyeballs popped out. Thanks to that, Duke couldn't use ‘Stealth’ and had no choice but to be chased by Ark. After a while, Ark measured the time and gave an order to Dedric.

“Dedric, block the passage to the left and drive that guy towards the right passage!”

“Okay!”

Dedric blocked the left passage and shouted at Duke with a loud voice.

“Shrimp! I’m going to capture you and eat you!”

“Ugh, that annoying bat!”

But Duke held his ground and didn’t waste time arguing with Dedric. Ark was coming up behind him with a menacing expression. In fact, Ark was already in a critical condition. There was no reason for Duke to be afraid of him. However, the fact that Ark deliberately stepped into the trap made Duke feel anxious.

‘That guy, he definitely has something. Perhaps he has an item capable of recovery magic…….’

Eventually, the psychological warfare won and he turned his body and headed down the right passage. Then, he heard Shambala’s voice again through the use of Trill.

-Ark, I’m heading to that place!

-Okay. I’m also almost finished driving him there.

-Count it down. 3, 2, 1……….now! 6 o’clock at my back, 3 m above!

-Duke is at the front just around the corner!

Ark and Shambala shouted at the same time. Just before Duke turned the corner, Shambala popped out from the rock. That’s right. In the Pandemonium arena, the left and right side structures were the same. Shambala and Ark were battling on separate sides. And there was a corner where the 2 caves connected

that was broken by a sharp angle. Ark and Shambala had worked out a strategy to aggressively swap partners there.

“What, what the? How did these guys.....?”

Duke was puzzled and lifted an eyebrow. However, after Shambala turned the corner he had already used a deadly skill.

“Torpedo Sword!”

The dagger sparked with lightning and a vortex was formed around the dagger as it rushed towards Duke. It was the hidden profession, Saint Assassin! The destructive power was enormous. Duke fell into the critical condition and he also had the ‘electric shock’ status. Of course, Ark wasn’t just watching. Taking advantage of Duke’s paralysis, Ark jumped and used his strongest skill.

“Take this, Blade Storm!”

Ark always had decent swords in a bag or two. It was in order to use Blade Storm at the last moment. As soon as Ark had pulled out a black sword from the bag, he used Blade Storm in the air. He was following Shambala’s directions of the target being 3 m up in the 6 o’clock direction!

Kwa ru ru rung!

The well-made sword was crushed to pieces and the fragments started to stir. At that moment, Jewel who was chasing Shambala appeared around the corner. Jewel was floating in the air with a translucent shield to protect herself. It was the protection magic which caused certain amounts of damage to become invalid. But the protective shield was quickly destroyed by the powerful offensive of Blade Storm. Jewel was surrounded by a vortex of shield fragments and was forced to the ground.

“Ugh, what on earth is this.....?”

Jewel still couldn’t grasp the situation.

“What is going on? You guys have become the targets!”

“Ugh, hell.....! You say that like it was a planned mission!”

“It is the end. Dark Blade!”

Ark ran up to Jewel and used Dark Blade.

“Damn, don’t look down on me, Warp!”

When a magician and warrior battle became close combat, the warrior would be superior because the magician’s magic would fail. The magician had to memorize a chant in order to use the magic. When the magic was invoked, it would appear in front of them and they would have to activate it. In dire situations, the magic reaction speed would naturally slow down and the magic would fail. The magician’s magic would fail without the right words. But that didn’t happen. Even when the situation was dire, Jewel was experienced enough to remember the chant and her warp succeeded. Jewel appeared 10 metres away using warp and immediately used mist magic to disappear.

“Dedric, after her!”

“There’s no need. Leave it to me, Ark. I’ll take care of it!”

Shambala shouted at Ark while he was wielding his sword. At the moment an amazing thing happened. The crowd couldn’t understand what it saw, or Ark.....and maybe even Shambala couldn’t imagine that such a perfect picture would be created. However, at the moment Ark understood Shambala completely and swung his sword at him. He didn’t intend to do it but it suddenly flashed and separated. Then. Although they had forgotten for a while, Ark and Shambala had a strange synergy with each other while fighting together.....this was because words couldn’t describe it.

“Riposte!”

Ark made his Riposte hit Shambala’s sword. The two swords clashing together caused sparks to fly! Ark’s counter struck Shambala’s chest. At the same time, the additional effect of Riposte kicked in. Shambala

didn't fight it and instead added to the pushing force, propelling him even more powerfully into the sky. He surprisingly flew 15 metres and struck with his dagger while using Torpedo Sword. A ray like lightning burned through the darkness. And Shambala penetrated Jewel's body that fell to the ground. In her last moments, Jewel's laughter came flowing out.

"Ah ah ah ak! U-unbelievable.....I.....I.....to guys like you!.....!"

It was like the reaction of a boss monster. Anyway, Jewel was surrounded by blue sparks and disappeared. Ark turned around and quickly looked at Duke.

"Ugh!"

Duke was barely out of the electric shock state and only had 1% health left. When Jewel had died in vain, he immediately lost his fighting spirit. Duke jumped up and tried to run away. Ark smiled and gave an order to Dedric.

"Dedric, how much have you piled up?"

"Ohuhuhuhu, tormenting weak guys are my specialty. Leave it to me! Dark Dash!"

Dedric flew like the wind and struck Duke in the head. Duke received the 'Darkness' status and struggled as he fell down.

"This guy! This guy! How dare you shoot an arrow at the my master that I respect? And you even sent Deimos back to the Netherworld? Then let me return the favour to you!"

Thus, the pioneer Duke was stepped on so much by Dedric that he died. Dedric who had controlled Duke trembled and reached out with both hands.

"Hehehe, Master. I handled the villain. Aren't I pretty? Right?"

Dedric was really showing off. Shambala who was watching suddenly laughed.

“Kuk, hahaha, hahahaha. It really is fun fighting with you!”

Ark also let out a silly laugh. It was the toughest battle he ever had, and it was also the most exciting. When the two died, there was a ringing sound and Pandemonium suddenly disappeared. However, the crowd was so quiet that it was strange.

Then like a needle falling, a voice was heard.....

Like the crowd, the magic eye had been looking at the two of them with a bemused expression. Then like he suddenly woke up, the magic eye burst out with a loud noise.

-A, awesome! Blue Sword and Dark Wolf player! They were able to overcome the disadvantage in skills using strategies and the two opposing players were eventually defeated! It is this! The real beauty of the Evil Silrion arena! Ah, have you ever seen such a wonderful battle?Therefore, the winners of the 186th Pairs Tournament have been decided. With this tournament, he has the record of 49 straight matches, Blue Sword! And after his debut, Dark Wolf who made a shocking impact and won 12 straight matches.

Now the whole arena vibrated with shouts. Firecrackers burst in the night sky while the crowd stomped their feet and chanted Blue Sword and Dark Wolf. The users who bet on Jewel and Duke also generously cheered.”Wah ah ah!”

“That was more amazing than watching a real fight!”

“This fight was worth every penny, even if the admission fee was expensive!”

“The best. I had to watch that match no matter what!”

“Blue sword and Dark Wolf, this time you should become pros!”

“That’s right, you should play in more matches. I’ll get to see it every day!”

The stadium shook up and down.

Ark realized that 1,000 people had competed in this tournament and he had actually won.