

## Ark Vol 6 C 6

### Chapter 6

ACT 6 I'm a fan!

"Alan, is this really the way to do it?"

Andel yelled in an angry voice. Alan sighed in frustration.

"How many times do I have to say it? Now is not the time for me to do anything."

"It's not? What were you doing while I was in Cairo? I received the dog treatment. You know? The dog treatment, a dog! Ark treated me like that! That's what I'm saying. If I try to fight him, then I would just be stepped on again. They just carelessly talked in front of me like my presence was nothing!"

.....This was around the one hundredth time that he had heard it. Andel gradually became more fired up and spat out saliva as he talked wildly.

"Do you think I would casually accept such a thing? No, do you think that I would forget my promises of revenge?"

Alan had no interest in what Andel was saying. It was Andel that had a debt to clear with Ark, not Alan. If he thought about it closely, there was no reason for him to get revenge on Ark. He was just a nuisance to his eyes. But it seemed like he was becoming an obstacle. Since he hadn't received any decisive damage from Ark yet, it was just a gut feeling. If so, he would like to get rid of him as soon as possible. Ark had become a hated guy for no reason. But he lacked the motivation to chase him and postponed it for other important matters. At that moment, Andel was gnashing his teeth beside him. Alan would have to coax him in order to properly handle this annoying guy. It was only just that. However.....

'Honestly, I find you more annoying than Ark right now.'

Alan became irritated and gave a sharp sidelong glance towards Andel. Although Nagaran was peaceful today, he couldn't guarantee what the battlefield would be like tomorrow. This time there was 12 castles opened in Nagaran. Thousands of users from the Schudenberg Kingdom, Sinus Principality and

Bristania Kingdom flocked to Nagaran, but the number of guilds was only in the hundreds. Of course, they rushed into a prolonged war.

‘If I occupy the throne carelessly, there will be a concentrated attack from the guilds that were watching for an opportunity.’

Indeed, at the beginning someone carelessly took the throne and after 30 minutes of a concentrated attack, all the members were exterminated. Therefore, it became an achievement to even capture a castle in Nagaran. He noticed that most of the guilds in the same situation studied each other. They would then increase the supporters using secret dealings and one of the guilds would be expanded, and this would be repeated. Intrigue and betrayal! It's standard was bloodier than reality because of the enormous profit concerned. But those skirmishes were also coming to an end. They either submitted to the power of another guild or they would join forces and begin earnestly building up their power to occupy a castle. And they also prepared a plan to keep the castle for a long time once they've occupied it. Of course, 'Dawn Blade' led by Alan was one of the main forces. The time for the decisive battle of Nagaran was about to begin!

‘All the necessary preparations are finished. Now all that's left is the timing. Victory or defeat will be decided by when I move.’

The place Alan was targeting was Silvana in the southern part.

‘Among the 4 properties in the south, Silvana has the best location. The distance between the three kingdoms is short and it is also next to a beach, making it a good place to develop trade. When it became stable, Nagaran would definitely be the centre of trade in New World. If I can develop Silvana well then 'Dawn Blade' will definitely be the strongest guild!’

Alan prepared for it without hesitation. And when he was trying to march to Silvana to occupy it, that was when Andel visited.

‘He is a guy that doesn't think.....!’

Andel just acted without thinking. There were several reasons that Alan had brought forces to Nagaran within a short time. Alan was smart. He was able to grasp situations quicker than other people and if there was friction with the other allied forces, he would either placate them or get rid of them. His

covert support for growth was also useful. The Cathedral's bishop would conveniently receive a share of Silvana's profit if Alan occupied it in return for some covert help. The cathedral has sent 20 mercenaries to support 'Dawn Blade.' They also ensured that they were provided with a large amount of ammunition. However, the most influential factor in expansion was none other than his reputation. Alan was recognized as the Holy Knight! It was the storybook image of someone who hated injustice and would righteously pursue justice! That public image was surprisingly important. It could possibly be compared against the analogy of the Three Kingdoms? The same applies to New World. The image of Alan had been crafted so carefully that it had a large impact when placating other guilds. Some guilds even approached him intentionally to form an alliance.

'The most important thing to me is my righteous image.'

What would happen if it was known that Alan had hired assassins to take care of Ark?

.....It would likely spread and become a serious problem. That was why Alan couldn't blindly get rid of Andel.

'Andel right now is in a poisonous state. I don't want to say something cruel and make it even worse. But with the mobilization of Dawn Blade, Andel might not have any time to go look for Ark.....his head is like a pebble. How do I explain it to him so that he understands how important it is? Nevertheless, my plan doesn't work with this guy.'

Eventually, Alan headed out with Andel to where the ammunition was being procured. In the time it took to receive the military supplies, he tried to see if he could coax Andel. However, no matter the persuasion Andel was unshakable and refused to give up on catching Ark.

"That Ark is already over level 100. In addition, they seemed to have made a lot of money before leaving Cairo. Are you just going to leave them alone?"

"I told you. The Dark Brother organization now has a hostile relationship with Ark. Even if we don't do anything, they won't leave him alone."

"You don't understand at all. Even if the Dark Brothers kill Ark dozens of times, if he quits the game then I won't get my revenge. I won't be satisfied until I beat him with my own hands!"

“Of course Ark requires direct handling. But right now there is more important matters.”

“Important? Ha! What is more important? Isn’t occupying a castle a game as well? What on earth should I understand. Yes, it’s just a game. Why are you so invested in this game? Isn’t it more important to step on that guy? Isn’t it?”

“.....”

He let out a sigh. He’s not a child so what do should he say to make him understand? It was to the extent that he thought it would be easier to sit an ogre down and persuade it than Andel. When Alan turned his head, Andel immediately closed his mouth. The carriage carrying the two of them had finally arrived at the border of Nagaran.

“Eh? T-that guy.....!”

Andel swelled up like a ball and stuttered. As the carriage approached the border, the form of a hobbit merchant was seen humming and approaching. A smile spread on Andel’s mouth.

“That is the merchant that was in Cairo with Ark!”

“Hyu.....!”

Sid was sweating as he looked up at the clear blue sky. He had walked non-stop for the first few hours on a steep mountain path. He was using a carriage but it wasn’t an easy task. But the idea that it was difficult didn’t hold at all.

“Hu hu hu hu.”

Rather, whenever a heavy feeling appeared in the storage compartment then he would just laugh.

“This is what I have been wanting to do since I first came here.....”

When he arrived at the border of Nagaran, he had experienced some deep emotions. One week had passed and the hours seemed long when it was short, or short when it was long. However, Sid was a merchant so it was evident what was the most rewarding time for him. After all, warriors and merchants were different. Discovering unexplored dungeons and fighting a boss monster before finding a legendary item deep underground. That was every warrior's fantasy. But a merchant's dream was finding a new trade route and making a large profit from it! During the week he headed towards Nagaran, Sid had such a dream.

‘War is money!’

That was an undeniable law. In Nagaran there would be a bloody war between guilds! It was the best place for selling the various scrolls he bought from Cairo. But despair was waiting for Sid when he arrived at Nagaran. Nagaran was declared a war area. In other words, even if a user killed someone they wouldn't become chaotic. It was a very dangerous thing in a sense. Users could be killed without penalty. Unlike the [Robbery] scroll which was used to steal an item, the aims of the Kings of the Three Kingdoms was different and they intended for Nagaran to be a simple lawless area. No, that was certainly the case. Because of that, there were signposts at the Nagaran border to prevent people walking in without knowing. The kings of the Schudenberg, Bristania and Sinus Principality also forbid any scrolls from being used. If they used a scroll then it would be considered a rebellion against the royal families of the Three Kingdoms. Sid's mood became dark. The ratio of scrolls within his 7 bags was 90%.

‘Ark-nim is expecting a profit of more than 50%.....’

If it wasn't possible to use scrolls inside Nagaran, then it wouldn't be possible to receive a fair price for them. No, he didn't even know if he could sell them.

‘Ark-nim will kill me if I return after selling it for 60~70% of the listed price!’

Sid knew and was terrified of how obsessed Ark was with money. If he returned the 5,500 gold investment with a loss, then Sid would really be made to drink soup.

‘If Ark was in this situation, what would he do?’

Ark was a warrior, yet he earned more money than Sid. Even when the assassins forced him to fall into the hell, he was still obsessed with making money off the japtm. He would never give up in any situation where it was possible to make money. Sid was the only user who closely watched Ark’s obsession with making money.

‘If it was Ark-nim then he would never give up! On the contrary, he would somehow use this situation to make even more money. Yes, that’s it!’

When he finished thinking, an idea popped in Sid’s head. had started.

The changes occurring in New World was not just Nagaran opening to the public. So far, only a handful of users had been able to qualify to travel between the borders open to everyone! However, the best way to move was Nagaran which had become a war zone. Even when Nagaran became stable, users had to move through a steep mountain path. In this situation, it was inevitable that problems would occur. Thus, in peacetime it would immediately become less desirable. Sid carried the luggage and immediately went to the villages near the border. The main customers for him were suspicious looking warriors. The chaotic scrolls could be sold to them for 100% of the market price. The reason was clear. In the absence of peace at the border, they would use the scrolls to try and rob the merchants crossing the border.

‘Hu hu hu hu, this is it!’

Sid began to catch the feeling. When the scrolls were sold, Sid immediately left to an adjoining village. It was easy to sell hundreds of robbery scrolls. Of course, the security in the region was at the worst case scenario. It was a state where merchants would be immediately fearful, with rumours of thieves waiting to rob them on the mountain paths. His customers were also those merchants. It was a rule that a place that sold knives would also sell shields. Cairo also had items that could stop various chaotic scrolls.

“A standard item to escape from a crisis! The [Warp] scroll. You can hire mercenaries confidently with [Sword of Truth], protect yourself from [Robbery] and [Seize] using the [Bag Protection] or [Equipment

Protection] scrolls. From the [Elimination] scroll which removes one scroll effect, there is a bulk sale on all items for a safe trade route. Please use Sid's stalls."

Immediately merchants flocked like clouds.

"How much for a [Warp] scroll?"

"45 gold. If you buy it in a set of 10, I'll will discount 10 gold."

"Yes? Isn't that 110% of the price in a store? If I buy it from the store, I can also get a discount of 30%....."

"I went through a lot of risk to bring the scrolls from Cairo to here. I met with bandits along the way quite a few times. Since it is like that, I'm selling it for 110% of the price.

"But, it is 45 gold for one scroll....."

"If you don't have the cash right now then I also accept various potions. But the potions have to be 80% of the listed price. Because I can sell it again for a profit. As a merchant you should understand?"

One merchant to the side poked another one and whispered.

"There's not much time left on the due date for trading. If a thief robs us then the quest will fail and we will lose a lot of credibility. "

"Hyu.....I understand. 2 [Sword of Truth] and 2 [Warp] scrolls please."

"Yep, here you go! Have a safe trip!"

Sid aimed for this. A merchant would understand the mindset of other merchants. After the borders were opened, many merchants received quests to transport exotic goods. But in order to complete the quest within a certain period, they had to cross the border.

‘Hu hu hu, I’ve learned this by following after Ark-nim.’

If they were going to spend money, once he has hooked them then he had to squeeze as much as possible out of them. When selling a missile to one side, he should turn right around and sell a missile defense system to the other side. Did it matter what kind of business it was as long as he made a profit? He had to do this if he wanted to engage in business. By selling a lot of knives, the price of the shields would jump up even more. Because of him, there were a lot of merchants who received damage. Sid’s life was tied up in this trade route. It wasn’t possible for him to look at other people’s circumstances when he was worried about eating the soup made from Ark’s pot.

‘I didn’t understand the world at all until now.’

So another unsuspecting merchant entered the path of darkness. No matter how much he wanted to keep sell the scrolls, timing was important in this business. Other merchants who smelled money would soon flock to the border with the scrolls. A market price slump for the scrolls was inevitable!

‘When it becomes less profitable, I will shake it off and leave. It is Ark-nim’s iron-set law.’

Ark had suddenly become a textbook. He bought items in Cairo at 60% of its price and now he was selling it at 100~110% of its price. Of course his experience and skill proficiency, as well as his income increased tremendously. Once the business became successful, Sid began to think even more. If he took advantage of the timing then it was possible to make even more profit! Sid determined that expensive potions and tool boxes were worth investing in so he bought some without any hesitation. Once the scrolls were exchanged for consumables, the amount was enormous. He also spent a fortune on hiring NPC mercenaries and returned to the carriage. That was also a part of his calculations.

‘After Nagaran was opened, it became a public combat war. Since large amounts of guilds are in this area they require various potions and consumables, especially over time. It is a war of attrition. However, the winner is not determined by how much money they spend in a short amount of time. But if they did want to replenish supplies in the field, they would have to go all the way back to Selebrid.....I’m going to sell supplies near the entrance to Nagaran so even if it is a little bit expensive, it would save them time! Before other merchants attract them, I have to detain the customers!’

Sid was increasingly aware of his responsibility as a businessman. But since scrolls couldn't be used in Nagaran, there was no security so if he died then he would lose items.

'Since PK is allowed in Nagaran, this business is dangerous. PK is fun for the people that exploit it. If I die to such people and lose even one item.....'

Soup. Sid shuddered as a chill crawled up his spine.

'Even if the profit was a little bit less, it is safer to set up trade at the entrance.'

Therefore Sid arrived at the entrance to Nagaran. He arrived just as a carriage containing a warrior was leaving to go buy supplies and decided to approach Sid.

"Are you a merchant? If you have any recovery potions or repair boxes can I order them in bulk?"

Sid looked the warrior up and down. Once he saw the equipment it wasn't a joke. The shine of money was clearly visible! Sid clasped his hands together as he kept up a business smile.

"Yes, of course. Not only recovery potions but I also have many potions that would increase the stats. Because you're my first customer, I'll give you an excellent price. However, it's still a little bit higher than the fixed store price.....He he he, you understand right?"

Sid spread out catalogues showing the products available. The warrior asked with a surprised look.

"That's an amazing amount. Do you own such a big business by yourself?"

"He he he, 90% of it is the capital entrusted by other people."

Sid had a big mouth. There was a subtle smile on the mouth of the warrior.

“So it is like that. It works out just fine. Since the large guild competition is about to start there is no time to go to Selebrid, so it is lucky that I managed to meet a merchant with so many goods. If you don’t mind 110% of the fixed price, I’d like to buy all your potions and repair boxes.”

“Yes? Yes? 110% of the fixed store price?”

He calculated the astronomical amount on a calculator.

‘Finally.....I finally have an opportunity for a colossal deal.....!’

Although merchants made the same amount of profit through many small deals, if they accomplish one huge deal then they would earn more fame and experience. If he sold items worth thousands of gold in one transaction then he couldn’t even imagine the experience he would get! Sid’s eyes stared at the warrior on the horse. The warrior smiled and said.

“However, our situation is that we can’t receive the items at the moment. So let’s set a time and date to receive the items. Because we have to prepare the gold as well. Please deliver the promised goods to this place tomorrow morning.”

The warrior opened his map and designated one section. Sid flinched as he looked at the map. Although it wasn’t far, the area was in Nagaran.

“Is that a problem?”

“Yes? Oh, no. But.....”

“I know what you’re worried about. But these days the outskirts are empty as most of the users have flocked to the area around the castles. While coming here I didn’t even see 1 user.”

“I understand. I’ll deliver it to the appointed place.”

Sid eventually accepted the offer. Although he was a little anxious, the number was too large for him to miss out on. The warrior nodded with a pleased face.

“If you’re able to provide this huge amount of supplies then you must be a rich merchant. If you’re managing the funds of other people then you must be quite reliable as well. It is fortunate that I met someone like Sid at the entrance to Nagaran. I was looking for reliable merchants. If it becomes necessary in the future, how about a long term deal? It might be more difficult but there would be no risk and we’ll pay for all the trouble.”

“I-I thank you.”

“I’m glad to hear it. Then should we create the contract?”

“Yes, of course. But what is your name.....”

“Alan, I’m Alan the leader of the Dawn Blade guild.”

The warrior.....Alan grinned and replied. Sid who didn’t participate in the event quest had never seen Alan.

The day after Ark’s companions had a wild night.....in reality it was only 4 hours later. The sunlight spilled through the dim window of the tavern. Although JusticeMan liked drinking all liquor, his didn’t enjoy drinking to death. However after Roco’s words in the middle, they couldn’t stop and began drinking even more furiously. Fortunately after chatting outside for 1 hour, the chilly wind helped dissipate the alcohol. Roco’s face contained one expression that they knew well.

“Now are you going to go to the Evil Silrion?”

“No, it has been postponed for the moment.”

“Yes? We’ve also found the big brother that we were looking for.”

“Then it’s official.”

JusticeMan tried to say something else before laughing.

“Okay, do you know what you’re going to do?”

“No. Right now.....”

“That’s great. Then briefly come with me. I’ve got something to show you. I wanted to discuss it with you.”

“Show me what?”

Ark tilted his head to the side while Jjak-tung interrupted with a smirk.

“Hu hu hu, the achievement we accomplished in the meanwhile. While you were winning, we weren’t just playing around.”

“Achievement?”

“If you look at it then you’ll know. It isn’t far so I’ll leave it for the time being. You’ll notice the details once you’ve arrived. Shambala, don’t make me nag you and come as well!”

JusticeMan suddenly pulled Shambala along with Ark.

“Um, why is it so noisy at dawn? What kind of people.....”

The murmuring was coming from an alley not far from where Ark’s companions were. It looked like there were 3 homeless people wrapped in hoods. When Merchant A, B and C were keeping an eye on Ark, they literally fell asleep right there. The sleepy Merchant B made an annoyed noise and lifted his head at the noisy sounds of Ark and his companions. He had a vacant expression for a short time before standing up in surprise.

“Eh? H-Hyung-nim! Hyung-nim! Wake up.”

Merchant A who was snoring through his nose opened his eyes tiredly. Merchant A rubbed at his swollen eyes with a frown.

“What the? What’s going on?”

“Those guys are moving.”

“What?”

Merchant A was suddenly wide awake and jumped up.

“Damn, they drank all night so why are they up this early? Hey, wake up!”

Merchant A kicked Merchant C and commanded him.

“Summon the mercenaries that you hired yesterday and tell them to come quickly. I’ll shadow them. As usual, communication is through the ‘Feather of Whispering’ and act quickly!”

Merchant B and C rushed down the alley on short legs. Merchant A also quickly packed his luggage and followed Ark.

‘As expected, you’re going after the treasure!’

Ark and his companions were collecting a huge amount of food from the market. The reason that so many users were buying food was because they were going on a long trip somewhere. Once they collected all the necessary clues, of course they would want to start treasure hunting. As expected, Ark and his companions immediately left Selebrid when they finished their shopping. Merchant A quickly whispered using the ‘Feather of Whispering.’

-Those guys have left Selebrid. How long until the mercenaries are gathered?

What? They’re not ready yet? Those children, standby until I give my order.....Anyway the warriors.....okay, sounds good. Once the mercenaries are gathered then come to this location.

Like a spy movie, Merchant A secretly kept up secure communications while following Ark. After Ark’s party left Selebrid, they ascended up the mountain path. But after a short time, the path they were walking on became lush greenery.

‘Huck huck huck. I should’ve exercised a little bit more.....’

Merchant A had poor stamina. He was out of breath in less than 1 hour. Furthermore, as there was no path the merchant had to push aside thick bushes. He tripped over tree roots on the unfamiliar path and was out of breath in less than 1 hour. There was also no path for him to walk on so he had to walk through the forest. He tripped over roots on the unfamiliar path and got stuck on tree branches.

‘This is that Dark Wolf’s fault! In the future, I’ll certainly seize the map and cause him despair!’

Merchant A was burning with revenge.....Honestly, if it wasn’t for that than he wouldn’t have been able to keep up. After following a small stream for a while, the lush forest eventually came to an end. Ark was communicating with the party as they arrived.

'Ohhhh, this is.....a golden opportunity!'

Merchant A's eyes were sparkling. Hidden inside the woods deep in the mountains. What else but a thief's hideout?

'There's no doubt. I've seen those flags planted above the wild plants at the Merchant's Guild. The group of thieves that everyone is super careful about around Selebrid! If so.....?'

He could only think of one thing, they were trying to suppress the group of thieves in order to go somewhere.

'The heavens are helping!'

He didn't know what was going on inside. It was probably a dreadful battle with a lot of blood spilt! It was the ideal chance to get rid of Ark. Now the odds of victory was 100%! Just then, Merchant B and C arrived with the 20 mercenaries.

"Huck huck huck, Hyung-nim. Those guys?"

"Hu hu hu, my younger brothers. The saying that the heavens would help those who help themselves is true. They know nothing and are trying to suppress the thieves here in the mountains."

Merchant A smiled coldly and clenched his fist firmly.

"If we storm in then the situation will end simply. We have to hurry before Dark Wolf and Blue Sword are killed by the thieves and drop the clues. Quickly use the scrolls before that happens!"

"I understand. Everyone heard? Start immediately!"

"Rush!"

Merchant A, B and C boldly led the mercenaries in. But when they arrived, they felt something strange. The mountain was really quiet for being in the middle of a battle. Was that all? Laughter was even occasionally heard. Merchant B felt something strange and tried to stop. However, it didn't matter because Merchant A had already opened the door and shouted.

"Blue Sword, Dark Wolf! You guys.....eh?"

Merchant A trailed off with a bemused look. Hundreds of eyes had immediately turned to him when he opened the door. Of course, they should've been engaged in a bloody fight. However, there was nothing but Ark and the thieves staring at him.

"Eh, why.....why? Why aren't you fighting?"

"What the? Who are those guys?"

"Blue sword? Dark Wolf?"

The thieves scowled at the merchants and mercenaries with unpleasant eyes. Yes, it was the achievement that JusticeMan mentioned in Selebrid. He was talking about the thieves gathered here. JusticeMan randomly rehabilitated the thieves. And two days ago, he had found the older Hyung that he had been looking for. The older Hyung was a boss bandit named Wangnuni with a level of 150. Usually they would never dare fighting against him, but JusticeMan had other forces. The thieves around Selebrid that he had rehabilitated! JusticeMan directed them at Wangnuni in waves and after a long bloody battle, Wangnuni eventually surrendered and was rehabilitated. Thus, the number of thieves now following JusticeMan was 300 people.

Merchant A, B, and C realized that there was something wrong.

"H, Hyung-nim?"

"Hiccup!"

Merchant A started sweating. Although the merchants were frozen, when Merchant C hiccupped he accidentally tore the scrolls. He had wanted to use [Robbery] on Ark. However, he didn't specify the target so a thief was hit by mistake. The thief hit was the older Hyung-nim, Wangnuni. Wangnuni looked at Merchant C with no expression and laughed.

"What the? Are you trying to squeeze me?"

"No, it's not....."

Merchant A grasped the situation too late and tried to withdraw when JusticeMan smiled and said.

"Hey guys, what is it that I always stress?"

"I'll serve food and aid in one hand. I'll do a good thing once a day. And the villain that doesn't repent would be soaked!"

The 200 thieves replied coldly.

"Okay, lock the door."

"Yep!"

The thieves suddenly walked to the door. Although the merchants and mercenaries tried to retreat, their path was blocked. The situation alarmed the mercenaries who eventually pulled out their swords.

"Damn! It's not possible! We're stuck!"

"It is Hyung-nim's enemy! Get rid of all the litter!"

The thieves had been completely brainwashed by the torture of the chowder medley. JusticeMan had already become Wangnuni's hyung. And when someone opposed their hyung, it was the thieves'

unwritten law that they would pay with their bodies. The thieves drew their swords and rushed in unison.

“Huck, Hyung-nim. Why on earth is it so different?”

“How should I know? We have no choice but to endure somehow!”

“Damn it, they will die. It should be around ten enemies for each person?”

The mercenaries cursed but it was too late for them to regret it. And soon a fierce battle took place.....if it could even be called a battle. The assassins were 30 levels higher than the thieves. However, the numbers was 15 times as much. 20 against 300. It couldn't possibly be called a fight. Moreover, there was also Ark's nursing skills as well as Roco's music. As there were many people, the skills became more effective. The thieves who received various buffs through nursing and music yelled and crushed the hired warriors.

“Hmm, why is it so dull?”

Ark felt like the battle was too dull. Just yesterday he had engaged in a bloody war with his partner against the pioneers in the Evil Silrion.....Compared to that, the level 120 mercenaries felt boring. He wasn't aware of it yet, but his experience with the Evil Silrion and Lee Myung-ryong had raised his standards to the highest level.

Then, a garbage bag was suddenly visible to the side. While the thieves had opened the door and beating the mercenaries, three garbage bags were stealthily moving away. When a thief passed them, they would stop and then move again. This pattern repeated until they managed to escape from the hideout.

‘What the, that is?’

Ark stared at the garbage bags escaping to the mountain and gave an amazed laugh. It was the three merchants. In order to escape, they had disguised themselves as garbage bags. Whether it was because the disguise was effective or it wasn't worth wasting time on, they somehow managed to survive the rough fight. Then Ark stabbed his sword tip firmly into the ground.

“Hey, you guys. Where do you think you’re going?”

The garbage bags flinched and chattered.

“Hyung-nim! We were discovered.”

“Huk huk huk, Hyung-nim. Are we going to die? I’m scared.”

“Just calm down. My younger brothers. I have an idea.”

Merchant A swallowed his saliva and suddenly stood up. They stripped off their robes and revealed their true identity. It was small bodied dwarf. However, perhaps because they were merchants but they didn’t have the distinctive muscles of the dwarves. With a bulging stomach and trembling hands, they seemed more like the Three Little Pigs than dwarves. Merchant A suddenly grabbed Ark’s hand and begged.

“Please don’t kill us. Blue Sword and Dark Wolf!”

“What? Don’t kill you?”

“Oh, the truth is, in fact.....we are.....fans! Yes, that’s right. We are fans!”

“Fan? How did you know I was related to Dark Wolf?”

“That is.....we were interested. Yes, interested.”

Merchant A nodded his head as he twisted his hands together.

“Your fight was so impressive that we wanted to find out more so we hide ourselves and watched. That’s when we learned that you were Dark Wolf. Our respect was burning so much that we were chasing after you to ask if we could organize a fan club.”

“Oh, really? That was why you’ve been chasing us?”

“Fan meeting! Will you have a fan meeting? That’s it. Ha ha ha, we weren’t told in advance anything about this fight. The work became twisted up.....because some strange fellows were mixed in among the fan club members. Anyway, as expected of Blue Sword and Dark Wolf. Though they looked quite strong, they weren’t a match for you. Ha ha ha, you are great.”

“H,Hyung-nim.....”

Merchant B and C looked at their hyung-nim with miserable eyes. It was truly absurd. Ark had already witnessed their meeting with Jewel in the alley. He knew that they were after Magaro’s clues. They had obviously hired mercenaries to steal the map from Ark. If he let them go, there was no guarantee that they wouldn’t try it again.

‘Thanks to the thieves, a crisis was averted. But if I was alone then the surprise attack would’ve robbed me of the map. I have to make them lose any will to try it again.’

Something flickered at the corner of Ark’s eyes.

‘This is a chance!’

A pair of eyes flashed in the darkness. A black mask was hiding the face while the body was wrapped in black clothes. The Red Palm symbol.....an assassin from the Dark Brother organization. Yes, it wasn't only the merchants that shadowed Ark's party. The Dark Brother had watched Ark since Selebrid and also chased after him. While the merchants were distracting Ark, he took advantage of it to advance to the rear and develop an elimination plan.

'A mistake in judgement. Surely the thieves here are a part of Ark's group. Chet, the merchants entering the mountains should of had the element of surprise.....There's no helping it. With my power I cannot deal with more than 300 thugs. Although it is vexing, there should be another chance.....'

The assassin who was hiding outside assessed the situation and turned around without doing anything. Then there was an unexpectedly good fortune. The foolish merchants disguised themselves as rubbish bags and escaped to the mountain, and then Ark pursued them by himself. The rehabilitation members and the thieves were busy with the mercenaries and paid no attention to the outside.

'This is a great opportunity!'

The assassin pulled out a sword without hesitation. He was level 250. He was different from the ordinary assassins and was armed with a variety of skills; he was the super secret assassin from the Dark Brother. It wasn't possible to count the immense number of foreigners that had died by his hand. Although it wasn't possible to handle all his colleagues, Ark had displayed a careless amount of confidence and gone out by himself.

'Anyway, the goal of the Dark Brother organization is Ark. I don't care about the other guys. Okay, I can't give him time to escape to the hideout!'

The assassin made a deadly resolution and used all his buffs to increase his abilities. His damage was boosted using 'Sword Aura,' his traces were erased using 'Light Step,' 'Critical Hit' was used to maximize the chances of a critical strike and so on.....But his special moves were separate from that. The 'Blood Thrill' was a special skill that only an assassin of the Dark Brother could use. It was a fatal assassination skill which converted 50% of his health to offensive damage and that transfer meant that one blow was deadly! The moment the attack was successful, he would lose 50% of his health but now was the time to use all his power. Once he used the skill, his sword changed to a bloody red colour. The assassin approached like a ghost and struck Ark with a strong blow.

-You have received a critical hit from the surprise assassination skill. There is also an addition damage of 250 x 3 thanks to the Blood Thrill skill.

The total damage is x 2 and you have been stunned for 10 seconds.

Ark suddenly felt his spine tingle before he lost an absurd amount of health. Three times the damage of 250 was 750! With an additional double damage, he had lost 1,500 health with one blow. Ark's health instantly went down to 500. That wasn't all. He felt drunk as he was hit with the additional stun effect.

'What, what the?'

Ark freaked out and turned his body around. The masked man with a red palm symbol instantly caught his eye.

"You, you're from the Dark Brother? Don't tell me Andel.....?"

"Never, this is the will of the Dark Brother organization."

"What?"

"Did you think you would get away with killing people from the Dark Brother? You can never escape the hand of the Dark Brother. Although you can revive with the secret skill of the foreigners, you would have to buy a village to escape from the Dark Brother. Wouldn't that be more painful to a foreigner than dying?"

When the assassin showed up, the merchants who didn't know the situation immediately left with a puzzled expression.

"Hyung-nim. What happened back there?"

"How should I know? Anyway, hopefully that black guy can defeat Dark Wolf."

“Then.....?”

“If we see the chance then we’ll use the scrolls! And I was negotiate with the black one.....”

The merchants whispered together and looked at the two of them with a sense of expectancy. However, Ark wasn’t in a situation where he could worry about the ulterior motives of the merchants.

“Damn, you bastard.....!”

Thanks to the surprise attack, Ark had the injustice of losing a lot of health. And because he was stunned, his body felt heavy like a lead bag. When he was stunned, evasion, attacking and using his skills were all blocked. The duration was only 10 seconds, but when looking at the offensive power of the assassin that was plenty of time for three or four more attacks.

‘Being careless for just a short moment can cause such a fatal failure.....’

Pepeng! He received another critical hit and lost 300 health.

The sword once again targeted Ark’s neck. It was a 100% chance of death! The assassin’s eyes shone with an eerie light as he became confident of his victory.

“It is the end!”

“Ark!”

A black shadow suddenly came running in at the desperate moment. And there was a shower of fists towards the assassin who was trying to deal the final blow. He aimed at Ark’s neck but the sword suddenly became encased in solid stone.

‘Petrification of Blood!’

Ark looked up in surprise at the person who had ran out. Shambala! Shambala had a passive skill to detect assassins. He had used the skill to check if there were any other mercenaries around and detected Ark and the assassin outside the hideout! And he used Petrification of Blood without confirming who the opponent was.

“Ark, it’s your turn!”

Shambala shouted from one side. It was the pincer attack that they used countless times in the Evil Silrion. As soon as Ark was released from the stun, he used Dark Blade. While the defense was raised by 500% when Petrification of Blood was used, it meant nothing to Dark Blade which ignored all defense.

Putt putt putt peng, the violent critical hits flowed continuously.

However, the assassin was level 250. Even though ‘Blood Thrill’ consumed 50% of his health, after 3~4 critical hits he still had a lot of health left. Meanwhile, the assassin rushed towards Ark after Petrification of Blood wore off.

“Ugh, Ark, even if I die I’ll take you to hell with me!”

“Holy shit!”

Profanities burst from Ark’s mouth. He had thought it was possible to finish the fight before Petrification of Blood wore off. He only had 200 health left, but because of that he didn’t feel the need to drink an expensive potion. Therefore he would die with one hit! His habit of trying to save money had caused a crisis again. However, Shambala unexpected stepped of front of him and blocked Ark. Although they weren’t in the Evil Silrion anymore, he still had the unconscious habit of protecting Ark.

“Ark, Whirlwind of Death!”

Shambala shouted before pressing the assassin. It was the pincer technique that Ark and Shambala had developed in the Evil Silrion. The assassin was surrounded on both sides. And he was overwhelmed with a series of punches and kicks! The damage itself wasn’t that high, but since an abnormal state was caused every time an attack hit, the assassin got slaughtered.

“Ugh, drat. But as long the Dark Brother organization exists, a 2nd and 3rd assassin will come after you.....”

Eventually, the assassin muttered pathetically and collapsed. Ark looked away from the assassin. And he caught the merchants who jumped in surprise. He rolled his eyes before saying with a smile.

“Whoa, as expected of Dark Wolf and Blue Sword! Ha ha ha, I knew it was possible for you to win.”

“.....”

Ark glared silently. Ark knew that they had been silently rooting for the assassin. If he died in this situation. Merchant A noticed with his keen senses and quickly pulled out a contract. After writing something down, he extended it towards Ark.

“In fact, this was what I was trying to give Dark Wolf when searching for you!”

“What is this?”

“So that Dark Wolf can concentrate on his matches, it is the support money donated by the fan club!”

“Donations?”

A Merchant’s Agreement.

A person with this agreement will pay you 10 gold once a month (10 days) which you can receive at any branch of the Merchant’s Guild. The merchant who drew up the contract will open an account at the Merchant’s guild for the recipient, in order to settle the accounts.

This agreement will last until the contracted merchant is bankrupt or the written contract disappears.

'This is.....a debit card?'

Ark's eyes shone brightly as he read the contract.

'These guys have other ulterior motives but.....'

In fact, killing the three little pigs had no apparent benefit. There was no guarantee that they would give up on the map after being killed. If they started developing a grudge like Andel's then it would become more annoying. If so, wouldn't pretending not to know and then reaping the profits be more beneficial?

But.....the amount of money was quite low if he was to pretend.....

"How many fan club members are there?"

"Yes? Just.....the people who have come with us.....so 23 people."

"So 23 people pay 10 gold every 10 days.....that's 50 silver per day? Are you confused between donating and begging? Only that much money? You asked to give it first. But now you're trying to patronize me? No, are you really a fan? Perhaps you have a different purpose? In that case....."

Ark felt offended and glared. That was only enough for three hungry people to eat for a couple of days! Did they think they could catch him and have him immediately accept (?). Merchants B and C who felt the crisis looked at their brother with tears in their eyes. Merchant A was quick to revise the contract.

"Oh, I made a mistake. It was actually 20 gold."

"....."

Ark kept a meaningful silence and a dark cloud was cast on Merchant A's face.

“3, 30 gold? -Uhh, of course. 40 gold! Anymore would be too much for the fans.....”

Merchant A eventually muttered tearfully.

‘Sheesh, the atmosphere here is quite heavy.’

Ark struck them in the heart. Ark was the type that would suck out the bone marrow if he had the chance. Because he was instinctively aware of the opponent’s wallets. If he tried to squeeze any more money from those guys then they would probably just give up. In addition, if they became bankrupt then the contract would also disappear. If he left it alone, he would be able to suck out more money for a longer time.

‘40 gold every 10 days. It’s not a small amount of money.’

“Ah, you’re fans as expected. I cannot ignore the sincerity of my fans.”

Ark’s face went through a 180 degree change and the decision was made. The world was love and peace, but Ark understood that a person who cared about money could also be good.

“Do you accept?”

“Of course. But we are two people.”

“Yes?”

“Didn’t you say you were fans of Dark Wolf and Blue Sword? So the donations should be given fairly. Unless.....perhaps you aren’t our fans?”

Ark’s face gave an impression of frowning. Although Shambala didn’t know the situation, he would figure it out later. He didn’t like the idea of splitting 40 gold evenly. Merchant A had to whimper and make another contract again. Now Ark nodded with a friendly smile.

“Thank you. I should remember a nice fan like you. But don’t I need your name in order to memorize it? What is your name?”

“Yes? That is, we’re just.....a passing fan?”

“I’m a man who knows that I should also cherish a passing fan.”

“.....We’re Buksil, Sapjil and Ulmeok.”

“Yes, Buksil, Sapjil and Ulmeok. Okay, I’ll remember that. Ah, and.....if anyone figures out that I’m Dark Wolf, I’ll look at my fan club president first. Do you know what I mean?”

Ark pointed at the 300 thieves lined up behind him. He was politely threatening them to keep their mouths shut! Then they hastily left the mountain.

“Dark Wolf, I’m looking forward to your next match. Fighting!”

“Fighting!”

Thus the merchants left the mountains alive. Merchant C, Ulmeok murmured in a tearful voice just like his name.

“Hyung-nim. What will happen to us now?”

“Hu hu hu, it’s okay.”

Buksil had a sinister smile on his face.

“Do you know why I was fearful and polite around him? That’s about it. You guys know about that contract? The merchant agreement states that he had to pick up the money at the Merchant’s Guild. What does that mean?”

“T-then……?”

“Yes. Sooner or later they’ll put clues together and go to find the treasure. But since the income will arrive on a certain date, sooner or later they’ll have to withdraw the money. We can just sit back and watch their movements. In the meanwhile, we should think up a new strategy and at the last moment……we’ll snatch the treasure. Our goal now is not the combination of clues. It is obtaining the treasure.”

“Oooh, it’s like the bears hiding until the money is found and then turning everything around. As expected of Hyung-nim. Just thinking about that moment!”

“But how long will it take?”

Then, Sapjil asked with an uneasy look.

“What if they don’t look for the treasure right away? One month is 10 days in real time. It is 40 gold every ten days so for the two of them it would be 80 gold, that’s 240 gold out of one month’s account. If they take 2 months it would be 480 golds, three months 720 gold…….”

Now Buksil’s face turned dark. He never even considered the money that would be spent. However, he soon vigorously shook his head.

“It’s fine. Those guys will certainly look for the treasure straight away.”

“But if they don’t find it within two or three months……we will become broke.”

“……”

The merchants flinched and were silent for a moment. If Ark continued cleaning out money from their accounts, the merchants would become bankrupt. The NPCs from the Merchant Guild responsible for merchant accounts or leased warehouses would take all the gold contained in their bags. There would also be a huge penalty given to the credit and skills! While they had to give money to Ark, they had no intention of filing a bankruptcy report. If they stole the treasure and completed the Grandmaster's quest, they calculated that the compensation was worth the possible penalty. However, that was if they managed to snatch the treasure. What if they became broke before that? They could see that without money, they would bitterly lose everything they've worked for.

"Let's go earn money!"

Buksil cried out as they ran down the mountain.

"We underestimated the situation while we were cleaning up."

JusticeMan muttered and scratched his head.

"What?"

“Well, as I said.”

JusticeMan spoke with a serious voice while folding his arms.

“Although the thieves have been rehabilitated.....these guys still haven’t fully become new men. No, even if they become a new person what will they do now? Their name is red.....”

“Chaotic.”

“Yes, that is a problem. If the chaotic status isn’t removed, they won’t be able to enter villages. So they can’t sell anything, even if they hunt. If they can’t pay the bills then they would probably be forced to become thieves again.”

He was worried about how the NPC thieves would live. Other users might laugh if they heard, but JusticeMan considered it a serious problem.

“But according to the information that Jjak-tung discovered, there is a statute on the chaotic NPC. If they don’t commit a crime, then over time their alignment would gradually return to neutral.”

Ark also knew that information. When he asked Lorenzo about his future in Cairo, Lorenzo said that he didn’t intend to stay in Cairo. If he visited a garrison in the city after becoming neutral, he would be able to get rid of the chaotic state with just a small bail. One of the reasons that Roco tightened the amount of money spent was to save some for the thieves’ bail. Therefore, it was inevitable that the thieves would follow JusticeMan’s party with a sincere heart!

“So I decided to thoroughly train them how to survive here on edible wild plants and so on.....but the Dark Brother organization knows about this place now? Even if they don’t come back, they might inform the guards of Selebrid of this location.”

JusticeMan scratched his beard. Sometimes Ark realized how kind he truly was and how rare it was in this world. Anyway, JusticeMan’s heart was heavy so he complained to Ark. It was because of Ark that the Dark Brother discovered the hideout. He was responsible.

“The assassin that attacked is the problem. Only one guy has managed to track you so far, but more of them will probably come. Well, you managed to get away but if more come here then it would become a problem. If only there was a place to stay while avoiding the eyes of the guards and the Dark Brother.....but a village is needed to train the 300 thieves to become people. Since they’ve stopped stealing, they have no choice but to enter a village for several living necessities.”

Ark was worried about the same thing. His life had become entangled with the Dark Brother organization. The crisis was averted, but if the same situation was repeated then Ark would find it quite frustrating. Of course they couldn’t follow Ark forever in the game, but he needed a place to hide and avoid the attentions of the Dark Brother for a while.

Once he heard the words a proper village, Ark’s head reflexively went up.

“I know the right place.”

“What? Where?”

“It is a small village in the Argus Mountains, where there are no guards and the villagers also don’t like outsiders. In addition, there are many areas that haven’t been explored yet. Ajusshi can probably hide the thieves there until the chaotic state is released.”

“Ooh, there is such a place?”

“Yes, there is no guarantee that they will take 200 thieves in a chaotic state.....I’ll try to somehow convince the village chief to meet them.”

“Okay. Let’s go there at once.”

JusticeMan became motivated and looked towards the hills. As soon as Ark finished talking, they began moving around and making preparations for the thieves to travel. Meanwhile, Ark looked around for Shambala. Shambala was searching the body of the Dark Brother assassin.

“Shambala, I was thinking of going with ajusshi to the Argus Mountains. Did you want to come with us?”

"I.....might have some other business."

"Other business?"

"Yes, you called this guy a Dark Brother?"

Shambala pointed to the red palm mark on the assassin's mask. Then he pulled out the blue dagger and compared it to the mark.

"A red palm symbol!"

"Didn't I tell you before? In fact, I was looking for information on the Dark Brother in Selebrid. The dagger I had before the 'Black Frost Blade' was made by quenching it in the blood of 100 foreigners. It was a part of my job quest."

The words seemed like something from a horror movie. However, Shambala said it without blinking an eye.

"The dagger quest connected to the quest about seeking information. Therefore I wandered Selebrid trying to find this information....."

"Then?"

"Once I found a clue on the 'Dark Brother,' I'll have to go back to Selebrid. Anyway, we can't do anything without Sid and there is the level restriction. So let's separate for the moment. When you're level 150, let's meet up again in Selebrid. How is it?"

"Okay, send a letter after your business is done."

"I'll do that. And.....it would be better for you to have this."

Shambala passed him Magaro's secret map.

"It's only my gut feeling, but the difficulty for my current quest seems quite high. So please hold on to this for the time being. If you leave it in your snake, then I don't have to worry about it dropping.

"Okay, ah, I'll give this to you."

Ark handed him 1 contract which had been squeezed from the merchants. Ark couldn't use it anyway since the recipient was Shambala. Shambala laughed when he looked through the contract.

"Those dwarves from before. As expected, you managed to squeeze money from them."

"Well I thought about it and collected money from them. If you don't want it then I can stop it."

"Who would complain about money?"

Shambala returned to Selebrid holding the contract. Ark separated from Shambala who he had met after a while with an open heart. However, Shambala was Shambala and Ark was Ark! New World was large with a lot of things to do!

"Ark, we're ready!"

"Yes, let's set off. To the pioneer village of Lance!"