

Ark Vol 8 C 1

Chapter 1

ACT 1 Cash Walker

“Shit.....”

He cursed with a sigh. Things were getting all twisted and dirty. Alan was a part of the so called elite 1% of South Korea. He was born into a rich family and received an education worthy of his background. When he entered a prestigious university, it was natural that he would graduate with top honours. He was always at the heart of the topic and never failed at anything he worked on. Success was something that came naturally for him. It was natural. Out of the 99% of humans, he was part of the 1% elite. It was also like that in New World. And it had been like that until recently. Since he was always at the heart of the topic and had become an enviable existence to everyone. Users ran around until they got nosebleeds obeying Alan and NPCs were the same. However.....

“Ark.....!”

He had screwed up everything. An unexpected siege, an unexpected battle situation and Lariette unexpectedly announced that she would be leaving the guild. He was at the centre of all these events. That’s right, Ark.....!

He didn’t understand why Ark was so good. He didn’t have abundant funds like Alan and he hadn’t been playing longer like the pioneers. Nor did he have a strong organization like Raiden with the Hermes guild. That guy didn’t have anything to boast about yet he kept on grabbing Alan’s ankle.

“I will never let him.”

Alan bit at his lips until it became bloody. If someone looked impertinent then he had to punish them severely. That was the sentiment Alan had about Ark so far. But today Alan realised that he had been too comfortable. He never considered that those guys could do any damage. The stray dogs will become fiercer as they become hungrier and snap unprovoked at a person more excellent than them. It was the lowly nature of guys like that.

‘Then I have to show those guys my power. I’ll show it until those dogs won’t dare bark twice. I’m going to finish him in this siege and end this!’

Alan sneered.

‘After that I can convince Lariette again. What can she do by herself? Although I’m excited thinking about it, I can’t go outside.’

If the situation goes as planned then Alan was sure to win. Alan’s side had suffered a lot of damage in the opening campaign. But Alan had succeeded in his original purpose of removing the magicians and catapults. In addition, the presence of one Defense Tower left means that the durability and regeneration of the walls was boosted. The Hermes Alliance also had the burden of having to break the walls within a time limit.

‘With one Defense Tower remaining, breaking the walls with no siege weapons will be difficult. If we can endure for 3~4 hours then it is our victory.’

The remaining time was 7 hours. Even if the castle walls collapsed after 4 hours, it would be difficult for the Hermes guild to occupy the castle. The next 3~4 hours were the crossroads in the game! And since Hermes lost the catapults, they would never break down the walls within 4 hours.

‘The result of this siege is already clear.’

After visualizing the situation in his mind, Alan gave a relaxed smile. However, his smile didn’t last long.

Bang bang double bang!

Suddenly he heard a roar from the window. It was a familiar sound.....a member of the guild immediately identified the sound.

“Alan, those guys have started to attack with the catapults again!”

“What? Catapult?”

“Yes, the situation is urgent. The repair rate of the walls cannot keep up with the damage.”

“What nonsense are you saying.....the catapults were destroyed!”

Alan could not understand the situation. Once the siege begins then they were no longer able to procure materials from the outside. Yet they’ve managed to repair the catapults. The Hermes Alliance must’ve hired craftsmen to repair it so quickly. But he never received information that any of the NPC mercenaries they hired were craftsmen. Yet they managed to repair the catapults in the end. The catapults had definitely received a lot of damage from his concentrated attacks.

‘But how?’

He figured out the reason after he looked over the wall. The NPCs repairing the catapults had pricked ears with a broad tail attached. It was the NPCs mercenaries who had shown up with Ark and Dark Eden and fired the portable cannons that did a lot of damage. Those mercenaries were craftsmen? After he saw Ark standing next to the mercenaries, sparks flew from his eyes.

“Ark! It’s you again?”

“Sir Alan. The remaining Defense Tower also isn’t going to last long. At this rate.....”

“There’s no need to panic!”

Alan roughly ordered and turned his body.

“It doesn’t change the fact that there are only 7 hours left. If we manage to defend the throne for 7 hours then it is our victory. We’ll concentrate all our energies on protecting the castle walls for the moment. And you head to the courtroom and tell the paladins to be prepared.

“The paladins.....you’re using them again?”

“It was a promise with the Archbishop. If the castle is about to be taken away then there won’t be any trouble.”

“I understand.”

The guild members hurriedly ran to give support.

Bang bang double bang!

The rocks flew through the sky at an incredible speed and crashed into the castle wall. It blew debris all over the place with the durability of the walls noticeably decreasing.

‘Wow, this, unbelievable……!’

Raiden swallowed his saliva as he watched the scene. The raccoon clan had started repairing the catapults and after 2 hours they looked like new. But they didn’t simply repair it.

“Hmm, I don’t understand.”

“Why did they design this part?”

“If they did this then the range and damage would be much better…….”

When they first started repairing, the raccoons became confused about the design and started chattering. Ark didn't miss the conversation.

"So you can raise the performance of the catapults if you have the materials?"

"The materials aren't necessary. No, we actually have to remove several things to raise the performance. They put wasteful equipment in which lowered the performance."

"They seemed to have put several unnecessary parts in to ensure that anybody could use it.....if an expert uses it then the continuous shooting speed would be quicker."

"Experts?"

"A craftsman like us."

After his answer Ark heard the sound of pouring gold coins.

"Then wait a minute. I'll ask Raiden if you can convert it."

Ark ran like the wind and explained it to Raiden.

"Upgrade? Then of course they have to remodel it!"

Raiden welcomed the speedy solution with open arms. Then he noticed Ark's face as Ark replied.

"But it requires some valuable materials to convert the catapult. It isn't possible to explain the trade secrets of the NPC craftsmen.....therefore they'll demonstrate the performance but they'll have to operate it directly."

".....Is it money?"

It fit perfectly well. By now, Raiden was able to 100% grasp Ark's nature. Ark was like a cunning merchant as he made a proposal.

"The upgrade cost and labour costs is 30 gold per NPC. So that's 600 gold in total. How about it? Because of my high intimacy with the NPCs, I finally persuaded them to agree to this repair price. Aren't you thankful? Please decide as soon as possible. There's no time."

He could earn money on the battlefield. Once Ark realised that, he persistently bit at Raiden's pocket. Although his real profession was Dark Walker, Ark was more like a Cash Walker. And in New World, Raiden was a user strong in a specialized field. It was impossible for him not to figure out that Ark was running a scam. However, it was a situation where even 1 minute was critical!

".....I'll put it on the account."

Raiden wrote up another contract with an expression that looked like he was eating shit.

"That's it. Now please hurry!"

After taking the contract, Ark hurried back to the raccoons and immediately made them start work. In fact, Ark did not have that much time. Apart from stepping on Alan, the contracts with Raiden relied on him occupying the castle. If he didn't then Ark wouldn't get anything. The 100 intermediate recovery potions and all the costs of repairs and upgrades totalled 1,600 gold! If he didn't win then it would be difficult to claim the money. Fortunately, the raccoons were the best craftsmen NPCs and soon finished all the work.

"This is the upgraded catapult?"

Raiden's face showed an expression of disappointment when he looked at the changed appearance of the catapult. However, his face brightened after watching the performance. After the remodelling, the range and damage had been upgraded. In addition, it normally took users 4~5 minutes to use it but the raccoons only took 2 minutes! The firing speed was 2 times faster.

.....He was able to confirm its power.

The durability of the walls fell at a faster rate than when attacked by the golems. With the longer range, they didn't have to worry about the arrows flying from the walls. Ark laughed when he saw that people from Dawn Blade were in a state of panic.

"How is it? Isn't this worth 80 gold?"

"Well, I guess....."

Raiden scowled at Ark.

'What on earth is with this kid? He leads a group of NPCs. And the warrior NPCs are much stronger than usual. And there is also the cats who flew around at the beginning.....how on earth did he manage to hire such NPCs?'

Even though he was a pioneer, he couldn't imagine Ark's game system.

'And why is he so shameless about taking money.....'

Raiden shook his head. He was a very scary guy who would start biting once he found a weakness. In New World, it was the first time that he had seen such a man. Nevertheless, he still felt like swearing. Ark had successfully negotiated the price of the money. Although it was an appropriate price and it was necessary, Raiden was still getting his money stolen. In fact, it wasn't that different from Ark's view on life.

'If you receive a meal, there is no reason to mourn the price.'

While Ark used scams to swindle money, at least he never PKed anyone. But he never does anything free of charge.

Give and take!

Wasn't it natural that he receives a prize for a favour? Thanks to that mindset, Ark felt no shame even while he was biting at Raiden. After all, when the crisis is over then the Hermes Alliance will immediately become profitable.

Once the catapults were repaired, the Dawn Blade coalition immediately went on the attack. But they couldn't deal enough damage to the Hermes Alliance. Fugetsu and Dark Eden joined to rally the troops, but the situation was less dangerous because Alan wasn't there to directly influence them. Once the attack was completely blocked, the Hermes Alliance had a chance to win.

-The 2 Defense Towers were destroyed.

*The shield applied to the castle walls has been reduced by 100%.

* The recovery rate of the durability of the walls has been reduced by 100%.

Since the start of the siege, they accomplished the feat in only 19 hours. Noel and Hamanechi had continuously attacked the Defense Tower. Unlike Ark's forces, they were pushed hard by the defense and only 300 survivors re-joined the main force.

"Currently we have 900 people but those guys have received considerably more damage. Since the Defense Towers are destroyed, it is only a matter of time until the walls fall. Although they have the favourable terrain of the castle to dominate the battle.....it is not enough. No, we will certainly win!"

Raiden became red in the face from repeatedly shouting the good news.

"Keep on attacking! Not long now!"

Raiden waved his mace around and yelled until his throat was sore. Then.....

Tu tu tu tung, kwakwang, kwarururu!

With a roar, the gate and walls eventually fell apart.

“The whole army, charge!”

“Wah ah ah!”

“Sweep them all away. The last victory will go to the Hermes Alliance!”

Raiden and the 900 users rushed into the castle shouting wildly. There was no place for the Hermes Alliance or Dawn Blade coalition to withdraw anymore. It was the final decisive battle!

A fierce battle was waged as if a match was thrown into oil. While airplanes holding missiles flew about and a number bomb destroyed several hundred thousand people in modern warfare, the one that inserted their flag at the end in the enemy camp was the infantry.

War in New World was no different. The magicians and priests from both sides had already fallen. The only thing left was the warriors with high health and defense. Which one had the higher level? Who had stronger equipment or had more potions? It was those things that would determine the final result. But it was a little bit different battling inside the castle compared to when they were fighting outside. It wasn't a vast empty plain. Inside the castle, it was densely packed. In other words, it meant that the hundreds of people couldn't just stampede into the castle. The watchtowers were also placed in strategically important positions. From the standpoint of the attackers, they had to quickly take off the various facilities with as little damage as possible!

On the other hand, the results depended on how long the other side could defend and hold out. Of course, this required more advanced tactics than all-out war. In that sense, Raiden was a professional.

“There is no need to rush. After the walls crumbled, the morale of those guys are already at the bottom. Hermes and Silver Moon will take the front while Noel and Hamanechi will take the left and right. Fugetsu and Dark Eden will deal with the remaining forces. Now 2nd line, advance and occupy the watchtowers in the front!”

Raiden quickly ordered simultaneously.

Square, barracks, and above the collapsed walls.....the warriors' bloody battles spread out all over the place. Ark and the survivors of Dark Eden were also in the middle of the confusion.

"Now it's time to get revenge for Hyungs, Jjak-tung!"

Tazza breathed out hot air from his nostrils and lifted his dagger. The thieves, Cross and the Meow all followed. However, Ark became surprised and shook his head.

"No, Dark Eden will stay in the back and assist."

"What?"

"We've already received considerable damage. Unless the battle situation becomes worse, there is no reason to go out and receive more damage. Our purpose for coming here is to defeat Alan. But if we die without even seeing Alan's face then how unfair will that be?"

"Certainly but....."

"But.....the people who've died.....as the leader of Dark Eden, won't you let us fight and defend their honour?"

Cross said as he couldn't agree with the decision. Ark sighed and shook his head.

"Yes, I know that it isn't suitable behaviour for a knight. I will take the blame. But losing you will be even more painful than your condemnation. Since my cowardly self cannot stand to see any of the Sylphid Knights die. I'll receive all your criticisms as long as you concentrate and survive. I'm not asking, this is a command."

"Ark.....You are really.....!"

Cross looked at Ark impressed. He was a commander who thinks of the lives of his soldiers more than his honour! What kind of soldiers wouldn't follow such a commander? The rehabilitation members and the thieves also nodded with a face as impressed as Cross'.

"I'll follow your command."

Ark breathed a sigh of relief.

'I cannot lose any more NPCs!'

Thanks to the repeated combat, Dark Eden was severely damaged. Including JusticeMan and Roco, 6 members of the rehabilitation group had died with only 4 surviving. Out of the 70 NPCs, 30 had died. It was understandable since it would be difficult to take part in the war with their levels. But after considering the damage, Ark had to make a decision. Since it was likely that they would win the battle, there was no need to go out and receive unnecessary damage. Then Cross asked in a worried tone.

"But to fight like that in such a confusing battle....."

"Don't worry about it."

Ark smiled towards Fugetsu's guild Leader Baron and shouted.

"Baron-nim, please go forward first."

"Yes? Us?"

"We're just handling the remnants in the rear. All of them will have received considerable damage so it is possible for Fugetsu to handle it."

"Of course, but Dark Eden can also do that....."

Baron hesitated and said. Ark gave a friendly laugh and replied.

“We have already decided the proceeds at stake already. But aren’t the other guilds supposed to get a stake depending on how much achievements they have? It is a great opportunity for some accomplishments.”

“T-then.....?”

“We destroyed the Defense Tower together. Therefore Fugetsu is on the same level as other guilds. We’ll definitely support from behind so just give everything you have into fighting!”

“Wow, thank you very much! Everyone charge!”

Every time they killed an enemy in the siege, they got a point. When the siege finishes, the leader of the alliance will give compensation based on the contribution.....it was merit system. However, Fugetsu were just advancing during the Defense Tower attack so didn’t receive that much points. Because of that, Baron received glared from his guild. After Ark drove home his point, Baron didn’t hesitate to rush out and attack the enemies.

But it was too late. People in the Dawn Blade coalition were quite strong. Fugetsu were the weakest in the Hermes Alliance and couldn’t kill the opponents.

“These bastards are only level 130 yet they’re still trying to attack us?”

“Did they become overconfident just because the walls collapsed?”

“Ugh, these guys.....are strong!”

The Baron became confused after his rush was pushed back. And he tried to retreat too late and the path behind was already blocked. Ark and Dark Eden pushed towards where Fugetsu was.

“Don’t panic! We can win.”

“Everybody gather! Help out the Fugetsu guild!”

Ark pretended to care and fired the cannons blindly as they pushed through enemy territory towards Fugetsu. Thanks to that, Baron and Fugetsu had no choice but to fight the enemy with even more determination.

“Damn, since Dark Eden is helping out like that it isn’t possible to run away…….”

“Sink or swim!”

Eventually Fugetsu became Dark Eden’s shield thanks to Ark’s plan.

‘If this continues then it will become difficult.’

Ark summoned Dedric and ordered.

“Mmm, the fragrant smell of blood from the battlefield is stimulating my appetite.”

“Stop sounding like a pervert and look around from the sky. Tell me if any enemy unit tries to join up with the ones Fugetsu are fighting. Let me know the location in coordinates.”

“Sheesh, always making me do these kinds of things!”

Although Dedric complained, he clearly did as ordered.

“Master, there are three or four guys moving at your 3 o’clock.”

“Okay, artillerymen move to the right and shoot them!”

“Master, there is a guy playing dead at your 8 o’clock.”

“Hyung-nims, please step on him!”

With Detric’s help, Ark was able to use the artillerymen with their cannons to defeat the enemy. Since Ark couldn’t afford for Baron to die, he swung his sword and intercepted the opponents. Meanwhile, Ark also summoned Deimos after recovering his spiritual power.

“Deimos, be prepared for any surprises and protect the artillerymen as well as Cross.”

Clack clack, clack clack clack!

Thanks to Deimos defending in front of the artillerymen, a perfect formation was made.

‘Huhuhu, this is like I’m swimming on land.’

Anyway, the nearby enemies also fell thanks to the efforts of Fugetsu working together. And after 3 hours passed, the events were slowly decided. When they collided outside, there were some doubts about how the levels of people in Dawn Blade were so high. But compared to the Hermes Alliance, they were somewhat lacking.

“I’ve captured the barracks!”

“The East Watchtower was knocked out!”

“We’ve also overwhelmingly dominated the battle in the annex!”

“There is no more power to stop our advance!”

The good news was conveyed.

“It was a tough fight but everyone has done well.”

Raiden looked at his forces with thrilled eyes. After a long battle, they’ve finally reached the final stop in Silvana.

“The resistance has 300 forces left!”

“Okay, the end is in sight! All that remains is the Hall of Glory! Without a doubt, Alan will be prepared for a conflict there. Except for the ones still fighting, all troops rush the Hall of Glory!”

Raiden entered the castle leading 300 people. Ark quickly grasped the opportunity and led Dark Eden. Thanks to Fugetsu falling for Ark’s temptations to fight, Dark Eden was able to join the main forces without any damage. Of course, Raiden wouldn’t eagerly fight until the end. With the military situation tilted, the safest place was next to Raiden. If he was near Raiden who was the leader of the Hermes Alliance, he could avoid any danger until the decisive moment. He would also get the chance to strike the final blow to Alan.

‘Okay, now should I watch the figure of Alan fall?’

“Kill everybody visible!”

Raiden was in good spirits and moved to the upper floor. And they finally arrived at a place blocked by a huge iron door.

Hall of Glory!

It was the room inside the castle that symbolized the Lord’s control. The iron door that was battered by the warriors’ maces and Ark’s cannons soon shattered.

“Alan, there’s no place for you to run to!”

“Damn it, stop them!”

Alan’s desperate voice was heard from a corner. The two groups clashed with a violent ringing sound that shook the room. Dawn Blade’s last line of defense in the Hall of Glory numbered 250 people. They were also the members selected from the guild with considerable skills. But the Hermes Alliance had 300 people. They also had an overwhelming strength thanks to the pioneers.

“Oh spirit of deterioration, turn everything to ashes. Hellfire!”

Jewel and Duke had survived the battle and used their wide area skills. A fire pillar roared and moved around while dozens of arrows came pouring down like a shower. Since the magicians and priests had died, the power of the wide area skill was absolute. Following Raiden’s commands, the warriors quickly cornered their opponents and Dawn Blade’s health steadily decreased. However, soon a wide area magic was also invoked from someone in Dawn Blade.

“Blades of wind, Tornado!”

“Kuaaaak!”

Numerous blades swept through the Hermes Alliance. Users who had low health collapsed.

“Sheesh, these guys still had a magician left?”

Raiden cursed and looked at the magician.

Ark reflexively looked and felt momentarily breathless. The last magician in Dawn Blade.....standing next to Alan was the elf Lariette.

‘Still.....you’re alive.....’

At that time Raiden shouted.

“Duke, shoot that woman!”

Duke quickly held his posture and pulled the bow taut. After using wide area magic, Lariette had exposed her body! It wasn't a situation where she could avoid Duke's sniper skills. But why? Ark grasped the situation and ran forward, blocking Duke's view.

“What are you doing, you idiot!”

Duke shouted at Ark and fired the arrow. But thanks to the late timing, the arrow bounced off Alan's shield.

“Such a stupid child.....!”

Duke spat out, but Ark ignored him to give a bittersweet look towards Lariette hiding behind Alan's body.

‘Doing such a thing even after Lariette chose Alan.....’

She had been with Alan for a long time. But when he saw her helping Alan on the battlefield, he couldn't help feeling terrible. A defeated feeling or maybe a feeling of betrayal.....but Ark still didn't want to see her die. Even there was a chance to attack with the artillerymen many times, Ark didn't give the order. But he knew he couldn't take such an ambiguous attitude forever.

It had been 20 minutes since the battle started and 400 users had already collapsed in the Hall of Glory. Combining the remaining troops from both sides, there were 130 people left. Only 30 of them were from Dawn Blade. If someone saw the chance then they would attack Lariette. On the other hand, for long distance attacks they only had Duke and the artillerymen from Dark Eden. Since Ark blocked Duke, the only chance was Dark Eden's artillery. Once or twice was fine, but if he kept on protecting her then he wouldn't be able to feign ignorance anymore.

‘Yes, this is war. She knows that too.’

Ark sighed and ordered the artillerymen to target Lariette.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang! A violent sound suddenly came from the rear of the Hermes Alliance. Ark flinched and turned around with a look of horror. What appeared to be the paladins came rushing in and squeezed the Hermes Alliance into a wedge formation.

“Are they.....?”

He had forgotten about it. When they smashed the front gates, the 20 cavalry troops that came out with Alan! Although a few of them had fallen in the confusion outside, there were still 17 left.

“He wanted them to rush us from the back!”

The 17 paladins joined forces with the remnants of Dawn Blade and trampled the Hermes Alliance.

“Heh, did you think I would give this room to you so easily?”

Alan’s face was filled with confidence.

-You have acquired 1 Intermediate Recovery Potion.

Ssak.....

Snake checked the information window and sighed. Snake had been wandering the battlefield and became covered in dust and blood.

‘There might be some useful items that have dropped. I only believe in you, Snake.’ After receiving Ark’s order, it had spent many hours searching. Snake searched the corpses really eagerly in order to please Ark. When something glittered, it crossed the battlefield with determination and swallowed it.....

Ssak, ssak ssak ssak

Snake raised its shabby face. Ark's face flashed through its head. Snake knew. Ark had a happy look on his face whenever he saw money, not to mention items. In fact, Snake didn't know the value of items but worked hard to learn what 'items that would become money' for its Master. But so far it hadn't eaten anything of use. All it had swallowed was a couple of potions. If Snake returned like this then Ark would probably be quite disappointed.

Ssak.....

Tears welled up in Snake's blues eyes.

'I'm counting on you Snake.' Ark's voice was going around its head. But it didn't eat an item of worth that would make Master satisfied.

Maybe Ark would think that Snake was like Dedric and Deimos. That would be so unfair and vexing. It just wanted to please Master in every way possible.....but why was it so incompetent? Eventually tears flowed down Snake's innocent face.

Suddenly a message window flashed in front of Snake.

You have manifested a new power.

Stalking (Beginner, Species Characteristics): You have gained a new skill thanks to your efforts in searching for something hidden. Your tongue has the ability to connect the sense of touch and smell together. It is possible to identify everything around you using the tip of your tongue and you can even identify what direction to go to if there is a collection of targets. This ability will provide crucial clues to keep track of hidden items and enemies.

Mana consumption: 30>

Ssak?

Snake's eyes widened.

In fact, stalking was a skill that an Alamone Larvae would learn when it was born from its mother. However, Snake grew up with Ark so it didn't have that opportunity. After wandering off from its owner and swallowing items, it naturally learned the skill. Although the information window was supposed to appear in front of Ark, Snake was too far away. Snake who couldn't read didn't understand the contents, but it felt like its senses were keener.

Swaeek.....swaeek!

It immediately flicked its tongue and smelled something plausible from far away. It was a familiar smell, the smell of items worth money that Ark liked. Snake immediately followed the smell. And after a while, it discovered a paladin's body. With a body that had ripened, it was one of the cavalry riders that had harassed Ark. Snake became angry and struck the paladin with its tail. That guy deserved to die for pestering Master. As revenge, Snake crawled underneath the armour. As expected.....a gauntlet was buried in the corpse.

-You have acquired 'Gauntlet of Glory.'

Swaeek! Saek saek saek!

Snake swallowed it and immediately screamed. Although it wasn't able to verify the information window- but with just a look- it was able to instinctively sense money. Now it was able to return Master's expectations. Snake looked around with greedy eyes. It wanted to find other things. Unfortunately, the gauntlet was the only item there. It wasn't possible so Snake was about to move to another place.

"Now. A lot of the Dawn Blade members were killed but there is still hope. In this battle, a blow in the back can also reduce moral!"

The paladins suddenly rushed charging out and rushed to the rear of the attacking forces. Snake who was hiding under the corpses became worried and secretly chased after them. The armoured knights

would drop fairly good items. If they were going to fight then some of them would die and it could pick up the items. In other words, if Snake followed them then there was another chance to get good items.

Saek saek saek.....

There was a grin at Snake's mouth.....a familiar smile. It was an expression that was normally seen on Ark's face.