

## Ark Vol 9 C 7

### Chapter 7

#### ACT 7 Hunting the Dead

“Hrmm.....this is also useable.”

Darkness began to spread in the forest. One wolf was shaking his tail and collecting fruits. A wolf with flowing black fur, it was Ark who had transformed into a wolf. Ark had arrived at Hagel Forest 1 hour after he left the village. The distance would only take Radun 20 minutes, but Ark walked there. That was because Radun wouldn't be able to carry Buksil and Sapjil as well.

“Huhuhu, I can now relax and scrape as much items as I want.”

For more than a fortnight, he had been worried about bag space and hadn't been able to pick up everything. Because of that, his stress had piled up. But now he didn't have to worry about his bag thanks to the pigs. No, he had to collect as much items as possible and kill them before finding Magaro's laboratory. So Ark kept on singing as he scraped up items. He found various magic ingredients using 'Magic Detection' in the forest and he couldn't just give it up.

Grrrrrrr.....!

Monsters also appeared in the dark forest. However, Ark would just neatly slice it up before piling the items in his bag. After passing through the ice caves and the wilderness, Ark had raised his stats and there was also the dark attribute bonus.....the monsters in the vicinity weren't capable of threatening Ark. Regardless of the level, but there weren't a lot of people with Ark's stats. Therefore he had an edge while hunting. Every time Ark's bag became heavier, Buksil's and Sapjil's face became increasingly gloomy. Once Ark's bags became full then they knew one of them would have to go and die. The two pigs trembled at the idea of becoming the wolf's lunch.

“Now I've collected most of the ingredients here so shall I earnestly begin the quest?”

Ark cracked his furry hands and began to explore. But the forest was huge and it wasn't easy to find a clue. Then Radun who had been snooping around licked its tongue and pointed in one direction. At the same time, a message window appeared in front of Ark.

-Radun has used 'Stalking.' Radun has found suspicious footprints leading into the forest.

When Radun used Stalking, the outline immediately became clear.

'Footprints? Beseutyu only sent his grandson and assistant. Yet these footprints indicate at least 20 people. Did I find something unrelated to my quest? No, you never know so I should check it out anyway.'

Ssak ssak ssak ssak!

Radun nodded proudly and indicated the front. The footprint tracks were headed in that direction. Ark followed Radun and tracked the prints deeper into the forest. How far did he go? He was walking along a wide road when he suddenly heard a feeble groan from ahead of him. When he approached, he saw that someone injured was leaning against a tree trunk.

'Blue skin.....a Myutal. Perhaps.....?'

Ark came closer and shook his shoulders.

"Are you okay?"

"Ugh.....w-who are you?"

"I'm here at the request of Beseutyu who lives in the Valley Village."

"B-Beseutyu.....teacher sent you?"

The person raised his head in pain and looked at Ark.

"What on earth happened? Where is Beseutyu's grandson?"

'Dammit.....'

Ark knew what he needed to do in this situation. Usually when he met injured NPCs during a quest, the NPC's health would not automatically recover. He had to use recovery potions or magic to heal them. The NPC might be holding a clue for the quest so he couldn't let him die. Ark felt like crying and handed him one of his Umma's Sap. After the person recovered their energy, he began to explain the whole story.

"Thank you. I'm called Guran and I work as an assistant for Beseutyu Teacher. I recently received Teacher's request to investigate this forest. But suddenly I met the Nakujuk clan....."

"Nakujuk?"

"They're the Myutal that dominates the Northern region. Unlike us, they're aggressive Myutal and won't hesitate to kill people. I don't understand why, but they have something to do with the disappearance of the dead that Teacher was investigating. I witnessed them putting the deceased onto a wagon with an iron window and leaving. Then.....while I was looking for a way to inform Teacher, I ended up being attacked."

"So what about Bona?"

"I don't know. After they hit me and I collapsed, they seemed to have dragged him somewhere. Ugh, I don't know what those guys are doing with Bona....."

"I have to hurry. Please guide me."

Guran became surprised at Ark's words.

"You're going to help?"

"Why would I come here if I wasn't thinking of helping?"

“B-but those guys are the Nakujuk. There are also 20 of them. Even though I’ve experienced all sorts of hardships, I was easily defeated by them. You don’t know me yet you’re still offering to help?”

“How can I let them go when they are capturing innocent people?”

Guran looked at Ark with foolish eyes. He seemed quite impressed. Indeed, it was natural to be impressed with someone who suddenly appeared and offered to risk their life to help him. But Ark had no interest in Bona’s life. He was willing to risk his life because of the quest. And the reason for the hurry in his voice.....

“Okay, the appearance of the hero who can’t tolerate injustice. Ah, good. Now moving on to the next scene.”

Buksil was standing behind the magic projector and gave a thumbs up. It was the excuse he used to follow Ark, but Buksil was actually filming. When Ark killed the monster, Buksil filmed it on the projector. Unlike a professional who needed to cut and edit, all he needed to do to film a dramatic scene was turn the projector on and off.

At first, Buksil was quite annoying. However, Ark came up with an idea after watching the recordings. It was the first time Ark had seen a scene of his gameplay. But the scene of a black wolf swinging his sword against a giant monster surrounded by trees looked quite cool.

‘Wouldn’t it be the same with other people watching this scene?’

Once he got the idea, Ark started to become greedy. Since he was transformed into Dark Wolf, his identity didn’t matter. So he started putting on an act. Guran looked at Buksil and asked with a perplexed face.

“What’s that?”

“It’s nothing.”

Ark smiled and shook his head.

“Over there.”

Guran hid in the bushes and pointed in front of him. After accompanying him for a few minutes, Ark was able to find the Nakujuk clan. Located inside the forest, a group of approximately 20 Nakujuk were gathered around a campfire.

‘They’re not blue?’

The Myutal had different skin colours according to their tribes, with the Nakujuk being red. And next to the carriage Guran mentioned was a cage. It was dark but he could clearly see the deceased souls that were trapped. Of course, he had no interest in the dead. He was there to rescue Beseutyu’s grandson, Bona. Guran looked at Ark with a worried expression.

“It is impossible by yourself. I’ll help as well.”

“No, aren’t you still recovering? Please leave it to me.”

Ark shook his head with a confident expression. The level of the Nakujuk clan was between 290~300. Meanwhile, Ark had reached level 238 in the wilderness. With that dark attribute bonus, that was level 333. Now it was time for Ark to judge his combat power. Since he got quite a lot of stat bonuses, his abilities were higher compared to his level. And the darkness attribute bonus didn’t simply raise his level. It also increased all his stats by 40%. That meant that the stat bonuses he received were also

similarly applied. When considering users with 30~40 levels more than him, it wasn't an exaggeration to say that his combat power was a lot higher.

'But I can't just blindly rush in.'

"Dedric, go lure five or six guys."

"Understood, Master."

Dedric flew towards the Nakujuk's campsite. Usually it wasn't easy for a monster to approach campsites. However, Dedric specialized in these sorts of things. And since he was always luring enemies during battle, he developed new professional skills.

-Your pet Dedric has learned a new skill. Taunt (Beginner, active): Rile up your opponents and induce a strong hostility in them towards you. The angrier you make your opponent, the longer the duration will last and there will be a wider range of effects.

It was a perfect skill for Dedric. Dedric waited patiently for some of the enemies to patrol the perimeter. And after 7 people left the camp, he immediately threw a small stone.

"What the?"

The Nakujuk members turned around and saw Dedric taunting them. They started to feel dirty as soon as they saw him! The Nakujuk warriors pulled out their weapons and rushed towards him. Dedric flew through the branches and lured them into the forest while Ark followed. While the others were paying attention to the noisy fight, they didn't notice Ark at all who had hid himself with 'Stealth.' He aimed for a backstab with the first blow!

"Ugh, what the?"

One of the Nakujuk collapsed and the battle began.

“7 people. It is a little tight but I can handle it!”

Ark swung Gwisal’s sword and plunged among the Nakujuk. The Nakujuk were certainly stronger than normal monsters. Their strength and stamina weren’t that high, and their defense was low since they wore leather clothes. However, their agility and attack speed was beyond imagination. They all used a thin rapier and the speed at which they wielded it was dazzling. Three or four attacks would instantly hit if he looked away even for a moment. But a relaxed smile spread on Ark’s face and he just laughed.

“Shall I test this out? Good, take this, Flash!”

At that moment, Ark shot out a stream of light. Then he moved in a zigzag pattern like lightning in a dark sky and stepped among the Nakujuk.

Susasasasak, Puaaak!

There was a ringing sound, and at the same time a terrifying fountain of blood rose in the air. The 7 of them had been struck at the same time and their health steadily decreased. That was the power of the new skill set Ark learnt, ‘Flash.’ Learning as much skills as possible was good. He never knew what combination of skills would create a new skill set. And Ark agreed with this idea. The effect appeared when he raised ‘Sprint’ and ‘Dark Dance.’

The rating of ‘Sprint’ has been raised after a lot of experience. There is a limit to increasing the chances of survival with a strong weapon or sturdy armour. Escaping is not a shameful behaviour. Indeed, it is foolhardy to continue to face the enemy because of being ashamed by running away. Sometimes having quick legs is more useful than a sword or armour. Since Sprint has reached intermediate, you can consume more mana for a more explosive dash.

\*Thanks to the combination of ‘Sword Hand Combat’, ‘Dark Dance’ and ‘Sprint’, you have learnt the set skill ‘Flash.’ (Pre-requisites: skills in the sword (Sword-Hand Combat) series, footwork (Dark Dance) and

dash (Sprint) series) Once all the skills in the set reaches intermediate rank, you can learn a new skill (The type and effects of the skill depends on the profession)>

Flash: A mana explosion will raise your attack speed and movement speed to the limit. Your blade can attack any enemy in the battlefield in a flash. However, the technique's focus is on speed so the attack will fall. Thanks to your reaction rate and reflexes increasing, your evasion and critical hit will rise dramatically.

'Dark Dance' and 'Sprint' had a large growth rate after he registered them as major skills. When he swung the sword, he could deal damage to all enemies within a 20 metre radius. It was a wide area skill using a sword. Although it only did 70% damage, it didn't matter when he used 'Blade Maintenance' and 'Elemental Sword.' In the wilderness, monsters only appeared by themselves. So he never had the chance to use Flash and relied on Dark Blade for damage. But if he was dealing with multiple enemies then it was a 180 degree change.

"Flash, Flash!"

When Ark continuously used Flash, the 7 people had their health decreased to 40%. It was to the extent that it was raining blood!

"Uhh, m-monster!"

The Nakujuk's morale immediately shot down to the bottom.

"Now they're ripe for the picking. Dedric, Deimos, crush them!"

"Bring it on, these red skinned bastards!"



Clack clack clack clack!

Since the start of the battle, they've lost half their health. Under the wave of attacks by Ark and his summons, the Nakujuk warriors collapsed in vain. When 4 people died, the rest became frightened and ran away.

"It's impossible with our skills. Call for help!"

"Not a chance."

Ark took out the Nadingka's fruit and threw it. When the fruit hit them, vines starting wrapping around their limbs. Thanks to that, their movements slowed down until it seemed like they were in a slow motion video. In a blink of an eye, Gwisal's sword cut into them and they collapsed.

"This is unbelievable!"

Guran burst out when he saw Ark handle Nakujuk in an instant. Buksil who was holding the magic projector was speechless and just stared with his mouth open. But in fact, the most surprised person was Ark. His landslide victory against the Nakujuk was completely unexpected. Since he had an easy time fighting the monsters in the wilderness, he hadn't realised how strong he was now. No, this was much stronger. Even though the 7 Nakujuk was level 290, he only had his health decreased by 40%. In addition, Dedric and Deimos had almost none of their health decreased. It meant there was no burden.

'Perhaps the Nakujuk are incredibly weak?'

He contemplated the thought.

'If it's to this extent, dealing with 10 people.....no, the remaining 15 people will be enough. But will it be boring repeating the same battle? I have to finish it perfectly. What should I try out this time?'

Ark spoke towards the magic projector like he was in a play.

“Well, those guys are too weak. Although I’m certain I can win, a warrior should always be prepared for every situation.”

Ark immediately took out his pot and cooked a dish. He mixed the Icecap’s Decisions from the snowy mountains with some ingredients and created a survival cooking dish.

-Snowy Ice WaterThe coolness of the icecap has dissolved into the water. It is possible to change the properties when mixed with food. However, if you eat it carelessly then the temperature of your stomach will decrease.

Ark used ‘Stealth’ to hide close to the campsite holding the ice water. Then he waited until the Nakujuk finished preparing dinner. Ark crept closer and poured the ice water into the pot. Then he withdrew and watched the situation.

“Mmmm, what a delicious smell. Let’s eat.”

“Hey, it is time for dinner everybody!”

“The guys patrolling still haven’t come?”

“Let’s just leave some aside for them.”

“Eh? Somehow the soup tastes better today.”

The Nakujuk warriors started to ravenously eat the soup. Then a little bit of time passed.

“Eh? I’m eating soup but why do I feel more cold?”

“Ohhh, it’s not a joke. Why is it so cold?”

‘Now!’

Ark who had been watching suddenly bolted forward. Buksil hurriedly turned on the magic projector.

“Ark-nim, we’ll cheer you on! I’d like a nice scene!”

Ark didn’t forget to laugh a little bit, revealing some of his fangs.

“Radun, transform! Let’s go Dedric, Deimos!”

Ssak ssak ssak!

Ark assaulted the camp while riding Radunma.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Radunma rushed into the camp and it instantly became a mess. Burning firewood went flying everywhere as the pot overturned.

“What, what the? A black wolf and a lizard?”

“It’s an attack!”

“That’s it! Radun, come back!”

Ark quickly jumped off Radunma who transformed back. In fact, he had rushed forward riding Radunma for the sake of the scene. Of course, Radunma could be used for combat. When fighting on Radunma, he got a 10% increase in attack and defense. But at the same time, there was a fatal disadvantage. His forward thrust was 500% faster, but stepping backwards or changing directions was quite slow. While his ‘Riding’ skill was slowly rising, it was still at a beginner level. Therefore, it was quite a disadvantage in

a battle like this. In a large scale battle, only a knight wearing heavy armour would have an advantage fighting on a horse.

‘Anyway, I wonder if that scene looked good?’

Ark pulled out his sword with a grin.

“Elemental sword, Ice attribute!”

After he used the skill, Gwisal’s sword was wrapped in a white frost. With the Nakujuk in an abnormal state, their movements obviously slowed down.

‘Okay, as expected the effects are showing!’

“Flash!”

Ark moved between the Nakujuk clan like a flash of lightning. He instantly struck 16 of them with his sword and they turned a pale blue. Ark had been aiming for this. Since they already drank the ice water, their cold resistance went down by 50%. When struck with his frost sword, they received further damage and obtained the ‘Frozen’ state.

‘A devastating effect!’

The great thing was that the ‘Frozen’ state overlapped. Every time they obtained ‘Frozen,’ their movement speed decreased by 15%. If three or four of them stacked up then movement speed would decrease by 50%. In addition, once the ‘Frozen’ state stacked up 100% then it was impossible for them to move anymore. That was the main reason a weapon with the ice attribute was incredibly expensive. However, Ark could use his skill to freely add an ice attribute to his sword whenever he wanted. In addition, the use of ‘Flash’ meant that all enemies received the ice damage at the same time. Of course, the chances of a critical hit also increased in this state. Ark was originally a user who relied on his tremendous agility and critical hits. In addition, Flash increased the chances of a critical hit so when he struck 16 enemies, at least 5 of them would receive a critical hit. It was a combination of Survival Cooking, Elemental Sword and Flash! Ark swung his sword five times in a row using Flash.

“Keuak!”

“Ooooh, c-cold.....”

“I can’t move my body!”

The Nakujuk’s health quickly fell to 50% and they all had the ‘frozen’ state. He had completely sealed the Nakujuk’s amazing speed. The only one who could move at his original speed was Ark.

“Let’s do this before the frozen state wears off. Demonic Opening!”

Kyaaaaak!

Once the seal was lifted, the ghosts jumped out wildly. Although Elemental Sword, the use of Demonic Opening made Gwisal’s damage transcend imagination. The Nakujuk were frozen and smashed to pieces when attacked. Once in a critical condition, the Nakujuk were split open using Drastic Measures like a frozen mackerel. Meanwhile, some of the Nakujuk unfroze and rushed towards Ark but it was already too late. Gwisal’s sword flashed three or four times and they eventually collapsed to the ground.

“Sheesh, didn’t you do too much? We didn’t get a chance to do anything.”

Clack clack clack, clack clack clack clack.

Dedric and Deimos started complaining.

“Heh, I poured cold water on your fighting spirit. Sorry. But you’ll get another chance to fight.”

Ark started saying a monologue while putting his sword away. He was still paying attention to the filming of the movie. While his heart was excited, he deliberately put on a casual expression. 1 against 16. Until recently, it was something he never would’ve dared try. He only had his health decreased by 60%. So it wasn’t an exaggeration to say that it was a landslide victory.

“Indeed Ark-nim. You really are awesome!”

“He handled those many warriors alone.....it is the romance of a true warrior!”

Buksil and Sapjil clamoured together. Indeed, when would a merchant get to see such an incredible sight?

“This is not the time. Please hurry! I have to rescue the innocent people!”

Ark quickly searched the bodies of the Nakujuk warriors. As a humanoid enemy, they had dropped some equipment items.

Myutal's Rapier(Magic)Weapon type: One-handed Rapier

Attack: 20~25

Durability: 23/25

Weight: 20

User restriction: Level 120, Agility more than 200

The sharp rapier used by the Nakujuk clan of the Myutal species in the Netherworld. As a lightweight weapon, it is very easy to use. When equipped with this and the Nakujuk's agility, no enemy's defense can hold out.

Dirty KeyA public key that can open the Nakujuk's iron carriage.

'Myutal's Rapier? Although the attack is bad for its level, the option of addition attack speed it quite good.'

The reason for the Nakujuk clan's incredible attack speed was influenced by the rapier. When equipped with two weapons with +20% attack speed, it would increase to 40%. With that incredible speed, Ark wouldn't have been able to hold out against a barrage of attacks. It was an excellent choice to use the ice sword.

"Bona-nim, Bona-nim. Are you okay?"

At that time, Guran ran out of the forest towards the carriage. Then a boy who was sitting calmly in the carriage lifted his head.

"Guran, you're alive!"

"Yes, the warrior Teacher sent helped defeat the Nakujuk clan."

"Grandfather!"

Bona grabbed the iron window and stared at Ark with eyes filled with respect. Ark smiled and walked towards the carriage. He was looking for the lock when a sudden movement made he flinch. Inside the carriage was a woman wearing a white robe. She was not a Myutal. It was a user like Ark, and a woman that Ark was familiar with.

"La-Lariette-nim?"

Ark stuttered as he looked at her with a stupid expression. Lariette.....the Lariette that he had last seen in Silvana was in the iron carriage. Lariette jumped and looked at Ark.

"Uh, how do you know my name?"

“Huh? What is that?”

Ark was puzzled until he belatedly realized that he had transformed into Dark Wolf.

“Ah, it’s me. I’m Ark.”

“A, Ark-nim?”

“Yes, thanks to several circumstances I’ve transformed myself into a wolf.”

“How did Ark-nim get here?”

“That’s what I want to ask you.”

Ark and Lariette looked at each other with bemused eyes. They never expected this chance encounter to occur. But wasn’t it more intense because it was unexpected? So far, 8 people have entered the Netherworld. No, it was 11 people if he included the pig brothers. 11 people out of millions of users. Who knew that they would meet each other in such a place? It was indeed a twist of fate.

“I’m here because of a quest……chasing after the dead…….”

“Oh, wait a minute. I’ll open the carriage first.”

“Huk, w-what the hell? Ark-nim! Above! Look above!”

Ark had been taking out the key to open the carriage. Then Buksil suddenly shot out of the forest screaming. Ark reflexively raised his head. A dark shadow came shooting down out of the night sky. The huge monster roared and blocked Ark’s way.

“What, what the?”



“D-Draken!”

Guran yelled after he lifted his head. The Duerakan was a wyvern like monster. However, it was several times bigger and looked more ferocious than a wyvern. The Draken looked around before opening its mouth and shrieking.

Kurwarwarwarwa-!

Buksil and Sapjil screamed and flopped down onto the ground. Guran also became stiff. This was due to the immense pressure Draken used. However, one of the characteristics of Ark’s profession was a 50% resistance against Fear. With his passive skill ‘Courage,’ his immunity increased to 60%. Ark didn’t shrink away from the shriek at all.

“This bastard.....Dark blade!”

Ark jumped and swung Gwisal’s sword. The Draken grabbed the carriage and flapped its huge wings. Then the whole carriage was lifted. All Lariette could do was cling to the bars.

“Ah, Ark-nim!”

“Lariette-nim! Sprint!”

Ark tried his hardest to catch up but the Draken disappeared into the darkness. It all happened in an instant. Ark looked at the dark sky blankly. Then Buksil walked over and muttered.

“Yah, this time the scene is good. A fateful encounter and a kidnapping, how exciting!”

Ark’s lips crept up and then a cry echoed through the darkness.

“Do you want to go to hell?”

“Ready. Summon the slime!”

JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members took their positions. Then Jjak-tung tore the scroll.

-Slime’s Time NO.2 scroll has been used.

A huge slime appeared after they used the scroll.

“Here’s one. Let’s deal with it before another one comes!”

Owaaaaah!

The rehabilitation members flocked around it carrying weapons. After leaving Ark at Salrin’s Towers, JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members proceeded with the plan of mass producing Slime’s Immortality Pill. The Meow and thieves had already started gathering the ‘Fangs of a Hook Bat’ while the raccoons were gathering the ‘Roots of a Mandragora that has received moonlight.’ Thanks to that, Lancel Village had already gathered a considerable amount of ingredients. The remaining ingredients was the ‘Unicorn Horn’ and the ‘Corrupted Fairy Wings.’

But Ark was procuring those ingredients, so JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members started hunting for the Slime’s Essence in Cairo’s underground labyrinth. In fact, ‘Slime’s essence was the most important ingredient that they couldn’t obtain using money. So Ark made copied of the skill onto scrolls and the rehabilitation group went hunting slimes. However, the pollution slime had a property that

allowed them to evade most physical attacks. Since the rehabilitation members didn't have a magician, it was a difficult opponent for them. So they came up with this method.

"Now, start. Everybody ready! Haaayaahh!"

JusticeMan grabbed the slime with both hands and ripped it apart. Then something fell out of the slime onto the ground. The form of the slime was similar to a water balloon. Once it broke apart for a little bit, the viscous liquid fell to the ground along with the nucleus.

"Now, all together!"

The rehabilitation members stampeded towards the nucleus. Once it was destroyed, the slime exploded everywhere.

.....It was definitely a crude way of hunting!

Anyway, JusticeMan and the rehabilitation members manages to defeat the slime using this method. The great thing about Slime's Time was that the slimes were friendly unless they were attacked. Therefore they could leisurely handle one slime at a time. In addition, sometimes the slime would handle the polluted skeletons that appeared.

"Wah, here's another one!"

Roco was gathering the japtem and lifted up a Slime's Essence.

"Hehehe, then that is the 5th one?"

"Once the rest of the ingredients are gathered then we can create 5?"

"Besides, the slimes give quite a lot of experience."

One rehabilitation member yelled.

“Yesterday I’ve dropped by Lancel Village and they’ve gathered the rest of the ingredients. All that’s left is the Unicorn Horn and the Corrupted Fairy Wings.....”

At the moment, Roco suddenly felt a chill as she trembled.

“Roco, what’s wrong?”

“I don’t know. I just suddenly felt a chill.”

“Are you getting a cold? The weather these days is quite chilly.”

JusticeMan said with a concerned voice. Roco muttered in confusion.

“Really? Somehow I don’t think so.....”

“But what if it is a cold? Today you should exit early and take a rest.”

“Hrmm.....”

Roco scratched her head and looked uncomfortable.

‘That’s weird. Why do I feel so anxious? Somehow I feel like something very unpleasant happened.....perhaps something happened to Ark oppa? Don’t tell me he attracted another shrew fox? It can’t be.....ah, I can’t leave Oppa alone. The world is filled with too many foxes.’

A woman’s intuition truly was scary. It was particularly fearful when it came to another woman.

‘I have to stop it. This weekend I’ll drag him out on a date no matter what.’

The girl vowed to do so.