

## World 1041

### Chapter 1041: Checking out the Demonic Portal

It took almost half a minute before Diana finally reacted.

For the first time, she knelt with a bowed head. "Forgive me, Your Majesty. For my transgression, I deserve punishment."

"Stand up, Governor Malva," Jack said. "We both just start knowing each other better. But I do hope you will be more cooperating from now on."

"You can count on me, Your Majesty," Diana replied.

Jack figured her loyalty points should have increased, but he would need to go back to his throne to find out. The Officers Overview was one of the offline operations in the Monarch System.

"Good. Now, show me this demonic portal," Jack said. "Considering this city is still functioning as normal, I assume everything is fine."

"It is, Your Majesty. The closing of the portal has continued for almost two centuries. We are more than halfway through the process already," Diana informed.

The two walked to the back of the city hall. The mass was still crowding in front. If the two of them just waltz over to where the demonic portal was located, it would draw too much attention to the place.

They entered a carriage that was stationed there. Followed by a pair of guards on steeds, they rode out from the city hall.

Before coming to Themonium, Jack had investigated via the monarch system where the demonic portal might be located. Thebalder mentioned that the ancient ruin was underground. Hence, the entrance was most likely through a building not accessible to the public. A building owned by the Malva house.

Jack had checked the city map through the City Overview screen. As the ruler of the city, Malva house owned many establishments. But the most likely one was a large private warehouse. It was large enough to house a large number of people and was only accessible to people authorized by the Malva house.

Another supporting point for why that warehouse was the most likely entrance, was that the building owned by the Oder of Magi was next to it. The mages could easily enter the warehouse unnoticed through secret doors in the alley between the two buildings.

Jack had found seemingly fine rectangle lines in the two opposite walls of the alley when he was doing his earlier tour around the city. Those must be the secret doors.

Confirming his hypothesis, through the small slits of the windows of the carriage, he saw that they were entering this private warehouse.

The door of the warehouse closed after they entered.

"Your Majesty, Governor, we have arrived," the carriage driver informed while opening the carriage's door.

Diana exited first. Jack followed behind. Inside what was supposed to be a warehouse, was a garrison of armored soldiers. There were barricades, and further behind were scorpions affixed at higher elevations with soldiers manning them. All the barricades and scorpions were facing the center of the warehouse, which was a large hole with stairs going under.

Jack supposed that hole was the entrance to the ancient ruin.

Diana led Jack into that hole, followed by a squad of soldiers. Underneath, Jack saw a series of excavated tunnels. Most of the original walls of the ruin had crumbled. Replacing the walls were metal posts used to hold the ceiling so it didn't crumble.

Because many of the walls of the ancient ruin had crumbled, Jack had a broad view of this underground's extremely wide cavern complex. He saw some soldiers fighting monsters in the distance.

Following his gaze, Diana explained, "Even though we are right under a city, this underground section here is considered wilderness. Monsters frequently spawned in this place, so we regularly cleared the place so these monsters didn't cause problems for the mages who were sealing the portal.

Jack soon saw the mages Diana was talking about. Within the center of the cavern, was a large dome structure of black color. People in mage's clothes were seen surrounding this dome.

As they got nearer, Jack realized the dome structure was not actually a structure. It was a dome made of black light.

"That is the seal that blocked the demonic creatures from coming out. The portal is inside that seal," Diana explained.

"So, how do we know the portal is closing?" Jack asked.

"I will leave that explanation to the Order of Magi people," Diana replied.

Diana stopped them when they were near the light dome. There was a rune diagram forming a circle on the ground. Jack sensed this circle formed a protective barrier. This barrier must be to prevent the monsters around the ruin from coming near the dome.

One of the mages around the dome noticed them and came by. He made a gesture and interacted with the rune diagram on the ground. Jack sensed the invisible barrier giving way in front of them. The mage gestured for them to come in.

Only Diana and Jack entered, the other soldiers stayed guarding outside the barrier. The mage closed the protective barrier again after Jack and Diana entered.

"This is Severus," Diana introduced the mage who had let them through the barrier. "He is the supervisor from the Order of Magi. He oversees this portal-sealing operation."

Diana then introduced Jack. "This is King Storm Wind, the newly crowned king of Themisphere."

"Your Majesty," Severus gave a respectful bow. But his countenance showed that he was peeved by this interruption. "What can I help the two of you with?" He asked.

"How goes the portal sealing operation?" Jack asked.

"Despite constant interruptions, smoothly," Severus answered.

"Ehem!" Diana cleared her throat. She understood Severus was being purposefully sarcastic.

Jack didn't show any sign of being offended. He walked toward the black light dome, which prompted Severus to stop him.

"Your Majesty! Please don't approach needlessly. You might disrupt the sealing process," he said urgently.

But Jack continued to walk forward. Although Severus was displeased, he didn't dare to physically stop the king.

"Don't worry, I know a thing or two about magic," Jack said.

"With all due respect, Your Majesty. Any spell-caster can say that they understand magic, but very few actually do. The intrigue of the mystic way is deeper than just a simple casting of a spell. We, from the Order of Magi, pride ourselves in this study and thus, knows more about magic than other spellcasters."

"Oh? Then I should be qualified. I am also a member of the Order of Magi," Jack said.

Severus chuckled. "Your Majesty might be a member, but a low-ranking member is not proficient enough..."

Severus stopped talking when Jack equipped his Honorary Magi title. As one of the high-profile members of the faction, Severus knew that only the leader of his faction could issue this title.

## **Chapter 1042: Fellow Magi**

"Your... Your Majesty knows our Head Minister?" Severus asked.

"Yeah. He is the one who gave me this title. We have a good chat almost two months ago," Jack replied jovially.

Severus didn't question Jack's claim that the leader gave him the title. Severus knew only the leader could grant that title. He was more surprised about Jack's claim of having a good chat with the leader.

Jack might have said it as if it was nothing, but Severus found it hard to believe. Even he had never had the chance to meet the leader, only the leader's copy. But then again, it would be impossible for the leader to give this Honorary Magi title to someone if the person was not close to the leader. Although it was not official, the one having this title could be seen as the successor to their faction.

Severus was baffled to silence. Jack might be the king, but the leader never deign to meet any country's sovereign. This had happened in the past. Whether when the leader was summoned or when the sovereign came to visit, it was always the copy who came forward.

He could hardly believe this young boy, despite being a king, had truly met their leader face to face. Furthermore, Jack was not yet a king two months ago. This meant Jack had met the leader when Jack was still a nobody.

"Have you truly met our leader?" Severus asked.

"Yeah," Jack responded.

"You must mean his copy, right? You are aware he has many copies, aren't you?" Severus asked again.

"I'm aware. I've met his old copy, his young copy, and also his real self."

"Are you sure? Can you just maybe mistake him for another copy?"

"Unless he lied to me, but why would he lie to me that he is the real one?" Jack asked back.

Severus thought back to one incident when the Queen of the elven country visited their headquarters in the Aurebor Dynasty. The queen had demanded to meet the leader's real self, but it was still a copy who met the queen. When the queen asked if the copy was his real self, the leader didn't even lie to save the queen's face. He just said directly that he was a copy and his real self was unavailable.

If the leader didn't even bother to lie to Aurebor's queen, why would he lie to Jack, who was not even a king yet at that time?

"You are not lying to me, are you?" Severus asked.

"Dude, you are one mistrustful person," Jack replied. "How about we go next door? Young Janus should be there, right? Let's go and ask him directly."

"Ah... No need, no need," Severus said. "So, what is our leader like?"

"Well, he is..."

The two started to hotly chat on the topic. Diana who stood behind them was speechless. Wasn't Severus acting hostile not long ago? Now, the two were speaking as if they were the best of friends. Severus even forgot to address Jack with an honorary title anymore.

"Ehem!!" Diana cleared her throat again when their chat seemed to be dragging on for too long.

"Oh," The two realized they were getting carried away.

"Hey, let's chat some other time," Jack said to Severus. "I will look for you if I ever visit the Order of Magi here. Are you only stationed here, or do you occasionally go to other branches?"

"I mostly stayed here. The task in this place takes a lifetime, after all."

"That is depressing. I suppose we can find a place to hang out when you are free. Do you know any good place in the city?"

"There is a good restaurant around the..."

"EHEM!!!" Diana was getting impatient.

"Okay, okay! We are on official business here," Jack said to Severus, changing into a serious tone. "Tell me, good Severus. How do you detect that the portal behind this seal is closing without a problem?"

Severus also cleared his throat and adopted a formal tone, "Reporting, Your Majesty. We detect it by reading the energies from the rune diagram which our ancestors had set up. My fellow mages here are

channeling their energies to direct the flow within the rune diagram and make sure that everything works without a hitch."

"So, the portal is already halfway into completely closing."

"I say, around seventy percent. It might not need another century to complete this task. Probably around eighty more years, I dare say," Severus informed.

"Since the task is already half completed, do you still need two legendary artifacts to fuel your rune diagram?" Jack asked. "I mean, can you complete the remaining task with only one artifact?"

"Well, technically, it is possible," Severus said. "After closing the portal to this stage, the energy the portal emitted was not as powerful as when it was first opened. Theoretically, one artifact was sufficient for the job."

"That's great. This means I can take one of the artifacts away, can I?" Jack asked.

"Is that why Your Majesty is here?" Severus asked back. "Unfortunately, I must disappoint you."

"Why is that?"

"Because the artifacts are inside there," Severus pointed to the black dome. "They were within the heart of the rune diagram, which was right next to the portal. To go near that portal will require us to open this sealing dome. We don't know how many demonic creatures had slipped out of the portal. Although powerful ones should have been sucked back into their realm when the portal shrank, we can't know for sure. For all we know, there might be a mythical-grade demon behind this dome. If it gets out and causes havoc here, then all our effort these past two centuries will become wasted."

"Why does Your Majesty want to get the Boundless Cache?" Diana asked. "I understand the country needed funds after the war, but I think it doesn't worth the risk of agitating this demonic portal."

"What I want to take is the Totem Banner," Jack replied, which caused Diana's forehead to crease further.

"I need that artifact to make peace with Verremor," Jack said to her. "Trust me. If we don't resolve our issues with Verremor soon, we will be besieged from the front and the back when the enemy comes."

## **Chapter 1043: Preparing the Team**

"Enemy?" Diana asked.

Jack didn't explain his words to Diana. He instead asked Severus, "How about opening just a little gap for a small team to enter and close it again after that? I don't think the demons will expect that a gap will suddenly open in this dome."

Severus pondered Jack's suggestion and said, "Well, that is doable. But whoever wants to go in like that is either insane or has a death wish. Do I need not say again that a mythical-grade demon might be waiting inside?"

"But their number can't be that many, right?" Peniel joined the conversation. "Original demons from the underworld require corrupted mana from that realm to survive. If the portal has shrunk down, the corrupted mana will lessen. This limits the number and also the power level of the demons that can exist behind this dome."

"You are very knowledgeable, miss," Severus praised. "But as I said, we don't know the real situation behind this dome. It is still a high risk to enter. One other thing to note, if Your Majesty truly wants to send a team to go inside to take one of the artifacts, Your Majesty has to be in that team."

"That is out of the question!" Diana uttered.

Jack turned to her. He expected her loyalty to have increased, but he didn't expect it to increase to the extent where she showed such a concern for him.

Diana noticed Jack's gaze. Her cheek became red and she turned away. "Our... Our kingdom has just lost a king. If we lose another one again, it will be a catastrophe."

Jack smiled at her words and said, "Don't worry, I won't die." He then turned to Severus and asked, "I do intend to go in myself, but why do you say that I have to?"

"Because an enchantment had been placed on the artifacts," Severus answered. "Only Themisphere's king can take them away. Well, for the Totem Banner, an additional exception was placed where Verremor's grand chief can take it as well. This was the demand of past Themisphere's fourth king. He didn't want anyone to steal the artifacts once the portal was closed."

"You mean he didn't want the Order of Magi people to take them once the job is done," Jack said, to which Severus just shrugged.

Jack then asked, "For how many people do you think you can open the gap safely and then close it again before any of the demons inside can react?"

Severus made a few mental calculations and said, "Well, if you can find people insane enough to follow you, I reckon five should be okay. Going for six might push it a bit into the risky zone."

"Five... After I enter, can I summon my royal agents inside?" Jack asked.

"No. Royal agents are considered natives of this world. Once you enter, you are cut out from the outside world. You will not be able to call for help from the natives. But you can still summon something that is from within you. Like your summons or your pet, for example."

The knowledge that the king was an outworlder with Blade Dancer, Archmage, and Beastmaster classes was already common knowledge to the mass.

"Dang!" Jack cursed. 'Therras just has to go through a metamorphosis at this time,' he thought.

"You can summon your royal agents prior and have them follow you inside if you want," Severus said.

Jack turned to Diana and asked, "What are the level and grade of the strongest officer in this city?"

"That will be Knight Captain Dimitri. He is a level 60 rare elite," Diana answered.

'Not so high,' Jack thought. He himself is stronger than this Knight Captain. But what can he expect? This is not the metropolis-level main city.

"Who is the next strongest?" Jack asked.

"The next strongest is Rowan, a Knight lieutenant who was a level 65 special elite," Diana answered.

"Do you have another rare elite after Dimitri?"

"We have a few, but the highest level after Dimitri is level 50."

Jack made some pondering.

"Should I call the officers from other cities?" Diana asked.

"No. I prefer to not let too many people learn about this place," Jack replied. "Do you trust this Dimitri and Rowan?"

"I do."

"Call them over, please. For the other two, I will summon my royal agents," Jack said.

"Right now?" Diana asked.

"The sooner we deal with this, the better," Jack nodded.

"All right," Diana said. She then called one soldier over. She instructed him to head up and look for Dimitri and Rowan.

"Hold!" Jack suddenly uttered.

Diana turned to him questioningly.

"Don't need to call Rowan anymore. Just call Dimitri, but have him come here tomorrow morning instead of now," Jack said.

Diana was puzzled by the sudden change, but he asked the soldier to do as the king said. The soldier went away to look for Dimitri.

"I assume you are not going into that dome today then," Diana said to Jack.

"Yes. One of my helpers just become available, but he can only come tomorrow morning. We will wait for him," Jack said.

Diana wondered if what Jack meant was another outworlder, but she didn't push for an explanation.

The one who had just become available was Arlcard. Jack had just received a mental message from him. Jack asked him if he could come. He told Jack to give him one night to recuperate. He just came out of his cocoon. He wanted to adjust himself to his current power first.

'Current power. That sounds promising,' Jack thought.

If Arlcard truly had become a mythical grade as Peniel mentioned, then Jack had to have him when he entered the dome.

Since he had free time now, Jack asked Severus if he wanted to hang out in the city. Severus gave him a rain check. He said since Jack wanted to go in tomorrow. This gave him time to double-check his estimation about opening the gap safely and prepare for tomorrow's incursion into the dome.

Jack gave the large black dome another glance before saying farewell to Severus. He and Diana then left.

During the ride back in the carriage, Jack told Diana to have the carriage bring them somewhere secluded. He transformed into his disguise inside the carriage, which surprised Diana.

Jack told Diana that he would come directly to the warehouse tomorrow morning. He then left.

## **Chapter 1044: Judgement of Past Kings**

Jack spent the remaining of his day inside the Order of Magi's building.

Their building in this smaller city was actually better than the hut in the capital. It was a proper building with staff doing chores. Jack came in with his mage disguise, so he was right at home there.

He asked for Janus after showing his membership badge. He was shown to a door on the second floor.

When Jack entered this door, it was the familiar beige space with nothing inside except a desk and Janus sitting behind it.

"Mister Storm Wind!" Janus called out cheerfully. "Ah, I'm sorry. It should be Your Majesty Storm Wind from now on."

"I prefer you just call me Mister," Jack said. "By the way, I just recently learned of your activity next door."

"As it should be. You are the king now. It will be bad if you don't know what is happening inside your own kingdom."

"I have a feeling there are still one or two things hidden from me. Any of them involving your faction?"

"No, Your Majesty. Our secret deal with the kingdom is just the demonic portal next door."

"Hm, I will take your word for it," Jack said. "Anyway, I want to continue my challenge."

"You know the drill. You have the Honorary Magi title so you can challenge as many of the unconquered stages as you can," Janus said. He then added, "good luck!"

"Thanks," Jack said and went to the back of the room where a portal appeared.

He went to the challenge obelisk with the number 70 on it. The last time he tried this was when he was level 56 and still sporting super rare equipment. Now, he was level 64 with full unique-grade gears except for his Cloak of Shadow which was still a super rare grade cloak.

He supposed his odds should have increased.

He went into stage 70 and saw the same enemies as the last time when he failed this stage. He was facing five level 55 rare elites, twenty level 57 special elites, and five level 60 elites.



Since his mage disguise was wearing the regal outfit of the light cloth version, he had access to the regal outfit's full set skill, Judgement of Past Kings. And also, since all cooldown was reset after the challenge stage, he had no reservations about using this skill just for a test.

When he unleashed the skill, the void within the challenge stage brightened a little. The image of the eleventh king of Themisphere, Thenodeep, appeared above him. He was holding the royal staff. Spell formation was formed rapidly and a great flood was summoned. The spell washed over every monster inside this stage, delivering high damage.

As he faded, another figure replaced him. It was the tenth king, Thewolden, who was holding the royal sword. His figure then abruptly disappeared. Multiple clones of him appeared around the monsters that were still reeling from the great flood.

Each clone slashed at the monsters. It was similar to the Hundred Shadow Strikes, except this one did appear to have a hundred of the clones.

After Thewolden finished his skill, he similarly faded, replaced by another figure. The same thing went on. Each king appeared in turns, from the youngest to the oldest. Each king unleashed their most powerful attack. Some magical, some physical, some elemental.

When Thebalder appeared, the thirty monsters were already reduced to only the five rare elites. Even they were dying. Thebalder struck his sword into the ground and it flared. The ground in a large area shook and pillars of light burst out of the ground. These pillars of light intensified until they all became one large blinding pillar, consuming everything.

When the light subsided, the five rare elites were no more.

Since the enemies were gone, the skill automatically ended and Jack was sent out from the stage.

"Holy...," Jack uttered. "That skill wiped them out even when it is not fully completed yet."

"I already told you it is very powerful, didn't I?" Peniel said.

"You did. Damn! Imagining Themos using this on us made me shiver. Thank goodness he turned into a vampire."

"If he didn't. You won't have to fight him in the first place," Peniel argued.

"Whatever. Let's see how far we can clear the stages," Jack said and went to stage 71. His Order of Magi's rank was promoted to Renowned after coming out of stage 70.

In stage 71, the enemies were similarly wiped out before the Judgement of Past Kings was completed.

Only after reaching stage 73, Jack could see the completion of the skill. The last attack was of course carried out by Theridan, the first king of Themisphere.

His figure came with a grand entrance accompanied by his pet, Terraxx, in the sovereign mode. Terraxx stood tall as his two strange wing-like things flapped behind its large body. It then opened its mouth and yellow mana accumulated.

Jack knew that move. It was similar to his Therras' Earth Core Bomb, only larger.

When the bomb was shot, it created an explosion with a larger radius than Therras'. The damage was also much higher. Jack could sense the mana within the explosion swirling, amplifying the damage. This made him wonder, was Theridan a native with mana manipulation ability?

Jack's advance stopped at stage 78. He tried stage 79 but failed. In this stage was one level 61 mythical opponent, nine level 65 rare elites, and twenty level 70 special elites.

He estimated that with his current power, he should be able to deal with a mythical grade of the same level, even if barely. But this stage locked him out of his Blade Dancer and Beastmaster skills. So, he failed to defeat the mythical opponent of this stage.

Janus congratulated and complimented him for advancing another rank again in such a short time.

Jack thanked him and repeated stage 78 another nine times before going to the exchange station to browse what was available for the Renowned rank.

A bunch of items and spells were available for exchange in this rank, but three spells interested him. They were Lightning Mine, Interrupt, and Fly

Both Lightning Mine and Interrupt were spells needed for him to fuse with his available spells and evolve them into a stronger version. While Fly was a better version of Soar. The spell Fly didn't have a height limit and provide faster flying speed than Soar.

Unfortunately, he didn't have enough knowledge points. He only had 1,804 knowledge points in his Order of Magi Badge. The lightning mine cost 3,700 knowledge points, Interrupt cost 3,500 knowledge points, and Fly cost 4,000 knowledge points. He couldn't even afford one of them.

"Guess I have to come here daily and do the challenges if I want to get those spells," Jack said dejectedly.

Seeing his somber expression, Janus said to him, "Don't worry too much about the knowledge points. If you manage to climb to the next rank, Exalted. You will get bonus knowledge points for passing that rank. Furthermore, starting from that rank, you will receive a boost to the acquired knowledge points every time you clear a stage."

"Really?" Jack asked.

"Yes. Exalted rank can be considered our high-profile members. Such members are often busy with their matters. They can't be bothered with the routines of doing these stages often, so the system gives them this bonus."

"Great. This makes me eager to beat stage 80 as fast as possible."

"I will be rooting for you," Janus said with a smile.

## **Chapter 1045: Settling the Affairs**

Jack checked into a local inn under his disguise to spend the night there.

That night, he received messages from Jeanny. It was the reports on both cases in his Affair Overview.

"This is fast! Only three days had passed," Jack remarked. "Professional investigators sure are dependable."

Jack reviewed the reports. For the case of the land dispute in Theboldiere, after asking the locals, it was found out that Olmond had been neglecting his ancestral lands, especially the ones by the suburbs. This disputed land was one of those neglected ones. That's why Olmond only responded after half a year had passed. He just found out after he heard the news about Ethos' successful business.

Olmond was both envious and tempted after receiving the news. He immediately took action which resulted in a dispute.

"This Olmond is quite a detestable fellow," Jack said.

"So, you want to pick the choice of supporting Ethos?" Peniel asked.

Jack gave the matter some thought.

"Even though I very much want to teach that greedy noble a lesson, I have to think of the bigger picture," Jack said. "That Olmond was still an influential lord in that town. Directly antagonizing him is not good for the kingdom. Additionally, Ethos was also negligent for not properly checking if his land transaction was legal or not."

"Hm... I can't picture you as a king before, even if you are already one. But you look more like one now," Peniel said.

Jack rolled his eyes at her. He then opened his status window and go to the Affair Overview page.

"Have you decided what to do?" Peniel asked.

"Yes," Jack replied.

He opened the affair with the title, Dispute of two landlords over a plot of land in Theboldiere. After that, he clicked the Response button. He ignored all four available options and fill inside the text box available as the fifth option.

Jack wrote that Olmond was at fault since he had neglected the land for a long time. But the court would partially honor his claim. Ethos was to pay Olmond fifty percent of the coins from what he used to buy the land through the faulty minister. After this transaction, Ethos will fully own the land and the court will legalize his deed.

The system asked if Jack was sure of his decision. Jack clicked yes and the case was closed. The two landlords would receive the court's decision soon.

On Jack's side, he received a notification that he had received 100,000 merit points and 5 ruling points. He only needed 12,196 merit points to reach the next sovereign level. Hence, with this notification, his sovereign level increased to level 4. He also received 10 ruling points from the level-up.

From Sovereign level 4 to level 5 needed 200,000 merit points. His king badge held 87,804 merit points at that moment.

"Yes! You said before if it was considered a perfect solution by the system if I receive ruling points for a reward, didn't you?" Jack asked Peniel.

"Yes. Apparently, this is considered perfect, or almost," Peniel replied.

"Awesome. Let's check the next case," Jack said and studied Jeanny's report on the second case, the inheritance of Lord Edmond.

It was the case where four people fought for the inheritance. One of them was originally a personal maid to lord Edmond but claimed to be his daughter. She also had a hand-written will of Lord Edmond, granting all his fortune to her.

After the players, whom Jeanny sent to investigate the matters, snooped around the case. They found something surprising about this case.

The maid, who claimed to be Lord Edmond's secret daughter, was not a level 1 commoner as she claimed to be nor did she have any blood relation to Lord Edmond. She learned witchcraft in secret and used it to disguise her level.

She regularly used charm spells on Lord Edmond, bewitching him into thinking she was his secret daughter. That's how she gained Lord Edmond's will.

The players whom Jeanny sent even suspected that Lord Edmond's death had something to do with her. They needed to dig deeper if they wanted to find the evidence but they were afraid it might cause the maid to become aware of their snooping. Hence, they gave their current report and asked Jeanny if she wanted them to proceed.

Jack thought this report was enough already. He opened the affair screen and clicked the response button. He also filled in the fifth option for this case instead of picking one of the available ones.

He typed in that new information had been found that the maid was false in her claim and use faulty means to trick her claims. Authority was to arrest her and investigate her further. The will on her hand was not sanctioned. Lord Edmond's fortunes were to be divided equally among his three descendants.

Jack then sent a message to Jeanny to have the players in the city continue cooperating with the authority, who was about to apprehend the maid. They could then continue their investigation to find out if the maid was indeed at fault for Lord Edmond's death.

For this case, Jack received 110,000 merit points and another 5 ruling points, signifying another perfect resolution.

His merit points were now 197,804. Just a tiny bit from Sovereign level 5. His available ruling points were 65. With the ruling points he received every month based on his sovereign level, it would be enough to make another round of Call to Arms and Mass Drill the next month.

He looked at the Affair Overview and was disappointed to find it empty.

"Don't worry," Peniel said to him. "The news will spread about you perfectly resolving two affairs so swiftly after you were crowned. More affairs will come your way. You might even find it overwhelming in the future."

Jack grinned and said, "I hope they will come soon. The more the merrier. With Jeanny's troops of investigators, I'm not worried about getting a good solution to each of these cases."

#### **Chapter 1046: Upgraded Arlcard**

The next morning, Jack went to Malva's private warehouse under disguise.

He went to the alley between the warehouse and the Order of Magi's building. Yesterday, he had confirmed with Diana the existence of the secret door that let the Order of Magi's members sneak in. He told Diana that he would be using this secret door tomorrow.

He tapped the door using a secret code. It soon opened and he went inside. He changed back into his real self after entering.

Diana was already in the warehouse waiting for him. A knight was following her. Jack used Inspect and found that this knight was Dimitri, whom Diana mentioned yesterday. Dimitri had a short sword on his waist and a large crossbow slung to his back.

The three went down to the ancient ruin under the escort of a squad of soldiers.

Severus opened the barrier and let them in.

"Your Majesty is still serious about going inside that seal?" The mage asked.

Jack nodded. "Have you confirmed the maximum number you can allow in is five?" Jack asked.

"Actually, after calculating further. Five is rather pushing it. But if we act fast, we should be okay," Severus answered. "So, you people should act fast. Don't dilly-dally and have second thoughts once we open the gap. You must rush in immediately."

"Understood," Jack said.

"By the way, after they go in. How are you going to know the time to open the gap to let them out again?" Diana asked Severus.

"If one of the artifacts is taken from its station, we will know. We will then open the gap at the same place," Severus explained. He then turned to Jack, "That is your intention going inside, right?"

"Yes," Jack answered.

"Which means you will let them be trapped inside if they don't complete the objective?" Diana asked.

Severus didn't answer. He turned to Jack instead, who answered, "That's fine."

Jack then turned to Dimitri, "Are you okay with this, Dimitri? It can be dangerous."

"It will certainly be dangerous," Severus corrected.

"Protecting Your Majesty will be my honor!" Dimitri proclaimed.

"Thank you, captain," Jack said.

"As I mentioned yesterday, you should call your royal agents now. You can't do it inside," Severus reminded.

Jack nodded. He took out his Themisphere King Badge and interfaced with it. He was given the choice to select which royal agents to call. He had already informed them about this plan yesterday, so they were ready for his call.

Duke Alfredo and Jonathan materialized nearby.

"Your Majesty," Both of them saluted.

Jonathan was especially awkward. The last time they met, even though Jack was a Viscount, Jack was basically just an adventurer. Of course, he had heard the news of Jack's accomplishment, how he was a hero in both the civil war and the invasion war. Jonathan didn't join both wars because Thesylvania was lacking in protection.

Yet, even with all the news, in his mind, Jack was still that carefree adventurer he last met. He had a problem picturing Jack as a king.

That's why he was very shocked when he saw Serenity's broadcast in the sky. And even more baffled when Jack contacted him asking him to be a royal agent.

"How are you doing?" Jack said to Jonathan. They finally see each other again after a long time.

"Good," Jonathan replied. He tried to speak less. The boy in front of him was now a king. He couldn't talk casually like he used to.

Jack actually preferred Jonathan to treat him normally, but he guessed it would become even more awkward if he asked Jonathan to do so. So, he simply nodded and ended their conversation.

Jonathan was a level 52 rare elite now after receiving Jeanny's Pill of Growth. He was stronger than the level 50 rare elite available in this town. That's why Jack called him instead of enlisting the local muscle.

Duke Alfredo stared at the black dome in front of them. Jack had filled him in about their task last night, but he still couldn't believe there was a demonic portal inside their country all this time.

"Now, let's call our last member, shall we?" Jack said and took out his companion token.

The air swirled when the token was activated, and red winds gathered. Following the wind, the smell of blood filled the air.

The mages who were handling the rune diagram were alarmed by the changes. Although they didn't have mana sense, they were sensitive enough to know when a powerful being was crossing through the plane nearby them.

The blood wind swirled faster and formed images of bats flying in circles. The blood bats coalesced before Jack and formed a humanoid shape. The congregation of bats transformed into Arlcard, who floated a few feet off the ground.

He continued to hover. His feet never touched the ground. His cold eyes stared at the black dome with indifference. He only glanced at Jack for a tick. After he came out of his cocoon, he heard from the soldiers that Jack had been crowned king. So, he wasn't surprised seeing Jack in the regal outfit. For the others, he didn't deign to give them any glance.

Jack used Inspect once Arlcard appeared. He was ecstatic to find that the vampire had indeed upgraded to Mythical grade. Arlcard also increased a level from the fight with Themus.

\*

Arlcard Maxius (Mythical Vampire, High Elder), level 66

HP: 1,460,000

\*

"My-Mythical...," Diana and the others gasped after seeing Arlcard's grade.

"High elder?" Jack muttered. "His vampire age had also increased. I understand that the higher the rank is, the longer it takes a vampire's age to increase, doesn't it?"

"It is," Peniel agreed. "It must be because of Themus' blood. After hearing it was the emperor of Sangrod who turned Themus, I didn't find that strange. But still, his bloodline must be unique to be able to assimilate other vampires' blood so easily."

Jack also noticed the aristocrat coat that Arlcard wore was slightly different. It looked more extravagant now. Dark flames occasionally swirled around the coat, making it seem as if it was burning yet it was not so.

"I think that coat he wore was a suppressed equipment," Peniel conjectured.

"Suppressed equipment?" Jack asked.

"It is," Arlcard answered. Though Peniel and Jack spoke in low voices, Arlcard could hear them.

"The coat and the rapier I used were originally Aubelard's," Arlcard told them. "Due to his wounds, his power had dropped. Hence, he used enchantment to suppress his equipment so he could still use them properly. I am now strong enough to undo his suppression. Enough useless talks. We are going into this dome, aren't we? I can feel a strong demonic aura from within."

"You can?" Jack asked. He could sense the aura because of his mana sense. If Arlcard could as well, that meant he had a mana sense ability now.

"It's probably his innate talent," Peniel explained. "He is also a mythical grade now. This grade is more in tune with sensing mana. If he truly has that innate talent, he will be able to learn mana manipulation by himself as well."

"Okay. Let us speak more after we achieve our objective. Severus, prepare to open the gap," Jack commanded.

Severus nodded. He was worried at first that there was a mythical-grade demon behind the dome. But now after knowing that the king also had a mythical-grade companion protecting him, he no longer thought Jack was just being reckless about going inside the dome.

He started interfacing with the rune diagram as the five positioned themselves near the black dome.

## Chapter 1047: Entering the Dome

"Get ready!" Severus yelled. He then gave a nod to the other mages who synchronized with his act.

The rune diagram around the black dome shone a bright light. Runic symbols started appearing around the dome.

Right in front where Jack and the others stood, a narrow slit appeared. It was as if someone used a knife to cut the dome's wall as if it were paper. The slit tried to repair itself, but the runic symbols gathered densely around it. Jack saw the symbols literally pulling the slit apart.

Then abruptly, it opened wide. A huge gap was there. There was nothing on the other side, just void.

"Go...!!!" Jack shouted his command and was the first to dash forward.

Seeing the king dove in without hesitation, the others didn't want to be left behind. In less than two seconds, all five disappeared into the gap.

"Close it!!" Severus shouted. The mages reversed their control. The runic symbols that forced the gap to widen now pushed it back. The dome itself seemed to be eager to repair itself. The gap closed faster than when it was opened.

Soon, everything was as it was. The black dome looked flawless as if there was never a gap. Everyone was silent. No one could know what was happening inside the dome.

Diana seriously hoped she didn't just send their newly crowned king to his doom.

\*

"What the... How can the inside be so big?" Jack uttered.

They were inside the dome. Behind them was the black wall of the dome which had a tear a second ago. Seeing the space inside the dome, Jack estimated it could easily be ten times larger than what they saw from the outside.

"Spatial distortion," Peniel said.

"What's that?" Jack asked.

"A phenomenon when unnatural mana invades a natural space," Duke Alfredo explained. "This dome has locked the space inside here for two centuries. The corrupted mana from the portal caused the space to distort, making it larger than it should be."

"But I thought there will be demons inside? Why is it so empty?" Jonathan asked.

"It's not empty," Arlcard said.

"I mean except that creepy portal," Jonathan said.

At the center of this space was a crimson oval tear hanging in the air. It was easy to guess that that was the demonic portal. On the portal's sides were two shining pillars that hummed and caused the rune diagram around the place to glow. Those shining pillars should be the legendary artifacts, their target.



"It's not empty," Arlcard repeated.

"He is right. Everyone be ready. This place is crawling with them," Jack said.

"Crawling with wha—Holy mother of...!" Jonathan's words turned a pitch when demonic creatures started appearing around them.

There were probably hundreds, maybe even a thousand of the creatures. They had different sizes, but each one possessed similar features that let them know that they were of the same kind. Each of them had red rough skin, horns, and a lean tail with a pointy end. They all had claws and sharp teeth. Some of them had wings. Some of them carried flaming weapons.

"Shadow meld," Arlcard said.

"It was underworld demons' natural ability," Peniel explained. "If they stayed unmoving in a shadowy area for some time, they become invisible."

'Like the ability of my Cloak of Shadow,' Jack thought. He surveyed the demons. They had a variety of levels and grades. Their level ranged from around 30 to 70, while their grades ranged from elite to rare elite. Rare elites were in a significantly less number and the highest level of the rare elite was level 60.

Jack came forward. "Perhaps I have been too cautious. You, people, need not act. Leave everything to me!" Jack said and used Judgement of Past Kings.

Thenodeep appeared and cast his great flood spell. The other kings followed one by one.

Duke Alfredo, Jonathan, and Dimitri were gaping as they saw their past kings come out one after another, decimating the horde of demons in front of them.

Arlcard was the only one unimpressed. "This is taking too long!" He uttered and cast his Perpetual Sword of Death.

Black orbs appeared around the demons. Black swords then shot out from those orbs, slicing the demons.

Jack noticed a considerable increase in the number of black swords from Arlcard's spell compared to when he previously cast. The black swords were also larger, delivering higher damage.

Jack was depressed. He thought he could show off. His Judgement of Past Kings ended up being downplayed by Arlcard's intervention. But he did admit although his skill was powerful, it took a rather long time since the past kings came out one by one.

Between Jack's Judgement of Past Kings and Arlcard's Perpetual Sword of Death, the demon horde fell at a fast rate. Everyone couldn't believe the menacing horde of demons that materialized in front of them was being mowed down like grasses.

By the time the two's skills were over, only a few level 60 rare elites were still standing. Their lives were also critical.

Arlcard floated forward and cast another spell. Seven dark large swords appeared around him. The dark swords resembled his other spell, Dark Lord's Sword, only slightly smaller.

The number of dark swords equaled the number of surviving rare elites. The dark swords rushed forward and stabbed each of the rare elites, claiming their lives.

"I feel like bringing us here is completely unnecessary," Jonathan said as the rare elites fell.

Duke Alfredo simply nodded.

"Well, I didn't expect it will be this easy," Jack said. "Perhaps we have just become too strong, hahaha..."

As he laughed, he sensed the mana around changed. The bodies of the demons that had been killed were strangely not yet disintegrated. Suddenly, those massive numbers of demon corpses burst apart at the same time, turning into flaming blood.

The blood rose into the air in a massive quantity and then was abruptly sucked into the crimson portal far ahead.

When the last drop of the blood entered the portal, a clawed hand thrust through. At the same time, an oppressive feeling assailed Jack's mana sense.

"F\*ck!! Perhaps I have talked too early...", Jack uttered.

The owner of the hand slowly pulled himself out of the portal. A head with a pair of long-bending horns appeared. Its skin was red like the other demons that had just been slaughtered. Its body was covered by black armor, and it had two large black wings on its back.

It seemed to have difficulty coming out of the portal. The portal throbbed madly. The two light pillars beside the portal shone following the throb.

After a struggle, the demon finally tore itself out. It stood more than two meters tall. Dark fires seemed to constantly burn his exposed red skin.

When Jack used his Inspect, he was speechless by the reading.

\*

ArchDemon Warrior (Eternal monster, Demon), level 85

HP: 4,300,000

### **Chapter 1048: Burning a Hole in the Dome's Wall**

"How the heck does an eternal grade demon appear?! I thought the portal is already half-closed and should not be able to support such a powerful demon?" Jack asked.

"Underworld demons are different from the demons you encountered in the wilderness. They need corrupted mana to survive," Peniel explained. "That portal oozes corrupted mana into this world that allows the underworld demons to exist in this world. Under normal circumstances, there shouldn't be enough corrupted mana to support such a powerful underworld demon."

"F\*ck! This quest should have been an SSS difficulty if there is an eternal opponent," Jack cursed. At the same time, he asked Peniel telepathically, "I suppose this dome blocks Goddess Serenity from sensing what happened here?"

"Yes," Peniel replied.

"We brought this upon ourselves," Arlcard said with a solemn face.

Alfredo nodded. "When we killed all the demons inside this space, it created a vacuum. That archdemon must have been waiting behind the portal all this time. When it sensed this vacuum, it claimed all the corrupted mana for its own. This allows it to cross through the realm. This is bad. I doubt this sealing dome will be strong enough to contain this archdemon. If it breaks through the seal, it can destroy the rune diagram that is closing the portal. Undoing all the work and allowing the portal to enlarge again."

"Then we keep it here," Jack said.

"How do we do that? That is a bloody eternal-grade monster," Jonathan said.

Jack didn't explain. Instead, he asked Arlcard, "Arlcard, can you hold it for a while?"

"... Maybe," Arlcard replied.

"Okay. Do that, please," Jack said. "The three of you stay back. Arlcard and I will engage that archdemon. Duke and Dimitri, support us with your spells and bolts. Jonathan, you protect them in case the archdemon gets past us."

"Get past? I say it will have no problem getting past all of us," Jonathan grumbled.

The archdemon just stood there and looked around. As if not seeing the five enemies before it. It then lifted its arm and pointed a finger in a direction. A rune symbol appeared on the tip of its finger and a thin laser beam shot out. The laser beam hit the wall of the dome.

At first, nothing happened. But then the dome started shaking heavily. Runic symbols appeared around the part where the laser beam was hitting. It was as if they were trying to fight off the intrusion caused by the beam.

Slowly, a hole was formed where the beam hit the black dome. It was as if the dome's wall was a paper being burned by fire. Through that hole, Jack and the others could see the outside. They even heard the panicked voices of the mages outside.

"Shit! Arlcard, stop him!" Jack yelled and rushed forward.

"Now that it burnt a hole, you can go get attacked by it if you want to try calling Goddess Serenity," Peniel said to Jack while he rushed forward.

"No. I can't keep on relying on the Goddess. Also, I'm not without a way out yet," Jack replied.

Jack summoned his spirit weapon, ten wolves, and Ice Demon Fiend. He also activated Gold Scale Armor, Life Burning Art, and Strength of the Wild. He then cast Barrier and Time Domain.

The wolves and Ice Demon Fiend rushed toward the archdemon while the spirit weapon opened fire using its range mode.

The archdemon looked at the wolves and Ice Demon Fiend coming its way. It didn't retract his hand that was firing the laser beam. It waved its other free hand. A firewall appeared before it and moved outward. The firewall wave washed over the ten wolves.

Struck by the firewall, the wolves tumbled back while being burnt. The firewall took out more than half of the wolves' HP on impact. The burning damage devoured the wolves' remaining HP in a short time.

The Ice Demon Fiend jumped over the firewall wave. Jack used his Beast Form. He and Arlcard flew over the wave. The firewall wave continued without any sign of stopping, toward the other three natives behind.

"Get behind me!" Duke Alfredo shouted. His two hands formed different spell formations. He was dual casting.

His spell formations were completed before the firewall wave arrived. Earth Wall and Magic Wall were erected in layers before them.

The firewall wave hit the magic wall. It trembled heavily before being obliterated. The wave then hit the earth wall. The earth wall managed to finally stop the wave but it also crumbled and the residual energy continued onward.

Duke Alfredo cast Barrier when his walls resisted the firewall wave. He also put Magic Shield forward, but both of them were destroyed when getting into contact with the residual wave. He received damage but not much due to his protective spells.

Jack sent the Ice Demon Fiend first to distract the archdemon. The archdemon didn't seem to react when the Ice Demon Fiend came near. It simply looked at the Ice Demon Fiend with its black pupilless eyes. It glinted an eerie black and the Ice Demon Fiend paused its movement.

"Oh no," Peniel uttered.

"What is it? Some kind of a petrifying gaze again?" Jack asked.

"No. Some powerful demon has the ability to control other demons."

"What?!"

Peniel's fear was proven true when the Ice Demon Fiend suddenly turned back and fired its ice beam at Jack.

"Shit!" Jack used Shooting Dash and escaped the beam's path before it hit.

Jack tried to unsummon the ice demon fiend but failed. It was now an enemy.

"Crap! I wasted mana core and give an enemy a helper instead," Jack cursed.

The ice demon fiend was about to attack again, but a bolt struck its shoulder. Metal chains burst out from the point of impact and entangled the demon. The bolt was shot from Dimitri's crossbow using a skill, Lock Shot.

The skill simply restricted the demon's movement. It didn't prevent it from using skills. It used its ultimate skill, the Ice Spear Rain.

Countless ice spears rained from above, targeting everyone including Dimitri who just shot at it.

"Let me!" Jonathan shouted and used Hurricane Punishing Cyclone. His body spun with blinding speed. His spinning conjured a twister that knocked all the ice spears away, preventing them from hitting Alfredo and Dimitri.

Jack used his burst sword art to knock all the ice spears away while advancing toward the archdemon. He didn't want to waste his time fighting the ice demon fiend. The archdemon was still burning the dome's wall. The hole was getting larger as time passed.

Arlcard was the first to arrive before the archdemon. He brandished his crimson-blade rapier, which was now longer. It was also coated with dark flame.

He swung and uncountable dark flashes appeared around the archdemon. The archdemon lifted his free hand, which had grown larger and was coated with black smoke. It made a simple swing. All the dark flashes shattered like they were tangible things.

Arlcard was sent flying back with damage numbers.

'This is close enough!' Jack thought and took something out of his inventory. He used that item on the archdemon.

#### **Chapter 1049: Transformed**

What Jack used was the Suppression Crystal dropped by Themos after he was slain. The crystal required a close range of ten meters from the target.

It was lucky that this archdemon was underestimating them. It simply stood in one place and focus on burning a hole in the dome's wall instead of dealing with them. This allowed Jack to safely get close enough.

The suppression crystal shone a bright light. The archdemon seemed to realize what Jack was doing but it was too late. Its haughtiness and Jack's time domain slowed its response. The light from the crystal enveloped it. It roared as it tried to fight the item's effect but even it had to succumb to the system's rule.

The archdemon's physique didn't show any meaningful changes, but Jack's mana sense detected a huge reduction in pressure emitted by the archdemon's presence.

Jack used his Inspect again and confirmed that the archdemon had degraded to a level 75 Mythical grade. Still much higher level than them but Jack thought this should be manageable.

The archdemon stopped firing its laser beam after getting suppressed by the suppression crystal. The hole on the dome's wall slowly patched itself back.

The archdemon stared at Jack with fury and hatred in its eyes. It didn't expect a weakling it had underestimated to cause its power to decrease to this extent.

A flash of shadow rushed by Jack and collided with the weakened archdemon. It was Arlcard. Now that they were both mythical-grade, it won't be easy for the demon to repel the vampire like before.

The archdemon made a grabbing motion and a saber made of flame formed in its hand. Its flaming saber and Arlcard's crimson rapier clashed. Arlcard was forced back a few steps. The archdemon was still stronger.

But Arlcard wasn't alone. In his supreme dragon form, Jack's stats nearly rivaled a mythical grade. Jack used Sword of the Braves. Ten golden swords stabbed into the archdemon. Jack then activated Asura and came from the other side, joining Arlcard in clashing with the archdemon. His claws slashed with Formless Flowing Sword Style powered by mana manipulation.

The archdemon's other hand conjured a whip made of flame. With the saber and whip, it battled the two.

Alfredo cast his spells, while Dimitri used his crossbow and shot from the distance. They stole hits when the archdemon was preoccupied.

Jonathan had rushed ahead and did melee combat with the Ice Demon Fiend, preventing it from disrupting Jack and Arlcard. Jack's spirit weapon changed form to melee mode and joined him.

Even though the archdemon was higher in level, Jack and Arlcard could contend with it. Jack's martial art gave him an edge at dodging and counterattacking without suffering a hit. Furthermore, the Time Domain made him faster and the archdemon slower.

Arlcard was a native with high HP, so he could afford a little damage. His rapier was fast thought, each swing and stab was accompanied by shadow feints, giving the archdemon trouble in pinpointing his exact position. Each of Arlcard's attacks also had a life-leech effect, restoring the HP he lost.

The archdemon was constantly enveloped by a fiery aura, burning everything in the vicinity. Jack and Arlcard, who were in melee range, received constant fire damage.

Peniel used her Healing Field to keep the two's HP at a safe threshold.

The archdemon was fed up with the two. It suddenly slammed into the ground, which cracked from the impact. Lava pillars erupted around the three. The lava pillars had sharp ends, making them look like fangs instead. These lava fangs closed in, like the teeth of a subterranean monster that came out of the ground to devour them.

Jack and Arlcard flew up, but the dome's ceiling suddenly filled with lava as well. The lava fangs were just to keep them from running away. The lava from above was the real attack. Lava fell from above like a waterfall. There was nowhere to run to.

Jack cast Ghost Form and turned intangible just as the lava fell.

Arlcard cast a spell, Shadow Barrier. A dark shell surrounded his body. The barrier blocked the lava for a duration of time but finally broke. The lava washed over him and dealt continuous damage. Luckily, his high HP allowed him to tank through the damage.

The attack ended, but the archdemon didn't give its opponents a moment to rest. Since Jack was still in ghost form, it targeted the wounded Arlcard instead. It swung its flaming whip, which coiled around Arlcard.

But as the whip was about to tighten, Arlcard's body burst apart into hundreds of bats. The bats swirled around the archdemon, delivering small bites.

The archdemon made a stomp and an explosion of fire burst out of him, burning countless bats. The remaining ones fled.

The archdemon was about to give chase when a bolt struck his legs. He lost movement for a bit. It was Dimitri's skill, crippling shot. While it lost its mobility, Alfredo's Pyramid Prison struck, further locking it in place.

Even though the archdemon was already locked by two skills, the duke still prepared another spell. He had been dual-casting. His second spell, telekinesis, further applied pressure on the archdemon to keep it in place. With all those restrictions, even if the archdemon was higher level and higher grade than Dimitri and Alfredo, it was still halted for a few seconds.

Jack didn't let the chance go. The archdemon felt a stinging force from above. It saw Jack had become tangible again. Jack's dragon body was wrapped in a lightning suit. There were also twenty lightning balls materializing in the air.

Arlcard had received Jack's cue. Once the bats transformed back into him, he cast his Dark Lord's Sword, which was twice the size it was compared to when he was still a rare elite.

Jack's spirit weapon also sneaked close and use its finishing mode. It exploded just as Arlcard's gigantic black sword stabbed into the imprisoned Archdemon. The twenty lightning balls detonated at the same time. Jack also activated Overlimit and used Soul Breath. The combination attack caused a massive explosion with the archdemon at the center.

The smoke from the explosion covered the archdemon. Jack didn't stop. He knew the attack was not enough to kill the archdemon. He continued firing every spell into the smoke, pinpointing the archdemon's position using his mana sense.

Suddenly, his eyes turned wide when he sensed the archdemon's mana spiked. He made an abrupt dash to a side, just as an elongated arm shot out. This arm missed Jack but it suddenly changed direction. The speed was so fast that Jack failed to dodge this second time. The arm caught Jack and pulled him down.

The smoke receded and revealed the archdemon, which looked completely different from before. Its body was larger. Its limbs were thicker. Its entire body was covered with crimson sharp plates. Its two horns turned crooked. Some extra horns grew on all sides of its head. Its black eyes now emitted constant flames.

The transformed archdemon slammed Jack into the ground. Its flaming eyes stared right at Jack's.

Jack screamed when he felt his soul getting burnt by that stare.

## **Chapter 1050: The Big Guns**

Jack's HP continued to decrease as his soul was burnt. He couldn't do anything because his mind was a mess. The agony was a thousand times more painful than anything he had ever experienced.

Luckily, Peniel was not affected by the mental assault. She immediately used Invulnerability when Jack's HP went to critical.

The Invulnerability protected Jack from everything, including mind attacks. It cleared Jack's thoughts and broke the archdemon's hold on his mind.

But the aftereffect was still there. Jack's mind was slow in responding when the archdemon reformed his flaming saber and stabbed it into him. Fortunately, the invulnerability had not yet ended.

Jack finally got his shit together before the Invulnerability ended. He used Gold Dragon Vitality, recovering all his HP and also doubling his max HP.

His attributes also increased from that skill. However, he still couldn't manage to push the archdemon off him. The archdemon's hand that was pressing his body to the floor was like a giant clamp.

The archdemon repeated his stab. Luckily, Jack still had the Lightning God Suit. Its protection mitigated much of the damage.

As he was struggling, a gigantic phantom fist slammed the archdemon's face. The phantom fist was Alfredo's Phantasm Fist. It failed to force the archdemon to release Jack but it did cause the archdemon to reel to the side. An exploding bolt struck the same face almost a second after.

Jack then saw Jonathan appear with his halberd covered by earth, forming a giant earth mallet. Jonathan had managed to take down the Ice Demon Fiend with others' help. Jonathan slammed his earth mallet into the archdemon's head which was already reeling. The archdemon's hand finally left Jack's body.

Jack immediately followed by making a double kick-up while pushing his body off the ground, striking the archdemon on the chin.

The archdemon was forced back from all those attacks. A shadow then slammed onto him, followed by multiple slashes. Arlcard zapped around the archdemon at incredible speed, his rapier slashed non-stop as he kept the archdemon occupied.

Jack retreated. His mind was still hazy. Jonathan stayed near him to provide protection. Alfredo and Dimitri continued supporting Arlcard from a distance.

"What the hell was that just now?" Jack asked Peniel.

"Soul burn," Peniel answered. "You are lucky. That skill has a chance for an instant kill."

"Why does it transform?"

"That is Demonization. A transformation skill similar to your Beast Form. If non-demon used this skill. It will turn the user into a demon. If it's a demon. Well, it turns the demon into a more powerful demon."

"Horse arse. It never gets boring when I'm with you," Jonathan cursed after hearing it. "Can you still fight?"

"I can," Jack said. "But my beast form will be ending soon. We need to finish this fast."

"The archdemon's HP had gone down to nearly half. I say you people have done a great job doing that in such a short time," Peniel commented.



"Great job is not enough if it isn't done. That archdemon has HP recovery, we can't stop pressing," Jack said while thinking quickly. Arlcard wasn't faring very well. The transformed archdemon was stronger than when it was still the normal size.

Jack then said to Jonathan. "Jonathan, I might need you to take on that archdemon for a while."

"What?! Are you serious?" Jonathan asked with wide eyes.

Jack nodded with a serious expression.

"... All right. Everything for you, Your Majesty," Jonathan said.

"I appreciate it, Jonathan," Jack clapped Jonathan's shoulder. He then relayed his plan to the others mentally.

"Time to use the big guns. Let's do it!" Jack exclaimed and ran to the edge of the dome's wall.

Duke Alfredo cast Summon Asura before doing the same as Jack. The four-armed asura immediately ran to face the archdemon.

Arlcard used Shadow Clone. His clone continued fighting the archdemon while he distanced himself.

Jack, Alfredo, and Arlcard put as much distance from the archdemon as possible but in three different directions.

Jack cast Accelerate on all five of them. Arlcard cast Shadow Veil on Jonathan. The shadow veil protected Jonathan as he joined Arlcard's clone and Alfredo's Asura in keeping the archdemon busy. Dimitri continued to rain bolts on the archdemon from afar.

Then, many runic symbols appeared around Jack and Arlcard. At the same time, Duke Alfredo cast a spell that formed a very large runic symbol.

Jack and Arlcard were using their rune techniques while Alfredo cast a mega spell.

Rune techniques and mega spells had one other weakness aside from the long-casting time. They had to remain immobile. They couldn't move around and cast it like normal spells no matter how solid their concentration was. Hence, getting attacked and being forced to move would easily cancel the process.

Jack knew only rune techniques or mega spells could push the tide in their favor, but the archdemon won't let them have the required time to complete the long process. Even with Accelerate, it would still not be fast enough.

Hence, he had the three of them, who had rune techniques and mega spells, positioned as far away from each other. If the archdemon wanted to stop them, it would need to choose which one to disrupt. In this way, two of them, or at least one could complete the process.

Jonathan was protected by Arlcard's Shadow Veil, but that was not enough protection. The archdemon easily smashed aside Jonathan's earth hammer with its flaming saber. Then with the other hand, it smacked Jonathan into the ground. Jonathan's HP went down a huge chunk.

Dimitri activated a skill, Repeating Shot. His crossbows fired rapid shots continuously, but this skill required him to be stationary. He was like holding a gatling gun after activating the skill.

The bolts from this skill had a knockback ability, but the archdemon's strength was simply too high that it completely ignored the knockback effect.

The archdemon used brute strength and forced its way through the asura's many weapons. Its fist punched the asura's chest hard, sending it flying. The archdemon's flaming whip then reappeared and caught Arlcard's shadow clone before flinging it away.

With the obstacles temporarily removed, it looked between the three in the distance. From the rune symbols around the three, it could see their intentions. It didn't take long to decide. It stretched its two hands aiming at Jack and Alfredo. These two hands fired bolts of dark crimson energy.

Its bat wings then flapped and it shot at high speed toward the one it considered to be the highest menace, Arlcard.