

World 1081

Chapter 1081: Outworlder Finalists

Jack used Shooting Dash. Ursa was surprised by the sudden burst of speed. Jack's claw weapon punched into Ursa's body when he was still dazed.

Unfortunately for Jack, Ursa's shadow form triggered the small chance that caused Jack's punch to just phase through without causing damage.

Jack didn't fuss about the misfortune. He used his second dash to move away. This time, it was Vivian who was surprised when Jack suddenly appeared before her. She instinctively put her shield to defend just as Jack's punch came striking.

It was a normal punch, but Vivian was still blown away by the impact. She again wondered how a beastmaster could trump her strength to such a degree.

Jack used the third dash to get back to Ursa, which caught him off guard again. He wasn't aware of a movement skill that allowed a player to zip around multiple times.

Ursa wasn't so fortunate this time, Jack's punch landed squarely on his stomach. His back bent from the impact. He felt all the air inside of him was forced out. His HP also went down more than half. Jack's mana-fueled normal attack was not less damaging than a mid-level skill.

Jack sent a second punch that should finish Ursa but Ursa vanished. Jack then ran at high speed to the side where there was nothing. The crowd was confused about what Jack was doing. They then saw Vivian frantically trying to chase after Jack.

They didn't see Ursa, who had turned invisible after using Vanish. Ursa's original plan was to sneak onto Jack while he was invisible and backstab Jack with Assassinate Soul. But when he saw Jack run toward him at high speed, he immediately ran away.

He at first thought that his invisibility didn't trigger, but then he noticed he couldn't see his arms while running. He looked back and saw Jack was still behind him, enclosing. That gave him the scare of his life. He tried to increase his speed as well as made a few zig-zag moves. But when he looked back, Jack was still there. Very close now.

'How the hell my speed loses to a beastmaster?!' Ursa bellowed in his mind.

Vivian knew his partner's predicament. She used Paladin's ranged skill, Holy Hammer, to hinder Jack. But Jack simply swiped his arm when the hammer came. Not even looking. The hammer was destroyed when it came into contact with Jack's hand.

Ursa, who kept looking back as he ran, didn't notice someone else come into his path. By the time he noticed, an axe had sunk deep into his stomach, depleting his remaining HP.

"Hey! I thought you are staying back?" Jack said to Four Winds who had finished Ursa.

"I thought you are done training?" Four Winds asked back.

"Never mind," Jack made a U-turn and was now running at Vivian.

Vivian was at a loss. Her battle plan with Ursa had always been putting her as the enemy's main target. Ursa was too fast so most enemies would have no chance but to come at her instead. Even if she died, she had the paladin's Rebirth. This would give Ursa the chance to trigger his Eye for an Eye skill, just like how they did in the first match.

This was the first time that Ursa became the main target and was killed first. She was still at a loss when Jack arrived. Jack's claw weapon burst into flame as he swung it. The flame strike hit Vivian's shield and blew her away.

She was still staggering when Jack resumed his pursuit. She used Heaven's Shield to stop Jack's advance while at the same time executing Heaven's Fist.

The large fist slammed Jack from above, but the fist simply passed through him. Jack used Flash Step to dodge the fist and shifted to Vivian's back. Vivian had seen Jack use this skill in the first round so she suspected Jack teleported to behind her. She wanted to turn back but Jack was too fast for her. Jack's fist repeatedly struck her back while she was still unbalanced.

Without being able to escape, her HP bar was quickly emptied by Jack's repeated punches.

She returned to life with her rebirth, but Jack and Four Winds were already waiting next to her.

She died again a short moment after. She revived the second time, but outside the arena this time. Ursa was there beside her.

"Who the hell is that person?" Ursa asked her.

Vivian only shook her head. "Cipher Flight has all the best players. No wonder they are the number one guild in this country. Sigh... We have done our best. It's not our fate to become one of the rulers of Verremor. Let's just watch the rest of this tourney."

Makadi announced Jack and Four Winds as the winner. The two walked out of the arena as the finalists from block A. Makadi called the next four combatants to decide the next finalists.

The representatives from the Giantkiller tribe and Spiritcrier tribe walked into the arena.

"Begin!" Makadi announced.

As before, Kilio moved in front of Roho to protect him while he started casting a spell.

Mkulme brandished his karambits and made a gesture at Tumwa, who nodded. They were not facing low-level outworlders this time. They couldn't get careless by fighting one against two.

Tumwa's body dashed to the side at high speed. After zooming a certain distance, she dashed again in another direction.

"Shooting Dash!" Jack recognized his own skill when Tumwa displayed it.

The shooting dash brought Tumwa behind Kilio and Roho, effectively rendering Kilio's protection useless.

Mkulme didn't give the opponents the chance to react. He charged forward with the energy shell around his body.

Kilio, who saw Mkulme's approach, activated Sacred Flame on his maul. He then swung that heavy weapon. The flaming maul crashed into the energy shell that came with Mkulme's charge. The impact stopped Mkulme but also threw Kilio back.

Tumwa, who had positioned herself behind the opponents, made a throwing motion. Multiple flying knives flew out.

Everyone expected Roho to cancel his casting to stop the knives. Instead, he lifted his free hand which was wearing a glove with a power stone. A magic shield formed. The flying knives were stopped by the magic shield while the spell formation on the staff in his right hand continued to form.

'He has dual casting talent, like Duke Alfredo,' Jack thought.

The spell formation was completed and three treants appeared. These treants ran toward Tumwa, who was strangely grinning.

All of a sudden, a large creature appeared beside Tumwa. It was an Armored Basilisk. The basilisk was a level 75 rare elite. The basilisk's eyes shone and one of the treants turned into stone. It then ran forward and crashed with the other two treants.

Jack smiled after seeing the scene.

Four Winds, who saw his expression, asked, "Why are you smiling?"

"Perhaps we still have a slim chance of winning," Jack replied.

Chapter 1082: The Versatile Orc

"Why do you say that?" Four Winds asked.

"It's still a slim chance, though," Jack said. "Never mind that. As we said before, we will just do our best."

Four Winds didn't push further. Inside his mind, Jack was conversing with the hidden Peniel, "I have been wondering. That Roho guy can dual-cast. His off-hand casting uses a magic glove, the same as Duke Alfredo. Can I cast spells using that kind of magic gloves as well? I mean, if I can, I will be able to equip two swords properly without relying on the Magic Weapon spell."

"You can cast using magic gloves. However, any weapon you wield will be considered null. You won't get any effect from the weapon's ability and when you hit using that weapon, the produced damage won't calculate the weapon's damage stat."

"Oh... I guess I'm stuck with the Magic Weapon spell then," Jack said

Inside the arena, the battle continued fiercely. The armored basilisk was more than a match for the two treants. Mkulme was dominating Kilio with fast movements. His karambits kept on slashing Kilio whose heavy maul had difficulty landing a blow. Kilio's steel body mitigated the damage, though, allowing him to endure.

As for Roho, after exposing his dual casting ability, his off-hand hand continued erecting the magic shield for protection while the staff in his main hand cast a different spell. Roho's magic shield was larger and sturdier than normal, all the flying knives that hit the shield were deflected.

Roho completed his spell and three tall earth walls came out of the ground around Tumwa, confining her the way they confined Jiwe Sharpstone in the previous match.

After imprisoning Tumwa, Roho turned to look at his other two opponents. He was still thinking about whether to aid Kilio or his treants when he heard a hissing sound from where his earth walls were.

He turned back and saw a black spot appear on one of the earthen walls. A flaring red ring surrounded that black spot, and it was enlarging.

Realizing what was happening, he hurriedly cast another spell.

When the black spot grew to a certain size, it burst into flame. The flame burst continued as if there was a flamethrower behind that earth wall. The flame finally died down and a large hole was sported on that earth wall. Tumwa was seen behind that hole.

Roho completed his casting. A man-eating plant appeared right in front of the hole. If Tumwa wanted to come out of the hole, she would be snatched by that man-eating plant.

Tumwa lifted his left hand. Everyone just noticed then that the glove on that hand also had a power stone. The power stone glowed and a spell formation appeared.

"She can cast spells as well?" Jack uttered in surprise. She had sported the abilities from the hidden weapon specialist, has a pet, and was now a spell caster as well. She was a very versatile combatant.

Her spell was completed and the man-eating plant burst into flames. It was the Immolation spell. Jack recognized it because Master had used the spell before on Peniel, except Tumwa's was more powerful.

The man-eating plant was engulfed in fire. It convulsed and uttered a shrill sound. It was obviously in pain. It had a strong weakness against fire.

While the plant was quivering, Tumwa jumped out of the hole. The plant still tried to bite Tumwa despite the burning, but its reaction was late because of its pain. Tumwa made a roll and escaped the plant's scope. The plant was not a mobile creature. Once the target was away, it became practically useless.

Roho cast another spell when Tumwa was escaping the plant. It was completed then and the ground below Tumwa shook. The ground then broke apart. Large pieces of the ground tilted up randomly. Those pieces then slammed down on Tumwa.

Tumwa had been moving once the ground shook. Despite the earthquake, her running was not affected. Even when the ground broke and tilted. She ran and jumped around the pieces as if she could predict which parts of the ground broke earlier and which parts broke later. With that intuition, she expertly dodged the ground pieces that broke and fell on her.

"She has mana sense," Four Winds said.

"That is not strange, she is a mythical grade," Jack replied.

Tumwa was throwing her flying knives even as she was running around the fluctuating ground, and her aim was uncannily accurate despite the situation. This forced Roho to again erect a magic shield for defense while his other hand cast another spell.

While throwing her knives, Tumwa was also casting a quick spell. Multiple flame bolts shot out once her spell was completed. With a large number of flying knives and flame bolts coming at him, Roho was forced to continue being on his edge because he had to adjust his magic shield around to deflect those projectiles. This caused the spell casting on his other hand to slow down.

With the chaos, Roho didn't notice that a boomerang flew by his side. This boomerang made a U-turn and struck his back. His concentration was still solid enough that the spell formation he was forming didn't break. However, he lost his balance due to the back attack and his magic shield was lowered.

Tumwa capitalized on this and unleashed Concealed Needle, another Hidden Weapon Specialist's skill. Thirty almost invisible needles flew at Roho from different angles. Roho was unable to block them all. He was struck and inflicted with Paralyze effect. The spell formation on his staff broke then.

Tumwa didn't relent. She had escaped the turbulent ground area. She continued throwing flying knives which caused the Bleed effect. Among the flying knives, some small pellets were spotted. When these pellets hit Roho, they exploded, inflicting him with Disoriented status.

Afflicted by so many status effects, Roho had trouble reacting.

Kilio saw Roho's predicament. He made a large swing that caused a strong shockwave that forced Mkulme back. He then used Charge, rushing over to Tumwa who continued to chase Roho while throwing her flying knives.

Once arriving, Kilio swung his large flaming maul at Tumwa. Tumwa skillfully dodged to the side while tapping the maul's shaft to redirect its swing, before making a spin kick that accurately struck Kilio's head, sending him sprawling.

"My goodness! She also knows martial arts," Jack uttered.

Chapter 1083: The Final of the Tourney

Mkulme didn't chase after Kilio after he ran off to face Tumwa. Instead, he came to Roho who had just been freed by the Disorient status. Without pause, his fists that held the karambits struck Roho repeatedly.

His repeating punches were very fast and were executed as if they were one rapid movement. Peniel informed Jack that those punches were Battle Monk's non-standard skill, Chained Strikes. This skill's damage increased with each connected strike. Jack counted Mkulme delivering twenty consecutive punches, which Peniel said was the number of strikes delivered by a Max-level Chained Strikes.

With Mkulme harassing Roho at melee range, Roho was denied the chance for casting a spell.

Kilio who had been knocked away by Tumwa was immobilized when Tumwa cast Hell Whip, a Warlock's spell. The fiery whip locked him in place, preventing him from assisting Roho.

Kilio activated a strength-increasing skill and then use brute strength to release himself from the hell whip. However, by the time he was free, another obstacle appeared. Tumwa's pet, the armored basilisk had finished taking care of the two treants. It now stood between him and Roho.

With her pet facing Kilio and Mkulme harassing Roho, Tumwa took a supporting role. She moved back and threw her flying knives at her two opponents, continuously chipping their lives while they were occupied.

After being forced into such a passive situation, Roho and Kilio couldn't find the chance to get out of their predicament. Mkulme and the armored basilisk made it so that the two stayed separate, with Tumwa steadily reducing their HP with ranged attacks.

Roho fell first. With that, the outcome was sealed. Kilio was already having trouble dealing with the armored basilisk. With Mkulme flanking him, he soon fell as well. The finalists of Block B were decided.

"Still think we have a chance of winning?" Four Winds asked Jack.

Jack didn't answer.

In the arena, after announcing the Giantkiller tribe as the winner, Makadi made a gesture. Rune diagrams around the arena flared. The armored basilisk disappeared. Mkulme and Tumwa's HP and skills were reset.

Makadi then called Jack and Four Winds to come into the arena for the final round.

"Well, win or lose, I won't go down without a fight!" Four Winds declared as he stood up.

"Of course, we will win!" Jack exclaimed. He then gave Four Winds a raised fist.

"What?" Four Winds questioned his gesture.

"Fist-bump. It's a good luck charm before a battle," Jack replied.

"What a childish belief," Four Winds said, but he still bumped his fist into Jack's.

The two then walked into the arena. Mkulme and Tumwa stayed in the arena waiting for them. The crowd was wild as the final round was about to begin.

"When the battle begins, I will handle Mkulme," Four Winds said as they walked. "Tumwa is too fast for me to chase. Only you can catch her. I will hold Mkulme for as long as possible while you take care of Tumwa."

"Bloody hell... Do you forget already that woman is a mythical grade? Without using my other classes' skills, I will be lucky to survive against her."

"Don't sell yourself short. Even without relying on game skills, you are a formidable opponent. Your martial arts are a league away from the first time I fought you in the world tournament."

"She also knows martial arts, remember?" Jack said.

"The natives' martial arts can't be compared to ours. They have the form but not the essence," Four Winds replied. "You should be able to see from her match just now."

"Even so, it will still be a very slim chance..."

"But not impossible. I believe in you," Four Winds said.

"Damnit! You just push all the pressure on me," Jack complained.

"Which shows how much I believe in you," Four Winds grinned.

After the four got into positions, they saw the grand chief who was originally sitting in his arranged seat, had come to the front of the VIP section. He made a gesture to the crowd which then quieted down.

"My good orcs of Verremor! You are witnessing the rise of the new member of our council. By the end of this next match, we will have a new tribe that represents your voice!"

The grand chief then looked down at the four combatants below. "Giantkiller! Cipher Flight! Both of you defeated the other opponents to be the last ones standing in this arena. You aim for the highest honor in our great nation. For that, you need to give your all! Now, you will both continue this trial of combat, the highest trial in our nation's tradition. Four of you stood in this arena, representing two sides. By the time this final round ended, only one side will remain. This last trial will now commence!!"

Horns were sounded. The crowd cheered wildly. The drum players were hitting their drums like mad orcs.

Makadi gave the crowd some moment to make noises. After the bustle lessened a bit, he looked at the four combatants before him. There was no need for him to ask if they were ready.

"Fight...!" He announced.

Four Winds used Cry of Rage the moment Makadi gave the word. Both he and Jack then rushed forward. Mkulme also lunged forward. The only one who jumped backward was Tumwa.

Four Winds used Charge and headed straight for Mkulme. Mkulme, who saw he was targeted, didn't back away. He also charged forward with an energy shell enveloping his body.

Four Winds' body enlarged as it was propelled forward by Charge. He had activated his bloodline skill, Titan Strength. At the same time, crimson tattoos covered his body.

The two muscled orcs crashed into one another. This time, it was Four winds who got thrown away. It was not just a few steps back, his body was flying back uncontrollably. He fell on his back and skidded on the ground. He had to do a backflip before he landed back on two feet and stopped the knockback force.

He could hardly believe it. Even with both his Titan Strength and Enhanced Berserk, his strength still lost by such a large degree.

He looked over at his opponent and was stunned to see that Mkulme's body was also covered in the same crimson tattoos as his.

Chapter 1084: Stealing a Pet

While Four Winds was tussling with Mkulme, Jack dashed at high speed chasing after Tumwa. Tumwa, who saw Jack coming at her, threw her flying knives while retreating. She attempted to kite Jack.

Jack's two claw weapons swiped around knocking the knives that came. As a mythical grade, Tumwa's flying knives delivered very high damage. But luckily, Jack had leveled up his rare elite claw weapons to a very high level as well. Combined with his high strength stat from three classes, Tumwa's knife's damage didn't eclipse Jack's standard attack by three times. Hence, Jack didn't receive any damage as long as his claw weapons accurately hit the incoming knives.

Tumwa's knives flew at high speed, but Jack was also not slow. Jack's expertise in sword art had reached a stage where his swing accuracy was exceptional. So, deflecting all those knives was not a problem. However, all those knives caused Jack to be unable to run at full speed. This meant he was unable to catch up to Tumwa who continued to move away.

Tumwa herself was incredibly astonished. This was the first time a beastmaster was able to chase her to such an extent. If she slowed down, that beastmaster would catch up.

Jack knew that he couldn't let Tumwa continue kiting him like this, so he called his wolves out. The ten wolves immediately spread out once called. They ran after Tumwa from different directions.

Tumwa had no choice but to stop to deal with these charging wolves. Her body spun and thirty concealed needles flew in all directions. Hitting all the wolves.

Jack didn't let this chance go. He activated Strength of the Wild and dashed forward.

Tumwa was also casting a spell when she was throwing the needles while spinning. When her spin stopped, her spell formation was completed. Fire bolts shot at Jack.

Jack similarly slashed these fire bolts as he did her flying knives, but he then noticed some small pebbles following these fire bolts. They were the exploding bullets!

He knew he couldn't dodge all these bullets. He activated Dragon Eye to slow time and positioned himself where he only needed to deal with one bullet. He slashed the bullet and it exploded. This time he suffered excess damage. The damage was not too much to worry about, but the explosion force caused his forward movement to stop.

As he stopped, he sensed something from behind. Tumwa had thrown the boomerang while Jack was distracted by the fire bolts and exploding bullets. Relying on his mana sense to pinpoint the boomerang's exact position, Jack performed a scorpion kick and kicked the boomerang away. Tumwa was very impressed her opponent canceled her concealed ambush in such a way.

Some of Jack's wolves were paralyzed by the concealed needles, but some weren't. The ones that didn't, lunged at Tumwa, whose body again spun. She made a full roundhouse kick and smacked all the wolves to the side. At the same time, she called her pet out, the armored basilisk.

'This is it!' Jack exclaimed in his mind. As soon as the armored basilisk was out, he used Beast Command.

Once the armored basilisk was summoned, it knocked all the nearby wolves in its vicinity using its tail, then it abruptly stopped moving. Tumwa also paused after seeing her pet's strange movement. She felt something was off between her connection with the pet.

All of a sudden, the armored basilisk turned to her and its eyes glowed.

"What...?!" She was stunned. The petrified gaze hit her. Her body started to turn stiff.

Before her whole body was covered by a layer of stone, she cast a quick spell using her left hand. A purifying light fell on her and the petrification was removed.

"Damn it to hell...! She has a Cure spell as well!" Jack cursed.

While Tumwa was hit by the petrify gaze, Jack approached. He finally caught up to her. At the same time, Jack's wolves sprang back, covering Tumwa's escape path. The armored basilisk also advanced, using its claws, teeth, and tail to attack.

The wolves' HP was in bad condition since they had been continuously hit by Tumwa. Jack used Beast Howl, healing the wolves' HP and increasing their attributes. The armored basilisk's attributes also increased since it was now considered an ally.

Tumwa didn't stop throwing her flying knives while using kicks to deal with the approaching opponents. She tried using Shooting Dash to escape encirclement, but Jack positioned his wolves with his grandfather's Nine Stars Formation. The formation made it difficult for Tumwa to find a proper path. It also allowed Jack and the others to adjust and surround Tumwa again after her dash, keeping her trapped.

It was as Four Winds said. Although Tumwa was one of the natives who had martial arts, her expertise wasn't comparable to real martial art experts. Jack utilized openings in her movement to land several hits. The armored basilisk also landed a few hits by tanking Tumwa's knives using brute force.

Even so, Tumwa's speed and agility were impressive since she was a mythical grade. If not for Jack's wolves running interference and the armored basilisk's joined assault, Jack would most likely be unable to land an attack.

Though she suffered damage, Tumwa didn't show a panicked expression. She had been casting a spell ever since she was surrounded. No matter how hard Jack tried hitting her to disrupt her concentration, the spell formation persisted.

Jack was concerned since the spell formation contained many runes. It was finally completed after six runes were formed.

When the spell was cast, many large fireballs were hurled in all directions. Jack didn't insist on attacking, he jumped away as some of the fireballs turned and came at him. It was the Flame Wrath spell.

The nearby wolves were hit by the hurling fireballs, which exploded and caused large fire damage. The same thing happened to the armored basilisk.

While the basilisk survived due to possessing high defense and a large amount of HP, Jack's wolves didn't. All ten died after the exploding fireballs consumed their HP which was again lowered from Tumwa's repeated attacks.

Jack used Shooting Dash when the fireballs almost hit him. They exploded but he was already out of the explosion range due to Shooting Dash's swift movement. The skill's three dashes had him circled back to Tumwa again. Jack was not going to let the orc put a distance from him again.

Jack could see Tumwa's face when he was back next to her. She was visibly annoyed. She thought she had chased this outworlder away.

When Jack was about to resume his clash with Tumwa, he heard a pained cry. He couldn't help but looked over and saw Four Winds in a close-quarter grapple with Mkulme. Mkulme was in an upper position pushing Four Winds down, his two karambits dug into Four Winds' shoulders.

Chapter 1085: Barbarian King

While Jack faced Tumwa, Four Winds fought against Mkulme. He mostly played defense using his martial arts. Starlight field surrounded him, deflecting Mkulme's assaults.

Even when Mkulme used multi-sided strikes where he created multiple clones that attacked from different sides, Four Winds defended using the same martial art.

Four Winds had mastered this art to near perfection. Relying on his mana sense, he could identify from which angles Mkulme's attacks came. He then focused the fast slashing of his axes at that part, creating a denser starlight. This allowed him to stop Mkulme's attack even when he lost in strength stat.

However, continuously using this martial art drained his body. Especially so after his Titan Strength ran out of duration. His body was back to normal size. He felt extremely fatigued. He knew he couldn't keep this up. He looked over at Jack and knew that Jack was still far from achieving a victory.

That momentary distraction cost him. Mkulme used Power Strike on a part that was poorly defended. This stopped Four winds' starlight field and staggered him.

Mkulme's two hands came together. A tell-tale sign of Ki Blast.

Four Winds was aware of that move. He immediately used Jump Assault. Not for offense though, he used it to jump away just as an enormous energy blast was discharged from Mkulme's hands.

When Four Winds landed, he looked back to where Mkulme was but failed to spot that native. Mkulme had used Vanish.

Four Winds at first worried that Mkulme was going to attack Jack while being invisible. He was about to head over to where Jack was fighting Tumwa, only for his mana sense to inform him of an impending danger coming from above.

He instinctively crossed both his axe above him, just as he felt an impact on those axes. Mkulme materialized then.

Mkulme's strength outclassed Four Winds, Four Winds was forced till his knees bent. Four Wind's axes were also pushed down until the sharp ends of Mkulme's two karambits stabbed into Four Winds' shoulders from above.

Damage numbers appeared from those two stabs. The pain also caused Four Winds to involuntarily screamed.

Players' HP pool couldn't be compared to high-grade natives. Those two stabs which were considered normal attacks drained almost one-third of Four Winds' HP.

Four winds could sense from Mkulme's mana that he was prepared to deal a final blow, but his mana suddenly went turbulent. Something had hit Mkulme right at the back of his neck.

It was Jack. He used the uncommon-grade throwing knife which he had bought but never used before because he had his spells for ranged attacks, but this time he couldn't use any of that. So, he threw that knife using his archer's skill, Precise Shot.

The knife dealt pitiful damage. But since it was unexpected and also hit a weak spot, it disrupted Mkulme's offense.

Four Winds didn't let the chance go. He drove his head forward. His forehead crashed hard on Mkulme's nose. The headbutt dealt damage because Four Winds used mana manipulation. It also dazed Mkulme that he let go of his downward pressure on Four Winds.

Breaking away from the grapple, Four Winds used the second skill from his Titan Bloodline, Titan Blow. Four Winds received this skill when his bloodline reached level 4. His Titan bloodline, which consumed essences from Humanoid monsters, was level 5 at the moment.

Titan Blow conjured a titan-size fist that delivered tremendous physical damage. The massive fist slammed into Mkulme who was still dazed. It sent him flying away, giving Four Winds the much-needed reprieve.

Mkulme, angry at being denied the chance to finish off Four Winds, rose and was about to rush back. However, he sensed something that made him turn. He was just in time before the armored basilisk' opened maws chomped his head.

He narrowly dodged the bite and then counterattacked with Chained Strikes. Repeated punches landed on the armored basilisk, dealing increased damage with each blow, and pushing it back.

"Four Winds, finish him!" Jack called while exchanging moves with Tumwa.

Jack had sent the armored basilisk over to aid Four Winds. With all his wolves gone, he had no way to limit Tumwa's movements. The basilisk was too slow for Tumwa. Even if he could keep his distance close to the orc, landing a hit was another matter.

So, Jack chose to flip their original plan. He was now keeping Tumwa busy while Four Winds and the basilisk finished Mkulme.

Mkulme's chained strikes drove the basilisk back. However, the damage wasn't as high as Mkulme hoped. The armored skin of the basilisk had a very high defense. Even after receiving the consecutive attacks, the basilisk immediately lunged back to attack.

Mkulme expertly dodged, but he sensed another pressure behind him. He looked back and saw Four Winds lifting his two axes high. One thing surprised him when he saw Four winds' body. All over Four Winds' body which was not covered by armor, his blood veins bulged and became very visible. They were also purple in color.

What Four Winds used was his special class, Barbarian King's level 60 skill, Royal Barbarian Blood. The skill gave the same buffs as the enhanced berserk. But instead of reducing defense like berserk skill, it added defense. It even lasted longer than berserk. It had a duration of five minutes. Each level-up

increased its duration, Four Winds had leveled it up several times. It lasted around eight minutes at its current level.

However, Four Winds didn't use this skill before because it had a downside. After this skill ended, all his attributes would be reduced by 50% for one minute. Hence, he only used it as a last resort.

The two axes in Four winds' hands glowed. He slashed downward. Rapid energy waves were unleashed from that slash. Mkulme was too close and the energy wave was too fast. Mkulme failed to dodge.

The slash was Barbarian King's first skill, Savage Cleave. It was similar to Jack's Brave Slash that it had a high chance to wound the opponent. It didn't boost the critical hit and damage but it dealt higher damage than Brave Slash. It dealt 1500% physical damage. It also caused Bleed and Weakness.

Mkulme suffered high damage and was afflicted by the two status effects. Additionally, his chest armor was torn by the Savage Cleave. The cleave didn't wound him. Instead, it broke his chest armor. Its durability was reduced to zero and he lost all the defense and ability bonuses from the equipment.

Four winds also used Ancestral Possession, Berserker level 50 skill. It was time to go all out. The spirit that he conjured was not the standard spirit. The spirit had the appearance of a red-skinned ogre with two demonic horns that wield large twin axes.

With the spirit floating above him and aiding him, Four Winds kept the pressure up. With the armored basilisk attacking from the flank and Mkulme inhibited by the status effects, Four Winds went all offense.

"Look out!" Four Winds suddenly heard Jack's call. His mana sense warned him as well.

He swayed as a flying knife flew past him.

At the same time, three large nails flew toward the armored basilisk. The rear ends of these three nails burst into fire and gave the nails a speed boost. The nails also whirled at high speed. These three nails then drilled into the armored basilisk.

The basilisk roared from the pain. High damage also appeared on it.

The nails were thrown by Tumwa. They were Hidden Weapon Specialist's level 50 skill, Drilling Dart. Each nail dealt 400% damage, ignored 70% defense, and had a 10% chance to inflict Fatigue and Weakness.

"I thought you are keeping her busy?!" Four Winds scolded.

"She is too fast, damn it!" Jack replied while continued attacking Tumwa. But as he had expected, he barely touched her.

At that time, Jack heard a notification in his mind. Therras had come out of its cocoon state and could be summoned again.

Chapter 1086: A Gamble

Jack almost stopped upon hearing the notification but luckily, he didn't let himself get distracted. Otherwise, Tumwa's flying knife would have stabbed his head just now.

"Peniel, what is the chance that Therras got the wing thingy like Terraxx?" Jack asked the hidden Peniel via his mind.

"Well, it's not a sure thing. So, I don't know. His grade is sure to become a mythical grade, though," Peniel answered.

"If it stays the same, my identity is blown," Jack said.

"Not necessarily. Someone else could have gotten a Therras beast pet. It's not an exclusive pet, even if it was rumored to have gone extinct."

"Its armor, remember? I say that is pretty exclusive," Jack countered. "If it grows wings like Terraxx, its armor should rearrange to accommodate the transformation, right?"

"Yeah."

Jack never stopped dogging Tumwa while talking with Peniel in his mind. He failed to deal any meaningful damage to the mythical-grade orc. He even had to constantly dodge and parry to make sure Tumwa didn't land a clean hit on him. Her damage was too high and each of her projectiles caused different status ailments.

Being a fast long-ranged combatant, Tumwa was also able to occasionally throw her knives or spells at Four Winds and the armored basilisk, preventing the two from fully cooperating against Mkulme.

With each passing second, Four winds' royal barbarian blood and Jack's hold on the armored basilisk were running out of duration. Once either of those two happened, their chance of winning would further drop.

Seeing this situation, Jack weighed his option. If he called Therras, there was a chance that his identity was revealed. The worse thing to happen was the orcs here immediately tried to apprehend him without giving him a chance to explain. He could try using his supreme dragon form and flee.

The other option was he gave up on this tourney and looked for another chance to meet the grand chief.

But after some thought, he figured that there was no safe way to make the meeting happen. His messenger was rejected even when the messenger brought a message stating that Themisphere would return Verremor's national treasure. Since it was so, he could only go the unconventional means.

Of course, he could also come into Verremor with a full army holding the banner totem for everyone to see. But many things could go wrong if he came with such a force. Their two countries were just in full conflict not long ago, some eager orcs might start attacking without considering the consequences. If that happened, another war would ensue before he had the chance to talk with the grand chief. He preferred there was no more bloodshed before the peace talk.

He guessed this was currently his best chance. Even if he was found out, perhaps the orcs were still reasonable enough to let him talk instead of just attacking him. Thinking about all this, he decided to take the gamble. He summoned Therras.

When he expected Therras to appear beside him as usual, the ground nearby cracked instead. The cracking happened right under where Tumwa was. All of a sudden, the ground erupted as something large burst out.

Tumwa was getting caught by surprise. Therras broke out of the ground and struck Tumwa with its two antler-like horns. It also threw her high into the air.

Jack saw it then, the two wings that resembled giant webbed claws on Therras' back. It was also a level 62 mythical now. Jack was very excited to see his pet's transformation.

While Tumwa was still in the air, Therras used its Autocratic Roar and Imperious Pressure back-to-back. Tumwa was afflicted by different kinds of status ailments from the roar, while the gravity field from the Imperious Pressure caused her difficulty in moving.

*

"A Therras beast...?" Kabaka Proudusk, Verremor's grand chief, muttered after seeing the summoned pet.

"I thought only the current Themisphere king has a therras beast?" One of the lord chiefs, who sat on one of the ten main chairs, said. This lord chief was named Kima Mountking. She was the older sister of the Verremor's strongest warchief, Makubwa Mountking.

"Therras Beast was very rare, but it's not unique. Other beastmasters could have tamed one," Another lord chief within the council, Woga Braidedbeard, offered his opinion.

"Hmph! Even so, the therras beast is the mascot of our nation's enemy. How dare an orc chose one to be his pet?!" Another council member, Jinga Loudmaw, said.

"He is an outworlder," Kima said. "He didn't know about ours or our enemy's history. He was not at fault. The Therras beast is indeed a powerful pet to have. You can't blame him for taming one."

"This therras beast was even one with perfect form," Woga said. "I heard the one owned by Themisphere king is wingless. This meant our nation now has a better therras beast than them. We can use this to insult Themisphere, lowering their morale."

Kabaka was silent as the others discussed the Therras Beast. The therras beast in the arena wore armor. The war report also mentioned that Themisphere King's therras beast wore armor. Medium pet armor was difficult to come by, but several high-level blacksmiths provided the service. So, it was not strange seeing the pet's armor.

Kabaka turned to Umeza Giantkiller who sat a distance away. He was one of the officers who were on the same battlefield as the outworlder who later became Themisphere's outworlder king. He was the one who had seen the outworlder king's pet directly.

Umeza was seen having creased brows.

'Is he creasing because of the situation of his tribe's representatives in the arena? Or is he creasing for another reason?' Kabaka wondered.

*

Inside the arena, the situation greatly reversed once Therras was out. Afflicted by status ailments and having a heavy body to move, Tumwa was unable to resist when Therras followed up its assault using Overbearing Stomps. She continued suffering damage as she was unbalanced by the tremor caused by the stomps.

Jack left Tumwa to Therras. Therras was the same grade and even one level higher than Tumwa. Therras speed was also boosted by its armor so it won't have trouble catching up to Tumwa if she tried to flee.

Jack went to aid Four Winds as his situation seemed direr.

When Therras was summoned, Mkulme transformed. It seemed that Mkulme was not serious even when he was ganged up by Four Winds and the armored basilisk. Only after Therras showed up, he realized he had to quickly finish his two opponents so he could aid Tumwa.

Mkulme's beast form transformed him into a large red-furred ape.

Chapter 1087: Orc Bullet

Mkulme in its red ape form was faster and stronger. Each of its punches sent the armored basilisk back. Four Winds was also constantly on edge to avoid getting punched by those large fists.

Mkulme activated his beast form's skill and his red hairs tuned longer. The hairs also stood on ends. The visual effect was slightly similar when Leavemealone in his White Tiger Emperor form activated White Tiger Rage. Mkulme became even stronger after using the skill.

Despite its high defense, the armored basilisk's HP continued to drop steadily. It was now close to the critical state. Jack didn't mind the pet was killed. It was not his, but their fight would get a lot harder if it was taken out.

Jack arrived and joined the fight. He used his sword art to attack and his movement art to dodge. He commanded the armored basilisk to force itself onto Mkulme and took Mkulme's main attention, while Four Winds and he stole hits from the sides.

Jack studied the situation while they fought. Four Winds' Royal Barbarian Blood and Ancestral Possession were coming to an end soon, and so was his Beast Command. He didn't think they could defeat Mkulme before those happened.

Therras was winning against Tumwa. Jack had used Ultimate Beast, turning Therras into a bipedal creature and increasing all its power. He asked Therras to not activate its armor's supersonic mode, though. The visual of that armor's ability was too eye-catching. It would be too pushing it. He was already glad that until now, no one had yet stopped the tourney to arrest him.

Even though Therras was winning, Jack doubted Tumwa could be defeated in a short time. This meant once the basilisk was gone and Four Winds depowered, it would be him alone against Mkulme in beast form. That was not a good prospect. If both he and Four Winds were defeated, then it didn't matter even if Therras was winning.

After considering everything, he decided he should take another gamble. He commanded the armored beast to charge at Mkulme and forcefully kept him busy while he tapped Four Winds and pulled him aside. He then quickly whispered something to Four Wind's ear.

Four Winds frowned but he had no time to argue. He just said, "Make it quick!" He then rushed back at Mkulme. The armored basilisk had lost another chunk of life due to its forceful charge.

Jack took a few steps back. He took the opposite direction from where Tumwa and Therras were fighting. He then started focusing. Runic symbols started appearing around him.

*

"Rune technique?!" The more knowledgeable spectators uttered after seeing the runes around Jack.

"He even knows rune technique? That beastmaster is just full of surprises," Kima Mountking remarked.

"Rune technique is only useful if it hits. Let's see how he pulls that off first," Jinga Loudmaw scoffed.

"You seem to dislike that beastmaster. One might mistake that it's your tribe who are fighting down there," Woga Braidedbeard chuckled.

"Hmph, I simply don't trust outworlders," Jinga said. "They shouldn't have been allowed spots in this tourney from the start."

"Outworlders are already part of our world whether we like it or not," Kabaka mediated. "We shouldn't shut ourselves from this change. Two Gods already announced their support for outworlder monarchs. If our nation's outworlders proved their worth, we won't deny them the glory."

*

Four Winds tried his best to keep Mkulme occupied while the armored basilisk continued forcing itself onto Mkulme. This caused the basilisk to lose its HP even faster. It was now close to dying.

However, Mkulme had second thoughts when he was about to deal the basilisk a killing blow. This was Tumwa's pet, after all. But then he realized this was inside the colosseum's arena, the pet won't die for real.

This momentary hesitation gave Four Winds an opening. His Savage Cleave was off cooldown. Four Winds' two axes again shone with energy.

Mkulme sensed the power. He was not letting himself get hit by that move again. He used his beast form's skill, raging ape fist. His fist was enveloped by a red glow. This glow formed an image of a larger fist which Mkulme punched forward.

The cleave and the punch collided with one another, resulting in a destructive shockwave. It was Four Winds who was blown back. At that time, Mkulme caught sight of Jack whose body was surrounded by countless runes.

"Rune technique!" Mkulme exclaimed.

He was about to rush over to prevent Jack from completing the technique, but there were so many runes on Jack's body already. The rune technique was near completion. Hence, he stayed back. He

focused his attention on Jack's movement. He didn't know what kind of rune technique Jack was using. He prepared himself to dodge.

Mkulme wasn't wrong. Jack was indeed near completion. Jack called, "Four Winds, now!"

Four Winds was already knocked flying in Jack's direction. He made use of the force and propelled himself to Jack.

"Right on time!" Four Winds said. He was indicating his bloodline skill, Titan Strength, which just came off cooldown.

His body enlarged to a giant. With one hand he grabbed Jack's body. Without pause, he threw Jack in Mkulme's direction using all his strength.

Jack's rune technique could be learned by a beastmaster and he had never shown this technique in the public. So, there was no problem using this technique without exposing his identity. Even so, he originally didn't think about using it because this technique was a pure melee technique. This technique was only useful if he combined it with the teleportation spell.

But they needed to defeat Mkulme fast, and this rune technique was the only one with enough power to do it. Hence the improvisation. Four Winds' throw turned Jack into an orc bullet.

Jack only had a one-second gap between completing the last rune and landing a hit. He purposefully slowed down the forming of the last rune and completed it right before Four Winds grabbed him because he wanted to fully utilize that one-second gap. If it was not completed when Four Winds threw him, the technique was considered canceled because his position had moved.

With both the Titan Strength and Royal Barbarian Blood in effect, the throw took less than one second in sending Jack to Mkulme.

Mkulme was ready. He was about to move away when he felt something bite his leg.

"You...!" Mkulme exclaimed in rage. He had been too focused on Jack after seeing the rune technique that he forgot about the near-death basilisk.

He punched down and depleted the basilisk's remaining HP.

But the disruption was done. The basilisk had robbed Mkulme of the precious half-second. Jack's body which was propelled at high speed slammed into Mkulme, right when the last rune was completed.

Jack focused his willpower to boost the damage as the runic symbols slammed into Mkulme's body. Raging white flame erupted and engulfed the Giantkiller tribe's leader.

Chapter 1088: Winner of the Tourney

Damage numbers appeared continuously. Mkulme screamed from the burning pain. The white flame not only burned his body, but also his soul. If even the mythical-grade archdemon was greatly damaged by this technique, what more of a rare elite orc?

Even with the increased HP from the beast form, Mkulme's HP still decreased at a fast rate. His HP bar was also not in the best condition when the rune technique hit.

Mkulme moved about and flailed his arms frantically but the flame just won't die.

Jack was about to send Mkulme some hits to hasten the orc's demise but a flying knife came flying and forced him to jump back.

"Mkulme...!" Tumwa came running while continued throwing flying knives and casting fire bolts.

Jack was pushed back further and further. Four Winds also retreated. His Royal Barbarian Blood just ended and all his stats were currently reduced.

"Where is Therras?" Jack asked. His link with his pet made him look up. Therras was up there flapping its weird wings.

'It can fly!' Jack thought excitedly.

Therras opened its mouth and yellow mana started to gather.

"Oh, crap! Move away! Move away!" Jack shouted at Four Winds.

The yellow mana solidified into a yellow ball. Therras then fired this earth core bomb down, right on top of Tumwa and Mkulme.

Mkulme's mind was in a frenzy. He couldn't think straight, much less ran away from the blast area. Tumwa tried to keep Jack and Four Winds from approaching Mkulme to deal him more damage. But when she looked up at the incoming earth core bomb, she knew then that her effort was pointless.

The earth core bomb landed near them and detonated into a huge blast. The blast radius it produced was even larger than when Therras was still a rare elite. It now rivaled Terraxx's earth core bomb when Jack used the Judgement of Past Kings.

Jack and Four Winds had run to the edge of the arena. The blast almost hit them. If it did, then it would have been a disaster. A mythical grade like Tumwa could still survive the damage but he and Four Winds were surely toasted.

But Therras was an intelligent beast. It knew its attack radius and had adjusted the bomb detonation point after seeing Jack run to the arena's edge.

After the explosion subsided. Only Tumwa remained at the center. She was in a very pitiful state. She already suffered plenty of damages during her prior tussle with Therras. This earth core bomb almost took her out.

Her survival only lasted a short moment though. She was soon stomped by Therras who dropped from the sky with all its weight. Her body vanished and reappeared outside the arena, right next to Mkulme who had appeared there earlier.

The crowd was silent. Since the start of the fight, everyone had expected the Giantkiller to come out victorious, including the spectating players. Even Cipher Flight's members who were watching thought that it was a far cry to expect a win against these two powerful natives.

Clapping from the VIP section. This time, it was the grand chief who clapped while standing up.

Seeing the grand chief's approval, Makadi immediately announced, "Winner of the tourney, Cipher Flight...!!"

The players in the audience went wild. It took several seconds before the natives joined in the commotion.

Jack heaved a relieved sigh. He looked at Therras gratefully before unsummoning it. "That was close. If my pet didn't become available, I don't think we could have won this match."

"Hehe," Four Winds chuckled and simply gave Jack a tap on the shoulder. He was reveling in the crowd's jubilation.

Cipher Flight's members jumped down to the arena and celebrated. Some natives from the VIP sections came down also, but not by jumping, to offer their congratulations.

Jack took a look at the ten chairs that housed the council members. The grand chief and the other lord chiefs were not there anymore. They had gone somewhere while everyone was celebrating.

"Congratulations!" Umeza said. He was one of the natives who came to congratulate them. "I thought that finally, my tribe will have the chance to shine as one of the council members. It appears fate says otherwise."

Mkulme and Tumwa were behind him.

"You two are formidable fighters. I have no regret losing to the two of you," Mkulme said.

"We are just lucky. You are still too strong for us," Four Winds replied.

Tumwa didn't say anything. She just nodded at Four Winds and Jack.

Umeza came to Jack and said, "You have an incredible pet."

"Thank you," Jack replied.

"How about the two of us go have some tea? The sunset is especially pretty if watched from this town."

Jack momentarily paused before saying, "That will be delightful. Unfortunately, I still have a lot of guild matters to attend to."

"Of course, let's do it another time," Umeza said before going away.

"What guild matters?" Four Winds asked. Jack was not even a real guild member.

"Nothing," Jack replied. He had a cold sweat, though. He looked at Umeza who was walking away. Did that orc suspect him?

After half an hour of socializing around, they were approached by Makadi. He said, "The two of you are summoned by the grand chief. Please follow me."

Four Winds looked at Jack. At the same time, they exchanged messages. "To my knowledge, it is supposed to be only the tribe leader who meets with the council and briefs on the inauguration

ceremony. I had prepared an excuse to take you to this meeting. It seemed that I had prepared it in vain."

"Is this good or bad?" Jack asked.

"I don't know. You tell me," Four Winds replied. "You sure you want to follow?"

After a momentary hesitation, Jack said, "Let's go." If he didn't go with Four Winds, then all his effort in the tourney would have been a waste.

Four Winds nodded and said to Makadi, "Please, lead the way."

Makadi led the two to another part of the colosseum. They went into an enclosed hall. Some orcs were already waiting inside. Jack saw nine of the orcs as the nine who sat on the main chairs in the VIP section. They were the grand chief and the lord chiefs from Verremor's Council of Ten.

Next to them were three others. Umeza Giantkill, Makubwa Mountking, and Samuhn Spiritcrier. Several other orc guards were on standby on the sides of the hall.

Makadi excused himself after leading Jack and Four Winds here. Kabaka, the grand chief, gestured for the two to approach.

'Two high-level mythical grades,' Jack thought while walking. 'Only one exit. No windows. Perhaps getting close to the grand chief in a secluded room is not such a bright idea.'

It was too late to back away now. So, he just went with it.

"Halt! That's close enough," Makubwa said. He came forward and stood in front of the council chiefs.

Jack and Four Winds stopped.

"Congratulations again on getting a place in our council, chief Four Winds," Kabaka said. "We will discuss the details of the inauguration, your duties, and your rights as a council member after we deal with another urgent matter."

"What urgent matter?" Four Winds asked.

Kabaka then turned to Jack and said, "An urgent matter that involved an enemy's infiltration into our territory."

The second he finished speaking, the guards by the side rushed over and encircled Jack, cutting his escape path.

Chapter 1089: Returning the Totem Banner

"Grand Chief, please wait," Four Winds said.

"Shut your mouth!" One of the council chiefs, Jinga Loudmaw, hissed. "You are a traitor who has aided an enemy. We should just hang you and your entire guild instead of giving you a seat in the council!"

Kabaka waved at Jinga. "Jinga, we've discussed this. He won the tourney. If we deny him his right, we are denying the tradition handed down by our ancestors. The two of them fight fair and square. Even

though his helper used a false identity, his helper was registered by the world as his tribe. He is not at fault when it comes to following the tourney's rules."

Kabaka then turned to Four Winds, "That being said, depending on how things go, I might still need to punish you for smuggling an enemy into our midst. Your seat on the council is secured. Do not worry about that, but be prepared for a different penalty."

Kabaka finally turned to Jack. "Now, do you wish to show yourself on your own accord, or shall we?"

Seeing things had come to this, Jack saw no choice. He transformed back to his real self.

"It truly is you!" Jinga uttered.

The orc guards around immediately adopted a more hostile pose. They were ready to strike.

"Hold...!!" Kabaka called out. "No one makes any move!"

"Grand chief! This is our chance to capture the leader of an enemy country," Jinga uttered.

"I said hold!" Kabaka repeated with a sterner voice.

Kabaka looked around to make sure everyone abided. He then said to Jack, "Honestly, I'm still surprised that it truly is you. When Umeza came to me with his suspicion. I asked the mages to prepare rune diagrams inside this room. Nothing fancy like dispelling a disguise since we do not have much time, but something that tells us that someone is using a disguise. The rune diagram marked you the minute you entered this hall. We know you are in disguise, but I still can't believe it is the king of Themisphere himself. Why do you come here, all by yourself, into the hand of the enemies using such a covert and disgraceful manner?"

"Honorable grand chief, I come in peace," Jack said. "I come in this manner because I have no choice. I have been trying to get in touch with you, trying to get an audience with you in a proper way, but you keep on rejecting my messengers," Jack said.

"I did...?" Kabaka turned to the side.

Jinga, who saw the glare, immediately said, "Gra—Grand Chief, it's true that there are delegations from Themisphere, but they are enemies. We do not need to listen to whatever they say."

Jinga was the council chief responsible for foreign matters.

"Fool! Whether they're enemies or allies, messengers should be respected! Are we now a dishonorable race who captures or kills messengers, or captures or kills an enemy who comes willingly and presents himself before us? There is no glory in capturing or killing an enemy outside of combat!"

Jinga dropped his head after the scolding.

Kabaka returned his attention to Jack. "That being said, it didn't mean that we will just let you go. You can blame yourself for being so brave in coming here. But I will let you say your piece, why do you want to meet me?"

Instead of answering, Jack took out something from his inventory. Makubwa and the other guards were agitated when something suddenly appeared in Jack's hand. They almost attacked, but they stopped when they felt the aura emitted by the item in Jack's hand.

"That's..."

It took a few seconds before someone finally identified the item. "It's... It's the Totem Banner...!"

Most of them never laid eyes on the legendary artifact. This artifact was already gone before they were born. All they knew about their national treasure were from history books. This banner that Jack was holding was identical to the descriptions and illustrations in those books.

"I came here to return this totem banner to its rightful place, as was desired by Themisphere's fourth king, Thebalder," Jack declared.

Everyone was silent. They were confused about Jack's purpose in coming here, but this totem banner was the last thing they expected.

It was Jinga who spoke first, "The thief has finally returned the stolen item. Guards! Seize the banner and apprehend the thief!"

"You stay your tongue!" Kabaka scolded. "I am the grand chief here. You are speaking out of turn!"

Jinga winced at the words.

Kabaka then walked forward.

"Grand chief...", Makubwa who stood between Jack and the council chiefs tried to block Kabaka's path.

Kabaka put a hand on him. "It's all right," he said. "I don't sense any hostility from him, and I believe in you if he tries anything."

Hearing that, Makubwa moved aside. He followed closely beside Kabaka as the grand chief approached Jack.

"May I?" Kabaka said and extended his hand, asking for the totem banner in Jack's hand.

Jack felt a dilemma. As long as the totem banner was in his hand, he had a chip to bargain his way out. No one could steal the things in his storage bag if he stored this artifact inside. But once it left his hand, then he had nothing to stop these orcs from attacking him.

But if he used this totem banner as a bargaining chip, it defeated the whole purpose of his attempt. He was trying to make peace with this nation. Peace needed goodwill. Peace needed trust. If he couldn't show these orcs his goodwill and trust, then he should forget about expecting the same thing from them.

So, he extended his hand that was holding the totem banner and released his hold. The totem banner was now in Kabaka's hand.

Kabaka held the banner as if it was the most precious thing. The guards were getting ready again. They were expecting the grand chief to give the order to apprehend Jack now that the totem banner was in Kabaka's hands.

While they were waiting, an apparition suddenly appeared above the totem banner. It took everyone by surprise, including Jack. Some of the orcs even thought this was part of Jack's ploy, that an enchantment had been placed on the totem banner and it was now activated after Kabaka took the banner.

But before they could do anything, the apparition above the banner spoke. The apparition was the image of an orc in battle armor.

"Greetings, my fellow orcs! My name is Mojuto Raretooth, son of the great Ajabu Raretooth!" The apparition declared.

Chapter 1090: First Step toward Peace

Everyone's alarm scaled down once they realized the apparition was just a recording.

"I implanted my spirit recording inside this artifact because I realize I won't be making it home, and so is this totem banner. I must admit I might have been too impulsive but I don't regret my decision. My brother, Thebalder, needed this artifact, and for a good reason. He needed it to close a demonic portal that will not only threaten his kingdom but our nation as well, and the whole world if it goes unchecked.

"I have been too wounded by an archdemon, but I managed to drive it back into the portal. However, this place is already sealed, and so is my fate... I'm using my remaining life force to implant this memory, which will be activated when this artifact returns to an orc's hand.

"I don't know how long it will be before that happens. I just know that there will be tensions between our two allying countries due to this incident. I place this memory to implore you, my orcish family, not to blame the humans. We should honor our ancestors' pact and remain as allies."

The apparition then dissolved into nothingness.

Everyone remained silent for a long while. Though surprised by the recording, the guards still maintained a ready pose. They were still waiting for Kabaka's order to apprehend Jack.

Kabaka didn't give the order. He instead asked Jack, "You said before that the Themisphere's fourth king desired to return this artifact. Our history said that Thebalder tricked our past grand chief's son to steal this artifact. After hearing what Mojuto's memory said, I would like to hear the whole story. Do you know the story?"

"I do," Jack answered. He was more than happy to oblige. The fact that he was not attacked yet after handing the totem banner was already a very good sign. Maybe Mojuto's memory had something to do with it. He silently offered thanks to the ancient orc.

Jack narrated what Thebalder had told him about how the incident happened. How Mojuto Raretooth willingly brought the totem banner to Themisphere, and later willingly gave his life to save Thebalder and sealed himself with the archdemon.

Jack told them everything including what he went through to get the totem banner except for the location of the demonic portal. The orcs listened without interrupting.

After Jack was done telling the tale. Another period of silence returned.

Kabaka spoke first, "You said that the demonic portal is not yet closed. You can take this totem banner out because the closing process only needs one legendary artifact. Are you saying you choose to take out this totem banner over your kingdom's national treasure?"

"I did," Jack answered.

"Grand chief, he could just be lying about everything," Jinga said.

Kabaka turned to him and said, "If you are referring to the demonic portal, you know he was not." Jack didn't understand what that meant, perhaps it was because Mojuto's apparition had confirmed the existence of the demonic portal? Whatever it was, it shut Jinga up.

"Why? Why not take the Boundless Cache instead?" Kabaka turned back to Jack and asked.

"Our countries have suffered too long for this misunderstanding. Further conflicts will just weaken both of us. I don't wish for this enmity to continue further. I hope that you feel the same. I wish for peace between our two great countries."

Jinga reacted to Jack's request, "Peace? The totem banner was kept in your kingdom for almost two hundred years. Our nation went through all those years in a state of vulnerability because of it. We have to fight against pirates and barbarian tribes without the aid of the totem banner. We lost soldiers where we shouldn't have. How do you account for those losses?"

"Account? Then how about we talked about your recent invasion and all the other battles Verremor forces had directed at us?" Jack shot back. "You entered our territory, destroying our towns and land. Many of our soldiers lost their lives in that war. How do you compensate for the casualties in this war your nation initiated?"

Jinga was about to talk back but Kabaka's glare stopped him.

Kabaka then said to Jack, "Our countries have been at odds for almost two centuries, it will not be easy to let go of our bad blood. We orcs are a warring race, but we are not mindless barbarians who make war for the sake of bloodlust. We also honored peace, especially against honorable parties. You have proven yourself as one with such honor. You put yourself at the risk of being captured to give our two countries the first step toward peace. That alone is an honorable act deserving our respect."

Kabaka made a gesture of slight bow after his words. The other orcs immediately followed suit. Jack returned the gesture with the same slight bow.

"Thank you, grand chief. I sincerely hope we can start to rebuild the trust and alliance that were forged by the ancestors of our two countries," Jack said.

"Rebuilding the alliance is too large a step," Kabaka replied. "As I said, it will not be easy for our people to let go of their bad blood. It will need time. But you can rest assured that your kingdom no longer needs to fear aggression from our side, this I can promise you. In the coming days, I will also discuss with my people about opening our border to the human race. We will see where our two countries go from there. I hope you do the same on your side."

"That will be my priority once I return to Thereath. Thank you, honorable grand chief," Jack said sincerely. At the same time, he heard a notification, "Congratulations on completing the quest, Repair

the relationship between Themisphere and Verremor. Receive rewards of 5,000,000 exp, 50 gold coins, 1,000 mana cores, and 200,000 merit points."

His sovereign level increased to level 5 after the notification, receiving 10 ruling power. From sovereign level 5 to level 6 required 250,000 merit points. He was only lacking 52,196 merit points for that. Once he reached level 6, he could add another royal agent.

"Themisphere's throne had changed kings many times. It was only half a month since an outworlder sat on the throne, and the political relationship between our two countries had faced a potential change, in a good way," Kabaka praised Jack. He then looked at Four Winds and said, "This gives me the confidence that our newly inaugurated outworlder chief will perform well too."

"I will do my best to not let you down, grand chief," Four Winds responded.

Kabaka smiled and turned back to Jack, "King Storm Wind, now that we have everything cleared up. It is only right that we welcome you as a proper dignitary. Please come with us to the city hall. We will arrange a feast there."

"It will be my pleasure, honorable grand chief," Jack said. Although he very much liked to leave now after achieving his objective, socializing with a potential ally was also a king's duty.

"Chief Four Winds, you come too," Kabaka said. "The city hall will be where you spend your days ruling this city and its region. You should start getting used to the place."

"Thank you, grand chief," Four Winds said.

Umeza came to Jack and said, "Perhaps we can have our tea now?"

Jack laughed merrily at the old orc's words. Sometimes fate was indeed unexpected.

Woga Braidedbeard sighed on the side. He muttered, "If only Abasi was still here. His tribe has carried the taint of losing the totem banner for so long. The return of the banner and Mojuto's memory will have restored their tribe's honor. Where did they all go?"