

World 1091

Chapter 1091: Prisoners

Jack spent the afternoon talking with most of the council chiefs inside a meeting hall, discussing serious matters and non-serious matters.

Four Winds, on the other hand, was shown around the city hall and was informed of his tasks as one of the council chiefs. He had himself some sort of a throne in the great hall. Peniel had come out of her hidden dimension and was touring the place with him. Peniel informed him that the large seat in that hall was where he could operate the partial monarch system.

Four Winds sat on the seat but nothing happened. His guide told him that he had to be inaugurated first before he had access to the system. His inauguration was scheduled two days later.

Four Winds thanked the guide after the tour. He then talked to Peniel to know everything about the partial monarch system, so he didn't waste too much time grasping in the dark once he started operating the system.

On Jack's side, Umeza was also in the meeting hall, drinking tea with Jack. During the talk, he said to Kabaka, "Grand chief, now that we are no longer at war with Themisphere. What should we do with the human prisoners?"

"Prisoners?" Jack's ears perked up after hearing it.

"You are right," Kabaka said. "I almost forgot. King Storm Wind, we have captured some humans from the invasion war, as well as some human adventurers who brazenly adventure around our land. Now that we have buried our hatchet, we will of course release them."

Kabaka turned to Woga and gave him the instruction. He assured Jack that the prisoners would be freed by tomorrow.

Kabaka said to Jack, "Your side might also have some orc prisoners. I believe you will do the honorable thing and release them as well."

"I am honestly not aware of any prisoner. But you have my word, if there are prisoners, they will be freed," Jack replied.

Kabaka nodded.

Jack asked, "Where are the prisoners placed?"

"They are in jails in different cities," Kabaka answered.

"Are there any in this city?"

Kabaka turned to Woga, who answered, "There are two. One was captured during the invasion. Another was an adventurer captured a long time ago."

"May I see them?" Jack asked.

"I will have them brought here," Woga said. "It is improper for a king to visit the jail." Woga then call a soldier and gave him the instruction.

They continued chatting until the door was opened and the same orc soldier brought two human natives with ragged clothes in.

"Laurent!" Jack called after seeing one of the humans.

"Storm...?" Laurent was dazed seeing Jack's presence.

After Laurent sacrificed himself to block the orcs from chasing after Alfredo and the others, he had been caught. He thought he would be executed. But instead, he was brought back as a captive and put into jail.

Just now, the orc warden had come into his jail, removed his shackles, and then brought him to city hall. He was wondering what it was all about. Then he saw a familiar outworlder, sitting together with orc leaders as if they were best friends. Not to mention, the outworlder was wearing regal outfits that he had only ever seen worn by the king.

"You...," Laurent was completely lost.

"A lot has happened," Jack said with a wide smile as he approached. "When I heard that they have prisoners here, I have been hoping that one of them is you. Duke Alfredo and Duchess Isabelle will be very happy to see that you are alive."

"You... Your clothes," Laurent stammered.

"As I said. A lot has happened. Well, short version. I'm now the king of Themisphere."

"How... How...?"

"We can talk later," Jack said and turned to Woga. "Is there a place where he can clean himself?"

"Of course," Woga then ordered the soldier who had brought Laurent here. "Bring him to the bath, and give him a clean set of cloth."

"What about my friend?" Laurent gestured to the other prisoner he came in with.

Jack turned to that person and used Inspect. The man's name was Robinson, and he was a level 75 rare elite.

'Impressive level and grade,' Jack thought. Jack turned to Woga who nodded and said to the soldier, "Him too."

After the two ex-prisoners left, Jack resumed chatting with the orc leaders for the remainder of the afternoon.

In the evening, he was presented with a feast. Both to celebrate Four Winds' ascend to the Council of Ten and also to entertain a foreign monarchy visit.

The news about how Verremor and Themisphere would be burying the hatchet had spread all around the city. The news soon traveled to other cities. Kabaka let the news spread. He was actually the one who ordered it. This should help prepare the mass when the human race started entering their cities.

Laurent and Robinson joined the feast. Being the only three humans in the crowd, they stuck together. The two ended up acting as Jack's entourage, following Jack around as he greeted important orc officers.

In between the necessary greetings, the three chatted. Robinson was already in jail before Laurent was tossed inside. Being the only two humans inside, they became close friends.

Robinson was originally part of a group of adventurers who braved the Fulgur region. One day, his group accidentally encountered a high-level mythical monster. His group was slaughtered except for him. He only managed to save himself after running for days.

He was not fully aware of his direction during his run. He ended up inside Verremor territory. He happened on patrolling orc soldiers, who captured him because he was a human. He was then brought to Mjiku Maba and tossed into its jail, where he had stayed since.

He was not sure how long he had been in jail. He thought it should already be more than one year because before he was put in jail, outworlders had not arrived yet.

Jack was sorry about his situation. Jack asked him what was he going to do now. Jack asked whether he was going back to the adventuring life.

He said adventuring alone was too dangerous for him. All his companions were gone. He admitted that he honestly didn't know what to do.

Hearing that, Jack offered him to join the kingdom. With his high level and grade, Jack said that the kingdom would need his help.

He was hesitant at first. But probably he saw that he owed Jack for saving him from jail. So, he agreed. He would report to the kingdom office once they were back in Themisphere.

Chapter 1092: Steed's Quest

The feast lasted till late at night. Kabaka invited Jack to stay a few more days to attend Four Winds' inauguration. Considering Jack helped Four Winds win the tourney, he thought the two outworlders should be close friends.

Jack replied although he would like to, he had many matters to attend to. He needed to go back tomorrow and prepare from his side about opening the border for the orc race.

He figured not many human officers would be thrilled about this. As Kabaka said, bad blood between their countries had lasted for a long time. It would be hard to ask everyone to just forgive and forget. He might need to think of extra precautions to protect the orcs once they started entering human cities, especially the native ones. Otherwise, things might get ugly again and all his efforts were wasted.

Kabaka didn't force Jack to stay. Jack was given one of the best rooms in the city hall to spend the night. He spent the rest of the night sending messages to Jeanny and John, informing them about the situation.

He asked John to start discussing with the other advisors about lifting the ban on orcs and started drafting rules on how to deal with the orcs when they entered their cities.

John said that there was no worry. Jeanny had sent a few helpful players during Jack's absence. The players used to be politicians and legislators in their real lives. John had used his position as the royal advisor to put these players to work in the palace. They had been very helpful in drafting regulations to help keep the players and natives from clashing against one another, especially adventurer players.

This was not a problem in the past because players' level was much lower than the native. Now, there were plenty of high-level players. The average-level native guards were no longer sufficient if all of these players caused a problem. Hence, the regulations were made for these players to keep them on a leash.

Everlasting Heavenly Legends and its allied guilds also helped maintain these regulations, especially those who had joined the kingdom faction. These players helped the native guards if rogue players were causing trouble.

Jack didn't forget to ask John to check with Isabelle and Thaergood about the orc prisoners. If there were such prisoners, they were to be released immediately.

It was way past midnight when Jack was about to sleep. He didn't have enough sleep, though. Because around two hours after he slept, he was woken up in the most uncool way possible. By a vivid nightmare.

He didn't remember what the nightmare was about, but he woke up sweating. In front of him, a literal nightmare was staring back at him.

"Ma'am, are you the reason I'm having a nightmare? If you want to wake me up, just give me a nudge or something," Jack complained.

Pandora started neighing for a reply.

Peniel also came out of her hidden dimension. She was listening to the nightmare intently.

"What did she want?" Jack asked half-sleepily after Pandora stopped making sounds.

Before Peniel could answer, Jack heard a quest notification, "You have been offered a steed's quest, Help Pandora. Do you accept?"

"Stee—steed's quest?" Jack stammered

"You do remember that she gave you a one-year limit for her service, don't you?" Peniel asked.

"Oh, you're right!" Jack uttered. He honestly had forgotten about it. He then made some quick calculations. There was still around one month before their contract ended.

"This is your chance to make her your permanent steed," Peniel said. "Help her. Perform well, and she might consider serving you forever."

"Help her doing what?" Jack asked.

"Her family is in danger," Peniel answered. "She needs your help to save them."

"She had a family?" Jack had trouble picturing a herd of fiery horses with nightmare visions gathered together as a family group.

"Yes. Get ready, she will take you there right now," Peniel said.

"What? Right now? You mean, right this second?"

"Right this second!"

"Why such a hurry?" Jack turned to Pandora. "Ma'am, can you please wait one day? No, half a day! I wish to take care of some stuff first."

Pandora neighed and stomped her feet. The atmosphere in the room turned significantly darker even though it was already dark. Jack didn't need Peniel to interpret the nightmare's answer.

'Damn it, such a pushy,' Jack complained.

Jack originally planned to go back to Thereath first to use the mass pay function to increase the officers' loyalties. Tomorrow would be one week since he last used it. Not to mention, Verremor's grand chief had expressed the desire to send him off tomorrow. Going away now would be so impolite, but he guessed he couldn't argue with an angry fiery horse who could literally give him nightmares every night if she was displeased.

Pandora neighed and stomped again, showing her displeasure.

"Hold your horses! I will help you, but at least give me a few minutes, will you?" Jack said. "I need to talk to someone first."

He accepted the quest and then walked out of the room. He knocked on the door to the next room. Laurent opened the door. Both Laurent and Robinson were given a guest room next to Jack.

"What's wrong, Your Majesty?" Laurent asked.

"Something urgent has come up. I need to leave now," Jack said. "I can't accompany you back to Thereath, but I can give you gold coins so you can use the zone portal to teleport directly."

Jack had planned to use the zone portal with Laurent and Robinson instead of letting them go back on foot with the other prisoners. Using zone portals for natives was expensive, but Jack didn't mind paying for the fees since he had many coins.

"Where are you going, Your Majesty? Do you need my help? I don't mind coming with you," Laurent said.

"Um... That was not a bad idea," Jack turned to Peniel, "Where are we going? Can I bring him?"

"Pandora can only carry one person to where she needs to go," Peniel said. "So, no. You can call Arlcard and your royal agents once you are there, but you can't bring another passenger along the way."

"Oh, too bad. His healing spells would have been very handy," Jack said. He then turned back to Laurent and said, "Well, you hear the lady. Unfortunately, I can't bring you. You should go back to Thereath as originally planned. Here are the coins for you and Robinson."

Jack handed him 240 gold coins. It took 120 gold coins to teleport from Mjiku Maba directly to Thereath. The longer the distance, the more expensive the cost. That's why it was impossible to teleport a whole army of natives.

"Thank you, Your Majesty," Laurent said after accepting the coins. He was truly grateful to Jack.

"Hey, can I ask you? Do you mind being my royal agent?" Jack asked. "Or are you planning to go back to the Church of Creation?"

"Even if I want to, they won't accept me back. They made it pretty clear when I chose to help during the invasion," Laurent replied. "To answer your question. Yes, I will be honored if you are willing to have me as your royal agent."

"Sweet! My sovereign level will increase soon. Once it does, I will send you an invite. Please accept it then," Jack said.

Sounds of stuff breaking could be heard from next door.

"Okay, got to go. I have an angry nightmare to attend to," Jack said and hurriedly ran back to his room.

He sent a quick message to Four Winds on his way, explaining his urgency and asking Four Winds to send his regards and his apology to the grand chief for disappearing in the middle of the night.

"Okay, I'm ready. Should we go outside first? We are inside a room, for goodness sake," Jack asked after he was back in his room.

Pandora neighed with impatience.

"She said just climb up, slowpoke," Peniel translated.

"Fine. Let's go... to wherever the hell you want me to go," Jack said and climbed up Pandora.

"Funny," Peniel said. "You are indeed going to hell."

Chapter 1093: The Underworld

"What?" Jack thought he must have heard wrong.

"You do remember where I said her kinds came from, don't you?" Peniel asked.

Pandora didn't wait for the two to finish chatting. She just started running at high speed inside that bedroom.

"WAAA....!!!" Jack screamed when he saw that they were about to crash into the wall.

The room suddenly elongated. It was like he was looking at a picture getting stretched. Pandora continued to run at high speed while the room expanded at a speed not slower than Pandora, so the wall was always out of reach.

Then, the room started to burn in different spots like it was made of paper. It continued to burn until there was nothing left but void. Despite seeing nothing, Jack knew from his mana sense that they were in some kind of a tunnel, and Pandora kept on galloping.

After an indefinite amount of time, Jack saw the end of the tunnel. Not the sighting of a light source, but instead, the sighting of a much darker thing compared to the already dark void around them.

Pandora rammed straight into this wall of the blackest substance by the end of the tunnel without slowing down.

Then, it was not dark anymore. Around him was a scene of black and red. Hard black stony ground with lava rivers, burning bushes, and burning trees were all around. Above him was a red sky, filled with ominous dark clouds and occasional thunder and lightning. But what tipped Jack off that he was no longer in the same dimension as the previous game world was the sickening mana all around him. It made him feel uncomfortable.

"Where do you say this place is again?" Jack asked.

"Welcome to the underworld," Peniel answered.

"The... The underworld...? Do you mean the same underworld where that archdemon we fought inside the dome came out from?"

"The very same."

"Holy...," Jack looked around, expecting to see demons around there.

His radar then informed him several things approaching fast. His mana sense also picked up the danger soon. His Storm Breaker was out and he used Shredding Fangs in the direction where the ambushers came from. Followed by Wind Slash. He just started attacking without thinking too much. He was currently too agitated.

What attacked him were five monsters. Four were dead after his attacks. One survived.

"Huh? Why so weak?" Jack asked after seeing it.

In his anxious state, he was expecting the ones ambushing to be powerful demons. He now had a good look at the one surviving ambusher. It was something that looked like a cross between a large snake and a bat. Jack's Inspect informed him the monster was Amphipterelet, a level 50 elite draconic.

The one surviving Amphipterelet flew away after seeing its brethren killed.

When Jack noticed that he had received 8 draconic essences from the four Amphipterelet he had just killed, he used Sword of Light. The fleeing last Amphipterelet died and he received another 2 draconic essences.

"Not demons?" Jack asked.

"Not every monster in the underworld is a demon," Peniel replied.

"Hey, I just notice. Those Amphipterelets are not afraid of Pandora!" Jack uttered. He was still sitting atop the nightmare.

"Many of the underworld creatures had a high resistance against psychic attack," Peniel explained. "So, Pandora's ability will be somewhat dampened here."

"Hm... I don't mind getting attacked by those weak Amphiterelet, though. I need the draconic essences. Do you know where their lair is in this place?" Jack asked.

Pandora neighed and reared up. Jack would have fallen if there was no magical glue holding his butt to Pandora.

"She said she didn't take you here so you can go and farm monsters," Peniel translated.

"Okay, okay. I apologize. No need to get upset. Take me to where you want to take me then," Jack said to the nightmare.

Pandora then shot off in a direction. Jack opened his map and marked the coordinates where he met the amphipterelets, just in case he had the chance to come back again. He also noticed that his map had a different vibe now. Before, the map of the area he had already traveled to looked vibrant and was dominated by yellow and green colors. The map here was dominated by brown and red colors. This further reinforced that he was in a different world than before.

"This place is suffocating," Jack said. The uncomfortable feeling he had isn't going away.

"It's because of the corrupted mana," Peniel said. "Remember when I explained underworld demons needed corrupted mana to survive? This place was their natural habitat."

Pandora continued galloping. The landscape was mostly barren except for those burning bushes and trees. Stone hills with sharp pointy ends filled the terrain. Pandora had no trouble traversing the terrains. She even ran atop the lava rivers.

Jack saw some monsters. Some were still affected by Pandora's aura. Some were, as Peniel said, resistant and chased after Pandora. Yet, Pandora's speed was too fast for those monsters. She just left them in the dust.

"When she teleported us into this realm, why didn't she just direct it to where she wanted to go?" Jack asked Peniel telepathically.

"It didn't work that way. The crossing between the two realms was unstable. She could only pinpoint a region. Where she appeared in that region was completely random."

After some time, Jack finally saw something on his radar. A cluster of white dots.

"Natives?" Jack said with surprise.

"Underworld is not all just chaotic place filled with demons," Peniel told him.

Some sort of a settlement was soon visible. It wasn't large. It was the size of a village. The houses were tall cone-like structures made of materials that Jack was not aware of.

Some folks were walking around the village. When they got near, Jack saw that they were humanoids with goat legs and goat horns. They were satyrs.

Pandora just barged into the village like nobody's business, which surprised the inhabitants. The commotion caused the entire village to become aware of her coming.

She stopped in the middle of the village. All the satyrs in the village ran to where Pandora was. Jack was worried the satyrs were angry about Pandora's stunt. His radar still showed the satyrs as white dots instead of red, but he still held his weapons at the ready just in case.

Then, all the satyrs around them dropped to their knees in a reverent pose.

Chapter 1094: Custodians of Nightmares

Jack didn't know what to make of the satyrs kneeling before him. He then stored his weapons and said, "Everyone, please get up. I didn't know that people of the underworld also respect the sovereignty of the Themisphere kingdom. Hahaha..."

His laughing stopped after receiving a slap from Peniel. "They are not kneeling for you, dumbass!" She uttered.

At the same time, Pandora reared up. This time, there was no magical glue holding Jack to the nightmare. He fell to the ground on his butt.

"Ouch! Was that necessary?" Jack complained.

The satyrs stood back up, but they stayed standing in their places. Except for one satyr, who looked to be the eldest. He approached Pandora. Pandora also walked to him. The two touched their heads. The satyr closed his eyes and muttered something indecipherable.

"Ho...", Jack was amazed. This was the first time he saw this cocky nightmare acting so affectionate.

"It seemed that this village is where the custodians of nightmares live," Peniel said after seeing the scene.

"Custodians?" Jack asked.

"The nightmares are exceptional steeds. They are the only beings capable of freely traveling between the main world and the underworld. This makes lots of sides try to capture them. The young ones, I mean. It's impossible to capture the adult ones. It is rumored that there is a group of people who worship the nightmares and take it upon themselves to protect these nightmares. They are the custodians. When a nightmare is giving birth, she will return to these custodians who then help her give birth. Afterward, it is the custodians' job to nurture the nightmares and keep them hidden until they are strong enough to venture out into the world by themselves."

"I see... From the look of it, that old satyr should be the one who took care of Pandora when she was young," Jack surmised.

"It's likely," Peniel said.

After a while, Pandora looked back at Jack. The elder satyr also looked over. The elder satyr approached Jack. Jack scanned him and learned his name was Ykos. He was a level 65 special elite.

"Good tidings, upworld dweller. Welcome to Pilenus village. Pandora told me a lot of things about you," Ykos greeted.

"She did? You two didn't talk for long. Are all the things she said about me good or bad?"

"A bit of both," Ykos chuckled. "But she said you are someone who can be depended upon."

"She did?" Jack looked at Pandora who turned away from his gaze.

"The fact is, we need help and there is no one in this underworld whom we can depend on," Ykos said.

"That's why I contacted Pandora."

"What's the problem?" Jack asked.

Instead of answering, Ykos said, "Come with me, please."

Ykos led them outside the village. Pandora walked beside him while Jack and Peniel followed behind. They came upon the edge of burning woods.

"Will those trees continue to burn? Won't the flame eat all the woods up at one point?" Jack asked.

"No. This is the natural state of trees in the underworld," Peniel answered. "The flame will continue to burn as the tree grows. Once the flame dies, the tree dies as well."

"Okay," Jack said. He figured it would be a waste of time trying to understand how that worked.

Yvok and Pandora entered the burning woods. Jack entered anxiously as he made sure to not get burned by the flames.

Yvok took out a pipe and started blowing it. Jack didn't hear any sound from the pipe. When Jack was still wondering why the old satyr play an instrument in the middle of the forest, the scenery around them shifted.

"What...?" He was still stunned as the landscape around them transformed. It was like their surroundings rotated at a high speed. Then it stopped. He found they were standing on a small island surrounded by a lava lake.

"What the... Did we teleport?" He asked.

"This is a secret dimension we constructed," Yvok answered as he stored his pipe. "This is where we hide the young ones."

When he finished speaking, two little nightmares leaped out of a nearby rock and ran to Yvok. The old satyr laughed and petted the two. He was not hurt by their flames, just as Jack wasn't hurt by Pandora's.

"This is Sol. This is Fira," Yvok told them of the little nightmare's names.

Sol and Fira then noticed the nearby Pandora. They looked over with curiosity. Pandora came at them and lowered her head. The little ones slowly approached and started rubbing their heads on Pandora's. Yvok moved back and let the three spend time with each other.

"Those two never saw Pandora since their birth," Yvok said after he came to Jack's side. "But they could sense their mother's aura from Pandora."

"Their mother?" Jack asked.

"Their mother's name is Luna. She is Pandora's sister," Yvok answered.

"I see... So, where is Luna?"

Yvok sighed. "That is the problem," Yvok said. "Luna had been captured."

"Captured? I thought it is impossible to capture an adult nightmare?" Peniel said.

"You are the one saying that. I remember when we found Pandora, she was also in captivity. So, it should not be impossible," Jack said.

"Oh... Now that you mentioned it..., " Peniel remembered after Jack pointed it out.

"So, I guess you need help freeing their mother," Jack said to Yvok. "Who captured her? And where is she imprisoned?"

"She had been captured by a Hell Baron called Hraghshu. She is being kept inside that demon's manor," Yvok answered.

"Hell Baron? Demons also have a hierarchy?" Jack asked.

"Yes. Our underworld is one big demonic empire. Can you help us?"

"I am here, ain't I? Do you know where is the manor of this hell baron?"

"If you open your map, I can input its coordinates."

Jack opened his map as requested. While interfacing with Jack's map, Yvok said, "If you traveled with Pandora, it should take only one day to reach that place from our village. I implore you to make haste. We don't know what Hraghshu is doing to Luna. I bet she was being forced into servitude. An adult nightmare prefers dying to being a slave. If we delay, I'm afraid Luna might decide to end herself rather than submit."

Chapter 1095: The Kings of Hell

While they were talking, a spatial distortion happened at the edge of the map. Jack immediately readied his weapons, but Yvok told him to relax.

"There is no need to worry," Yvok said.

Two satyrs appeared from the spatial distortion. One male and one female. The female was holding a pipe similar to the one Yvok used earlier. Slung on her back was a long staff. The male was bare-chested but from his waist downward he was garbed with armor. He had a long cleaver strapped beside his waist and a buckler on his back.

The minute the two appeared. The two little nightmares immediately ran over to them. Sol ran to the female satyr who petted the nightmare affectionately, while Fira jumped onto the male satyr's chest. The male hugged Fira with a laugh.

"They are my son and daughter, Tenka and Yrin," Yvok introduced to Jack. "They are also the main custodians to those two little ones."

Jack used Inspect on the two. Both were rare elite. Tenka was level 70. Yrin was level 72.

"Father," Yrin greeted Yvok.

"Yrin. Let me introduce. This is Pandora whom I often mentioned to you," Yvok said.

"It's great to finally meet you, ma'am," Yrin said to Pandora. Pandora replied by neighing. The two continued chatting. Jack was amazed at how the two enjoyed their chat while they both used completely different languages.

"Father," Tenka greeted his father after putting down Fira from his embrace.

"This is Mister Storm Wind," Yvok introduced Jack to his son. "He is an upworld dweller. Pandora brought him here to help us out with the situation with Luna."

Tenka studied Jack for a while and said, "You are an outworlder."

"I am," Jack replied.

Tenka turned to his father and said, "What can an outworlder do? I am higher level than him. You should have let me and Yrin go to rescue Luna."

"No! We have talked about this a lot of times. You two are the main custodians to Sol and Fira. If anything happened to either of you, their growth would be affected."

"If we failed to bring back Luna, it will be even worse. You know they need their mother's essence to grow. It is our job as their custodians to make sure that their mother is returned to them."

"I have said it before, and I'm not changing my mind. No!" Yvok uttered.

"You are one stubborn fool!" Tenka scolded.

"Tenka! That is not the way to speak to our father!" Yrin chided.

"Hmph! It's pointless to speak," Tenka said and barged off. He also had the same pipe as Yvok and Yrin. He was now blowing his pipe and using the spatial distortion to exit this place.

"I will talk to him," Yrin said. She ran off and joined her brother who entered the spatial distortion.

Yvok sighed heavily after the two left.

Jack said to him, "Actually, the two of them have good levels and grades. It will help if they come with us to save Luna. We might need a local's guide to deal with certain things."

Yvok shook his head. "I'm afraid I can't let anyone from my village accompany you... When I told Tenka that he can't go because he is a custodian, it is only an excuse. The real reason I don't let him go is that I don't want anyone to connect Luna to our village. Even more so the demons of the underworld empire. If they do, the demons might come searching. If they learned about Sol and Fira, they will take those two away."

Pandora neighed, to which Yvok responded with, "Thank you. That is reassuring."

"What did she say?" Jack asked Peniel.

"She said, don't worry. Storm alone is enough for the task. He will surely bring Luna back."

'Damn it! That is a bold thing to promise without asking me first,' Jack grumbled in his mind.

"How strong is this Hell Baron anyway?" Jack asked.

"He is a level 60 special elite demon," Yvok answered.

"Oh? He is weak! Then no problem, sir. We will have Luna back in no time! Hahaha..."

"Though he is not too strong, he is a Hell Baron. He has many demon soldiers guarding his manor. From what I learned from the satyrs I sent to scout his manor, he probably has more than one hundred demon soldiers, with levels ranging around 50 to 70 and grades around elite to rare elite."

"Hm... I don't see any problem," Jack said. "As long as Luna is truly there, we can just barge in with brute force and save her."

"I've not yet finished," Yvok said. "He also has two demon bodyguards. Both are mythical grades. I'm not sure about the level but might be around level 60 or 70."

"Oh, now that is more problematic... But still manageable," Jack said. He had Arlcard and Therras who were both also mythical grades. Even if the enemies were higher level, they should be able to hold back those two demon bodyguards. He and his royal guards could take care of the other soldiers and then free Luna. After that, they could work together to finish the bodyguards.

Jack then thought of something. "Wait, is Hraghshu's manor in a town full of demons? If so, then it's a big problem. I doubt the demons will just let a human like me waltz in, won't they?"

"No, they won't. But don't worry, Hraghshu's manor is out in the wilderness," Yvok answered.

"That's a relief. Then all I need to worry about is the two mythical guards."

"Unfortunately, those bodyguards are not the most worrying matter," Yvok said.

"What?! Are you saying there are stronger being than those mythical-grade bodyguards that I have to worry about?"

"There is," Yvok said. "You see. The reason why a weak Hell Baron like Hraghshu has two mythical grade bodyguards is that he is the son of one of the six kings of hell."

"Kings of Hell?" Jack asked.

"The underworld empire is ruled by seven devils," Peniel explained. "The emperor of hell, Lucifer, sits at the top. Ruling under him are the six kings of hell."

"I'm surprised that you know so much about the underworld, Miss Peniel," Yvok praised. "Hraghshu is the son of one of them, Mammon."

"If Hraghshu is such a big shot's son, why is he only a Hell Baron in the middle of nowhere?" Jack asked.

"Because Hraghshu is too weak. Mammon is disappointed with that son of his. But even so, he is still his son. I'm sure he put some kind of rune diagram to warn him if anything happens to his son. When that happens, it is possible that he sent a stronger demon over or maybe even come by himself. Mammon is a level 95 eternal-grade devil."

Chapter 1096: Going to Hraghshu's Manor

"Le... Level 95 eternal...?" Jack stammered. That was as strong as Broidrireg. He doubted he could do anything if he had to face this king of hell.

Jack pondered this information with a solemn face.

"Still confident?" Peniel ridiculed.

Jack glanced at Pandora. The nightmare had been staring at him the entire time.

Even if it was dangerous, he still had to go. Unless, of course, he no longer wanted Pandora for his steed. But even if there was no benefit, he still had to go. He considered Pandora as a friend, even if the nightmare didn't return the same sentiment. He was not one to avoid braving dangers to help a friend in need.

"Do you know where Mammon stays? How far away is he from Hraghshu's manor?" Jack asked Yvok.

"Each king of hell rules over a demonic city and resides inside a palace. Mammon's palace is in a city called Dawnburn. By Pandora's speed, it would take around three days. But I'm sure Mammon's travel speed will be faster."

"Even if he is three times faster, he still needs one day to arrive," Jack said. "It should still be enough time for us to do our things, as long as we immediately act once Hraghshu finds out about us."

"Don't forget there is a chance Hraghshu's manor has a teleportation chamber that Mammon can use to arrive instantaneously," Peniel said.

"Hm... What is the nearest town with a zone portal to Hraghshu's manor?" Jack asked.

"That will be Deciridge. It is around nine hours of travel by Pandora," Yvok answered.

"Then our first order of business is to sneak into Hraghshu's manor and find out if there is a teleportation chamber. If there is, we destroy it to prevent Mammon from using it. After that, we will take it that we have three hours to find Luna and get away from there."

"When will you depart?" Yvok asked.

Jack glanced at Pandora again before answering, "As you said, It's better if we make haste. We don't know what Hraghshu is doing to Luna. We will depart at once."

"That's great. Thank you very much for doing this for us."

Jack waved him off. "This is for my benefit as well. If this Hraghshu managed to enslave a nightmare, he might be able to travel to the upworld. Who knows what chaos he will cause."

Yvok nodded. "Before you leave, please come back with me to the village. I'll introduce you to two of the villagers I've sent to scout the place. They should be able to give you a clearer picture regarding the situation around Hraghshu's manor."

Yvok gave Sol and Fira a warm hug before he used his pipe to open the exit. Pandora said goodbye to the little ones in her own way. Probably also reassuring the two that they would bring their mother back soon.

The group went back to the village after coming out of the secret dimension. They saw the villagers gathering when they got near. Those villagers seemed agitated.

When one of the gathering satyrs saw Yvok, he came running.

"Yvok! Yvok!" He called out. Jack could hear the nervousness in his voice.

"What's the matter?" Yvok asked.

"It's... It's Tenka and Yrin. They have left for Hraghshu's manor. They said they will save Luna."

"Those fools...!" Yvok cursed after hearing it. "They completely go against my wish."

"Don't worry. I will catch up with them on Pandora and bring them back," Jack said.

Yvok turned to the satyr who had brought the news. "Did they take the hang gliders?" He asked.

"They did," the satyr answered.

"Hang gliders?" Jack asked.

"It's a tool," Peniel explained. "It's a consumable item that allows fast aerial movement covering large distances."

Yvok nodded. "The hang gliders we have are produced from a unique-grade recipe. Their speed rival even a nightmare's speed. Even if you leave now, they will still reach the destination a few minutes earlier."

"Then I have no time to listen to your scouts. I will study the place myself after I arrive there. The most important is to catch up to the two and stop them from doing anything stupid. It will be troublesome if I have to end up saving three individuals."

Yvok sighed. "I'm sorry to place this burden on you. It should have been our job as the nightmare's custodians. Instead, we are being useless."

"Don't say it like that. You have done a great job helping Pandora grow up. Without you, I wouldn't have met her. She had helped me greatly this past year. So, consider what I do now as my thanks for having taken care of Pandora."

Jack climbed up to Pandora before continuing, "I don't think that son of yours will listen if I tell him to return here, so I hope you don't mind if I give him a bit of whooping."

"You have my permission," Yvok said with a smile.

Jack opened his map to see the direction of the coordinates Yvok had given him earlier. He pointed in a direction and said to Pandora, "Ma'am."

Pandora didn't need Jack to ask her a second time. She dashed at once in the direction Jack pointed, leaving a trail of fire on the ground. Yvok looked at them disappear in the distance and prayed that all of them return safely.

Based on what Yvok said, it took one day to reach Hraghshu's manor. He hadn't had enough sleep since Pandora woke him up in the middle of the night and brought him to this underworld. So, he now lay on Pandora's body and shut his eyes.

As long as Pandora didn't will it, he would magically attach to her body and won't fall off. It was also unlikely for the journey to get interrupted since her aura scared off half the monsters and the other half which were resistant to her aura mostly unable to chase her. So, Jack slept without worry. All he had to bear was the discomfort of the constant movements of his makeshift bed, but he was too tired to be affected by that discomfort. He slept soundly as Pandora rushed at high speed.

He woke up after half a day of sleep. It was not a good experience sleeping atop a running horse. Luckily, his body was a game body that didn't truly need a rest. He didn't feel any aches from the wrong sleeping position. It was his mind that required rest. Now that his mind was rested, he felt refreshed.

Peniel informed him that they should have another ten hours before they reached their destination. Jack spent the time practicing mana sense and mana manipulation while riding.

The first few minutes he started practicing, he felt strange. The corrupted mana here was slightly different from the upworld mana. It felt heavier and stickier. It was easier to sense but harder to manipulate.

Due to the difference, Jack decided to focus on practicing mana manipulation. Practicing mana manipulation here could be compared to people lifting weights to train their muscles. He figured his mana manipulation should be stronger if he could get used to doing it here.

Chapter 1097: Stopping Tenka and Yrin

Jack continued practicing until Peniel told him that they were close to the coordinates. He was too focused on the training that he lost track of time. If Peniel didn't remind him, they might have arrived in Hraghshu's manor without realizing it. They were around one hour away.

They didn't see Tenka or Yrin on the way, which meant the two were still ahead of them.

Jack told Pandora to not run directly to the coordinates. They couldn't afford to barge in the manor just like that. They first had to covertly check if there was a teleportation chamber inside the manor.

When he saw some red dots at the edge of his radar in the direction they were heading. He instructed Pandora to stop. Pandora complied. Jack unsummoned her after dismounting. He suspected the red dots so close to the coordinates could be Hraghshu's goons patrolling the territory. It was better if the demons didn't spot another nightmare. On second thought, this could be a way to lure the guards out when he needed to sneak in. He might use this ploy later.

Jack went on foot from there. He approached the red dots silently to get a look at them. Suddenly, two white dots came out of nowhere and met the red dots. He did not doubt who these two white dots were. He forfeited his silent approach and ran at full speed toward those clustering dots.

As expected, when he got near, his dragon eyes that could see far objects identify Tenka and Yrin fighting a group of red-skinned demons.

Tenka fought at close quarters using a large cleaver and buckler while Yrin supported from behind with her spells. One of her spells created shadow tentacles that whipped the demons and damaged them. These tentacles also entangled the demons if they tried to come near Yrin.

The demon patrol consisted of seven demons. Even when their number was more, it was evident that Tenka and Yrin were winning.

The leader of the demon patrol realized this and shouted a command for two demons to retreat and warn the manor. Two demons immediately removed themselves from the battle and ran in the direction of the manor.

Tenka and Yrin tried to chase after the two but the remaining five forcefully blocked them.

Jack, who was approaching them, changed direction after seeing the two fleeing demons. He used Charge then followed by Shooting Dash, immediately putting the demons within his range after the two skills. He then executed Wind Slash and cast Myriad Venomous Vipers at the same time.

The wind slash damaged the demons and the fifteen vipers burst from the ground and entangled them, preventing them from fleeing.

While bound, Jack approached and finished the two demons. By that time, Tenka and Yrin had also vanquished the demons on their side. Jack came to them then.

"Go back," Jack said to them.

"Hmph! You are the one who should leave. This has nothing to do with you," Tenka returned.

Jack didn't speak another word, he instead lunged at Tenka who was surprised by Jack's action. He reflexively lifted his buckler when Jack used Flame Strike.

The impact sent Tenka flying back. He dropped to the ground and skidded a few meters before stopping. When he rose back up, his eyes showed disbelief. How could a level 66 outworlder send him flying back like that?

"You...," Yrin lifted her staff.

"Stay out of this, Yrin. You know your father doesn't want you coming here," Jack said while walking past her.

Tenka readied his cleaver and buckler at Jack who was walking toward him. "Hmph! Don't think you win just now, outworlder. You simply caught me by surprise!"

Tenka ran forward. His satyr's goat legs gave him a higher movement speed than other races. He tried using this movement speed to confuse Jack. While doing that, he swung his cleaver. Ten slashing lights came at Jack following the swing.

Jack lightly slashed. A straight line formed of light cut through all of Tenka's slashing lights, breaking them apart.

Tenka could feel the unnatural power from that slash, yet he also knew that it was not a skill.

"You can't beat me," Jack said after showing off his one-word slash. "You will fail if you force yourself to infiltrate the manor."

"Don't get cocky, outworlder! I'm higher level than you!" Tenka exclaimed and his body transformed.

"Demonization!" Peniel uttered.

Tenka's brown-skinned satyr's body enlarged and changed to a red-skinned demon's body. Two large bat wings grew on his back as his hands and hooves turned to claws.

His large cleaver also burst with dark flame. This skill was Infernal Flame, the opposite of Paladin's sacred flame.

"Die, outworlder!!" Tenka exclaimed.

Jack didn't back away from the intimidation. As Tenka's flaming cleaver came, Jack similarly transformed. His claw came forward and stopped Tenka's cleaver.

Tenka tried to pull his cleaver away but was unable to. Jack's dragon claw was clutching the cleaver tight. Tenka was confused. The infernal flame from his cleaver should have damaged Jack continuously as long as Jack was touching his cleaver, but no damage number appeared. Jack had manipulated the mana to encase his claw that was grabbing the cleaver, protecting the infernal flame from damaging him.

A humanoid dragon and a demon continued contesting strength as one tried to pull away while the other kept grabbing.

Yrin was hesitant. Should she interfere? More demon patrols might come by.

"I say it again. You can't beat me," Jack said.

"Shut up!" Tenka executed Shield Smash using the buckler in his left hand. It was a stronger version of Shield Bash, and also had a chance to cause Dizzy status.

Jack easily dodged the smash using Eight Diagram Illusory Steps. At the same time, he caught Tenka's arm that was holding the buckler. Utilizing the shield smash's momentum, Jack flipped Tenka upside down before slamming him into the ground.

Jack then used the burst attack of his sword art. Ninety-six instant slashes were unleashed, but none of them hit Tenka's body. Jack directed all the slashes and hit the ground beside Tenka.

Even though Tenka didn't receive the slashes, he could feel the power of those slashes. The corrupted mana in the underworld allowed for easier sensing. So, most rare elites in the underworld could also sense mana. Tenka understood if all those ninety-six slashes landed on his body, he would be heavily wounded.

Chapter 1098: Working Together

"Still want to continue?" Jack asked as Tenka stood back up.

Tenka looked at the slash marks on the ground. Each of them was deep.

Jack used mana manipulation to enhance the damage of his sword art. After training continuously all this time, his control of mana had been refined. His half-day training under a corrupted mana environment had pushed his mana manipulation to undergo a long overdue breakthrough. The damage produced by his mana manipulation had now increased.

Even though Tenka was still a rare elite, he understood the concept of mana manipulation. He knew that what Jack used just now was not a skill. He sensed the powerful mana accompanying each of Jack's slashes. He knew then that Jack's claim about he being unable to beat Jack was no empty boast.

To reinforce his point, Jack summoned Therras. The majestic beast stood beside him and stared at the two satyrs menacingly. Jack commanded Therras to stay still so it didn't attack Tenka who was considered hostile because of the fight just now.

Seeing the mythical-grade beast, the two satyrs became even more speechless. Therras had increased another level to level 63. Jack never stopped feeding it high-level pet food daily so it continued to gain exp points even if it was not summoned for battle.

"I admit I can't beat you, but I won't go back!" Tenka exclaimed.

Jack shook his head. Tenka was not so stubborn that he was not willing to admit defeat, but why did he still refuse to go back?

"Let me tell you, the reason your father doesn't want you involved in Luna's rescue is so that no one knows about the involvement of your village. Even if you successfully saved Luna, if any of you is sighted by the enemy, they will come to your village. You will just bring calamity to the others."

"We... We will make sure no one finds out," Tenka said.

"Really? Because if I didn't show up as I did, two demons would have made it back to the manor and alerted the demons inside. Unless you killed all the demons in that manor, someone will know about your involvement. Or do you think you can kill the two mythical grade bodyguards in that manor? You do know about those bodyguards, don't you?"

Tenka was silent. A frown creased his forehead, but he didn't show any sign of going back.

Yrin came forward then. "Mister Storm Wind, I'm sorry. We have to do this. This is our responsibility."

"Oh...?" Jack turned to Yrin. He thought that Yrin only came here because Tenka persuaded her. She seemed like an obedient child when Jack first met her.

"Calamity might befall our people if we were found out, but we also can't shy away from our role. If we do, then we don't have the right to be the custodians of the two little nightmares. If it is within our power, we have to see it through. Please don't send us back, but let us lend you our aid. I'm sure you are unfamiliar with this place. Your success chance will be better with our help than without."

Jack didn't deny having the locals' help on site would be much more helpful, but he had told Yvok that he would bring these two back. If something happened to them, or worse, their village got targeted by the underworld empire, he would feel very bad about it.

"Please! We will not go back even if you told us to," Yrin uttered. "We will go save Luna on our own. You will have to kill us if you want to stop us. It's either we do it separately or we work together."

Jack saw the determination in her eyes. He looked at Tenka and saw the same eyes. He sighed and said, "Fine! But you will have to listen to everything I say!"

Yrin and Tenka looked at one another before turning back to Jack and nodding their heads.

Jack unsummoned Therras and said to the two, "We need to survey this place first. I need to have a better look at the manor."

"We have already done that before you arrived," Yrin answered. "There is a high ground nearby where you can see the entire compound. Follow me."

Jack followed her. The three moved while Jack paid attention to his radar to make sure there were no more patrols nearby.

Yrin led him to a nearby hill with a rocky outcrop at its top. The three laid down atop that outcrop and looked down.

Jack saw a single large building in the distance. That must be Hraghshu's mansion. Around it was a ruined landscape. Traces of trees being cut down and the land being dug were evident. On that ruined landscape were many people who seemed to be working. They were cutting nearby trees and doing more digging. Some were using pickaxes to mine spots that Jack identified as ore deposits. There were lots of these ore deposits.

"That place is a hidden mining site," Peniel said. "As they dug deeper, they will find more ore deposits for mining."

"I see. That manor must have been built after they found this mining site. The manor was also a base of operation," Jack conjectured. "Those workers down there don't seem compliant."

Jack had seen several demon soldiers down there whipping the workers. The workers were also composed of different races. There were satyrs. There was a race that looked like lizardmen but was smaller and had darker scales, Peniel identified them as kobolds. Then another race whose appearance was small humanoids with toadlike faces, Peniel called this race Boggarts.

Peniel informed him that they were all considered the minor races of the underworld. Different from the upworld which had seven main races, the underworld only had one main race, the demons. All other races were considered minor and in most cases were slaves to the demon race.

Jack studied the place. Only one main road led to the entrance of the manor. All other routes required him to pass through the work site filled with workers and demon guards. He was most likely spotted whichever route he took.

"What exactly is your plan before I arrive?" Jack asked Yrin and Tenka.

"We plan to reduce the demon soldiers by taking out the patrols before going into the manor," Tenka said.

Jack shook his head. "Too slow. They can just replenish the demon soldiers by requesting reinforcement from the city. Hraghshu is the son of one of the kings of hell. I doubt he has problem requesting reinforcements if he finds some of his troops are missing."

"So, what do you propose?" Yrin asked.

Jack was silent as he continued studying the place.

Chapter 1099: Getting Information

"First, we need to find out more information," Jack finally said. He had been thinking about using his incorporeal state mana sense to scout the place, but the mansion which was the target was too far. If he got closer, he faced the risk of getting stumbled over by patrolling demons when he was out of his body. He needed a more traditional approach.

"Do you happen to know any of the satyrs that were working down there?" He asked Tenka and Yrin.

"I can't tell. It's too far away to see clearly," Tenka said.

"We did have some villagers missing," Yrin said. "Considering this place is not too far from our village, the missing ones may be among the captured here."

"Let's go down to have a better look," Jack proposed. Although his dragon eye allowed him to be able to have a good look at the satyrs down there, he couldn't describe every satyr's appearance. Not to mention all of them looked almost the same to him.

"Try to make as little noise as possible," Jack warned them. He was not worried about himself because of his ranger's silent step skill.

"Don't worry," Peniel told Jack. "Satyrs had a natural ability that is similar to ranger's silent step."

"I see. Good. But still, watch your steps and be aware of your surroundings," Jack said. "We will advance slowly. We go that way. I see more satyrs in that area."

The others went down with Jack on the lead. Although Jack could move faster, he adjusted his pace so his two companions didn't have to move too fast.

They hid behind a mound of soil from the ground that was dug nearby. They peeked out from there. Yrin and Tenka looked at the working satyrs while Jack watched the demon guard in charge of that section. When the guard was looking in their direction, he signaled Yrin and Tenka to hide.

They continued using that method while moving to get a look at the other sections. Luckily, Yrin finally identified two of the satyrs that were working there.

"Those are uncle Yokui and his son, Wotai," Yrin informed Jack. "They had been missing from the village for around two weeks. So, they have been captured and taken here."

Jack peeked out and looked at the two satyrs Yrin mentioned. He then looked at the demon guard. Luckily, only one guard was watching this area.

"Wait here," Jack commanded Yrin and Tenka. He didn't want the two to get identified by the captives here.

Jack rushed out when the demon guard was looking the other way. With his speed, he was already close to the guard when the captives around started gasping and making noises after sighting him.

The guard finally turned around after the commotion. Jack was running and casting at the same time. His Magic Bind spell was completed before the guard could react. He also used Sword of Light and Swords of the Brave back-to-back.

One crescent light and ten golden swords landed on the surprised demon guard. Jack followed with the burst attack of his sword art once arriving. The demon was just a level 55 special elite, so he was killed by the end of that burst attack.

Without wasting a second, Jack came to the two satyrs mentioned by Yrin. His mana sense identified unusual mana on their anklets. He then noticed that every worker wore the same anklet. Jack surmised those must be some kind of a shackle that kept the workers tethered to this place.

Jack slashed his sword and accurately struck the anklets without hurting the wearers. The anklets were not so sturdy. It broke after one slash. Jack immediately grabbed Yokui and Wotai and carried them while they were still confused. He had no problem carrying two satyrs with his strength.

Some of the other workers called out, asking Jack to free them as well, but Jack ignored them. The other guards would soon come after the commotion, he couldn't stay for long.

Jack summoned Pandora and then jumped onto her with the two satyrs on his shoulders. Pandora then rode away.

Jack had asked Yrin and Tenka to retreat to the rocky outcrop atop the hill and waited for him there. Pandora rode in another direction before Jack unsummoned her and then ran to the hill still carrying the two satyrs. If the guards came following Pandora's flaming trail, they would head in a different direction.

Arriving on the outcrop, Yokui and Wotai who was still confused finally saw familiar faces. They called Yrin and Tenka in relief. However, an outburst from Tenka caused them to freeze. They then realized Tenka's outburst wasn't directed at them.

"What did you do?!" Tenka shouted at Jack. "You let them see Pandora! The workers will surely tell the demons and this will make them search around for another nightmare. They might widen their search and come to our village."

"I did it intentionally. It is needed for my next plan to infiltrate the manor," Jack returned. "You will have to move your village away anyway after we rescue Luna. They will still come searching when that happens. The most important thing is that they don't identify you two, so they won't have a specific target. As long as all of you moved away, you should be fine."

Tenka contemplated after hearing Jack. He didn't consider what will happen after they saved Luna. No way the underworld empire would just stay idle if they succeeded in doing what they wanted to do here.

"Let's deal with the current issue first," Jack said and turned to the satyrs he had just rescued.

"Yokui and Wotai, is it?" Jack asked, to which the two nodded. "How long have you been forced to work down there?"

The older satyr made a pondering expression while the younger one said, "I... I think it's two weeks already. We're not sure how long we have been taken."

"It has been fifteen days since we last saw you two," Yrin informed. "What happened?"

"We are taken by the demons when we are...," Wotai stopped when Jack waved for him to stop.

"You can chat later. Right now, we don't have much time. We need to limit our discussion to only the essential information," Jack said. He then pointed to the mansion at the center of Hraghshu's manor.

"Are you allowed inside that building?"

Chapter 1100: Planning the Infiltration

"Ye... Yes... We rest inside there after our shift," Yokui answered.

"Which part of the building?" Jack asked

"The one at the right side of the main entrance. See the walls with many doors on the side. The rooms behind those doors have many bunk beds inside," Wotai said.

"Did you go to the other parts of that mansion?"

"No, we stay inside the rooms with bunk beds if we are not working outside."

"Do you know how many demon guards are inside the mansion?"

Yokui and Wotai looked at one another before Yokui answered with uncertainty, "A hundred... I think?"

'Same as what Yvok mentioned,' Jack thought. In this case, that number should not be far from the truth.

"Do you often see new demons? For example, one that you haven't seen the days before," Jack asked.

"Or demons that you often see, but never saw again in the following days."

Yokui and Wotai looked at each other again before Yokui answered, "I can't truly tell since most of the demons look alike."

But Wotai added, "However, I once overheard the demon guards talking about a demon mage being sent here during the first few days of our capture. Then a few days later, I saw that demon mage. I can tell because she wore a different attire than the other demons."

"Do you see her come in by land?" Jack asked.

Wotai shook his head.

"Maybe she rolled in when you two were resting inside the building?" Jack said.

"No, the satyrs in the other shift said that the demon mage also didn't come during their shift. We talked about it since there was nothing much to talk about. We were wondering how she suddenly appeared out of nowhere."

'This confirms the existence of a teleportation chamber inside the mansion,' Jack thought.

"Have you ever seen the Hell Baron who lives inside the mansion?" Jack asked.

Yokui and wotai shook their heads.

"Hm... Do you know where he lives inside the mansion?"

"We don't, but some of the satyrs who are in charge of cleaning the interior mentioned that some areas inside the mansion are forbidden. So, I guess one of those areas must be where the hell baron resided."

Jack's ears perked up after listening. "Can you tell me which parts of the mansion are forbidden?" He asked.

"I can only tell you what I heard. I can't be sure whether it's true or not," Wotai informed. "One of the forbidden parts that I heard of is the fourth floor of the mansion, which is also the top floor. Then the opposite end to the main entrance on the ground floor. The last one is on the left wing of the third floor."

"For reference, the place where we stayed is the right wing," Yokui added.

"Thank you very much. The two of you have been of great help," Jack said.

"You finish questioning them?" Yrin asked Jack.

Jack nodded.

"They sent a squad to make a search," Tenka, who had been monitoring the activity below, told them.

Jack crawled over and had a peek. He saw around ten demon soldiers going in the direction where he had ridden away on Pandora.

'Good. This confirmed the demon's interest in capturing a second nightmare,' Jack thought.

"Can the two of you return to Pilenus Village by yourselves?" Jack asked Yokui and Wotai.

The two nodded.

"Then go," Jack told them. "We still have things to do here. It's not safe for you to stay with us. That demon squad down there goes in another direction. You shouldn't encounter them by going in the village's direction."

"Thank you, sir, for saving us. We will not forget it."

Jack told them not to mention it and the two started running away.

"So, what's your plan?" Yrin asked Jack.

"I will explain it together with the others."

"The others?"

While Yrin was puzzled, Jack took out his king badge and summoned his royal agents. He called all five of them. Duke Alfredo and Jonathan stayed at the same level as he last saw them. After separating from Jack, the three rookies returned to Jeanny's arranged power-level teams. They had increased another level. Lindsey was level 51. Amy and Jonathan were level 47.

When the five appeared, they were bewildered when they found the place they were summoned to. Among the five, Duke Alfredo and Howard were the most surprised. This was because they could sense the difference in the atmosphere.

Howard was a mythical grade, so his sensitivity to mana was better than the others. As for Duke Alfredo, he was the most experienced and had dabbled in magic for a long time. He also joined Domon's training session for the kingdom soldiers. He had started to develop mana sense.

"Where is this place?" Alfredo asked after sensing the unusual mana around them.

"We are in the underworld," Jack answered.

"Un... Underworld...?"

"You are shitting us, right?" Jonathan asked.

When he saw Jack give him the 'I'm serious' expression, he said, "Damn it! I have said it before. There is never a dull moment with you, Your Majesty."

"Your Majesty?" Yrin asked.

"I am a king in one of the countries in the upworld," Jack told her. "You didn't notice my crown?"

"Your crown is different from the ones our kings here wore," Yrin replied.

"Okay, people. I got a plan and I need everyone's help," Jack addressed his royal agents. First, he explained the current situation to them. Afterward, he described his plan.

"You didn't make this arrangement to stop us from going inside the manor, did you?" Tenka asked after hearing about the plan. In the plan, Jack infiltrated the manor by himself.

"You promised to listen to my orders, didn't you? If you have a better plan, I'm all ears," Jack said.

"There is a high chance that there is a teleportation chamber inside that mansion. We need to destroy it before we go into a direct conflict with the hell baron, and we most likely will because I believe Luna will be where the hell baron is. We can't risk Mammon arriving while we are still here. To do that, we need to go in and find this teleportation chamber covertly. I have the highest damage value. I also have mythical-grade helpers in case I met the mythical-grade bodyguards inside the manor. Most of all, I believe I have better experience in infiltration missions."

The experience Jack mentioned was one he gained from playing stealth games, but they didn't need to know about that.

"All right... Let's go with your plan," Tenka said.