

World 1111

Chapter 1111: Leaving the Underworld

While Jack was thinking, Peniel asked him, "You know what you can get with this stone, right?"

Jack's thought was still on the main quest, so he didn't quite catch Peniel's meaning.

Seeing Jack's confused expression, she said, "This stone closes a portal. We got a portal in Themonium. We close that portal and we get..."

"The boundless cache!" Jack exclaimed while slapping his thigh.

"Yes! Let's go, let's go!" Jack said excitedly. With the boundless cache, he could increase Themisphere's pace of improvement. He was very eager to go back to the upworld now.

"Go where?" Jack heard Yvok's voice. The old satyr had returned.

"Oh, nothing. I'm just getting a little homesick," Jack said.

"Then we shouldn't make you wait longer. Our people are ready to move. I'm here to say goodbye," Yvok said. He then gave Jack a deep bow. "Thank you, very much, mister Storm Wind. Although we can't get Luna back, we gain the means that allow the two little nightmares to grow. That is the most important thing. For that, you have our utmost gratitude."

"I truly don't deserve it," Jack said. He still felt bad about failing to save Luna.

"I want to reward you, but I'm unsure what is the proper thing to give you," Yvok said.

"How about those hang gliders that Tenka and Yrin used?" Jack asked.

"Those gliders are precious to us. We no longer have a skilled blacksmith so we can't produce more. However, I can give you the recipe if you want."

"Oh? That is even better!" Jack uttered.

"Give me a moment," he said and took out a piece of paper and pen from his small bag and started scribbling. After he was done, he gave the paper to Jack. Jack received it and used his Inspect.

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Hang Glider recipe (Unique blacksmith recipe, for guild purposes only)

Allow the creation of a guild war tool: hang glider

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"Yes! Our first war tool!" Jack exclaimed.

War tools were a very rare find. Even now, in Themisphere, only two guilds had war tools. The war fires from Crowd of Sins and the Caltrops from Gluttonous Despot.

Jack stored the recipe. Yvok went to Tenka and Yrin. The three had some heartfelt conversation. Jack gave them space. Yvok also said goodbye to Pandora and the two little nightmares. Afterward, Yvok said to Jack, "We are ready."

Jack nodded. He climbed onto Pandora. Tenka and Yrin stood beside Sol and Fira. They formed a circle with Luna's power orb in the center.

"Mister Storm Wind. Please, take care of them for me," Yvok said.

"Don't worry, I will. You stay safe as well," Jack replied.

Pandora then started connecting with the power orb. The orb throbbed and its light intensified, turning into a small sun again. Flames then swirled from Pandora. These flames went to the orb and for a moment, they formed Luna's image. Luna's image looked affectionately at her two offspring. The two returned the gaze with a longing stare. The image then dispersed into flames again and flowed to Sol and Fira.

The flames blanketed them. They were as if wearing a layer of fiery suits.

Pandora neighed, seemingly guiding the two on what to do. Raging flames rose around all of them, circling them. The swirling flames became so dense that they couldn't see what was outside.

It went on for some time. They couldn't see outside, but Jack could sense the change around them, especially the mana. It turned lighter as time passed, less convoluted. So, when the raging flames around them dissipated, he already knew that they were in the upworld.

It was in the afternoon. The sun was still up in the sky. The two satyrs looked at the sky with mesmerized eyes. This was the first time they saw the blue sky, so Jack couldn't blame them.

"This... This is the upworld? So bright...," Tenka said.

"It's beautiful...," Yrin added.

The two nightmares also seemed excited. Luna's power orb was floating above them, continued nourishing them.

Jack opened his map to study the place they were at. Pandora helped them cross through to Thereath region, but where they ended up was random.

After studying his map, he pointed in a direction. "That way," He said. He was going to take them to Heavenly Citadel. He figured his guild headquarters would be the safest place for the satyrs and little nightmares to stay. He had sent Jeanny a short message informing her about the situation.

"It should be a few hours of travel," Jack said. "Can Sol and Fira run?"

"They can, but not as fast as adult nightmares," Yrin informed.

"We can carry them using our hang gliders," Tenka said. Though the hang gliders were precious stock, Yvok had given some to them.

"Let's do that. The faster we arrive, the better," Jack said.

Tenka and Yrin activated their hang gliders. They then carried the little nightmares using one hand and operated the gliders using the other. Jack climbed onto Pandora who flew with speed adjusting to the hang gliders.

While flying, Jack contacted Wilted Tree to satisfy his earlier curiosity.

"What do you want?" Wilted sent a reply.

"So unfriendly. As if you are unhappy to hear from me," Jack said.

"Cut the crap. Just get to the point. You always want to ask about something when you called."

"You are not wrong. I am wondering. When you people design Second World, do you include a main quest for the game?"

"Of course, we include one. Which RPG games don't have a main quest?"

"Okay. Mind telling me what's the main quest."

"As in any RPG game, the main quest is very long interconnecting quests. To summarize it. It's about the players' effort to prevent a cult that worships demons from unleashing the underworld force into the world. Failure to do so will result in the seven main countries being overrun by the underworld force, destroying everything in the process."

"What happens if that failure happens?" Jack asked.

"The game ends and everything is reset. Every player will then have to start from the beginning again."

Chapter 1112: The Missing Main Quest

Jack had heard a few times the natives mention the demonic cult. He at first thought that it was one of the cults of the bad Gods. But after rethinking, he had engaged Fear's cult a few times but no main quest ever popped up.

"So, why do I never hear anyone getting any main quest?" Jack asked Wilted.

"To be honest with you. I also wondered about it. The main quest should have been triggered for everyone a short time after they entered this world. But I am too occupied with stopping Master so I don't have the time to bother about this main quest anomaly. It is better this way. Otherwise, it will be more complex if we have to deal with Master and the demonic cult at the same time."

"So, where is this demonic cult you kept mentioning?" Jack asked.

"That's the thing. I never see any sign of them. It was as if they have been erased from this world's existence," Wilted answered.

"Is it the doing of your mysterious associate again? Like the one who installed the Monarch System without you knowing?"

"... I don't know," Wilted answered. "What I know is what should have been. This demonic cult should have been everywhere. Hidden inside the main cities of every country. Creating havoc to try to undo the sealing of underworld portals in the seven countries."

"Wait! Are you telling me all seven countries have an underworld portal in each of them?"

"Yes. One of the mid goals for players is to completely seal these underworld portals. Failure to do so will cause these seven underworld portals to break open when the main underworld portal is opened by the cult. This will cause the seven countries to become occupied by the demonic hordes pouring out of the portals in their countries. This prevents them from forming a joint effort in dealing with the main underworld force. Hence, increasing the failure chance for players to win the game.

"In the opposite scenario. If players successfully seal all the portals in the seven countries, this gives the seven countries a better chance of fighting the underworld's main force. If the underworld force is beaten back, the game proceeds to the final stage, where the seven countries unite and invade the underworld. Players will take charge in this invasion, getting access to the underworld in the process. This underworld can be considered as post-game content, giving players a new territory to play in."

Jack absorbed the information. Now, that did sound like a main quest of a game. Why was it removed from the game?

But this was fine as well. It would be a pity if this was a real game. But in the real world, this meant it was one less thing to worry about. Without the demonic cult, no one would disturb the process of portal sealing. Even if he left them alone, they would be sealed eventually.

"Why do you ask this, anyway?" Wilted asked.

"Oh, I'm just wondering. Since I've just gotten a Portal-closing Stone that mentioned the main quest," Jack answered.

"Portal-sealing stone? How the hell do you get that?" Wilted asked. "That stone can only be gotten from the underworld. It is supposed to happen within one of the mid-quests where players were sent to the underworld for a short period."

"Well. It's not strange then, because I did get it from the underworld," Jack answered.

"The underworld...? How the heck do you travel to the underworld?!"

"Using my steed."

"Your steed... The nightmare! That steed is supposed to only be attainable when players gained access to the underworld after their victory in driving the underworld force back. That steed allows players to travel between two worlds without the hassle of going back to the main portal. I am honestly very surprised when I first saw you ride that nightmare."

"In case you are wondering, I got the nightmare from the Valley of Tempus which you said was supposed to be one of your partner's secret sites," Jack informed. But then he remembered he found the nightmare after accessing a secret room that was not supposed to be found. He guessed no one was supposed to get the nightmare that was stashed there.

"Well, whatever. Are you done? I already have enough headaches dealing with Master here without having to think about the anomalies surrounding you. Master is proving to be a more efficient ruler compared to the previous rebel prince. You have heard of him becoming the ruler of Liguritutum, haven't you?"

"I have," Jack replied. Jeanny had sent him a message concerning the news once their guild members learned of it. He said to Wilted, "I wish you luck."

"I need more than luck," Wilted replied and ended the message.

Jack thought about what he had learned. It just added more questions than answers. He already had enough unresolved matters without adding another one. But he didn't let them bother him too much. He would just deal with them as they came. He didn't let something that he couldn't do anything about to stress his mind.

He spent the rest of their traveling time training mana manipulation. He felt his mana manipulation was stronger after doing it in the underworld.

After a couple of hours, the outline of Heavenly Citadel was seen. Jack had a feeling the headquarters had expanded again. More structures were seen. Out of curiosity, he opened his guild page and saw that their guild level was now level 5. They could now have 10,000 members.

Many of those opened vacancies had been filled up. Players were queueing to join the number one guild in the country. Everlasting Heavenly Legends was never short on applicants.

Jack and the others landed on a balcony on the rooftop where the Hero Altar was located. He didn't want too many people to see the satyrs and the little nightmares.

Seeing the Hero Altar, he wondered if they could recruit another hero and guild guardian now that the guild leveled up.

Peniel answered that level 5 guild allowed the Hero Altar to be leveled up to level 3. Thus, they could recruit another guild hero. But for guild guardians, they could only build the structure that housed another guild guardian after they became a level 6 guild.

Chapter 1113: Space-Time Chamber

Jack led the group to the entrance of the time chamber. Only core members were allowed access to the time chamber, so the existence of the two little nightmares won't be exposed to too many people.

Additionally, this time chamber let Sol and Fira experience ten times the time outside. Peniel ensured Jack that although the time chamber didn't affect the player's age system, real-life aging was still affected by the chamber. This meant that the little nightmares would grow at a pace ten times than they would have normally outside.

The time chamber also had dense mana due to the installed mana-gathering stone. This dense mana gave any native a good growing environment.

Pandora followed them. She didn't allow herself to get unsummoned until she was sure her sister's two offspring were properly settled.

Jeanny was already waiting for them at the time chamber's entrance. Jack introduced her to everyone. She was especially fond of Sol and Fira. She thought they were very cute.

"I cleared everyone out of the chamber," Jeanny said. "I don't want the little ones to get spooked if there are too many people when they enter."

"Thank you," Jack said.

Everyone then entered the time chamber.

Once they were inside, Jack and Jeanny heard a system notification, "Detects an upgrade item. Do you wish the chamber to fuse with the item?"

Both of them were confused at first before they realized what item the system was referring to. Above Luna's power orb, which had also followed them inside, was a holographic box. It contained yes and no options.

"Hey, Peniel. Are you aware of this?" Jack asked.

"That power orb is a modified item. I have no idea what it can do," Peniel replied.

Still, that item was not theirs. He couldn't decide about it. The orb would most likely disappear after fusing with the chamber. The same as the previous mana-gathering stone. So, Jack turned to Pandora.

Since she was linked to Jack, she also heard the system notification. She seemed to have a better idea about what the orb could do. She asked Jack through Peniel, "Will Sol and Fira be safe here?"

"It's the safest place I can think of," Jack answered.

Pandora asked another question, "Do you promise that Sol and Fira can stay here until they reach adulthood?"

"You have my words," Jack uttered. "Anyone who dares to chase them away or bully them will have to deal with me."

"I give you my words as well," Jeanny said.

"All right. Let my sister's essence fuse with this place. It will provide a better growing environment for them," Peniel translated Pandora's answer.

Since they had gotten permission, Jack clicked the yes button in the holographic box.

Once he did, the power orb burst into tiny particles that spread out. All of a sudden, everyone felt a loss of equilibrium. At first, they thought something was wrong with their vision because they saw the chamber getting stretched. But then they noticed the people they were with looked the same, only the room that was changing.

When the stretching stopped, they discerned that the space they were in had now become much larger than the previous.

"This...," Everyone was speechless.

"It's spatial distortion!" Peniel uttered.

"Like the dome where the underworld portal is?" Jack asked.

"Yes. The orb contained corrupted mana. It must have interacted with the regular mana and created this effect like the phenomena inside the dome. Alternately, a nightmare's energy contains the power to manipulate space. That can also cause this space alteration."

"This wide space is better for Sol and Fira to live in," Tenka said. "I was originally worried since nightmares need to run regularly to stay healthy. That previous space didn't give much space for that. Now, this is more appropriate."

"Even the name has changed," Jeanny said. She was checking the description via her guild page. "It is now called Space-Time Chamber. The size is around twenty times from before. We can easily fit more than two thousand members inside. With this size, we no longer need to regulate this chamber usage. Every core member can freely use it."

"That's great," Jack said. "But do remind them to not disturb our guests, or else they will have to answer to me."

Jeanny chuckled. "I'm sure they will behave after listening to that threat."

"It's not just the size that changed, you know," Jack said. The mana inside this chamber had become even denser. There was a sense of heaviness that was characteristic of the corrupted mana. Ones who trained mana manipulation here would have better progress than training elsewhere.

The two little nightmares were running excitedly around the place.

"Thank you, mister Storm Wind. We truly can't express our gratitude," Yrin said.

"Please, call me Jack," Jack said to her. "That's my real name."

While Sol and Fira were running, an image of a fiery horse accompanied them. It was Luna's image. This chamber gave her essence enough power to manifest her spirit so that she could watch over her two little offspring while they were inside here.

"Would you look at that," Jack said, smiling in relief as he watched Sol and Fira running alongside their mother's spirit

Pandora came beside Jack and neighed softly. She then burst into fire and transformed into a steed whistle that returned to Jack's hand.

"She said thank you," Peniel translated.

Jack studied the red whistle in his hand.

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Pandora Whistle (Legendary steed)

Summon an augmented Nightmare steed

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At the same time, he heard a notification, "Congratulations on completing the steed's quest, Help Pandora. Receive rewards of 5,000,000 exp, 60 gold coins, and 2,000 mana cores. Pandora will now be your permanent steed."

'Yes!' Jack exclaimed within. At first, he thought he failed this quest because he was unable to save Luna. If so, then he had to look for a new steed after one month.

The exp points from this quest completion combined with the demons killed by his minions around Hraghshu's manor had increased his Brave Swordmaster and Beast Monarch by one level. His Brave Swordmaster was now level 67 and his Beast Monarch was level 66.

Jack and Jeanny spoke a bit longer with Tenka and Yrin. Jeanny told them if they needed anything, they could just tell the core members who entered this chamber. Or they could also go directly to the guild hall to look for her. She had set so the two were permitted into the hall.

Jack told the satyrs he would most likely not be around much, but he would check on them from time to time if he was in this headquarters.

Chapter 1114: Guild Guardians' Growth

Coming out of the space-time chamber, Jack handed the level-down pill to Jeanny. Jeanny was both excited and morose at the same time. This level-down pill provided another avenue for strengthening their members, but this also meant another item had been added to the list of items to be copied. At this rate, no number of mana cores would be sufficient.

"Aren't you going to donate some mana cores?" Jeanny asked.

"Sorry, I also have an urgent need for these cores," Jack said apologetically. "Speaking of which, have you copied that item I requested?"

"Yes, here. I swear, there was never an end to your need," Jeanny said and handed him a Pill of Growth.

Jack wanted to give this pill to Laurent. The high priest had agreed to become Jack's royal agent, but even though Laurent's level was high, he was only a special elite. So, Jack wanted to help him increase his grade.

After storing the pill, Jack smiled wryly at Jeanny and said, "You might want to scold me, but I have another item needed copying."

"Another?!" Jeanny uttered. her tone was close to screaming, causing Jack to wince.

In his hand was the Portal-closing Stone. He had heard from Wilted that a demonic portal existed in all seven main countries. If he wanted to shut all these portals, he needed seven of these stones. Although Wilted said that the demonic cult's existence was seemingly no more, the portals existed and the underworld empire was real. If some unfortunate accident happened and one of the portals failed, the force from the underworld might pour out and cause chaos.

Peniel, upon seeing Jack's request, said, "Um, I know I said the Book of Creation can copy everything except for artifact, but there is one more item classification that it cannot copy."

"Oh? And what is that," Jack asked.

"Quest items," Peniel answered.

Jeanny had used Inspect on the stone in Jack's hand. Upon hearing Peniel's words, she heaved a relieved breath. "Well, it's unfortunate that I can't help you with this stone," she said.

"You don't need to sound so gleeful," Jack said to her.

Jack said goodbye to Jeanny. But before he left the headquarters, he visited the guild hall. Tip and Captain Whitebeard were there.

Jack greeted the little mouse before handing the Hang Glider recipe to Tip, who accepted it happily.

"How is the dragon turtle doing?" Jack asked.

"His name is Gumeru," Tip answered.

"Who named him?" Jack asked. The name reminded him of the famous Kaiju movies he used to watch when he was a kid.

"Who else, the girl band, of course," Tip answered. "If you come earlier this morning, you would have been able to see them in action. They were as if having two children now."

"So, has the newest child grown up?"

"Of course not, it's not even one month yet. But considering we've just installed a mana site, Gumeru's improvement should significantly escalate."

"Mana site? Do you mean the fire mana site John gained when he captured the dragon turtle?" Jack asked. He had read the report, so he knew what transpired during the mission.

"No. That fire mana site is more suitable for Penny," Tip said.

As Tip spoke, he operated the command platform and summoned the image of Sky Garden Peak, where Penny resided. Above the entrance to the cave beside the waterfall, Jack saw a glowing red orb. This orb constantly released fire energy. Penny was seen resting in the cave near the entrance, enjoying the fire energy washing over her, as if she was sunbathing.

"She had an affinity to the fire element," Tip said, summoning her info. She is level 65 now. "Any elemental mana site is beneficial to a monster's growth. But by using a mana site corresponding to the monster's affinity, the growth rate will be faster. In Penny's case, this fire mana site combined with the girls' care, her rate of improvement should not be lower than expert players."

"That's good," Jack said. "But you mentioned before that Gumeru also had a mana site installed?"

"That's right. Gumeru's affinity is the ice element. Ever since you gave John the position of royal advisor, he had used his privilege to utilize the kingdom's information network. It so happened that he found rumors of several places that might have an ice mana site. We have formed a few squads of players armed with a mana orb to each of these places. One of them yielded a result."

Tip now switched the image to a holographic image showing a cave filled with water. It was the Undersea Cave, the structure they had built to house an aquatic-type guild guardian. At the center of this cave was a large blue glowing orb, which constantly released ice energy. An unnaturally large turtle shell decked with dorsal ridges lay beside this glowing orb.

"Jet and his team procured this ice mana site on a snowy mountain in the Republic of Palgrost," Tip informed. "The ice mana site they found contained even more concentrated mana compared to the fire mana site John found, hence this ice orb you see is bigger than the one on Penny's lair. With this ice mana site, Gumeru's development would be even faster than Penny's. I reckon in less than one week, Gumeru should reach adulthood."

"He has better be," Jack said. "Gumeru has a lot of levels to catch up."

"Well, I see you have everything under control. Good job! This place will depend on you now that John rarely comes here," Jack said and gave Tip a pat on the back.

When Jack was about to leave, Bowler and The Man rushed in.

"Hey! I hear you brought two little nightmares here," Bowler said.

"Nightmares?! There are nightmares here?" Captain Whitebeard uttered after hearing it.

"Yeah. They settled inside the time chamber. Don't go...," Jack wanted to say don't go disturb the nightmares unnecessarily, but the two clowns had rushed away once they heard the location.

"Wait for me!" Captain Whitebeard also rushed out following them.

Jack didn't chase after them. He had many matters to attend to. He had no choice but to send his warning via messages. He told the two if they made their guests uncomfortable, he was going to whip their asses.

From Heavenly Citadel, Jack teleported to Themonium. He visited Diana and informed him about his purpose. Diana was visibly ecstatic. If the demonic portal under the city was closed, she could divert lots of manpower elsewhere.

Chapter 1115: Closing the Demonic Portal

Jack and Diana went directly to the underground ruin under Malva's private warehouse. When Severus saw Jack again, he was surprised but not as unpleasant as the first time they met.

"Your Majesty, what brings you here?" Severus asked.

"Good Severus, I'm here to finally relieve you from this never-ending task," Jack announced.

"Haha, Your Majesty truly likes to joke."

"No, seriously. I'm here to take back the Boundless Cache for the kingdom."

Severus gave Jack an exasperated expression. "Your Majesty, you do know that we only have one artifact powering the rune diagram now, right? If you take the Boundless Cache, we won't be able to..."

Severus stopped when Jack showed him the Portal-closing Stone. His eyes were wide.

"This... How do you come to the possession of this stone?! Our faction's archive said that this stone can only be produced in the underworld."

"Hehe. I got it from the underworld, of course," Jack answered with a grin.

"You... You get it from the underworld...?" Severus couldn't tell if Jack was joking.

"There is no time to waste. Severus, open the dome! It's time we shut this portal for good!" Jack exclaimed.

Although Severus found it hard to believe, he couldn't deny the stone in Jack's hand was authentic.

"We still need to prepare in case there are strong demons behind the dome," Severus said.

Diana was ready. Behind her was a platoon of elite soldiers with Dimitri leading. Jack also summoned all his royal agents, Arlcard, Therras, and his spirit weapon.

Severus informed the mages around the dome to be ready for combat. This time, they won't only open a small gap in the dome. They would open the entire dome, so there was no need to limit the combatant.

Under Diana's instruction, the platoon encircled the dome with a battle-ready pose.

"Is everyone ready?" Severus asked.

"Tear the dome down," Jack ordered.

Severus did as Jack instructed. He and the other mages then retreated to behind the soldiers, ready to cast their spells. The dome, after losing its power supply, started dissolving. It started from the top and slowly diffused downward.

When the dome was completely gone, the soldiers were confused since they saw no enemy. They had the same reaction as Jonathan when he last entered the dome. They didn't have mana sense so they weren't aware of the hundreds of demons staying inert and being invisible.

"Stay alert!" Dimitri warned. He was with Jack when they first entered the dome, so he was aware.

"I'll land the first strike!" Jack exclaimed and used the Judgement of Past Kings.

The second Thenodeep's great flood hit, the demons around the portal turned visible. The soldiers were surprised by the reveal.

Their surprise lasted only an instant. Those with ranged abilities sent their attacks at once. Severus and the mages also cast their spells, adding the damage output.

As everyone attacked, a roar was heard and a winged demon jumped out from the horde. It had a long neck and a serpent head. It was a level 60 mythical-grade demon.

Arlcard had sensed this mythical-grade existence. Once the demon jumped out, Arlcard turned into a shadow. The shadow slammed into the demon mid-flight. An enormous Dark Lord's Sword then materialized from above. It impaled this serpent-head demon and nailed it to the ground.

Duke Alfredo then cast Pyramid Prison and locked the serpent-head demon in place. Arlcard and Therras joined forces and entered the prison. They bullied the trapped mythical demon while the others wiped out the demons outside with incredible efficiency.

Jack rushed forward after the Judgement of Past Kings ended. There were still some demons left but he didn't wait until all the demons were wiped out. There could be another archdemon waiting behind the portal. He didn't want to risk it claiming the corrupted mana freed from the slain demons.

His royal agents followed him and helped him open the way. Diana, upon seeing Jack rushing forward, also ordered the platoon to press forward.

After Jack was around five meters from the portal, the stone in his hand finally reacted. An interface appeared saying it detected a demonic portal. It asked whether Jack wanted to use the stone to close the portal. Jack agreed without hesitation.

The stone shone a bright red before bursting apart into countless red stars. These red stars then rushed into the portal. A soft red glow enveloped the portal. With each star entering the portal, this red glow intensified and slowly shrunk the portal.

When all the red stars were gone, the portal was pressed to the extent that it was only a narrow slit in the air.

Jack felt a powerful throb from the portal before it completely vanished. He then sensed it no more. The demonic portal was finally gone.

Jack heard a system notification then, "Congratulations to have closed the demonic portal in Themisphere. Receive rewards of 6,000,000 exp, 100 gold coins, 3,000 mana cores, and 250,000 merit points."

"Wow! Even though I don't have a quest for closing this portal, I still got rewards from the system," Jack remarked.

Peniel also had no idea about this. Jack surmised that maybe the closing of this portal was supposed to be part of the main quest. Even when he didn't go through the proper channel, the system still granted him the rewards.

The exp point leveled up his Time Sage to level 67. The number of gold coins and mana cores generated was also generous, but what excited him the most was the merit points. It was more than double what he got from perfectly solving an affair.

These merit points pushed his Sovereign level to level 6, acquiring 10 ruling power. He could now send Laurent an invitation to be his royal agent.

They finished the few remaining demons. The mythical serpent-head demon dropped a few things. Jack didn't use his Runestone of Luck when Arlcard finished the demon because he was still absorbed by the notification at the time.

The mythical demon dropped coins, mana cores, two gemstones, and some equipment. The equipment was nothing to speak of, the highest grade dropped was only super rare. What Jack was interested in was the gemstones. A unique emerald and super rare amethyst.

Jack used the super rare amethyst on his runestone of luck and the unique emerald on his runestone of marching. Unfortunately, the elemental energy was not enough to upgrade the two runestones. Both runestones were still far from upgrading.

Chapter 1116: Using the Boundless Cache

From the battles in the underworld and during the portal closing in Themonium, some of Jack's royal agents increased in level.

Jonathan increased to level 62. Lindsey was level 53. Amy and Howard were now level 50. The three rookies could be considered full-fledged soldiers now.

Arlcard, Therras, and Duke Alfredo didn't increase any level. They were unlike Jack, they didn't get the bonus exp points from other soldiers' kills.

Jack unsummoned his minions and came to where the light pillar used to be. The light was gone now. A large ball sat on the ground. When Jack reached for the ball, the rune diagram under it flared. Jack sensed the energy from the diagram checking him out. The energy was soon gone.

Jack picked up the ball without a problem.

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Boundless Cache (Legendary Artifact)

Reduces the upkeep cost of the country's buildings and units by 20%.

Generates 100,000 gold coins, 20,000 mana, and 5 ruling points every week

Restriction: Only effective if owned by a country's ruler

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After storing the artifact in his inventory, Jack thanked Diana, Severus, and all the soldiers and mages who had helped. He gave a short speech emphasizing how important the deed they had done today was. They had closed a potential disaster in their kingdom and everyone deserved rewards.

He took out 300 gold coins from his inventory and gave them to Diana and Severus, asking them to share the coins with the soldiers and mages. Since the monarch system couldn't let him give coins to the lower-level soldiers, he had to do this manually. The drawback was he had to use his private coins.

Severus was unwilling at first because he was a member of a different faction. Accepting coins from Jack was inappropriate. But after some persuasion, with Jack reminding Severus that Jack was also an Order of Magi member, Severus finally accepted.

Jack asked Severus if he was interested in joining the Themisphere kingdom faction since his task was over. Severus politely turned down the offer. He said that he wanted to focus on studying magic in the Order of Magi. He was not interested in power struggles in any form.

Jack left Diana to settle the remaining matters. He used the zone portal to teleport to Thereath.

The sun started to set when he came out of Thereath's portal. He visited Amy's bakery and restaurant first to pick up his profit, replenishing the coins he had used to award the soldiers and mages earlier.

He had a short chat with Ellie, Bill, and Samantha. Samantha again asked about Amy. Jack told her not to worry. He informed her of Amy's improvement. Jack could see the pride in Samantha's eyes. Jack felt the same too.

He returned to the palace afterward. Duke Alfredo had returned earlier when Jack unsummoned him. Jack asked him to bring Laurent to the throne room. Laurent had been staying at the palace. Robinson who came back with Laurent had joined the army as he promised Jack. He had been assigned under Armstrong. Armstrong was pleased for getting a new high-level combatant.

Jack saw Laurent, Alfredo, and Duchess Isabelle when he entered the throne room. John was unsurprisingly there as well. He was level 61.

"I thought you are going to stay at level 59 because of being too busy playing with this monarch system," Jack said and sat on the throne. The screens that were in front of John were automatically shifted to Jack's front. John rolled his eyes at Jack for this interruption.

"Remember to use the mass pay," John said to him.

"That's why I come back here," Jack said. "I got something else that you should see."

Jack took out the Boundless Cache. John sensed the item's unusual aura. After using his Inspect, he blurted, "Good lord! Where do you find this thing?"

"This is originally our country's national treasure. Rather than find, it's more appropriate to say I bring it home."

"It's great to finally see this national treasure returns to us," Isabelle said.

An interface appeared when Jack took out the artifact. The interface informed Jack that the first generated resources were ready for retrieval. A button for retrieval was there if Jack wished to do so.

Jack clicked the button and studied the Country Overview screen. The kingdom coffer had dropped to almost one and a half million gold coins since John continued to use the coins for constructing buildings around the country. The number on the screen increased by one hundred thousand after Jack click the Boundless Cache's retrieval button.

The kingdom mana also increased. Jack himself received 5 ruling powers. His ruling power was now at 90 points.

"The total coin expense and total mana expense have been reduced," John pointed at the numbers on the screen. "This meant our monthly income had increased by twenty percent."

"Good. This meant we can spend more on building our force," Jack remarked.

"I've assigned towns to focus on building structures that supported the economy. This is better rather than just focusing on military effort," John said.

"I trust your judgment. Do as you see fit," Jack said.

"As you should," John replied, which earned him Jack's annoyed glare.

"Go to the City Overview. There should be a new building that is previously unavailable," Peniel said.

"Wait, let me finish the mass pay command first," Jack said. He was already in the middle of the process. He chose the 300 gold coins option. 170,100 gold coins were transferred to the kingdom's officials, increasing their loyalty. Jack didn't forget to equip the title, Rightful Themisphere King, to boost loyalty increase.

If he wished to do this mass pay every week, the weekly coin income from the Boundless Cache wasn't enough to cover it. But he figured this was not something that continue forever. Once the officers' loyalties increased above 80 points, he supposed that should be safe enough. Currently, except for a few officials, most of the previous worst ones were nearing 70 loyalty points.

Peniel informed him that the higher one loyalty was, the fewer points they increased using the pay function. Nearing 90 points, the loyalty won't even increase anymore with the pay function. A personal approach was needed to further increase the officers' loyalty.

But she agreed that officers with 80 loyalty points were good enough already. They won't pointlessly die for Jack, but they would listen to most of Jack's commands and perform them earnestly.

Chapter 1117: Ancient Beacon Tower

Jack didn't immediately go to the City Overview as Peniel asked. He first accessed the Royal Guards Overview and sent a royal agent invitation to Laurent. Laurent accepted the invitation and expressed his gratitude to Jack for the honor.

Jack proceeded to give him the Pill of Growth. Laurent didn't expect such an immediate gift the minute he became a royal agent. He bowed and thanked Jack for the gift. He used the pill and his special elite grade improved to rare elite. He was now a level 70 rare elite, close to Duke Alfredo's power level.

Alfredo congratulated him for the upgrade.

Laurent's base equipment was already decent, so Jack didn't make any changes.

Jack studied Laurent's spell traits and affinities. Laurent's spell traits were Arcane, restore, Enchant, Manipulate, and Boundary. His affinities were wind and light.

Jack installed two spells onto Laurent. The first was Telekinesis, the same as Alfredo. Laurent was a level 70 and had the Manipulate spell trait, so he had no problem using the spell. The second spell was Chained Healing. This spell healed the first target by 10,000 HP. The spell then jumped to nearby allies with less healing. It could jump up to ten targets. The spell had a short 10 seconds cooldown.

After finishing with Laurent, Jack opened the Foreign Overview. He saw that their relationship with Verremor had improved from hostile to neutral. There was even a message that they had received a gift of 50,000 gold coins from Verremor. But many officers considered this a small part of war remuneration instead of a gift, so they weren't excited about it. Many still viewed Verremor as an enemy.

Jack asked John if he had dealt with the orc prisoner matter. John said that all orc prisoners had been returned to Verremor. Many of the human prisoners had also arrived in Themisphere.

About the request for an embassy Jack had sent to the Republic of Palgrost, it had been denied. It was as Peniel said, it was not easy.

Jack didn't do anything about foreign matters except send a thank you message to the Grand Chief of Verremor and send him a request to establish a trade route.

It might be difficult for the two races to trade with one another so soon, the relationship stated in the monarch system was also only neutral. Still, he thought he had to take the first step. The grand chief also seemed friendly enough, but Kabaka might need to convince his officers if this trade route was to be approved. If it happened, it could help the two races to start interacting and burying their hatchets.

Jack then opened the City Overview to check the new building Peniel mentioned. Considering that Peniel said the new building was previously unavailable, it should be a special building. So, Jack scrolled down to the bottom of the list. He saw a green-color building name down there.

"A wonder building?" Jack said. Remembering the World Peace Garden that had been built, its name was also green. This new building was called Ancient Beacon Tower

*

Ancient Beacon Tower (Wonder building)

Houses 5,000 level 90 ancient champions (4989 rare elite, 10 mythical, 1 eternal). Not part of the kingdom's army, can't be promoted into official positions.

These 5,000 ancient champions will actively defend the city if the city is attacked, but can only be commanded as a regiment during war campaigns against the underworld force.

When an ancient champion is killed, it will come back to life after 30 days inside the tower.

Allows 1% of the kingdom army to register to become the special unit: Ancient Champion

Increases the overall Security in the country.

Construction cost: 30,000 gold coins, 100,000 mana, 10,000 lumbers, 10,000 minerals.

Construction time: 50 days.

Upkeep: 50,000 mana/month

Requirement: No demonic portal within the country.

*

"Level 90... Almost five thousand rare elites... With ten mythical and one eternal...? This... This regiment is insane...," Jack uttered. "With this regiment, no one will be able to conquer Thereath. We no longer need a country guardian to protect our capital."

"But other than for the defense of this capital, they are practically useless for other campaigns. Since the main quest has been removed, there will be no confrontation against the underworld force," John said. Jack had informed John about what he had learned of the main quest.

"Yes. I guessed this building is more geared toward the main quest, but it still has other benefits. It increases the overall security and we got access to a new special unit." Jack turned to Peniel and asked, "We can only turn 10% of our kingdom army into special units. With this Ancient Beacon Tower, does it mean that our limit increases to 11%?"

"That's correct," Peniel confirmed. "Some later research in the Military path can also increase the percentage further."

"No demonic portal. So, this Wonder Building could be built because I closed the portal in Themonium," Jack remarked after reading the requirement to build this Ancient Beacon Tower.

"That's right," Peniel confirmed. "Since this is a Wonder Building, once you build it, no other country can build another Ancient Beacon Tower even if they close the demonic portal in their countries. You can view this as a secret reward for being the first one to close the demonic portal."

"The mana upkeep is very high, but we can still afford it," Jack remarked. "Let's put this building as a priority."

"All right, I will build this tower once the current construction is finished," John said.

"You've better build it now," Peniel said. "Ancient Champion is a very powerful unit. 1% from your current kingdom army meant you can have around 30,000 ancient champions. But it takes time to reach that number because soldiers will have to manually apply for the transformation and they will have to pass a test given by the Ancient Beacon Tower. So, the sooner you have this building up and running, the sooner you get this special unit among your army."

"Well, I guess it is time for my ruling power to work its magic then," Jack said and opened his sovereign status in the country overview screen. "Hey, I got a new option for using my ruling power."

*

Enforced Tax

Generates 30,000 gold coins from Megalopolises, 10,000 gold coins from Metropolises, 5,000 gold coins from cities, 2,000 gold coins from towns, and 500 gold coins from villages.

Greatly reduce Happiness throughout the country

Cost: 10 ruling power

Cooldown: 1 week

*

"You can get 193,000 gold coins if you use this power," John said when Jack was still calculating. "It even only cost 10 ruling powers."

"But it greatly reduces happiness," Jack said.

"Yes, it will be a lot harder to increase happiness if it goes down. You'll just invite a revolt if you keep on using this power," Peniel said. "Only use it if you truly need the coins."

Jack hoped it didn't have to come to that. He used the option to hasten construction in Thereath.

"Choose the Colosseum," John said. Colosseum was the special building he put into construction when Jack departed to Verremor. There were still 17 days left for its construction time.

Jack agreed. He spent 2 ruling power and the colosseum was completed. He then started the construction of the Ancient Beacon Tower and used 5 ruling powers to immediately complete it. From the city map, the tower stood at the edge of the noble district.

Jack left his throne and ran to the royal balcony by the side of the throne room. He went outside and immediately caught sight of the magnificent tall tower. It was many times higher than the rest of the buildings in the capital. At its top was a large shining orb that glowed brightly. Since it was evening, the glow was very eye-catching. It was like a beacon of hope, encouraging those who saw its light.

Chapter 1118: Arcane Forge

Jack continued standing there on the balcony and admired the view of the Ancient Beacon Tower. The others stayed there with him.

"By the way, since you are back. I need to inform you that we have a guest," John said after a while.

"Just collect them into the monthly visit. I will meet them then," Jack said.

"This one is a bit special. He insists on staying here and demands to be notified the minute you are back."

"So pushy. Who is this guest?" Jack asked.

"The guest is a representative from Hydrurond Dominion," Isabelle said. "He might have gotten the news by now that Your Majesty is back in the palace. I'm sure he will demand an audience tomorrow morning."

"Do you know what he wants?" Jack asked. He didn't get any reply from Hydrurond, whether from the gift or the message he sent. Other countries had replied with congratulation on his ascension. Perhaps this Hydrurond diplomat wanted to congratulate him in person?

"He refused to say," Isabelle answered.

"I don't like his attitude from the first time I saw him," John said.

"I doubt you like anyone's attitude," Jack said.

"The Hydrurond representative has almost gotten into a big quarrel with our royal advisor at that time," Isabelle reported.

"Yeah. If Thaergood hadn't interfered and persuaded him to leave, I would have called the guards and put his pompous ass in jail," John said.

"Are you trying to make us an enemy to another main country?" Jack shook his head. "Anyway, I'll be leaving again tomorrow morning. If he is so urgent, then he won't mind meeting me this late. Call him over, then."

"Yes, Your Majesty," Isabelle called one of the standby guards and sent him to fetch Thaergood and the Hydrurond diplomat.

Jack took in the view a few more seconds before heading back to the throne room. He sat on his throne and checked the monarch system while waiting.

John gave him a short report about what had been built while Jack was gone. He also told Jack about his plan for the future. As he mentioned before, he would focus the towns on building their economy. For villages, he would focus on population growth. If these villages could develop into towns, they could provide the country with a better economic boost.

He would still focus on military buildings for cities and metropolises, except Thereath. For Thereath, he wanted to focus on population growth, the same as villages. The reason was that Thereath was very close to becoming a Megalopolis. If that happened, Thereath would be the first megalopolis in this world.

John had checked the other countries using Isabelle's information network, the largest cities in the other countries were behind Thereath in terms of population counts. John wanted to capitalize on this advantage.

Jack approved of his plan and told him to proceed.

For research, John said he read about the tech trees in the palace's library. It didn't have detailed information about all the techs that could be researched, but it did mention that civil path had techs that allowed them to process orichalcum ore. Once this tech was learned, they could process orichalcum ores to upgrade their soldiers, increasing their power. Since they had an orichalcum mine as one of their special resources, they could utilize these ores once they learned the tech.

Peniel informed them that it was true that the civil path had that tech, but that tech gave their blacksmiths the skill to process orichalcum ores, it did not automatically empower the troops. They needed another tech from the military path, one that allowed them to construct a special building called Arcane Forge.

Once this arcane forge was built, the country could spend a certain number of ores to create an enchantment that provided a small buff to all troops.

Peniel also added that there were three levels to the arcane forge's enchantment. Even if they had enough orichalcum ores, they couldn't use them because orichalcum ores were used for the third level of the enchantment. They had to first complete the first and second levels.

They had two choices for each level. The first level used super rare grade ores, either Titanium or Mithril. The second level used unique grade ores, adamantine or magicite. The ultimate level was using legendary-grade ores, Astral or Orichalcum.

"How many adamantine ores are needed for the arcane forge?" Jack asked Peniel.

"Don't forget you also have to learn adamantine forging from the civil path first," Peniel reminded. "To answer your question, it is three hundred adamantine ores."

"Oh... Well, I guess someone is watching over me," Jack grinned and took out one of the adamantine ores in his inventory. "I already have three hundred of this."

"That's good, but unique grade ores are not a problem. Another of Thereath's specialty resources is magicite ores. So, we have plenty of that," John reminded.

"Oh, right...," Jack remembered then.

"What you still need are titanium or mithril ores for the first level," Peniel said. "You need one thousand for either one of them. You can't mix them up to reach the quantity."

"I will talk with Four Winds about mithril ore. He recently gained access to a mithril mine," Jack said. "Of course, he will most certainly demand something for a trade, but we will negotiate with him once we get the techs and start building the arcane forge."

"In that case, we need to focus on a path that gives us those techs," John said. "Peniel, please elaborate on which techs we need to learn to get to the required techs."

Peniel described the paths to them. Jack didn't see John writing anything down. He guessed the guy could map the paths in his mind simply by hearing the explanation one time.

Based on Peniel's information, if they chose the right techs, they only needed to learn two more techs in the civil path to start learning mithril forging. From there, they could learn adamantine or magicite forging, then orichalcum forging in sequence. For the arcane forge, they needed to learn three more techs in the military path to get to that tech.

John looked at Jack after getting the information. "How about using your ruling power to hasten the research?" He asked.

Chapter 1119: A Dignitary from Hydrurond

Jack checked his ruling power. He had 83 ruling powers at the moment. He needed 80 ruling powers for Call to Arms and Mass Drill. But by the time he could use those two powers again, he should also gain additional 60 ruling powers from his level 6 Sovereign.

Thinking that he could spare some ruling powers, he opened the Research Overview. For the three techs they were researching, University had nine more days left, Explosives had five days left, and Collective Ardor had seventeen days left.

They only needed to hasten the research of University and Explosives if they wanted to get to the techs they were discussing earlier. But since Jack was feeling generous, he hastened all three techs, spending 4 ruling powers.

He then chose the techs from the civil and military paths that Peniel had mapped before. For the mystic path, there was no special need so he chose Healing Diagram, the tech that John was previously fussy about.

Since the Collective Ardor was learned, Jack could now cast it as kingdom enchantment.

Jack went back to Country Overview. There was a new option to cast an enchantment there. Jack clicked it and a list of available enchantments was shown. There was only one on the list.

*

Collective Ardor (Country enchantment)

Boost productivity by 10%.

Cost: 100,000 mana

Upkeep: 10,000 mana/month

*

"Only ten percent," Jack muttered.

"It is the first available enchantment. Of course, it is not powerful," John said. "But even with only ten percent, it meant we reduce construction time and research time by ten percent. I said it's worth it."

Jack looked at the kingdom mana. There were still over a million mana available. The monthly income was over two hundred thousand mana after the Boundless Cache reduced many of the buildings' and units' upkeep. Even deducting the 50,000 mana upkeep from the Ancient Beacon Tower, they still had plenty to spare.

Thus, Jack proceeded with the casting. There was no special effect. This collective ardor simply popped up in the enchantment list, right under Serenity's Blessing. Jack wondered if any visual change happened outside when he cast the spell.

Finished with the casting, he went back to the Research Overview. He saw the days needed to research the techs he chose earlier had indeed been reduced.

He proceeded to spend more ruling powers. In a blink of an eye, the country completely learned the two techs from the civil path and the three techs from the military path. He also hastened the research of the Healing Diagram that John craved. He spent 21 ruling powers for all that, causing his ruling power to drop to 58 points.

The civil path was now learning the Mithril Forging. The military path was researching the Arcane Forge. As for the Mystic Path, Jack chose Mana Spring.

He let the research proceed normally without spending more ruling power. Even if he learned them now, he did not yet have the required mithril ores. He needed to negotiate with Four Winds first.

While they continued to talk about the paths of research, Thaergood finally entered the throne room. A draconian in opulent attire walked beside him.

Thaergood stopped before Jack's throne and bowed. "Your Majesty," He uttered.

The draconian stood beside Thaergood and stared directly at Jack with his chin lifted high. The gesture made Jack frown. Jack didn't need anybody to bow before him, especially the subjects of another country, but at least gave some respect like a nod or something.

'I warned you about his attitude, didn't I?' Jack received John's message.

Jack took a deep breath. If he was not a king, he would have thrown this draconian out himself. But he was one now, so he had to learn to be diplomatic.

"Marquess Guzrim," Jack greeted. He had used Inspect to find out the draconian's name and rank. Hydrurond Dominion's noble rank was similar to Themisphere's. Aside from that, his Inspect also informed him that Guzrim was a level 70 special elite. "It is our honor to have you in our hall."

"It is indeed," Guzrim said. He didn't drop his chin while speaking, as if trying to make sure that Jack noticed that he didn't consider himself beneath Jack.

Jack calmed himself and said, "You must forgive me for making you wait. I would have prepared a banquet if I know a Hydrurond's dignitary is visiting."

"I doubt your banquet will impress me. I am indeed displeased with the wait, but now that you are here, we can discuss compensation later."

'Motherf*cker...', Jack cursed within. 'Are you here trying to pick a fight?'

John was secretly snickering beside him.

Jack tried to rouse his patience as best as possible, but he was not sure how long he could stand this overbearing draconian. So, he tried to cut to the chase, "To what do we owe the pleasure of your visit?"

"It's good for you to ask. My time is precious so I don't wish to waste it unnecessarily. These few days of waiting have been a huge waste of my invaluable time. I am here in the name of our queen mother, Frorryntiar. I wish to remind Themisphere of their duty to pay semiannual tribute."

"Tribute...?" Jack's frown became deeper.

Jack turned to Isabelle beside him, who approached and whispered, "In the past when Hydrurond was the leader of the seven main countries, there was a custom for every country to pay tribute once every half a year."

"What kind of a tribute?" Jack whispered back.

"300,000 gold coins and some special resources from respective countries," Isabelle answered.

"You said in the past? So, we are no longer doing it even during Themis' rule?"

"We haven't been paying tribute for twenty years already," Isabelle replied. "The other countries are the same. All the other countries had grown strong enough that they felt they no longer needed to fear the Hydrurond Dominion. The Hydrurond probably knew that as well so they just treated it as if nothing happened. Probably they knew that if they tried to enforce the tributes, they would be the ones who got embarrassed."

"Then why are they demanding this from us now?"

Isabelle was silent.

'It's because they think us weak after you take over the throne,' John sent Jack a message. He was right next to Jack so he heard their whisper. 'You are an outworlder who took over the reign of a native kingdom. Even if you have the Goddess' backing, the Hydrurond believed that you don't hold the people's support. Not to mention you sent them a gift once you ascended. That act of friendliness probably gave them the impression that you are afraid of them instead. Maybe they believe under these circumstances, they can intimidate you into obeying their demands and becoming their vassal state.'

Chapter 1120: Throw that Dog Out!

Jack's face went dark for a second, but his expression returned to normal soon. He gave Guzrim a warm smile and asked, "Marquess Guzrim, Themisphere has not paid any tribute for a long time already. It is a thing of the past. We are both countries of equal dignity. There shouldn't be tributes given by any one of us."

"Equal dignity? Hahaha!" Guzrim laughed condescendingly. "You outworlders are truly ignorant. Do you think you know our world? You are just guests! Your kind is unruly creatures who only care about profits. Not to mention, you are such a young outworlder. Even with Goddess Serenity's blessing, I am surprised the human natives allow this farce to proceed. I guess they are just the same spineless race as their ancestors."

Alfredo, Isabelle, Laurent, and Thaergood fidgeted. They were offended by Guzrim's words, but they didn't speak out of turn. They kept silent and waited for Jack's response.

When Jack didn't give any, Gizrum continued, "Despite your unworthiness, our great queen mother is willing to be your benefactor. With Hydrurond's protection, you won't worry about rebellion or another invasion. Surely you have lost many troops in the recent invasion war. We are willing to garrison a few legions of our mighty warriors to help protect your territory. With our presence, it will drive all resistance, whether from the inside or outside, away from your rule! All you have to do is submit to our queen mother and pay your tributes."

Gizrum paused for a bit before adding, "It's a fair price to pay to guarantee the continuation of your rule, isn't it? Don't waste my time by saying that you need time to think about this offer. More importantly, do not waste our great queen mother's generosity. You won't get this offer a second time."

Jack was still smiling throughout Gizrum's speech. John was strangely also smiling with him. The four human natives were confused by these two's expressions.

Gizrum, on the other hand, thought the outworlders' smiles were an indication that they understood how beneficial this offer was to them. He was glad. It saved him time from trying to make these lowly creatures see the wisdom of his offer.

"Thank you for your very generous offer, great marquess," Jack finally spoke. He stood up from his throne. The wide smile on his face never faded.

He came down from his throne and walked toward Gizrum while saying, "I've long heard of the mighty Hydrurond Dominion. No one dares to oppose you in the past. Your past mighty army was the stuff of legend. People of the old crumbled to their knees whenever they heard of your country's name. Even being a vassal state of Hydrurond was an honor for those past countries."

Gizrum was slightly conflicted. Jack's tone and expressions showed he was praising Hydrurond, but why did this young king use so many 'past' words in his speech?

"This offer you bring is indeed very generous. I was sincerely touched by it," Jack said and offered a handshake.

"Despite being an outworlder, I'm very glad that you are wise enough," Gizrum shook Jack's hand.

With a friendly gesture, Jack put his other hand on Gizrum's shoulder. Gizrum didn't like this lowly human touching him without permission, but he let it slide since Jack was not a fool who rejected his generous offer.

"But... As I said, it's a thing of the past," Jack said, still smiling. Gizrum felt pressure from Jack's hand on his shoulder.

"What...?" Gizrum was confused.

"You see, honorable marquee. You are right about one thing. We, outworlders, are indeed a bit unruly," Jack continued. The pressure he applied on Gizrum's shoulder intensified.

Gizrum's legs were shaking as he tried to resist the pressure. However, even though he had a higher level than Jack, he was also only a special elite. His stats were nowhere near the sum of Jack's three special classes.

Gizrum was extremely puzzled. A draconian race provided extra strength stat compare to the human race. In theory, he should be stronger. He grabbed Jack's hand which was pressuring his shoulder. But even as he tried his best to tear that hand away, it won't budge.

His legs finally buckled and he fell to his knees.

"You... How dare you...!" Gizrum was furious at the shame of getting forced to his knees.

"Listen to me, great marquess," Jack uttered. His face was still wearing that smile but his tone was anything but friendly. "You might think that you can come and show us our place, but you have been blinded by your past glory. Themisphere is no longer a kingdom that bends its knees to any country. It is not during Themos' rule. And contrary to what you believe, it also definitely will not be so during my rule. Now, you can go back to your mighty Hydrurond and tell your great queen mother this. If she dares to show such disrespect again to our kingdom, the next messenger he sent won't just end up with a little bruise."

"Bru... Bruise...?"

When Gizrum was still bewildered by Jack's words, Jack let go of the hand that was shaking Gizrum's hand. With lightning speed, that hand went to Gizrum's throat. The sudden choke caused the draconian to be unable to speak.

Jack then lifted Gizrum high before slamming him down with wrestling-style chokeslam.

Jack used mana manipulation on the slam. It was so hard that it cracked the floor. A damage number appeared above Gizrum.

Gizrum was coughing on the floor as he shouted, "You will regret this, you foolish outworlder!"

Jack didn't bother talking with the draconian anymore. He gave Gizrum a hard kick, which sent Gizrum flying toward the exit with another damage number popping up.

"Throw that dog out!" Jack commanded.

The stationary guards around the hall immediately came to where Gizrum had landed. He was then forcefully escorted out while still shouting and cursing.

Jack sat back to his throne afterward.

"Well, I say we can say goodbye to the attempt in allying with Hydrurond," Isabelle said.

"You don't approve?" Jack asked.

"If Your Majesty hadn't thrown him out. I might have been the one to do so," the Duchess said.

"Although this is not good diplomacy, I guess there is a time when we have to make our stand," Thaergood remarked.