

World 1191

Chapter 1191: Begone, You Ants

The spell that Master had cast was called Forced Unsummon. It was a single-target spell that could target any summoned creature, either from skills or equipment. The success of this spell depended on the rank of the summoned creature and the intelligent stat between the summoner and the caster.

The lesser Tiger God manifestation was a mythical grade. The forced unsummon spell required the caster to have intelligence stat four times the summoner's stat. Master's intelligence stat from five classes, with four magic-based classes, easily trumped the intelligence stat from Leavemealone's Tiger Brawler class by five to six times.

Jeanny and Megan watched the incident with disbelief. The flame tiger was a mythical grade. How could it be defeated with just one spell?

Jeanny didn't let her surprise last for long. He yelled to Megan, "Megan, use angelic possession! Go and destroy the platforms. I will hold him back!"

Megan acted once receiving Jeanny's prompt. Her body shone with radiance and a pair of wings formed of tendrils of light sprouted from her back.

Angelic Possession was Inquisitor's level 50 skill. It increased all of Megan's attributes by 100%. All her attacks dealt light damage and were boosted by an additional 30% damage. Megan also gained flying ability. This skill lasted five minutes.

Now that she could fly, she flew up while Jeanny rushed forward and executed her Brave Lancer's first skill, Brave Thrust. A golden light shot out from her spear and stabbed toward Master.

Master dual cast with both his magic staffs. The first spell was Ice Wall which blocked Jeanny's brave thrust. The second spell was telekinesis, which was aimed at Megan who flew above.

Megan felt her body becoming heavy in mid-flight after being targeted by Master's telekinesis. She was then forcefully pulled down and slammed into the ground.

Despite her consternation, Jeanny didn't stop. She used Jump Attack and her body vanished. She reappeared above Master and stabbed downward.

Master used Magic Shield to block the attack. Master's intelligence stat was so high that his basic skill completely stopped Jeanny's elite skill without suffering any damage.

His combined strength stat was also higher than Jeanny's. He executed Shield Bash using the magic shield, striking Jeanny as she landed and causing her to unbalance. She was surprised by how strong the bash was. She had forgotten that Master had five classes.

But even when unbalanced, she didn't stop. She used her Brave Lancer's level 60 skill, Spears of the Legionnaires. The skill conjured ten golden spears that struck nearby targets. Each spear dealt 500% light damage and ignored 50% defense.

Master was already casting another spell when the golden spears materialized. Her spell was completed and Master's body disappeared when the spears came stabbing. He had cast Teleport and now reappeared a distance away.

Because of the teleportation, Master's telekinesis was interrupted. With the pressure lifted, Megan could move again. She hurriedly rose and attempted to fly again. However, another force gripped her and she was unable to rise higher into the air.

She was not the only one, Jeanny was also assailed by this force. In between them was a ball of dark energy. This ball was another of Master's non-standard spells, Gravity Field. The ball created a strong force that pulled everything in its vicinity toward it.

This spell didn't cause any damage, but it was also not a movement restriction spell. Skills that negated movement restriction were not effective against this spell. The only way to free oneself from this gravity field was by having enough strength to counter the pulling force.

However, even when Jeanny had high strength stat from her Brave Lancer class, she still found it hard to counter the pulling force. This was because the pulling force of the Gravity Field was affected by the caster's intelligence stat, and Master's int stat was out of this world.

While both Jeanny and Megan were struggling to move away from the dark ball, Master rose into the sky while casting another spell.

The spell formation continued to form one rune after another. Jeanny's alarm increased with each rune formed. Yet, her panic didn't help her in freeing herself from the gravity field.

When the spell formation continued after the seventh rune, Jeanny was flabbergasted. 'He is level 70 already...?!'

Master had indeed reached level 70, but only for one of his classes. The others were still ranging from level 60 to 64.

Master had adopted a different method than Jack, who gave equal exp points to all his classes. He shut off the exp points for the other classes so he could get to level 70 as fast as possible. It was so that he could learn the non-standard spells with eight runes spell formation.

He was now casting one such spell.

As the spell was completed, the blue sky above changed color. It was now crimson. Dark clouds appeared in the sky and roiled. These dark clouds then abruptly parted. It was like the sky was split in half. Out of this split heaven, a colossal rock descended.

The spell Master cast was Meteor Fall. Though this spell had the same eight-runes spell formation as the Meteor Shower that he cast using a magic scroll during the destruction of the Council of Virtus, they were also very different.

Meteor Shower conjured several meteors that fell randomly in a very large area, while Meteor Fall only conjured one meteor. But this one meteor was much larger and dealt higher damage. It was a concentrated attack that most likely took out whatever it fell onto.

"Begone, you ants," Master muttered before releasing his hold on the meteor.

The meteor then fell with incredible speed, burning the air as it descended.

Jeanny and Megan could only watch the falling rock with helpless eyes. The gravity field was still hindering them from moving away. But even if they could move now, it was too late. Despite only being a single rock, the meteor was extremely large. Its diameter was almost one kilometer. They won't have enough time to run away from the meteor's impact zone.

When the meteor hit the ground, it created a huge tremor that shook even the armies that fought a distance away. Everyone paused for a beat to look over. A mushroom cloud grew from the impact site.

Players who watched wondered if a nuke had just exploded there.

Chapter 1192: Looking for a way to Contact the Queen

During wartime, teleportation between countries was shut. One had to cross the border physically before using one of the cities near the border to teleport to other cities within the country.

With upgraded Pandora, it took Jack only one day to cross the vast border. He then landed near a border city. Using his orc disguise, Iamanorc, he teleported to the zone portal of Messephyria, the capital of Hydrudond. This was around the time when the two forces of Hydrurond and Liguritutum were getting ready to clash with one another.

The soldiers guarding the zone portal halted him when he first appeared. This made him nervous. Was his cover blown?

The guards used Inspect on him and asked him several questions. Questions such as what his purpose for coming here was and where he came from. Fortunately, he was let go after his data and response were recorded.

Jack was puzzled but he just chalked it up to this capital having a more stringent security procedure.

This was not the first time he visited Hydrurond's cities, but he was still amazed by the sight. The buildings in Hydrurond's were always tall as if trying to reach the sky. The ones in this capital were even more exaggerated. Every building had flying buttresses and pointed arches. Jack felt as if he had entered a gothic city.

The palace was the most impressive because it was the tallest building in the capital. It soared up into the sky as if a sword piercing heaven. He wondered if the throne room was up there on the top. He pitied the palace dwellers if it was so. He couldn't imagine how many staircases one had to climb to reach the top of that palace.

He had been in contact with guild members who frequented this capital. Queen Frorryntiar rarely showed herself in the public. It was also too risky for him to infiltrate the palace. Even if he could do it, he doubted such an act would inspire confidence that he was an ally.

In this case, he had no choice but to go through an intermediary. Unfortunately, neither he nor his guild members knew any of the upper echelons within Hydrurond's monarchy. However, his guild members informed him that Queen Frorryntiar had a daughter, Princess Aldryth, who regularly came out of the palace to meet the people of the capital.

She was a figure more loved by the people compared to her mother since she often reached out and helped the common folks. She was also very devout and always traveled to the grand cathedral of the Church of Creation to attend its mass. Today was one of the days when she attended such a mass.

Jack checked his map. After making sure of the grand cathedral's location, he headed there.

The grand cathedral was also a very tall building. Not half as impressive as the palace, but it was still impressive. There was already a crowd gathering outside the cathedral waiting for the mass to start. The entrance to the cathedral was barred and entry was only permitted a few minutes before the mass started.

Jack circled the cathedral to check for other possible entrances. Members of the church of creation loitered around the building. They were not exactly guards, but they might as well. There didn't seem to be a blind spot where he could sneak in. Even if he flew from above, he was sure to be spotted.

He sent a message to a guild member whom Jeanny had introduced before he came here. After several back and forth of messaging to locate one another, he finally found the guy.

The person's name was Easycome. He was a draconian player who had been sent into this capital after the tutorial period, so he knew this place the best.

Easycome was a level 56 priest. Despite his low level, he was accepted as a member of Everlasting Heavenly Legends because of his good connection with players and natives in the capital. This made him a good go-to person when the guild needed something done here, like what Jack was doing now. Unfortunately, his connection with the natives wasn't high enough to let Jack get to the queen.

His low level was also the reason he didn't join Jeanny who was about to fight Liguritutum's invading army. He was not a battle-savvy person and was not originally a gamer.

"Easycome?" Jack greeted after locating the man.

"Boss," Easycome greeted back.

"Got any chance for me to talk to the princess?" Jack asked.

Easycome gave Jack a solemn face. "I'm afraid that will be difficult, if not impossible. The princess always has a team of bodyguards following her. The mass will only start after she arrived. She will be let in first so her guards can set a perimeter inside the chapel. This way, the crowd that came in later could be kept away from the princess."

"I thought the princess is known to make contact with the people? There should be a time when common folks can approach her, shouldn't it?"

Easycome smiled upon hearing. "Making contact with common folks are rather dress-up words," he said. "Don't get me wrong. I have a good opinion of the princess. She is one of those royalties who aren't acting all high and mighty. But even so, the common folks that she has contact with are influential people. Business owners and community leaders or such. Her bodyguards don't exactly let the real common folks get anywhere near her."

"Crap... So, there is no chance for me to get close to her?" Jack asked.

Easycome gave Jack a thoughtful gaze. He said after a moment of silence, "There might be a way, but it isn't exactly safe. It might draw the ire of the Church of Creation and make me lose membership in the faction if something goes wrong..."

"Tell me," Jack said. Any idea is welcome at this moment.

"It is a common procedure if an emergency happens during the mass, the VIP guest will be brought to safety into a safe room next to the chapel. The princess is no doubt considered the top VIP in this mass. If you are in this safe room in advance, you will get the chance to speak with the princess when she is brought into the room."

"The bodyguards will follow her into this safe room, won't they?" Jack asked.

"I can't set it so that only she is allowed into the safe room," Easycome said.

"You can?"

"My level might not be high, but I'm a high-ranking member of the Church of Creation," Easycome said. "I also have a native contact of higher rank inside the faction, but he might need some persuasion to help us."

"What kind of persuasion?" Jack asked.

Easycome made a gesture by repeatedly rubbing his thumb over his index and middle finger.

"He wants coins?" Jack said in surprise.

Easycome nodded.

Jack was speechless. It seemed bribery was as effective here as in the real world. "How many coins are needed?" Jack asked.

"Two hundred coins should do the magic, but we might need to prepare three hundred just to be sure."

Jack took out four hundred coins and gave them to Easycome. "Let's do as you suggested."

Chapter 1193: Getting into a Room with the Princess

A few minutes before the time the mass should start, the princess's entourage arrived. A grand carriage came accompanied by eight bodyguards on steeds. The clergymen directed the crowd to give the entourage a passage.

The bodyguards came down from their steeds and helped keep the crowd away as the carriage rolled to the cathedral's entrance.

One of the soldiers opened the carriage's door and a draconian lady in a grandiose gown came out. The lady was Princess Aldryth. Even with a face full of scales, one could see her beauty. The crowd cheered after seeing her. She looked at the crowd with a kind smile and waved.

A high priest was waiting in front of the entrance. He came to the princess and ushered her to enter the cathedral. She thanked the high priest and entered with her eight bodyguards.

Only after she entered and took her seat in the chapel, the crowd was allowed entry. The mass started not long after everyone entered.

It was roughly an hour after the mass started when an alarm sounded, startling everyone in the mass.

The eight bodyguards immediately put themselves around the princess in a defensive formation.

An outworlder priest came to the princess and said, "Princess, please follow me to a safe room."

"What happened?" The princess asked.

"We are not certain. It might be an intruder," The priest said. "Until we ascertain the cause of the emergency, please take shelter inside our safe room. We can't risk someone important like you getting harmed under our watch."

"Princess, it is wise to be cautious. Let's go to the safe room," One of the bodyguards said.

Princess Aldryth nodded. "Please lead the way," she said.

The nine followed the priest into a corridor next to the chapel. They came into a door covered with a rune diagram.

"This room is protected. There is no need to worry when you are inside," the priest said.

When one of the bodyguards wanted to enter the room, the priest blocked him and said, "I'm sorry. Only the princess can enter."

"That's absurd!" The bodyguard exclaimed. "It's our job to protect the princess. Where the princess goes, we go!"

"I'm afraid that is against regulation," the priest insisted. "You can stay guard outside here. The room only has one entrance and exit. I guarantee the princess is safe while she is inside. With you guarding this door, she will be safer."

"No!" The bodyguard insisted.

The priest looked at the princess, showing a face that expressed helplessness.

The princess said, "How about this, one of my bodyguards follow me inside. The rest wait outside."

"This... You are making it difficult for me, princess," the priest said.

"Your rule is also making it difficult for my bodyguards. If you want my bodyguards to give a compromise to follow your rule, you should do the same," Aldryth said.

The priest was conflicted. Seeing that he was not likely to change the princess' mind, he finally said, "Okay. One of your guards accompanies you..."

Princess Aldryth gave the priest a grateful smile. She then gestured to one of his bodyguards. That bodyguard followed her into the room.

The priest watched the two enter. He was uncertain what would happen next. One thing was for sure, he would have to leave this cathedral immediately. He lamented that his time in this faction was

probably over. He would need the guild to compensate him fairly for this. This priest was none other than Easycome.

He glanced at the door to the safe room before leaving. He hoped Jack who was inside was all right.

*

Inside the safe room, Jack had changed back to himself and used his cloak of shadow's ability to hide in a corner. He also used mana concealment in case the princess was a native who had mana sense. He watched the two draconians enter the room. One male and one female, it didn't take a genius to know which one was the princess.

Jack was surprised that someone accompanied the princess. This was not according to plan, but he was not someone who panic when things veered from the original planning. However, something else surprised him even more. The bodyguard that accompanied the princess was an outworlder. He knew it from the blue dot on his radar.

He was pondering about the action to take. Easycome said this safe room was not only completely protected, but it was also soundproofed. No one outside will hear the noise from inside.

He wondered what he should do with this outworlder bodyguard. But since it was an outworlder, he had an easier time deciding. He would have an easier time overpowering an outworlder compared to a native. If things became worse, it was okay to kill the outworlder. The outworlder would only lose one level since this place was a safe zone. What he was more worried about was what the princess' reaction would be if he roughed her bodyguard up.

He didn't have the luxury to think about the issue for too long. The clergies in this cathedral would soon find out the emergency alarm was bogus. Someone would come and let the princess out. He would lose his chance then. So, he stepped out of the shadow.

Both the princess and her bodyguard were facing away from Jack since they entered, so they didn't see Jack even when Jack came out of the shadow. Jack was planning to incapacitate the outworlder draconian when they were unaware of his presence, before explaining himself to the princess. However, this outworlder draconian swiveled abruptly before Jack carried out his plan. A flash of light followed his movement.

Out of instinct, Jack pulled out his storm breaker. A loud clang sounded as his sword narrowly parried an attack. He noticed then what he had just parried was the blade of a long katana.

Jack was surprised he was found out so swiftly after coming out of hiding, but he was more shocked to know that the attack that almost hit him just now was filled with powerful mana manipulation.

Chapter 1194: Talking with the Princess

"Arthur?" Jack said after seeing the face of the draconian bodyguard who just attacked him.

The player was Arthur Bagrat, the sword master who was also one of the champions of the world tournament. He was wearing a standard Hydrurond soldier's armor instead of the samurai set armor he

won from the world tournament, so Jack didn't recognize him. Jack was also too focused on the princess that he didn't use Inspect on Arthur.

"Hm...? You are... Domon's grandson?" Arthur said after recognizing Jack.

"I am Jack... You forgot my name, didn't you?" Jack smiled wryly.

"Do you know this outworlder, Arthur?" Princess Aldryth asked.

"Yes, he is my old enemy's grandson," Arthur answered. His katana was still aiming at Jack.

"Rival! Not enemy! People might get the wrong idea," Jack uttered.

"Why do you want to attack the princess?" Arthur asked. He didn't lower his katana.

"I am not attacking the princess!" Jack exclaimed. "I just want to talk to her."

Princess Aldryth finally noticed Jack's outfit. "Wait! Your clothes... You are Themisphere's outworlder king?"

"You are a king?" Arthur asked.

"You are not up to date with the current news, are you?" Jack said to Arthur. He then answered the princess, "Yes, Princess Aldryth. I'm King Storm Wind of the kingdom of Themisphere. I'm sorry to have to meet you in such a circumstance. I wish to speak to your mother, but she is unwilling to. I hope I can speak to you instead so you can convey my message."

"Princess, do you want me to call the guards outside?" Arthur asked.

Jack shot the old sword expert a glare that said, 'Dude! You forgot we were allies who fought together in the past?!'

"Please lower your weapon," Princess Aldryth said to Arthur. "I don't think this outworlder king meant me any harm."

Aldryth then turned to Jack. "What do you wish to speak about, King Storm Wind?"

Jack was glad the princess was as friendly as her reputation. He didn't waste this chance. He immediately conveyed his intention, "I've sent a message informing your queen mother that Themisphere is willing to aid Hydrurond in fighting the current invasion by Liguritudum and Aurebor. I'm serious about giving this aid, but your mother rejected me. Thinking it is a ploy for another invasion."

"How do I know she is not wrong?" Aldryth asked.

"I take a risk by exposing myself here. This should show you my sincerity. I guarantee you that my intention is only to drive Liguritudum and Aurebor back," Jack answered.

Aldryth shook her head. "I'm afraid that is not enough. How can I know that you are not doing this to convince us to let your army in and then attack us when we least expect it? We can't risk our national security simply because of your guarantee."

Jack didn't know what to say.

He had hoped that his sincerity could convince the princess. But it seemed that although the princess was a friendly and open person, she was not less cautious.

"What can I do to convince Your Highness of my intention?" Jack asked.

"I'm afraid you can't," Aldryth answered. "Even if I want to believe you, my belief means nothing. My mother rarely let me involve in her court. My words will not change my mother's decision. Also, there is no need to worry about the invasion. The might of our great Hydrurond army will beat the invaders back."

'Damn these draconian and their pride,' Jack cursed within.

"Princess Aldryth, please believe me. You shouldn't underestimate the invaders, especially the one from Liguritudum. Your country can be in great danger if you don't take them seriously."

Aldryth simply gave Jack a small smile for a response.

"If you are not willing to help convey my message, can you help arrange for me to meet your mother?" Jack didn't want to give up.

"I'm afraid I have to reject," Aldryth said.

When she saw Jack's disappointed expression, she added, "I'm saying this for your sake, King Storm Wind. No matter whether you are being honest or not, I'm certain my mother will have you captured once you show yourself in front of her. She might even execute you on the spot if you say what you said to me just now. We Draconian are a proud race. Saying that other races can threaten our country is the same as insulting us."

"That is not my intention," Jack said. "I truly want to aid your country!"

"I do want to believe you are being sincere, king Storm Wind," Aldryth said. "But perhaps it is you who underestimate us. What is this to you anyway? Why do you try so hard to aid us? You almost seem... desperate."

"This is because I and the outworlder groups who are in control over Liguritudum and Aurebor are sworn enemies. We have had scuffles a few times before we become sovereigns."

Aldryth just stared at Jack with her small smile. The princess seemed to have a polite temperament, but it was obvious that she didn't take Jack's warning seriously. Jack could see the princess had no intention to change her mind.

When Jack was still trying to find the words to persuade her, she said, "Bringing you to meet my mother truly won't result in anything good on your part. With how our current situation with outworlders, my mother is close to outlawing outworlders completely. It is because of me and Sir Arthur here who shows that there is still an outworlder who can be trusted that she didn't take this drastic measure."

"Situation with outworlders? Do you mean the invasion?" Jack asked.

"No. We have another troubling situation in our country at this time."

"What kind of situation?"

Instead of answering, Aldryth said, "Your time is short, king Storm Wind. I believe you have something to do with the alarm happening outside. I will not tell on you, but you have to leave now before the members of the Church of Creation find out that you are in this safe room."

Jack was unwilling, but kept on being stubborn was also not a good idea. He could just pity the situation.

"Sigh... In that case, I will excuse myself first. Please remember that Themisphere is ready to aid your country when you decided that you can trust us," Jack said.

"Currently we are dividing our army which weakens the ones facing Liguritudum and Aurebor. If you truly want to help, you should pull away your army that amasses near our border," Aldryth said. "My mother will still see it as a ploy, but I might be able to persuade her to draw away the army that is meant for the invasion from your side and use it to reinforce the ones facing Liguritudum and Aurebor."

Jack nodded without saying anything.

"Hey, kid," Arthur called when Jack was about to leave.

"Yes?"

"Your swordsmanship has greatly improved since we last met. I can't believe you can block my slash so perfectly."

"Hehe. Thank you for your compliment. By the way, aren't you a hermit? Why do you join this country's military?" Jack asked.

"Who says I'm a hermit and that I join the military? I am simply here because I am a friend to the princess," Arthur replied.

"Do you mind if I add you to my friend list?" Jack said and sent him a friend invite at the same time.

Jack couldn't stay for long, so he didn't wait for Arthur's reply. He started casting a spell. When it was completed. He disappeared from the room.

Chapter 1195: Serial Killings

Jack cast Teleportation to escape. The safe room's rune diagram originally also blocked anyone from teleporting in and out of the room, but Easycome's native contact inside the faction had shut down the diagram's function which blocked teleportation, allowing Jack to make his escape.

He appeared outside the cathedral.

"Boss, you are safe!" Easycome called from behind a nearby tree. They had agreed on this spot for their escape. Easycome honestly thought that Jack was not going to make it. He was hiding behind the tree to wait and observe the situation.

Jack hurriedly transformed into Iamanorc before anyone noticed.

Easycome came out of his hiding and approached Jack. "Did the faction members find you?" He asked.

"No," Jack answered.

"What about the princess and his bodyguard?"

"They will keep what happened a secret."

Easycome was relieved. This meant he didn't have to quit the faction.

"Are you free at the moment?" Jack asked. "I have some questions I need to ask."

"Sure. Whatever you need, boss," Easycome answered.

Though his involvement in the incident just now shouldn't get exposed, Easycome thought it was still prudent to wait and see. If he didn't get kicked out of the faction, he would contact his accomplice inside the faction and make sure before he entered any of the faction's facilities.

Jack asked him the nearest tavern and the two headed there. He received a message informing him that Arthur had accepted his invite. The elderly swordsman was now on his friend list.

It was still early, so not many people were in the tavern. They sat on the chairs from one of the many unoccupied tables.

After ordering some drinks, Jack asked Easycome, "The princess mentioned something about a situation involving outworlders in this country. Do you have any idea what she meant?"

"Situation...? Oh! I think what she meant was the serial killing," Easycome answered after thinking for a while.

"Serial killing?"

Easycome nodded. "I don't know when they first started, but I think I started hearing about it about one month ago."

'One month ago? About the time Mistress became Aurebor's queen,' Jack thought.

"The victims were always natives," Easycome said.

"Natives?" Jack frowned. "Considering this issue creates tension between the kingdom and the outworlders, does this mean the kingdom suspects the killings were done by players?"

"Yes."

"Do they have proof?" Jack asked.

"In some cases, there were witnesses seeing players leaving the crime scenes. In some other, someone sees players entering the rooms that have the victims. But the most convincing are a few occasions where the witnesses saw the killings happen right in front of them. The murderers wore masks and something that blocked others from using Inspect on them, but they were players."

"Murderers? There is more than one?"

Easycome nodded. "The killings aren't just happening in one city. It happened in almost every main city and large city. Although players could teleport from city to city instantly, it is unlikely one person pull it off. There are incidents where two killings happened at almost the same time, so it is more likely they were done by different people."

"A group then. It is unlikely different individuals develop the same urges at the same time," Jack said.
"And you said the killings happened inside cities?"

"That's right. You should have known that we players only lose one level if we die inside the city. Natives have no such perk. They die a permanent death whether it is inside a safe zone or in the wilderness."

Jack nodded. That's what happened to Alonzo, Quintus, and Themos. They all died inside the palace.

"Any of the murderers ever captured?" Jack asked.

Easycome shook his head. "The authority had sent many patrols searching, but without results. Whomever this group is, they hide very well. It stirs up the kingdom so much that curfews were implemented around two weeks ago. You should take care to not wander around the city after the sun sets. You will be arrested if spotted. Every outworlder that comes into the city also has to report to the authority and have their visits recorded."

'No wonder the rigorous checking when I teleport here,' Jack thought.

"I heard the situation has turned rather heated inside the kingdom faction these past few days. With the killings still happening and the perpetrators not caught, added by this invasion from Liguritum and Aurebor, this country is a powder keg. The rumor is the queen is very close to announcing the outlawing of outworlders. If that happens, we players will need to go on an exodus to other countries."

Now that Jack heard about this, he understood what Princess Aldryth meant by it being a very bad idea to meet with the queen at this moment.

Jack thought about this for a moment. The reputation of outworlders in this country had taken a nosedive. He wouldn't be able to convince the queen of his good intention at this time. But if he helped resolve this country's situation, maybe he could gain the queen's trust.

"Can you get the information about the past murders? The victims. Where they happened and when?" Jack asked Easycome.

"I have a contact in the law office. Not someone important, but he should have enough access to get the information, but he will need..."

Easycome did the money gesture again.

Jack rolled his eyes. "How much?" Jack asked. He was beginning to wonder if Easycome took a cut in this supposed bribery.

Easycome chuckled. "Hehe, not as much as needed for the meeting with the princess just now. We are not exactly breaking the law this time. Ten gold coins should be enough. Which city do you want for the info?"

"All the cities where the murders had happened," Jack answered.

"All...?! If that's the case, then I need two hundred gold coins," Easycome said.

Jack handed the coins to him. "I need the info fast. Can you make it happen by today?"

"I will get them to you by this afternoon," Easycome answered.

Chapter 1196: Retasking the Investigator Teams

Easycome left. While waiting, Jack sent messages to John. He informed John that he failed to get an audience with Queen Frorryntiar. This prompted John's mockery.

"I'm expecting you to inform me about some sort of a miracle. You truly have disappointed me, expert. You should go hide somewhere and reflect on this. Shame on you."

Even though Jack had expected it, it didn't make this less annoying.

"Cut the crap. I want you to pull out our troops amassing near Hydrurond's border," Jack said.

"Well, since you've failed, there is no use having the army waiting there. But instead of sending them back to their respective bases, I would like to continue keeping them as one army. We can just pull them back far enough so Hydrurond doesn't feel so nervous.

"Why? Do you think we still have a chance to mobilize this army?" Jack asked.

"That will depend on how long the war in Hydrurond lasts," John answered. "Remember my proposed plan to strike once Hydrurond is defeated?"

"All right. Just don't mobilize before that happens or before I give the order, and don't do any secret maneuver that might enrage Hydrurond. I'm serious. I will be angry if you end up offending them when I'm trying to earn their trust."

"Don't worry," John assured. "How are you trying to earn their trust?"

"There is a situation involving players in this country."

"What kind of situation?" John asked.

Jack told John what he had learned.

After hearing the story, John cursed. "Damn our guild's spymaster who is in charge of Hydrurond. I'm going to have a good talk with him. How can he not report such an important incident?"

"Important?" Jack asked.

"Even though I've said that Hydrurond is most likely Master's main target for expansion, we don't know when he will strike. If I'd learned about this serial killing earlier, I would have been able to predict that they will be attacking soon."

"Do you mean that these serial killings are done by the World Maker?"

"Or someone they hired, but I'm sure they are behind it. You said Easycome is getting the information, isn't he? Check the list of victims, I bet you should find all of them to be members of Hydrurond's kingdom faction."

"What does the World Maker's intention with these serial killings?"

"To destabilize the kingdom, disrupt its economy, and halt its military improvement," John answered. "I bet the victims are not only kingdom faction members, but they should also be Hydrurond's officers."

Their absence will cause a reduction in the settlements' stats, which in turn reduced the country's income and their ability to wage war. Hydrurond would be forced to redirect their focus in recovering the settlements' stats rather than on military matters."

"Do World Maker need to go that far?"

"Even though Hydrurond is no longer the leader of the seven countries, they once were. Their military might not be able to easily take out another country in a one-on-one fight, but their military is still the strongest. They have the highest army count. Even if Liguritudum and Aurebor hit them together at the same time, winning is not a certainty. World Maker will need to cover many angles to increase their winning odds."

"If only they didn't divide their troops... This is my fault," Jack said.

"If you've managed to convince Queen Frorryntiar, we might still turn this around. But you didn't, so we can only consider this as bad luck."

"If these serial killings are indeed World Maker's doing, then it is more reasons to stop the killings. Doing this will also allow us to gain queen Frorryntiar's trust."

"You do what you have to do," John said and ended the message.

Jack then started messaging different guild members via the guild function. These guild members were Jeanny's investigator teams. Jeanny had informed Jack of the names of the members she selected for the investigator teams. This way, Jack could contact them directly.

Jeanny had assembled quite many players with investigative skills. Jack told these teams to start crossing the border into Hydrurond and teleported to Messephyria once they did. He would then pass along the data from Easycome.

These teams had just completed the reports on five affairs, helping Jack to get perfect scores from three affairs. Jack received 410,000 merit points and 15 ruling powers from those affairs.

Another four new affairs were available but Jack didn't send the investigators to these new affairs. It was a bad rep to ignore affairs but Jack considered dealing with the serial killings in Hydrurond a higher priority. So, he ignored those four new affairs. He would probably just take a shot at one of the multiple-choice answers from the affairs when the time limit was about to end.

From the merit points received, Jack's sovereign level increased to level 10.

At this level, Jack could add another royal agent. After thinking for a while, he decided to send the invitation to Robinson, who used to share a jail with Laurent when they were in captivity by the Verremor nation.

Robinson was a high-level rare elite. He also looked trustable, and since he was a good friend of Laurent, they should be able to coordinate well together.

Jack received the notification that Robinson had accepted his invitation. Considering Robinson had just joined the military recently, his rank was still low. He had no reservations about letting go of his rank and joining Jack's royal agents.

Jack checked Robinson's data. Robinson was still level 75. But even so, he had the highest level among Jack's royal agents. He was one level higher than Duke Alfredo.

His skill traits were dart, dagger, fist, shield, and move. His affinities were light, earth, and wind elements. He had a talent, Fist Proficiency. This talent boosted fist damage by ten percent. It also improved his chance of learning fist skills, and he could learn fist skills with a level requirement twenty levels above his level.

Jack then used the royal agent function and spent coins to upgrade all of Robinson's equipment to super rare grade.

He installed two skills from the kingdom's skill library onto Robinson's two free skill slots. He chose Ki Shield for defense and Multi-sided Strikes for the offense. Both were skills he had seen in action. Ki Shield was once displayed by Ramaun, the underworld demon who fought the infernal stormbird. The Multi-sided strikes was a skill used by Umeza, the veteran orcish elder.

Chapter 1197: Unstoppable Momentum

Jack rented an inn for the day. Easycome kept his promise and came to the inn a few hours past noon. He took out a stack of papers from his inventory. The papers contained all the information recorded by the authority regarding the serial killings.

Jack thanked Easycome. They added each other as friends before Easycome excused himself.

Jack then spent the remainder of the day studying the papers. In the evening, Jack peeked outside. It was rather empty for a capital city. Only a few natives were seen. No players were on the street. Easycome was serious about a curfew taking place.

Jack returned to checking the papers. The investigative teams had been given the best steeds for quick maneuvering, but they would still take several days to arrive in this capital.

Jack was thankful that he had talked with John earlier. He immediately saw the connection between the victims of the serial killings. All the native victims were officers of the Hydrurond kingdom faction. John was right. This was a targeted operation.

Most of the victims were special elite grades and below. This made sense as the higher the natives' grades, the more HP they possessed. The murderers were attacking the victims inside a safe zone, so time was an important factor. They couldn't take their sweet time because someone might notice and report to the patrols.

Many of the killings happened during the night and in secluded areas. No wonder a curfew was implemented. However, it only slowed the killings by a bit. Easycome mentioned that the curfews started two weeks ago. Before two weeks, the killing happened in intervals of three to four days. Afterward, it was around six to seven days. This happened in most of the major cities.

He then noticed something unusual. A native of rare elite grade. Continuing from there, he found a few others. Each of the successive killings of rare elite natives either happened in the same cities or nearby cities, and their intervals were always three to four days, even after the curfews were implemented.

Jack suspected two things from these findings. Firstly, these rare elite murders were done by the same group. Secondly, the players in this group were experts. So, from all the groups operating in different cities. One group was especially dangerous.

Jack compiled the information chronologically and separated them for each city. He then decided to just send the info to the team by messages. This way, they could head directly to the cities where the murders took place and start investigating once they crossed the border. The messages took a long time and consumed coins, but Jack didn't mind.

Jack informed the teams that their job was only to find out about the responsible players and the locations. They were not to engage the murderers. He also told them to do it discretely so their targets weren't aware. These murderers took out high-HP natives in a short time inside a safe zone, they were not people the investigative teams could deal with. The investigative teams did not consist of battle-oriented players.

After he was done sending the information, he rested for the night.

*

For the next several days, Jack went back to the underworld to farm draconic essences again. Draconic monsters were more frequent in the underworld compared to the upworld.

He again used the same method of not returning to his previous grinding areas and only spent one or two days at one spot. This kept him away from any possible tracings by the underworld empire.

By then, Jack had also learned of Hydrurond players' crushing defeat. Both Jeanny and Megan were killed by Master's Meteor Fall. Luckily, both of them only lost one level. Jeanny was saved by their guild's Ressurrection Chapel, while Megan wore an Amulet of Rebirth.

Each of Hydrurond's player guilds lost more than half of their guild armies. This was a heavy blow to them. This meant they won't be able to do anything meaningful for the remainder of the war. They also didn't achieve anything significant in that battle on the first day, which meant they would get only a few war contribution points. Their loss far outweighed their gains.

Many of the guilds decided to no longer involve themselves in the war after those heavy losses. Only a few rejoined, but they took a cautious approach after the loss.

Everlasting Heavenly Legends were one of the guilds rejoining. Everlasting Heavenly Legends and Evil Breakers didn't lose as many members as the other guilds because they were separate from the other guilds who were getting overwhelmed by World Maker's guild army and members.

The most significant loss from the two guilds was their leaders. Jeanny and Megan issued a retreat after both of them were killed, thus limiting their losses. They didn't see a chance for the remaining players to succeed in getting to the enemy's guild army command platforms.

After decimating the players, World Maker redirected its force to support Liguritudum's native army. Even though Hydrurond's native army was fewer in number, their quality was better and their morale was higher. Hence, the battle wasn't too one-sided.

The surviving players who survived and the ones returning to the battlefield now changed their approach. They now played a supportive role in the native army as Jeanny suggested. However, they weren't welcome by Hydrurond's native army. Hence, they could only support from the rear and the flanks.

Jeanny later learned that this was due to Hydrurond natives' growing distrust of the outworlders caused by the serial killings.

The battle between the two forces raged on for days. It was not an easy battle but the Liguritutum's force with their number advantage continued to push. The way Liguritutum's army moved within the battle was also very flexible. Every unit perfectly support one another and they maneuvered in a way that exploited Hydrurond's army weakness.

Jeanny and the others from Everlasting Heavenly Legends felt a deja vu seeing the enemy's movements. They felt as if they were fighting an army controlled by John.

After five days of fierce battles, a clear winner was decided. Hydrurond's army was reduced to 500,000 troops, less than half their starting number.

As for Liguritutum, they lost around 1,000,000 troops. Even though their loss was the same as Hydrurond, the ratio between the two surviving forces had steepened. Liguritutum's army was now three times Hydrurond's army.

With only around 500,000 troops to defend against 1,500,000, Hydrurond was not able to stop Liguritutum from overwhelming them. Even with their abnormal pride, the general of the Hydrurond army had no choice but to issue a retreat.

They retreated to the nearest fort and holed up there. Only a bit more than 300,000 troops were left when they took a defensive position inside the fort.

Liguritutum's army didn't bother laying a siege on that fort. They went and conquered the closest city, Hemerama. They turned this city into their command base. A majority of the army then continued North with unstoppable momentum. They were heading toward where the two forces of Aurebor and Hydrurond were still having a showdown.

Chapter 1198: A Potential Victim

Before Liguritutum's army won and headed North, Jeanny's investigative teams had arrived in Hydrurond and teleported to the cities described in Jack's information. They immediately started their investigation.

All the while, Jack was in the underworld going from one place to another farming draconic essences.

As the investigative teams conducted their investigations, a couple of new murders occurred. The killings didn't stop even after World Maker carried out their invasion. It seemed that World Maker wanted to keep the cities unstable to force the kingdom to worry about two things at the same time.

But due to these new murders, the investigative teams had a fresh crime scene to analyze. They had to do it covertly though without support from the local government.

With their expertise, they quickly located clues and similarities with past cases that allowed them to profile future potential victims. They passed this info to the teams in the other cities where no new murder had happened yet. But considering the time frame, most probably one of them would happen soon.

With the data, they identified the most likely officer in each of the cities. The most likely place for a murder to happen next was in a city called Lefkauselis. The last murder took place eight days ago. The officer whom the investigative team in that city considered the most likely target was a native named Zoikod.

Zoikod was the vice governor of the city and a capable one at his job. Some even considered him a more vital figure in the office than the governor himself. Taking him out would cause chaos in the city hall, setting back the development of the city.

With bait, it would be easier to catch the fish. Jack decided to monitor the vice governor himself so he could take action once the murderers showed up. He thanked the investigative team and informed them of his intention. They sent Jack the information on Zoikod's daily routines.

At that time, nine days had passed since Jack first set foot at Messephyria. Fortunately, there was no incident with the underworld empire. Peniel made sure Jack avoided going anywhere near the main cities where the king of hell resided.

Since Jack had to constantly move around, he again didn't get many essences. He collected 2,000 draconic essences by the time he wanted to go back to the upworld.

From this gain, his Gold Dragon Bloodline increased to level 8. The bloodline now gave him a passive boost of 48% to his HP, Stamina, MP, and attributes except for the luck stat.

He hadn't gotten the Gold Dragon Wings he craved, though. He needed to reach bloodline level 9 for that. He still needed another three thousand draconic essences to reach that level.

Six days before that, Jack's human age reached the seventeenth month. His Limitless Potential upgraded to rank 11. This passive skill now provided him with HP +3000, Stamina/MP +300, and all attributes except for luck +11.

During the two farming sessions, the current one and the one when he got into the incident with Saakir, he gained 1,000 mana cores, two level-down pills, and six gemstones. The gemstones were one super rare amethyst, one rare sapphire, two super rare emeralds, one rare diamond, and one unique diamond.

Jack used the rare sapphire on his Runestone of Duration. The runestone gained 200 elemental energies. He used the two super rare emeralds on Runestone of Marching, giving it 1,600 elemental energies. He then fed the super rare amethyst, rare diamond, and unique diamond, which totaled 3,500 elemental energies to the Runestone of Probability.

None of the runestones received enough elemental energy to upgrade. It was a pity, but the rate by which he farmed gemstones was still faster in the underworld compared to the upworld.

He didn't receive much exp from farming the draconic monsters. The exp points he received were only enough to level him up one time. His Time Sage was now level 71.

He didn't use the level-down pill this time. He decided to no longer use the level-down pills on his Brave Swordsmaster and Time Sage, at least not until they reached a level when the classes gave him their last standard skills. He might use them for Beast Monarch class based on situations.

Jack returned to the upworld around Messephyria. He checked his whereabouts on the map and immediately headed to the capital. Fortunately, it was still in the afternoon so he was not worried about the curfew. He used the zone portal inside the capital to teleport to Lefkauselis.

He soon appeared in that city's zone portal. He was again using his orc disguise.

He made contact with the investigator team. Coincidentally, the investigator team said that they had detected a few suspicious individuals who were tailing Zoikod. Aside from being experts in investigations, the players on the team were also experts in covert surveillance. That's how they managed to identify the suspicious individuals.

Jack asked them to continue tailing these individuals in secret and updating him in real time. He took to the sky with Pandora. After spotting Zoikod from the team's info, Jack told the team to leave the rest to him. He tailed Zoikod from the sky. His Dragon Eye allowed him to see the ground from high up there.

Zoikod was on the street with several soldiers escorting him. He was on his regular trip where he walked the streets and interacted with the city's inhabitants. That was how he understood what the people of the city needed. He did this daily before heading home ahead of the time of the curfew.

After observing for several hours, Jack agreed that the suspicious individuals mentioned by the investigative team were indeed tailing Zoikod. Jack suspected they would be attacking soon, but not until the soldiers left Zoikod's side.

When the sun was about to set, Zoikod headed home, which was a large mansion surrounded by spacious courtyards.

From the sky, Jack saw Zoikod enter his courtyard but the soldiers stayed outside. The suspicious individuals who were tailing him gathered outside one of the walls of the courtyard. Jack then saw one of them cast a spell. They disappeared from that spot and appeared inside the courtyard.

"Mass Teleportation," Jack uttered.

This group, numbered six people, immediately rushed to Zoikod who was still unaware of the intruders and was walking toward his mansion.

Jack then saw a little draconian girl come out of the mansion and run toward Zoikod.

The six rushing players clearly saw the girl but they didn't slow. One of these players was even in the process of casting a spell while running.

Jack couldn't just stay idle. He had Pandora take a dive and the two hurtled to the ground like a falling meteor.

Chapter 1199: The Identities of the Serial Killers

Zoikod was a level 55 special elite. Jack didn't know the level of these six players rushing at Zoikod, but he doubted these players who dared to assassinate natives in a safe zone to be regular players. Against experts with the current average levels, Zoikod won't last long.

When Jack got into Inspect range, he used Inspect on the little girl running toward Zoikod. The girl was just a level 1 commoner, she won't survive a hit.

Aside from the player who was casting a spell. Another used a bow, and that player was in the process of nocking an arrow.

Jack didn't let Pandora slow down. She continued diving at high speed. When they were close to the ground, Jack used the momentum to propel himself down, increasing his speed even more. The player with a bow released the arrow then. It was a shot using a skill, the one arrow turned into multiple arrows that spread. The player didn't care if he hit the little draconian girl.

Jack slammed into the ground before the two draconian natives, shocking the hell out of them. Because he landed so hard, the ground where he landed caved and the impact also created a dust cloud.

The multiple arrows flew into the dust cloud and several impact sounds were heard.

The six intruding players were as shocked by this interruption as the draconian natives. The one who was casting a spell suddenly had his spell formation fizzled. He was confused. He was sure that he was focused on his casting. He didn't know that his casting had failed because Jack had used Cancel Magic on him.

The dust cloud settled and they saw an orc with a pair of claw weapons standing in front of the two natives.

"Who... Who are you...?!" Zoikod yelled as he grabbed the little draconian girl protectively.

Zoikod tried inspecting these intruders, but neither the orc near him nor the six outworlders further away could be inspected. The six were wearing Concealment Coats, rare-grade cloaks that hid someone's info. The six were also wearing face masks.

The face masks couldn't fool Jack's God-eye monocle, but the concealment coats could. So, Jack similarly couldn't find out the six's identities. Jack himself couldn't be inspected because he had re-equipped his Cloak of Shadow.

Jack used Gold Dragon Breath. He didn't care if this move exposed his identity. The breath struck all six players. Gold Dragon Breath inflicted major damage to the equipment's durability. The concealment coats and face masks were not battle-oriented items, so they had very low durability. They were destroyed just from one breath.

The six's true faces were revealed. They were a mix of different races, but they had one thing in common. They were all members of World Maker.

John's deduction was correct. This was indeed World Maker's doing.

The lead was a man in a ninja suit. When Jack used Inspect, he was surprised to find the man had a special class, ninja. Peniel later informed Jack that Ninja was a normal special class of the assassin class. The man with the ninja class was named Deekoff.

Deekoff was level 66, while the other five were all assassins and were level 65. Deekoff signaled for the others to spread out.

"Father, who are they?" The little draconian girl asked. It was clear from her voice that she was terrified.

"Paize, hurry and hide inside the house!" Zoikod ordered. He then ran toward the courtyard's exit, where the soldiers were guarding outside. "Guards! Guards! Help...!!!" He yelled.

The courtyard was too large so the soldiers outside were too far to hear the commotion inside.

"Hey!" Jack called. He was startled when the two people he was supposed to protect went in two opposite directions.

Since the World Maker's members spread out, one of them moved to where Paize was. Paize, who saw this stranger approaching, tripped and fell to the ground. Jack didn't let himself think too much. His body just instantly moved toward the girl.

The assassin who moved toward Paize was actually there to cut Zoikod's path toward the house. He didn't care about the girl. When he saw the girl was in his path, he wanted to just stab her for obstructing his way.

But he suddenly saw movements from the corner of his eyes. Before he knew it, he felt as if he had been punched in the face by a gorilla. A gorilla who had sharp knives attached to his fist. He was sent flying with a feeling that his face had been disfigured.

The gorilla was Jack who now put a stance protecting Paize. Paize didn't get up from the ground. She froze in fear. In her eyes, all these strangers were scary intruders.

Deekoff saw Jack's action and sent a message to the others. Another two of the assassins now headed to Jack while Deekoff and the rest chased after Zoikod. He didn't know who this orc who suddenly appeared out of nowhere was, but their target was Zoikod. They had to assassinate him before the soldiers outside became aware of what happened in this courtyard.

The two assassins came at Jack and used Phase Strike. They disappeared, but Jack's mana sense informed him that the two had moved to Paize behind him. They were attacking Paize instead of him. Jack immediately jumped back and use his body to shield Paize. The girl was a level 1 commoner. She would die if the phase strike hit.

This move was following Deekoff's instruction. After seeing how Jack protected Paize, he knew that Jack would sacrifice himself for the girl.

When the two's daggers stabbed into Jack, one of them laughed, "Haha, you fool! This girl is just an NPC, a computer program. You are treating her as if real."

Damage numbers came up above Jack, but the numbers were much lower than they should have been. They then noticed Jack's body was covered by golden scales. Jack had activated Gold Scale armor.

They then noticed Jack's wrathful eyes.

"You two pieces of shit. Die...!!!" Jack's claw weapons exploded into uncountable slashes.

The two didn't realize what had happened. They just felt as if they had fallen into a grinding machine where their bodies were shredded to pieces. Their vision turned black then.

Jack sent Wind Slash to the other assassin whom he had punched earlier. All five wind energies struck the guy before he could use Vanish. He also died.

Chapter 1200: The Serial Killers' Base of Operation

Deekoff and his two comrades had surrounded Zoikod. Zoikod might be a native, but he was just a level 55 special elite. He was not their match. The assassin was a class that dealt the highest burst damage. That's why these killings were tasked to them. They would only need around a minute to kill this native.

But when they just finished landing their first strikes, Deekoff saw several golden swords flying toward them.

"Watch out!" He warned his comrades. They were encircling Zoikod. He was coincidentally the one facing where these golden swords were coming from. His two comrades were unaware.

Deekoff's two comrades were late in responding to his warning. The golden swords stabbed into them. They inflicted damage and also caused knockback. The two were struck several times and flew a distance away, while Deekoff jumped back and used his dagger to strike three golden swords that targeted him.

Each clash with the golden swords caused his hand to tremble and also pushed him far back. He also suffered a little damage. This alarmed him. The damage from these golden swords eclipsed his damage by three times!

He looked at his two comrades who were no longer getting up. Their HP was zero.

He turned to Jack who had come and placed himself before Zoikod.

"Who are you?! That just now was not a beastmaster's skill!" Deekoff exclaimed.

A healing light from Peniel fell on Zoikod, recovering his HP.

"A high fairy... A player who uses a skill that is not of his class... Wait, are you...?"

"Go to hell with your question!" Jack exclaimed as he jumped forward and punched at Deekoff.

Deekoff used Roll to dodge. He then threw several shurikens, which was a ninja's first skill. The shuriken dealt physical damage and had a chance to cause Poison and Bleed. When Jack was slashing the incoming shurikens, Deekoff disappeared using Vanish.

Jack didn't sense Deekoff coming at him, so he used Gold Dragon Sight. He saw Deekoff running away while being invisible. After the clash, Deekoff knew that there was no way for him to accomplish his objective, so he decided to flee.

Jack didn't chase.

He turned to look at Paize, making sure she was all right. He then said to Zoikod who was still confused, "Notify the soldiers and apprehend this lot if they revive in any of Hydrurond city's rebirth zone."

After saying that, Jack summoned Pandora and went back into the sky. He had intentionally let Deekoff go. He always going to let at least one enemy survive. He believed the enemy had a base of operation inside this city, to hide from the authority and plan their moves. This was how he was going to find out about their base.

His Gold Dragon Sight didn't last as long as Vanish's invisibility state, but he had seen the direction where Deekoff was heading. The invisibility from Vanish didn't last long. He soon saw Deekoff appear again from high up in the sky. The red dot representing Deekoff also reappeared when he came out of his invisibility state. Deekoff was running through the alleys.

But one thing confused Jack, Deekoff seemed to return to being invisible on several occasions while he was running. Jack didn't see him using any magic scroll or a tool. Peniel explained to Jack that Deekoff was using Ninja's level 60 skill, Stealth Mastery.

This skill turned the user invisible whenever they came into shadowy corners. Similar to his Cloak of Shadow's ability, except Deekoff didn't need to stay still for long to become invisible. He just instantly became invisible whenever he went into shadowy areas. This skill lasted one minute at the first level. Additionally, every attack that was made during this invisibility state would give the ninja an ambush bonus.

But at this time, Deekoff was not using it for an offensive purpose. He was using it to escape from Jack. After realizing Jack's identity, he knew Jack's speed was inhuman. He had kept on looking back while running. Making sure that Jack didn't follow him.

Little did he know, Jack was watching him from above.

Jack let him continue his run. The curfew was already in effect, so Deekoff continued using small alleys to travel to avoid bumping into city patrols.

Jack tailed him until Jack saw him entering a shop. The shop was closed. Deekoff came to the door and knocked. Someone opened the door and he entered.

"That shop must be their base of operation," Jack said. Jack sent a message to the investigative team, asking them about the shop.

The team had made a comprehensive study of the city. They had created a version of their map. They quickly identified the shop that Jack mentioned. The shop was owned by a local guild called Hidden Dragons. This guild was a small-scale guild that had no headquarters.

'Was this guild another of World Maker's subordinate guilds?' Jack wondered.

He asked the investigative team leader down there to send this newest info to the teams in the other cities. Since they had found the links between these serial killers with Hidden Dragons, they could use this as a basis for their investigations. They only needed to check if the other murder sites had a link to this guild and to check the shops or buildings owned by this guild in the other cities where the serial killings took place.

Since Jack had seen with his own eyes the serial killer entering the building, he didn't need to be courteous. But he still checked the nearby surroundings to make sure there was no patrol before landing in front of the shop. He knocked on the door as Deekoff did.

It took a while before a voice came in from the inside, "Who is it?"

Jack was blank for a second before replying, "I'm Deekoff's friend."

There was a long pause before the voice inside said, "What's the password?"

'Screw this!' Jack said in his mind and slashed his sword at the door. The door lost more than three-quarters of its HP bar with that one slash. This door was not a durable structure.

Jack followed up with a hard kick using mana manipulation. The door's hinges broke and the door leaf flew back from the kick, carrying whoever the poor soul was behind it.