

World 1391

Chapter 1391: Entering without Limit

Grace was right. Their previous location was indeed close to where the entrance to Greed's sanctum was located. The two arrived in just a couple of hours. After arriving, Jack found the place to be slightly different.

"I remember the last time this place was more barren and the trees were all dead," Jack remarked.

"Yeah. I told God Greed the place is too bleak, that he should redecorate. It seems he follows my advice," Grace said.

"My Lady, you have my admiration," Jack said. Peniel agreed by nodding heavily.

Grace came to the largest tree. He touched her hand on its bark and a portal opened.

"Wow, so we no longer need to busy ourselves with the hidden rune diagram to enter?" Jack asked.

"He set the portal so I can come in at any time," Grace answered.

"Wow! VIP treatment. Again, My Lady, you have my respect," Jack made an exaggerated bow.

"Only respect?" Grace asked with a teasing voice.

"Huh?" Jack didn't quite understand.

Grace giggled and entered the portal.

Peniel slapped Jack's still confused head. "She has already entered," she said.

"Oh, need to hurry!" He is not sure if she could call Grace to open the portal for him if it was closed. He jumped into the still-open portal.

Arriving inside, he came to the familiar underground cavern. Grace was waiting for him. "Come," she said and the two went in deeper.

They arrived at Greed's hut. Grace called to announce their arrival before she walked in. Jack followed after her. The hut wasn't big. It took just one glance to see that it was empty.

"He is not home?" Jack asked.

"Hm... I wonder where he has gone to. He rarely leaves this place," Grace said.

"Well, even God gets bored. He is probably out there fooling around..."

"Boo!" A voice came from right beside Jack. Jack turned and saw Greed's face close-up.

"WAA...!!" Jack was startled and fell on his butt.

"God Greed," Grace bowed to Greed.

"Mm... It's good that you come to visit, but why bring this wanker here?" Greed asked Jack.

'The heck? Where did he learn that word?' Jack thought.

"From one of her stories," Greed answered. This caused Jack to remember that Greed installed a mind-reading rune diagram in this hut. Jack quickly guarded his thoughts.

"He wished to use the dragon flight portal to gather draconic essences," Grace informed.

"He did express that kind of interest when he was here, but why should I let him use it?" Greed said while giving Jack an intense stare.

"Can you let him? We will be truly grateful," Grace pleaded.

"Mm... Okay, just for you, kiddo," Greed said.

"Ki... Kiddo?" Jack stammered.

"He likes the word. It's also from one of my stories," Grace explained.

"Okay, get out! It's time for story-telling time. I don't want you here to ruin it," Greed said to Jack. To which Jack gladly complied. He got up and ran to the exit.

He stopped after thinking of something. "Um... After I use the dragon flight portal. Can I use the endless wave portal?" Jack asked.

"Aren't you here only for the draconic essences?" Greed asked in return.

"Yeah, but since I may only use it one time. I want to spend the remaining time using..."

"When did I say you may only use it one time?" Greed cut Jack's speech.

"Uh..." Now Jack was lost. "Do you mean I can use the dragon flight portal repeatedly within one day?" He asked.

"Knock yourself out," Greed said and closed the door in Jack's face.

"Yeah!" Jack jumped in celebration and headed to where the portals were.

He suddenly stopped mid-way, looked back at the hut, and muttered, "Hm... He is not doing anything indecent to Grace, is he?"

Peniel slapped his head. "Do you think Gods are like that? Don't lump the divines with lowly beings such as you!"

"Geez, why is it you who gets upset?" Jack said.

Inside the room, Greed saw Jack resume going to the portals.

"Thank you, God Greed. It's very generous of you to let him use the Dragon Flight portal without limit," Grace said. Even when she was here, Greed told her that she could only use that portal once. But Grace did not need draconic essence so that was not a big deal for her.

"Well, Hope did entrust the five of you with his hope, especially that kid. I've got to honor his wish," Greed said.

"I didn't know you have such a feeling about God Hope."

"Oh, make no mistake. I hated the guy. So self-righteous and so uptight, but you gotta hand it to him. That guy has principles and I respect that. I just hope that kid doesn't let him down."

"He won't," Grace said.

"You truly like that kid, huh?" Greed asked.

Grace didn't answer. Her face went red.

"Forget about him. It's story-telling time!" Greed declared.

"No problem," Grace chuckled. "But after this, may I also use your portals."

"You too, huh? Fine, fine. I guess I am getting soft in my old age."

"You still look young," Grace chuckled.

"This is just the form I choose to use at the moment. I can look different if I want. Enough chatter. Tell me a story!"

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Since Jack could use the dragon flight portal without limit, he just repeatedly used that same portal, netting 390 draconic essences with each entry.

He spent the remaining of the day and well into the night using the portal. It was past midnight when he came out of his fourth run. He had no intention of stopping, so Grace stopped him.

"Rest," she said.

"But... I can still go on," Jack said. If he reached bloodline level 9 by tomorrow morning, he could spend his time doing other things. He only needed four more entries.

"Portal close!" Greed exclaimed. Jack saw the entrance to the dragon flight portal turn dim. Grace shot Greed a grateful glance.

Jack's shoulders slumped. He had no choice but to rest now.

He sat on the prepared bed. Grace was laying on another bed next to him. She was already very sleepy. She stayed up only to make sure that Jack rest. Now that Jack had stopped his grinding, she could sleep.

Jack wasn't tired yet, though. After making sure Grace had slept, he took out the two loot from Euphosine. The Talent Pill and the Upgrade Cell.

Chapter 1392: New Talent and Upgraded Container of Souls

He first picked up the talent pill. In the past, he had tried multi-thinking when using the pill to gain his Hundred Synchronous Thoughts. As long as he had a hidden talent, he could bring it to the surface using this pill. He was now thinking about what he should focus on to give this pill the best success chance.

"What talent do you think you still have?" Peniel asked.

Jack was also rather confused. He looked at Grace who had slept. He didn't want to wake her up just to consult with her.

"You have been with me for quite some time, haven't you? What talents do you think I have?" Jack asked Peniel.

"Hm... Let me think. Your simple-mindedness. Your ability to ignore important issues when it is not urgent. Your denseness in understanding romantic gestures..."

Jack rolled her eyes. "Forget it. It's pointless asking you."

Jack stood up and brandished his two swords. When Peniel was confused about what he was trying to do, he started playing with his sword.

"Oh? Are you trying to bring up a talent that is related to your martial art?" Peniel guessed.

Jack nodded. "Yeah. I might not be the best martial artist, but I believe I have the talent for it. I only started late."

Jack continued practicing his sword art. He also meditated in the sword's heart while doing it and incorporated mana manipulation into his every slash.

When he felt like he was ready, he stored one of the swords and held the talent pill in his hand. He then used it.

The talent pill disappeared.

"Huh...?"

"What? Do you fail?" Peniel asked.

Jack sent her an annoyed stare. "You have that little confidence in me?" Jack asked. "I received a talent, but it's not what I expected. Go and see for yourself."

Peniel checked Jack's status page then. A new talent had popped up in his talent list.

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Mana Affinity (Talent)

Improves user's connection with mana.

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It was just a simple description. Peniel asked Jack, "Do you feel any different?"

"Yeah... It feels weird," Jack said. "It's as if I'm seeing everything for the first time. It's hard to describe."

"I can sense your feeling, but I can't quite understand it," Peniel said.

Jack closed his eyes and focused on his mana sense. He could now make out every detail in his vicinity even when his eyes were closed. His mana sense had become so sharp he might as well have a three-hundred-sixty-degree perception even without using his eyes.

Not only that, his mana sense range had doubled. He could now detect things from thirty meters away.

He tried to accumulate mana in his hand. It was as easy as breathing. He didn't even need to concentrate. It just happened with a thought. He used Flame Strike with mana manipulation. The flame from his Storm Breaker burst ragingly as he slashed. The flame burst made it seem as if a completely different skill. He was sure if an opponent was hit by this version of Flame Strike, the effect would be completely different than before.

"It's so easy now. Its power has also increased," Jack uttered. "This is better than I hope for."

"Well, I can sense a little mana as well. That slash just now sure felt intense," Peniel remarked. "I wonder if you are at Domon's level now."

"Hehe. Let's put it to the test when we meet that geezer," Jack said with a grin.

"Let's deal with the next one!" Jack exclaimed and came to the Upgrade Cell he had taken out earlier.

He brought his Container of Souls out. There were 1,400,000 souls inside. Eighty percent of it was courtesy of Euphosine. The rest were from the monsters he and Grace hunted during their two weeks journey to the Council of Charites. The players or the night hunters that were killed during Euphosine's game didn't award any souls. Perhaps because the rule of that dimension made sure their souls were recycled back to Euphosine.

He didn't use the souls inside the container yet. He wanted to first see what effect the container has after being upgraded.

Jack brought the Containers of Souls close to the Upgrade Cell. An interface appeared asking if he wanted to upgrade the Containers of Souls. Jack clicked the accept button.

After a series of animations, the Upgrade Cell disappeared, leaving only the Containers of Souls.

"Huh, it doesn't look different," Jack said. When he upgraded his Transformation Box, it transformed into the Transformation Prism. This time, the upgraded item retained its original look.

But then again, upon closer inspection, Jack saw many new detailed inscriptions along the container's surfaces. Jack used his Inspect skill then.

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Container of Souls (Legendary Artifact)

Collect souls of slain people or monsters.

Uses 1,000 souls to increase the user's basic skill level.

Uses 10,000 souls to increase the user's advanced skill level.

Uses 100,000 souls to increase the user's elite skill level.

Uses 300,000 souls to upgrade a skill's star, only a max-leveled skill can be star upgraded using these souls.

Links to Storm Wind.

Souls collected: 1,400,000

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The container's functions were mostly still the same. It just added one more function, upgrading the stars of a skill. But even if it was only this one addition, it brought Jack much excitement.

"Yes!" He exclaimed. He hurriedly closed his mouth and looked at Grace, afraid that his yell might wake her up. She was still fast asleep. She must be very tired.

"Yes," Jack said again but softly this time. The star upgrades were the hardest to increase. It took lots of repetition to upgrade a skill by one star. There was no shortcut but to spend the time to use the skills repeatedly. Now, he had the means for that shortcut.

"Cool, right?" Peniel asked.

"You could have just told me from the start what it will upgrade to," Jack said to her.

"But you won't feel as happy as you are now when you find out about it yourself, would you?"

"You got a point there," Jack said.

He stored the Container of Souls. He would use the souls later. He had spoken with Jeanny through messages. Jeanny had copied the technique books he last gave her. He just needed to meet her to get those books. He would use the souls then.

"Ready to sleep now?" Peniel asked.

"One last thing," Jack said and took out the Runestone of Spellcasting. "How many mana cores do you think are needed to copy this runestone?"

"Mm... I say it is no fewer than the Mana Gathering Stone, if not more," Peniel answered.

"Well, let's just fuse with it then," Jack said.

Chapter 1393: Gold Dragon Wings

While fusing with the Runestone of spellcasting, Jack was taken into a world of flying stones and quicksand.

He was assaulted by a hail of stones. He tried to use his hands as if swords to repel the stones, but there were just too many stones. The more he repelled, the more stones were conjured. It was as if he had to be hit by the stones. There was no way around it.

After getting stoned for a torturingly long duration, he suddenly felt himself sinking. He looked down and saw his feet were ankle-deep in the sand. He tried to pull himself out but couldn't. He sank fast. Before he knew it, he was completely submerged. He couldn't breathe. He couldn't move. Which was weird because even underwater, he could breathe just fine in this game world. What he felt now was what was called getting suffocated in his old world, and it was excruciating. It was worse here because he couldn't die.

Even under the sand, the text box asking him to quit was magically visible, tempting him to click the quit button. Jack forced himself to not look at it.

He then found himself falling out of the sand and back to solid ground. Then the stoning came again. It continued to repeat, countless times.

He didn't know how long it was. When it was finally over, he found himself sprawling on the ground. Peniel was looking at him with a smile.

"You succeeded," she said.

Jack sat up and wiped the sweat on his head. "I don't think I will ever get used to this. The one who designed this runecrafting process was truly sick people."

Now that he had fused with the Runestone of Spellcasting, he could summon it at will. It was now floating beside him with a yellowish glow.

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Runestone of Spellcasting (unique runestone)

Increase spells' power by approx. 30%.

Elemental energy required for upgrade: 0/100,000

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"Spell power... Does this indicate only spell damage?" Jack asked.

"No. It will increase your overall spell power," Peniel explained. "Spells that have probability will have their probability increased by thirty percent. Spells that increase attributes will increase thirty percent more."

Jack cast Time Realm. The max-level Time Realm had an AOE of a fifty-meter radius, but the barrier that marked the spell's edge was now farther than fifty meters from him. He focused his willpower on the runestone beside him and saw the spell's edge move further away.

He did not doubt that the enemies within this spell would also become slower than usual. He checked the spell's duration. It remained normal. The runestone's power didn't affect the spells' duration.

Jack then cast Heightened State, a Magician's basic spell that increased mana regeneration and increased skill cooldown. He saw his mana recover faster than the usual effect of the spell.

He then cast Illumination. The light ball conjured was brighter than normal.

He tested injecting as much willpower as he could while reading the description from his runestone. At his runecrafting level, he could push the increase to almost 50%. This meant at his best performance, he could increase his spells' power by half.

He then used the unique-grade Amber he had gotten from Euphosine to feed his Runestone of Spellcasting. The gemstone supplied 2,500 elemental energies to the runestone.

"You haven't slept...?" Jack heard Grace's voice from behind. He turned and saw Grace was half awake and staring at him with a sleepy face.

"I'm just about to!" Jack hurriedly stored everything back and canceled all his still ongoing spells. He went to the makeshift bed that had been prepared.

Grace was staring at him until he closed his eyes, making sure he truly slept this time.

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The next morning, he overslept because he was too tired. Grace intentionally didn't wake him up to let him rest. She also told Peniel to let Jack sleep.

When he woke up, he received the notification of some calls. He thought at first it was from John due to some emergency. It was instead from his grandfather.

He contacted Domon back.

"Gramps, you finally managed to learn how to use this messaging system," Jack greeted.

"Yeah. Jet taught me. It feels weird, though. It's like using a handphone without a handphone. I'm not sure I will get used to this. Anyway, when will you be coming back? Jeanny said you are done with whatever it is you left to do."

"I may probably return later today, but I will have to deal with kingdom matters first. Why? Do you miss your grandson?"

"A little. I have someone I want you to meet," Domon said.

"Is it Freddie? It is I who sent him there," Jack said.

"No, not Freddie. Someone else. I've made an appointment with this person to teach you. Don't take too long. Come back to the guild headquarters once you are done. She will only be here until next week. I'm not sure if I can persuade her to come again the next time. So, you better not waste this chance."

"Teach? She? What is this about?"

"Just come back as soon as possible. Domon out."

'Domon out? Do you think this is walkie talkie?' Jack thought.

He was curious about the person Domon wanted him to meet and what this person was going to teach him. Knowing his grandfather, it would be something related to martial arts. But this in turn picked his curiosity even more. His grandfather was the best martial artist he knew. What could this other person teach him that his grandfather couldn't?

He threw all this to the back of his mind. First thing first. He had to get the Gold Dragon Wings today.

He got ready and went to the Dragon Flight portal. He didn't see Grace or Greed. Grace was probably telling Greed another tale in his hut. He couldn't tell the time since he was underground but he estimated it was almost noon already.

Since he planned to go back to Thereath today, he didn't waste any more time and entered the portal.

Half a day passed. Jack finally completed the fourth run of the day. The draconic essences he had collected finally pushed his Divine Gold Dragon Bloodline to level 9.

His attributes, HP, Stamina, and MP now received a 52% boost from the bloodline. He also received a new skill.

He activated the skill and a pair of huge dragon wings of golden color spread from his back.

Chapter 1394: Special Attention

"You did it!" Grace was standing in front of the dragon flight portal. "Very cool wing," She added.

"Yeah. It has no duration or cooldown. I can use it anytime I want," Jack said. "I no longer need my Soar spell."

"These wings can suffer damage," Peniel informed. "They have a separate HP equal to 100% of your HP. If their HP is depleted, they will be broken. Certain skills that inflict wounds, like your Brave Slash, might break them even if they still have HP left. Don't worry, though. Given time, the wings will fix themselves. You just can't use them to fly in the meantime."

"I see. This means I can also use them as shields in a pinch. They can be a barrier with equal HP as I."

"I'm glad for you," Grace said.

"Now that I've achieved my objective, I will go back now. My gramps said there is a person he wants me to meet. Do you want to go back with me or do you want to stay?"

"I still have something to do. I will return to Thereath tomorrow morning. I will find you once I do," Grace answered.

"Okay, I will go back first," Jack said.

He heard Greed's voice then, who had appeared right next to him.

"Do you think this is a place you can come and go as you wish, punk?"

Jack turned to him with a surprised expression. 'Is this God trapping him here again like the last time?'

Greed laughed. "Look at your face! I'm just messing with you, haha! Where do you say you want to go back to again? Thereath, is it?"

"Ye... Yes...," Jack stammered.

"Bye!" Greed said and snapped his finger. Jack vanished in a flash of light.

Before he knew it, Jack found himself in the middle of Thereath's city square. The pedestrians who were walking around the place were startled when Jack just appeared out of nowhere. This was not the portal zone, after all. It was not common for people to teleport into the city at this square.

Some then noticed Jack's attire and realized he was their king. They quickly greeted Jack with a bow.

Jack was still stunned by the sudden displacement. He finally gathered himself after seeing people bowing to him. He nodded at them before summoning Pandora and made his way to the palace. It was almost evening by now.

'Damn, that Greed. Couldn't he have given me a warning first?' He complained in his mind.

He went to the throne room directly after arriving in the capital. John, Thaergood, and Isabelle were there.

"Ah... Your Majesty, you've finally graced us with your presence," John greeted.

Thaergood and Isabelle greeted Jack with a bow.

"You should learn from them how to properly greet your sovereign," Jack said to John as he took his seat on the throne.

"I don't think I will," John replied.

"Anything to report? How's it going with that incident at Verremor's border?" Jack asked as he opened the monarch system and study his kingdom's stats.

"The investigative teams just teleported to those border towns yesterday. They are still investigating. We will hear from them once they find anything," John reported. "I also send some of the teams to the towns on Verremor's side. They will coordinate with one another to match their findings."

"Armstrong has issued an order to tighten the patrols around the border zone," Isabelle reported. "I've also sent scouts around the border zone to see if there is any suspicious activity from the orcs."

"All right, but tell them to remain courteous to any passing orcs. Do not let our hard-earned peace be ruined just because of paranoia," Jack said.

"Due to the same incident, some nobles from those towns have been waiting for Your Majesty's return," Thaergood informed. "They insist on an audience with Your Majesty before they are willing to return to their towns."

"We will deal with them tomorrow morning. Let's resume building our military," Jack said. After building the World Commerce Center, the kingdom's coin reserve started to build up again. He didn't need to be afraid of continuing the heavy expenditure on their army.

Their national treasure, the Boundless Cache, also provided gold coins, mana, and ruling powers. The coin income from the Boundless Cache was nothing if compared to the World Commerce Center, but it was the ruling powers' income that was the treasure's main benefit. Peniel informed Jack that out of the seven countries' national treasures, only the Boundless Cache awarded ruling powers.

Added to the monthly ruling power income he received from his sovereign level, his stock of ruling power was 161.

He spent 80 of those ruling powers for the usual two monarch powers. The Call to Arms and Mass Drill. He then performed manual drafting on all the settlements starting from the Town level and above. With a Megalopolis and with some settlements that had increased their levels, this round of drafting gave him 478,000 recruits.

Their army within the country now totaled 3,170,000 troops. This was around the number Themisphere had before the Verremor invasion. They had returned to their original strength, but many of the recruits still needed training before they could fight.

Jack used the manual training function and sent all those recruits to the barracks for training.

He then checked the recruit's data to see if there was any mythical-grade recruit. He had again used his Runestone of Luck when he used Call to Arms. Since the number of recruits had increased, the probability should increase as well.

There was one. A man named Stewart. A mythical grade was a rare commodity in an army. Jack instructed Isabelle to tell Armstrong to give this Stewart and Ana from last month's recruit special attention. If they could quickly develop these two talents, it would be a great help for their army.

He also told Isabelle to give Kramer, who would be coming in one or two weeks, the same attention. He told her Kramer was his friend.

Now, he had to prepare the Council of Charites' new base, so that Talia and the others had a place to stay when they arrived.

Chapter 1395: Special Buildings

Jack had thought about which city to put the Council of Charites' new base during his time in Greed's sanctum. Since Talia and the others had expressed concern about their comfort among the hustle and bustle of a city, he decided to build their base in a city with the fewest population. That would be Themonium, a city that had recently upgraded into a metropolis.

Jack opened Themonium's building list and scrolled down to the bottommost section. A new Wonder Building was available there, Joy Recreational Hub.

For people who said they were not used to the hubbub of a settlement, their base sure sounded like a place for many people to hang out.

"Hoo... You never cease to amaze me, expert," John remarked. "From its name, I dare to guess this wonder had something to do with the divine faction you visited. Jeanny also went to a divine faction but all she got was a companion and a bunch of mana cores."

"She did?" Jack had heard about the mana cores but the companion was news to him.

"Yeah. Care to tell me what happened in the Council of Charites? You were out of contact for more than a week."

"Well, you are not going to believe this. We..."

"On second thought, forget it. I'm not interested. Check out that new Wonder Building. I want to see its effect," John said, cutting Jack's words mercilessly.

"I almost forgot how charming you are," Jack said sarcastically. He then clicked on Joy's Recreational Hub.

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Joy's Recreational Hub (Wonder Building)

Houses the Council of Charites. Not part of the kingdom's army, can't be promoted into official positions, can't be commanded, but will actively defend the city if the city is attacked.

Increases the overall Happiness in the country. The effect is doubled in the city this wonder is built.

Allows 1% of the kingdom army to register to become the special unit: Wonder Wizard.

Army morale always starts at 100 during the start of a war campaign. Morale deteriorates 50% slower. Gained morale is 50% more.

Construction cost: 50,000 gold coins, 60,000 mana, 10,000 lumbers, 2,000 minerals.

Construction time: 50 days.

Upkeep: 7,000 gold coins/month, 12,000 mana/month

Requirement: Receives an official request to build the hub from the Council of Charites.

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"Sweet...," John remarked. "All of them are good effect. The morale, new special unit, and additional garrison to defend the city, but I am most happy about the happiness effect. Do you know that the happiness stat of a settlement is closely related to a settlement's population growth? The higher it is, the faster the city's population increased."

"How do you know?" Jack asked.

"Duh. Hope's knowledge, remember?" John mocked.

"Then why do you not already know this Wonder Building's effect from the start?"

"It's Hope's knowledge, not Peniel's knowledge. Hope knows nothing about the effect when other divine factions join a kingdom. Speaking of which, once you build this Wonder Building, I think there should be an additional effect."

"What's that?" Jack asked.

"Try to build one first," John said. He then said to Peniel, "I'm surprised you didn't tell him about it when he built the Sanctuary of Courage."

"Are you talking about the Brave Academy," Peniel asked.

"Uh-huh," John nodded.

"... I forgot," Peniel answered.

John was speechless hearing the fairy's reply.

"What Brave Academy?" Jack asked.

"Just build this one first!" John instructed.

Jack complied. There was coincidentally an empty building slot. John was still pondering what to build on this slot when Jack came in. Afterward, Jack used 5 ruling powers to complete the construction process.

He then sent a message to Stefan, who was traveling with Talia, to ask him to inform her about the city where her new base was located.

"How many ruling powers do you still have? I have a bunch of things I want to hasten," John said.

"Of course, you do," Jack said.

"First, check the building list. There should be a new special building that can be built," Peniel said. She then said to John, "I don't forget this time."

Jack scrolled up to the list of where the special buildings were located. "Which one?" Jack asked. There were a bunch of special buildings. Jack never paid attention to them. He let John work on them.

"That one!" Peniel pointed.

"World Game Stadium?" Jack read the description.

"It's not a Wonder Building, but it might as well be. It requires a specific condition before it can be built, which was the settlement has to have Joy's recreational Hub built and it can only be built beside this Wonder Building."

"The same thing as the Brave Academy," John said.

When Jack turned to him, John said, "I already start the construction of the Brave Academy when I happened to see it on the list, but it still requires around thirty days to complete. You can use your ruling powers to complete the construction."

"Let's complete this one first," Jack said and put the World Game Stadium into construction.

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World Game Stadium (Special building)

Natives who use this stadium have a tiny chance to have their max HP increased permanently.

Improves the opinion of foreign natives on the country this special building is built.

Improves the quality of the natives within the country (Improves the probability of better grade recruits appearing during a military draft)

Construction cost: 10,000 gold coins, 15,000 mana, 5,000 lumbers, 3,000 minerals.

Construction time: 40 days.

Upkeep: 2,000 gold/month, 3,000 mana/month

Requirement: Has built Joy's Recreational Hub, has to be built next to Joy's Recreational Hub

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He then used 4 ruling powers to complete it at once.

"This stadium is heaven-sent. It should help lower the tension between us and Verremor by a bit," John said.

"This also helped us get better recruits the next time we draft," Jack said, then added, "Maybe I should have built this first before we did the Call to Arms and the military drafts."

"Maybe you should," John agreed. "Next time, leave the drafting for the last."

"That brave academy you mentioned. It should be in Therimdell, isn't it?" Jack asked.

"Yes," John confirmed.

Jack changed the screen to Therimdell and looked at the construction slots in progress. Brave Academy was in one of those slots.

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Brave Academy (Special building)

Training space: 10,000 units

Doubled the unit's training growth rate and skill/spell learning probability within the city.

Units who are training within this academy have their growth rate and probability tripled.

Construction cost: 30,000 gold coins, 5,000 mana, 1,000 lumbers, 6,000 minerals.

Construction time: 40 days.

Upkeep: 3,000 gold/month, 1,000 mana/month

Requirement: Has built Sanctuary of Courage, has to be built next to Sanctuary of Courage

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This Brave Academy was similar to the War Academy, only better. It still had 29 days till its completion. Jack used 3 ruling powers to complete it.

He then called, "Duchess Isabelle. About our two mythical recruits and my friend, Kramer. Please make sure they have the training slots in this Brave Academy."

"I will let Armstrong know," Isabelle replied.

Chapter 1396: Special Techs

"What do you want me to use my ruling powers on?" Jack asked John. He had 69 ruling powers left.

He was planning to use 10 ruling powers to increase the population of Theneward. It was the second most populated settlement after Thereath. If it could be upgraded into a second megalopolis, it would improve Themisphere's growth even further.

But that would take some time. At the moment, Theneward's population was seven million. Even by using his monarch power, it would still be long before Theneward could hit ten million population.

He also wanted to extend the Impose Blockade on World Ruler and World Maker. That required 40 ruling powers.

If he followed his routine, he would only have 19 ruling powers left. He wanted to listen to John's needs first to determine which took priority.

"On research," John replied.

While Jack switched to the research screen, John explained, "During your absent, Armstrong and I arranged a joint training with Hydrurond's army at Fort Aldryth."

"How are they? Have they got used to the fort?" Jack asked.

"Yes. They had even built a new settlement around the fort with the citizens they brought from Hydrurond. If you go to the settlement list, you will see we have one new city."

"We did?" Jack asked. He went back to the City Overview again and looked at the list of settlements.

"Alsvelg?" Jack read the name of the new settlement.

"Aldryth uses her name and her ancestor's name, Eorsvleg. The one who founded the Hydrurond Dominion. She said it is so she remembers that their home is elsewhere," Isabelle explained.

"The settlement is already the level of a city. It must be because of the population she brought from Lefkauselis," Jack remarked.

"It is counted as an autonomous area, so we can't do anything to that city," John said. "Your Call to Arms and Mass Drill just now also didn't affect that city."

"We have been supplying provisions to them the first few weeks, but the draconians were a prideful race," Thaergood said. "They worked hard on the surrounding lands. They should be able to sustain themselves in one or two more weeks. By then, they would be able to support themselves without us sending them provisions."

"That's good to hear," Jack said.

Some nobles of the country expressed objection when they found out about Jack giving the draconians a piece of the country. Asking their settlements to send provisions to these draconians further caused displeasure among these nobles. Jack had been ignoring the protest.

He was lucky Serenity's Blessing was in effect in the country, thus reducing the chance of unrest caused by these nobles. Now with the addition of Joy's Recreational Hub, the discontent should be driven down further. Still, if Aldryth's people could become self-sufficient, that would greatly help him in dealing with those protesting nobles.

"Can you please go back to the research screen, please?" John said.

"It's you who brought up the Hydrurond's refugees," Jack said. "What does that have to do with the research?"

"As I said, we have been doing joint training with them. As a result, new tech has appeared in the military path," John answered.

"Really? I don't know such a thing is possible," Peniel said in surprise.

"Despite Hope's knowledge in me, I'm also surprised when it happened," John said. "I think this is the world system adapting by itself."

The screen was now showing the research overview. Jack entered the military path. Aside from the usual tech tree, two new techs were floating by themselves without being attached to any of the branches from the tech tree.

The first one was titled 'Coordinated Strike: Hydrurond, rank: 1'.

When Jack clicked on this tech. It said that after researching this tech, the enemy army who received a joint attack from Themisphere and Hydrurond's armies would receive a debuff of -5% to their defenses and resistances. This tech was in the process of being researched. It still had twenty-eight days to go.

The second one was titled 'Martial Art Drills'. This tech improved the martial arts learning speed of native soldiers. This tech required eighty days of research time.

"This also popped up by itself?" Jack asked.

"Yeah," John replied. "After the efficiency of martial arts was shown during our battle in Hydrurond, words of mouth had spread quite quickly among the army. Emris was especially vocal after witnessing it firsthand. He requested Armstrong to send instructors to his camp. The other Lord Marshalls followed his lead, and thus the practice spread throughout the entire army in this country. This tech appeared then."

Jack nodded. He used 11 ruling powers to learn both of these techs. He expected 'Coordinated Strike: Hydrurond, rank: 2' to appear, but it didn't.

"Perhaps we need to arrange more joint training with the Hydrurond army for the rank 2 to appear," John guessed.

"I was wondering. If this tech can appear, then there should be similar techs for cooperating with the other countries," Jack said. "We should also arrange a joint training with the Verremor army."

"With the current political climate, I don't think this is the best time to bring that up," John said. "We need to solve the issues at the border first."

"You are right," Jack said.

Since he still had ruling powers to spare, he went with his plan and increased the population in Theneward as well as extending the blockade on World Ruler and World Maker. He had only 8 ruling powers left afterward.

"Thank you, everyone. It's late already. Let's rest," Jack said to everyone. To Thaergood, he added, "We will talk about other kingdom issues tomorrow as well as meet those nobles you mentioned."

"Yes, Your Majesty," Thaergood replied and left with Isabelle.

"You are not going to rest yet?" John asked Jack when he saw Jack was still sitting on the throne.

"In a minute, after I do Mass Pay to increase the officers' loyalty," Jack answered. "Before you go, what is your cloak's grade?"

"Rare grade. I suppose you have something to offer me since you asked?"

"Yeah. Take this. This cloak is a super rare grade. It helped me a lot of times in the past," Jack handed John his Cloak of Shadow.

"Well, I do wonder where your usual cloak has gone when you come in with that eye-catching fiery cloak," John said.

"Hehe," Jack changed the element of his cloak into lightning and the cloak flapped behind him while crackling with electricity."

"Show off," John said as he received the Cloak of Shadow.

"Neat cloak," John said after wearing it. All his information was now hidden. "Its shadow-melding ability is a nice combination with my God-eye monocle. This cloak is tailored for me indeed."

"Tailored your ass. I used to have both, remember?" Jack said. He wondered if he would miss the information-concealing ability of that cloak. But with how famous he was now, everyone would recognize him even if they couldn't inspect him.

Chapter 1397: The protesting Nobles

The next morning when he walked to the throne room, he saw John arguing with Thaergood at the entrance. Grace was also there.

"Jack!" Grace came to him. "I have something for you."

Grace handed Jack 5,500 mana cores.

"Where do you get this?" Jack asked in surprise.

"From one of Greed's portals, of course. I've been permitted to use the mana core portal continuously. The last time he let me use it only once a day. I used that portal multiple times these last two days to get this amount. I know you still lack this number to summon the archdemon lord."

Jack didn't know what to say. He now knew Grace had stayed back another night so that she could get these mana cores. He was very touched by her attention. In the end, he could simply say, "Thank you."

"See that? This is your future queen. How dare you bar her entry to the throne hall," John said to Thaergood.

"What the hell are you two arguing about?" Jack finally addressed the two.

John answered, "Grace came to look for you. I invited her into the throne room. Good Thaergood here said non-official personnel is not permitted into the throne room."

"We have a safety protocol in place for a reason," Thaergood argued. Then added, "It is bad enough we have one old draconian going around the palace like he owns the place."

"Speaking of that old draconian, have you seen him?" Jack asked while he grabbed Grace's hand and brought her into the throne room.

"I... I haven't seen him these past few days..." Thaergood wanted to say something about Jack taking Grace into the throne room but was unable to.

John walked past him with a smug grin.

In the end, he could only shake his head and followed them in.

"Wow, this throne room is very impressive," Grace uttered.

"Right, you weren't here during my coronation. You can come here any time you like," Jack said, which made John throw Thaergood another smug grin.

Jack spent an hour discussing with John the direction they were taking for the monarch system.

During that hour, John also briefed Jack in more detail about the incidents at the border.

After Themipshire and Verremor applied open border. Humans and Orcs were freed to cross over and visit the other country's settlements, provided they were able to cross the hostile zone. Hence, nowadays at the border settlements, it was common to see both races mingling together.

But during the past week, theft and vandalism had happened inside Themisphere's border towns. Eyewitnesses reported seeing orcs around the time the incident happened.

Accusations were thrown. Orcs could be peaceful but they were not a race that shied from conflicts. Hence, they returned the accusations using their fists.

Things would have been fine if this was a single incident, but it's not. It happened at almost every settlement near the border.

Luckily, no life was lost throughout those incidents, but what happened caused the people of those settlements to request the kingdom officials to again close the settlements' access to the orcs.

The officials tried calming the public down and increased security, but this of course displeased the orcs. It was as if the kingdom agreed that the accusations had been valid.

In short, things were not looking good for the peace effort between the two countries.

After Jack was done discussing with John, he said to Thaergood, "All right. Let's go meet these nobles."

The meeting was in another room. When Jack told Grace where he was going, she wanted to tag along. Jack let her. He never enjoyed this socializing session. He was glad if someone he was comfortable with accompanied him.

The meeting was held inside a formal meeting room. Inside the room, the nobles had been waiting. On the way, Thaergood explained to Jack. The nobles were representatives from the six families that held political powers in four settlements near the border with Verremor Nation.

They were the Ramos, Halward, Fafner, Orline, Delsodo, and Marken.

One thing that Thaergood warned Jack was these families were the ones who had the most conflict with the orcs in the past and were the most vocal in criticizing the currently implemented peace policy between Themisphere and Verremor.

"All six families had lost one or two family members to the orcs in the past," Thaergood said while he and Jack were on the way. "They were still trying to call for blood against the orcs. They just no longer had the kingdom's backing so they were powerless about it. The recent incidents gave them the chance to try to reignite the hatred of orcs in the masses, especially in the cities and towns where their families reside."

Jack and Grace listened to Thaergood's explanation in silence.

The representatives of the six families stood up and bowed at Jack when he entered the room.

There was a lord's chair inside the meeting room. This chair was meant for Jack, so he sat on it. Beside him were smaller chairs meant for his advisors. Thaergood and Grace sat on those chairs. Opposite them were rows of sofas. The representatives sat back down on those sofas after Jack and the others sat.

One of them stayed standing to introduce himself, "Your Majesty. Allow me to take the lead to introduce myself. I am Sean Ramos, the oldest son of Boan Ramos and heir to the Ramos family. My father was here during your coronation. He sent his regards."

Sean sat and the woman next to him stood. "I am Lisa Halward, the only daughter of Vlad Halward. I am also the heir to the Halward family. I've long to meet Your Majesty."

The rest of them also introduced themselves.

The representative from the Fafner family was Willem Fafner, the brother of Lord Fafner. From the Orline was Hans Orline, the lord himself. The Delsodo family also sent their heir, Julian Delsodo. The Marken was represented by Lord Marken's wife, Lucy Marken. She explained that Lord Marken couldn't come due to bad health.

Hans Orline, who was the most senior, decided to open the discussion, "Your Majesty, we are here to..."

"Let me cut you right there, Lord Orline," Jack said. "If what you want to suggest is to forbid orcs from entering our settlements. I can tell you now that it won't happen."

Chapter 1398: Game of Politics

The nobles were taken aback by Jack's bluntness. The king didn't even let them present their case.

"Your Majesty, please let us..."

Jack lifted his hand giving Hans Orline the sign to stop. "I understand that you surely have a very compelling reason to suggest what I think you want to suggest, which is outlawing orc presence in our cities. Am I, right? Is this what you want to suggest?"

"That is not wrong, but we also..."

"In that case, let me explain to you why I've taken the step to make peace with the orcs," Jack again cut Hans' speech. He was now standing up and motioned for Hans to sit down. Hans had no choice but to comply.

"I believe everyone here is aware of the war that has ravaged Hydrurond. This war ended with a loss on the draconian's side. They are now taking refuge inside our country. Now, the thing I want you to focus on is not the fact that the draconians are in our country. What I want you to pay attention to is what causes them to end up like that, and what is that?"

The six nobles looked at one another before Sean Ramos answered, "The Liguritutum and Aurebor?"

"Exactly!" Jack exclaimed. "Now, you might think this is just a faraway war of other countries that has nothing to do with us. But I can tell you this war has everything to do with us, with our world. I know the Liguritutum ruler. I have crossed paths with him several times, and I can tell you for sure that he will not rest until this whole world, including our great kingdom, is in his grasp.

"Now, we can waste our time here fanning our grudges with the orcs while he built his army. He already conquered three countries. Liguritutum, Aurebor, and Hydrurond! We can't afford to think this has nothing to do with us. They will come for us, sooner or later!"

"But... Aurebor is not conquered...," Julian Delsodo said.

"The current Queen of Aurebor is an outworlder, who is also Liguritutum ruler's consort! Aurebor might as well be his!" Jack declared.

Grace was speechless. She knew that although Mistress was Master's cohort, she was not his consort. Jack just made things up. But the fact that the two were working together was not wrong, so Jack was not entirely lying.

"If we waste our time here, fighting with Verremor, who do you think this will benefit?" Jack continued his sermon. "Once we weakened ourselves with these endless and pointless grudges. Liguritutum will come and sweep us like they sweep Hydrurond. At that time, we are the ones who will have to find refuge in another country. Do you want that to happen?"

"How do we know Verremor does not have the same thought?" Lisa Halward asked. "How do we know that they won't stab us in the back when Liguritutum comes."

"I have spoken to Verremor's grand chief," Jack answered. "Both of us want peace for our two countries. Our two countries have been trapped in endless squabbles rooted in misunderstanding. I know you have all suffered and lost someone due to past conflicts with the orcs, but the orcs have also lost someone. Continuing this vengeance-fueled crusade will just bring ruin to all of us. For the good of our country, I ask that you see the big picture. It's time we bury the hatchet! Verremor is not our enemy. The orcs are not our enemy. Liguritutum is! Our two countries have to work together to make sure that we stand strong against the inevitable invasion from Liguritutum!"

The six nobles were speechless as they looked at one another.

"Now that everyone is clear about this, please excuse me. I..."

"Your Majesty, I still don't think it is wise to trust Verremor just like that..."

"Your Majesty, if Liguritutum is such a threat, we have to eradicate Verremor which is closer before they come..."

When Jack thought he had settled the matter with his speech and wanted to leave, all six nobles instead expressed their opinions without any sense of order.

Jack gritted his teeth. This was why he hated court matters. He had no patience for this game of politics where he had to change people's minds. If this happened in the guild, he would have pulled his swords and beat these people senseless until they agreed with his view.

And he almost did. He was just a thought away from brandishing Storm Breaker when he heard Grace's voice, "Everyone, please calm down."

Grace had her hand on Jack and guided him back to his seat.

"Now that the king had expressed his opinion, he will now hear yours," Grace said.

Jack gave her a face that said, 'Do I have to?'

Grace just had her hand on his, telling him silently to stay still.

"Lord Online. As the most senior, we will hear yours first," Grace said.

"Thank you, My Lady... If I may be so bold, may I enquire your name?" Hans Online asked.

"Her name is Grace. She is my newest advisor," Jack announced.

Jack didn't look at Thaergood, but he could imagine the man lifting his eyebrows. All the formal advisor positions in the monarch system had been filled, but Jack thought it shouldn't be a problem to give Grace an informal position.

"Thank you, Your Majesty, and My Lady, Grace, for this chance. First, let me give you an account of the background of my family..."

Unlike Jack who just dove directly into the heart of the matter in his speech, Hans spent a considerable amount of time telling everyone about his family and his station. This pissed Jack off even more, but Grace's hand kept him in check.

Hans finally got to the main point of his speech where he expressed that orcs were a barbaric race and couldn't be trusted. The recent incidents at the border towns had shown that he was right. He demanded that all orcs were banned from entering Themisphere settlements.

Jack almost jumped up and kicked the noble in the face. What Hans proposed was the same as treating Jack's starting speech as non-existent, but Grace's hand again held him back.

Grace thanked Hans and then asked Lucy Marken to speak next.

Chapter 1399: Diplomacy and Influence

The discussion went on for hours. Each of these nobles gave needless introductions as Hans did. Jack was so bored that he no longer paid attention to whatever these nobles were talking about. He instead

trained mana manipulation and the sword's heart while maintaining the façade of sitting still and listening.

He trained until he felt a nudge from Grace.

"... Now that you have all presented your case, I would like you to go back to what our king mentioned earlier," Grace said. "We all understand your concerns. You all had a bad history with the orcs. Some of you have bad blood with the orcs..."

"Blood debt!" Julian Delsodo exclaimed. "The orcs killed my grandfather!"

"And how did that happen?" Grace asked. She didn't show any dissatisfaction with being interrupted.

"... In a battle when his patrolling squad met Verremor's roaming party," Julian answered.

"Then your grandfather died in the glory of battle. I'm sure he also killed some orcs during that battle. Orcs who might have children. Those children could have grown up and have children your age. Those orc children hated us too for killing their grandfathers, but they are letting go of this hate by coming to our cities and making friends with us. We should do the same.

"If we stop letting them come, they will come to hate us again, and then more grandchildren will lose their grandfathers in a future war that doesn't need to happen. It's time to put a stop to the needless war. There are enemies whom we should fight and those we shouldn't. The ones who shouldn't are the ones who are willing to make peace with us, such as the Verremor Nation.

"I know this is hard, but please give the orcs a chance. What happened was just theft and vandalism. No one was hurt. It might be the orcs who have done it, it might not. Even if it was, we can't blame the entire race for the act of a few. As our king said, banning the orcs is out of the question, but we can work together to make sure that adequate security is implemented."

Grace was staring at Jack when she said that, giving him a hint to say something.

Jack nodded. "Thaergood will work with you and listen to your proposal. As long as it doesn't cross the line, we will consider implementing it."

Grace rolled her eyes. Jack was pushing the work to Thaergood.

The nobles looked at one another. Finally, Hans Online said, "Thank you, Your Majesty, and My Lady, for listening to us. We will heed your words and work with Advisor Thaergood about the increased security."

"In that case, please return to the guest quarter to rest," Thaergood said. "I will arrange a discussion with you all tomorrow morning. For today, I still have matters to discuss with our king."

The six nobles stood up and bowed. "We shouldn't take up more of Your Majesty's time. Please, excuse us."

Jack happily excused them. Anything to end this charade. Thaergood rose and sent those people away.

"From now on, I want you by my side for my monthly kingdom meeting," Jack said to Grace.

Grace giggled at the request.

"You are truly good at dealing with those nobles," Jack added.

"Well, I did meet a lot of high-profile people in our past world," Grace said. "It comes with the territory of my profession. Socializing skill is a must."

"I don't think it is just your socializing skill," Peniel said. "What is the level of your Diplomacy and Influence skills?"

"Uh... My diplomacy is Advanced Master. My influence skill is Intermediate Master."

"Good Lord...! So high? How did you get them so high levels?" Jack asked. "I know so many important natives in this world but I only have Advanced Expert for my influence."

"I don't think any of your important natives are comparable to God Greed now, are they?" Grace chuckled.

"I am close to Goddess Serenity!" Jack declared.

"You are just imagining it!" Peniel slapped Jack's head. She then said to Grace, "Your two auxiliary skills are truly very high. As long as the natives don't hate you from the start, they will listen to what you say, and it will be easier for them to see your point of view because of it. Jack is right. You should be present in his court meetings. It will be easier for him to sway the officials' opinions to his side... Well, as long as his opinions are not too absurd."

"Hey, when have my opinions ever been absurd?" Jack protested.

Grace laughed. "I am happy I can be of use to you."

"You are not just of use. You are extremely invaluable to me," Jack said.

Grace's cheeks became red and she lowered her head.

"Huh? What's wrong? Are you not feeling well?" Jack asked, which resulted in Peniel's slapping his head again.

"Your denseness is truly outrageous," Peniel said.

Thaergood returned to the room then. "Shall we proceed to our regular meeting?" He asked.

"Yes, let's go, but I want Grace to attend the meeting as well," Jack said.

"Certainly. I would have suggested it myself," Thaergood said. He was also impressed with the way Grace handled the meeting just now.

They spent the remainder of the days discussing country matters. Jack listened to everyone's opinions as usual. But because he had gone through this several times, he now had his own opinion once in a while. When he expressed it, Grace helped to make sure that his thoughts were properly articulated.

It was late at night when the meeting ended. Jack was now free to deal with his things the next day. He sent a message informing Domon that he would go to the guild headquarters the next morning.

"Thank you very much for your help today. You are amazing," Jack said to Grace.

"You've only realized that now?" Grace asked teasingly.

"Of course not. I've always known you are amazing, but you prove that you can be even more amazing than your usual amazingness."

"I have no idea what you are spouting. So, you will go to Heavenly Citadel tomorrow?"

"Yes," Jack nodded.

"Can I tag along?" Grace asked.

"I certainly won't mind. Let's go together tomorrow morning," Jack said.

"Okay. See you tomorrow. Sleep well."

"You too," Jack replied.

Jack watched her leave. She had been given a guest quarter in the palace.

"You should have invited her to your quarter. I can't believe you wasted such a precious chance."

Jack heard a voice and turned to see Darnos there.

Chapter 1400: Returned Technique Books

"Hey, old mighty one. Where have you been to? Thaergood said you were absent for a few days," Jack asked Darnos.

"Do I have to always be in this palace? I thought he was glad that I wasn't here to bother him," Darnos said. "To answer your question, I went back to my place to take some things."

"What things?" Jack asked.

"Honestly, I never thought that hanging around here is going to be a long-term thing, but I guess it's not that bad. Among the things I picked up is the water from my lake. I mix that water into the lake next to your guild headquarters. That should increase the grade of that lake and its fish. Now, I can enjoy that lake properly."

"Pick up water? How the hell do you do that?" Jack asked.

"Everyone has their secret, little Jack. You should be thankful I improved the grade of that lake. The tiny dragon turtle living inside will experience better growth due to the improved environment. You can't expect it to stay cooped up inside its cave and just rely on the ice mana site, do you? Growing monsters need a large and quality space to move around to stay healthy. Thanks to me, it now has it."

"I see. I guess I have to thank you then," Jack said.

"You should. But despite my kindness, that dragon turtle is still rude. It still hid inside its cave when I entered the lake."

"Yeah. I wonder why," Jack said. "Well, I am going to sleep. See you."

Darnos harrumphed for a reply.

*

The next morning, Jack teleported to Heavenly Citadel with Grace.

Domon told Jack to come to the Space-Time Chamber. Jack first went to the guild hall because Jeanny wanted to meet him. She was going out on a quest so she couldn't stay long. Paytowin, Tip, and Captain Whitebeard were also in the hall.

"How is your trip to the Council of Elpo?" Jack asked Jeanny and Paytowin.

"It's a good trip. We were made to wait outside the entrance for a few days, but once the faction's representatives came out and sensed Hope's sanctification within us, we were invited in."

"We were treated with a feast and they showed us around the place," Paytowin added with excitement.

"The faction was built at the center of a constellation of floating islands. A very beautiful place. The islands themselves were home to a minor race, the eaglefolk. They were humans with eagle heads and large eagle wings on their backs."

"These eaglefolks live together with the people of the Council of Elpo," Jeanny said. "They normally stop anyone from going near the faction, but they also sense Hope's sanctification in us so they let us pass."

"We don't need to worry about Master attacking that place," Paytowin informed.

"Why is that?" Jack asked.

"The place is full of crazily powerful natives. Most of them have levels 80 to 90," Paytowin said. "Their upper echelons are all mythical grades above level 90. There were even a few who were eternal grades."

"Do you remember the first native we laid eyes on during the tutorial period?" Jeanny asked. "The one who opened the portal into this game world."

"Honuren?" Jack asked.

"Yes, that one. He is Hope's second-in-command. With Hope gone, he is now the top guy in the faction," Jeanny answered.

"And he is a level 99 eternal," Paytowin said.

"Wow! So powerful?!" Jack exclaimed. "Hey, this makes me think. Since all the players who have Hope's sanctification are in Themisphere, maybe we can persuade them to move their base into this country?"

"Forget it. We have already tried," Paytowin said.

"They share their God's strong belief in neutrality. They won't take any side in the world's struggle," Jeanny said. "We give them our warning. They were fairly surprised when we told them about the divine heritage. Honuren can sense Hope's essence inside the altar once he knows it is there. He thanked us and ensured no one would disturb the heritage. Even if Master attacks with an overwhelming number, they have a counter. As the leader of divine factions, they have a beacon that can summon the other divine factions."

"That's right. With so many powerful natives and such a protective device in place, there is no way Master can get the divine heritage," Paytowin said. "As gratitude, they treated us with another feast and

let us use their facilities for a few days. Jeanny and I got a lot of mana cores from those facilities. All in all, we had a really good time there."

"What about you and Grace? How did it go with the Council of Charites?" Jeanny asked.

"We, uh... We also have a good time... We were welcomed. We were invited to participate in their games, which we played rather well, but we had to cut it short and not play until the final. They were so happy with us now they've decided to move their base to Themisphere," Jack said with a grin.

Grace and Peniel were shaking their heads vigorously behind Jack. Jeanny and Paytowin were confused about what to make of all that.

"Well, anyway, Paytowin and I have to go for another quest," Jeanny said. "Here is your stuff. I better give them to you now before you run off again to God knows where."

Jeanny gave Jack three technique books she had copied. Books that contained the Field of Swords, the Ghost Sword, and the Lightning Mine.

"Before you leave, do you mind copying another one?" While grinning, Jack handed Jeanny the Magic Clone technique book.

Jeanny shook her head. "You are lucky we got plenty of mana cores during our trip to the Council of Elpo," she said.

She copied the book on the spot and returned the original to Jack.

"Thank you!" Jack exclaimed.

Without further ado, he learned the skills from those four technique books.

*

Field of Swords, level 1/20 (Active skill, range, requires swords)

Conjures swordlights in a ten-meter radius area around the user. Each swordlight dealt 100% light damage.

30% chance to cause Bleed.

Cooldown: 30 minutes.

Stamina: 250

*

Ghost Sword, level 1/20 (Active skill, melee, requires sword)

Turns the equipped swords incorporeal. Swords will bypass all obstacles and deal 100% soul damage when passing through targets. Ignore all defensive stats.

30% chance to cause Weakness.

Swords can no longer be used to parry attacks.

Duration: 10 seconds.

Cooldown: 1 hour.

Stamina: 200.

*

Lightning Mine, level 1/20 (Active spell, range, requires magic weapon)

Create 1 lightning orb that discharges lightning which deals 100% lightning damage each second to everything within a 5-meter radius.

Each lightning attack has a 1% chance to inflict Paralyze.

Range: 80 meters.

Duration: 30 seconds

Cooldown: 10 minutes

Mana: 150

*

Magic Clone, level 1/20 (Active spell).

Creates an identical clone to the caster.

Duration: 3 minutes.

Cooldown: 3 hours

Mana: 200