

World 1461

Chapter 1461: Breaking into the Palace

"What the... Instant kill?"

Jack had a problem processing what he just witnessed. He landed on the platform and used Inspect on the bodies. They truly had died.

A few pedestrians saw the incident. They were now running away for fear that they might get targeted next, or maybe they were running to alert the soldiers on the wall. In any case, it was not wise to stay here.

"Who is that?!" Jack heard Leavemealone's voice.

He was stuck in the guillotine machine. Jack and Arlcard were behind him and he couldn't turn his head to see them. Jack went and unfastened him.

"Jack?" He said after he was freed from the contraption.

"This is the second time I save you from a certain execution. You better give me a proper thank you this time," Jack said to him.

"What did you do?" Leavemealone asked. He didn't understand what just happened. He just saw thick red smoke circling him and all the guards were down on the ground.

"You truly don't know how to thank someone, do you?" Jack said with annoyance.

"We are wasting time here. Let's go," Arlcard said. He then flew in the direction of the palace.

"Damn it! So hasty," Jack uttered. He resummoned his gold dragon wings and said to Leavemealone, "Follow us. We are getting back on the person who almost has you executed. Can you keep up?"

Leavemealone took out a whistle and blew it. A large panther with two long protruding upper canine teeth appeared. It was Leavemealone's unique-grade steed, Swift Saber Panther.

Leavemealone rode the panther as it ran and jumped along the building's roof, keeping up with the two who were flying up there.

"What skill did Arlcard use just now?" Jack asked Peniel.

"I don't know," Peniel answered.

"Serious? There is a skill that you don't know?"

"There is no skill I know that looks like what we saw just now. At least not one that can kill a group of natives in an instant."

"Hm... What about a skill that looks different but can kill a group of natives in an instant?" Jack asked.

"This is no such... Well, if the native is a vampire. There are, but it doesn't create a red smoke and it also only affects one target," Peniel answered.

"What skill is that?"

"Excorsim or Unholy Exorcism," Peniel said. "Exorcism is the standard spell of the exorcist special class. Unholy exorcism is a non-standard spell that can be learned by the Inquisitor class. The two spells differed in a few details but both had a chance to instantly kill a demon, an undead, or a vampire. But as I said, they are single-target spells and the chance of the spells succeeding depends on the difference between the levels and grades between the targets and the caster."

"Those soldiers were lower level and lower grades than Arlcard, but the supervisor was a level 81 rare elite," Jack said. He learned about it after using Inspect on the sparkling vampire's body earlier. "That supervisor was probably placed there to deal with me when I showed up to save Leavemealone."

"Marcus wasn't aware that you can already deal with such an opponent," Peniel said.

"Which is a good thing. If he underestimates me, he will be caught off guard when we attack him," Jack said. "Anyway, that supervisor was lower grade but higher level than Arlcard. Do you think those two spells you mentioned could have instantly killed him?"

"If the opponent is a vampire, his age comes into concern too. That supervisor is a high elder, the same as Arlcard. I will say that the instant kill chance is very small, but why are we discussing this? The spells I mentioned is a single-target spell and it doesn't produce red smoke. What Arlcard did just now is not Exorcism nor Unholy Exorcism."

"Hm... Okay," Jack said. They were close to the palace by now.

Arlcard was the first to arrive. Most of the soldiers were at the city wall fighting the rebels, but there were still two soldiers guarding the palace's main entrance. Arlcard didn't waste time with stealth. He just flew directly toward the two guards.

Arlcard cast a spell and multiple dark lord's swords assaulted the guards. He also cast Dark Enchantment on his rapier and engaged the guards directly. The two guards were not his opponent.

Jack didn't immediately join. He stopped a distance away and used the communication device to contact Horatio. Leavemealone stopped beside him. After a short glance between Jack and Arlcard, Leavemealone went ahead and joined Arlcard.

"Hey, we are outside the palace now," Jack said to the communication device when he heard Horatio's voice.

"Okay. I will be shutting down the rune diagrams," Horatio said. "I don't know how long I can defend this place. Don't spend too long time."

"Understood," Jack said and stored the device.

The two guards were half-dead by then. With his joining, the battle soon ended. The three entered through the main entrance.

Jack touched the wall and sensed the place. "The rune diagrams are down. Horatio makes good on his promise," he said. "The remaining soldiers in this palace should be heading his way, which gives us more freedom to search around. Come on! We have to find the stairs to the basement as soon as possible."

"If it's the basement you are looking for, I know where the stairs are," Leavemealone said.

"You do?" Jack asked.

"Yes. After you left us to be captured. We were taken to the basement and kept there until we were brought to the execution ground."

"#@\$!... I didn't leave you. I was teleported away by somebody else," Jack said.

"Whatever you say, man."

"You know. You are truly one ungrateful son of a b*tch for someone who has been saved twice."

"Enough chatter! Show us the way!" Arlcard said to Leavemealone.

"Please forgive him. It is his time of the month," Jack said.

Arlcard had no idea what that meant.

"Follow me," Leavemealone said. The three ran through the hallways with him at the lead.

Chapter 1462: Crossing the Border

When Jack and Arlcard were still inside the mausoleum's labyrinth looking for their way to the bottom floor, John and the army he led arrived at the spot where the old bridge was located. Across this bridge was Palgrost's territory. They were one day ahead of schedule. His careful route planning and troop management to repel the local monsters had been more effective than he predicted.

John was standing on top of one side of the chasm, feeling good about himself while the troops slowly trickled across the old wooden bridge.

The old wooden bridge looked fragile but they were sturdy. It had no problem supporting the army that marched on it. Even so, the bridge was not wide. Many of the troops had to wait their turn to cross the bridge.

John had them run on the bridge to save the time. Those who had skills that increased movement speed used them before running across the bridge. Those who could fly used the ability to cross through the chasm.

As for the supply carts, they were too large for the bridge. John had some high-level magic users with the telekinetic spell to move these carts across the chasm. A few mages used telekinesis on the same cart, this was because their intelligence stat was not high enough to move the heavy cart by themselves.

Luckily, the chasm at this spot was not too far. The gap was only twenty meters, so it was still within the range of telekinesis.

When all the supply carts were moved to the other sides, John had these mages use their telekinesis to move the soldiers. Thus, increasing the pace of everyone crossing the chasm. The one with flying ability and sufficient strength also helped carry people over.

This process of crossing the bridge had been going on for almost half a day. Salem came bringing John a report.

"Reporting, sir. Sangrod's scouts continue to approach this place. We had the illusion copies led them elsewhere a few times, but it seems they have started to suspect this area. I'm afraid we won't be able to fool them for much longer."

John sighed. "And here I thought I could just stand here idly and do nothing until everyone passes. Fine then, I will go and take their attention. Call the illusionists! Salem, I leave you in charge here. Have all of them cross this bridge before nightfall. Whip them if you have to!"

"Uh, yes, sir," Salem answered. He was fine being asked to command, but whipping people, that's another matter.

John called Arther and Meryl to follow him while he met the illusionists. He had kept these special units the last to cross because he needed their spells to distract the Sangrod's scouts.

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At the place where the large natural bridge linked the Jagara region with Palgrost's territory, Ezekiel and Sierra were on standby with a large army. They had arranged a defensive formation around this rock bridge. No one would be able to cross without first defeating their army.

"Be on alert! They should arrive by later today or tomorrow," Ezekiel told his adjutants. He was not aware that the Themisphere army had arrived early and was already in the process of crossing over the chasm some distances away.

"Our scouts had not found them?" Ezekiel asked Sierra.

"Not yet, brother. They spotted several brigades that were marching all over the place. They tried to catch up but all of those were just illusions."

"Damn those humans! Hmph. Doesn't matter. Whatever they are playing at, they will still have to come through here. Unless they can all fly, we should be fine to just stand guard over this place."

He then saw one of his scouts come riding at top speed.

"Sir! We have spotted the Themisphere army," the scouts reported once he arrived.

"Are you sure they are not just illusions?" Ezekiel asked.

"We saw the outworlder leader at the head of this army," the scout answered.

"The Illusion Copy spell works on outworlders as well," Ezekiel said. His tone was slightly peeved.

"The outworlder leader, he, uh, he called out to me," the scout said.

"He did?"

The illusion copy created an illusion. The copy couldn't be touched like Jack's previous spell, Body Double. The copy also couldn't talk.

"Where are they heading?" Ezekiel asked.

"Toward here. They should arrive soon."

Ezekiel heard it then. The sound of approaching troops. Themisphere army came out from behind a cliff. Ezekiel called everyone to be ready for a battle. He hoped it didn't come to that. Especially after he saw two of Themisphere's Lord Marshall were in the march. Arther and Meryl were riding next to John.

Arther and Meryl were both level 81 now. They increased a level due to Jack's multiple usage of Call to Arms which also benefitted them.

However, Ezekiel had a higher level than them. He was a level 85 mythical. Most of Sangrod's soldiers had higher average levels than the other countries. This was because they lived the longest compared to the other races. But in turn, Sangrod also had fewer soldier counts compared to other countries.

Ezekiel wasn't afraid if he had to battle a lord marshall. Going against two at the same time, however, was not something he looked forward to unless he had no choice. But if the Themisphere army intended to force their way, he won't back down.

"Hold...!!" Ezekiel shouted when the Themisphere army came exceedingly close.

John gave the sign and everyone stopped.

"We meet again!" John greeted with a wide grin, which confused Ezekiel. The human leader was acting as if this was a joyful encounter.

"Stop advancing and turn back!" Ezekiel exclaimed with a stern face.

"So stiff. You should loosen up a bit," John said. He turned to Meryl and asked, "What do you think, my fair lady Meryl? Do you think you would want to go out with such a stiff guy? I think not, right? Not even if he is the general of an army."

Meryl glared at John with annoyance. At this moment, she had more of an urge to fight this royal advisor than the enemies in front of them.

"I won't repeat myself. Back off!" Ezekiel warned. He was not amused by John's words.

Chapter 1463: Maintaining a Facade

"No need to be so alarmed. I just want to talk," John said. "I will go there by myself. My army will stay here. Is it okay? My throat hurts if I have to keep on yelling like this. I'm coming over, okay? Don't shoot!"

John climbed down from his kelpie and then walked over on foot.

Ezekiel was unsure how to respond. What was there to talk about? His demand was for the Themisphere army to stay back. There was nothing to discuss.

The outworlder leader truly approached by himself. Arther and Meryl stayed behind. Although John's level was rather high, at level 70, it was still much lower than Ezekiel's level. There was nothing for Ezekiel to worry about, so Ezekiel simply stayed silent as John approached slowly. And by slowly, it was extremely slow. It was as if the guy was walking in slow motion.

Ezekiel creased his forehead. 'The f*ck is this guy playing at?' He thought in his mind.

"I'm sorry. I used to be a summoner. My dexterity stat is very low," John apologized.

The ones who heard rolled their eyes. 'You think we are all kids?' They all thought. Even a low-level summoner wasn't that slow!

"What do you want?" Ezekiel said curtly once John came close enough. "As long as you humans didn't cross into Palgrost, then we have no problem. Stay back and everything will be fine!"

"Come on. Is there no room for negotiation?" John asked.

"There..."

Ezekiel stopped when John suddenly gave him the sign to stop. The guy looked elsewhere. He was as if talking in his mind.

"I'm sorry. You were saying?" John returned his attention to Ezekiel. He had just received a message from Jack, who had been out of contact for some time. Jack just came out of the mausoleum's labyrinth. John got a brief report of what was happening in Sangrod's capital. If Horatio's plan succeeded, then Horatio would be able to order Ezekiel to let Themisphere army pass.

It would be good if that happened, but John didn't like putting all his coins in one pot. There was no guarantee that Marcus would be successfully toppled. John opted to continue with his plan to cross over to Palgrost. Plus, more than half of his army had already crossed over by now. There was no sense to stop.

"I said that there is no need for a negotiation," Ezekiel answered with annoyance. "You can either stay here or go back. I care not. As long as you don't pass into Palgrost, then we have no problem."

"I see. Hey, do you know there is a rebellion going on in Vacharest? Some nobles led an army and laid a siege on your capital. Shouldn't you run back to deal with them?"

The furrow on Ezekiel's forehead returned. "If this is your attempt to trick us, then you can just forget about it. We won't move from this place!"

"Who tries to trick you? You should have a transmission device, shouldn't you? Send a message and ask about it."

Ezekiel looked back at Sierra. Sierra was the one who carried the device, but he turned back and said decisively, "If there is an urgency for us to return, the emperor would have contacted us about it. Even if what you said is true, the army in the capital and the nearby settlements will deal with these so-called rebels. There is no reason for us to move away from this place."

"Sigh... In that case, we will comply with your demand. We will not advance," John said.

"Do you want to use the same trick again?" Ezekiel said. "Don't think we will fall for the second time. You can go back, but we will stay in this place. Don't expect us to move from here."

"Who says I'm going back? I only said we would not advance. You have your order. I have mine. Without the order from my king, I can't go back, so we will stay here until you move aside."

"You can stay for ten years but we won't move unless our emperor orders us to," Ezekiel uttered.

"Fine! Then let's just stare at each other for ten years!" John said and strutted back. He stopped abruptly, turned back, and yelled, "And don't try to go anywhere near us! We will consider it an act of war and attack. Stay away from us!"

John returned to where his army was and then just sat there on the ground.

"What the hell was that about?" Sierra asked.

Ezekiel shook his head. "I've heard that outworlders are weird. We've seen it firsthand now."

"Should I send scouts to look around? Maybe they are trying something."

"No. I prefer to not get into conflict. Their enemies are the Liguritudum army, not us. I still don't understand why our emperor asks us to block them instead of letting them kill each other. As long as they stay over there, there is no need to antagonize them. Keep everyone away from them. I don't want that weird outworlder to use that as a reason for a fight. There is only one path here. We only need to guard this path."

Sierra nodded.

So, the two armies just stayed there gazing at each other. An hour passed.

"That's weird," Sierra said.

"What?" Ezekiel asked.

"The field out here is large. It is better if they come out of that cliff road and rest in this open field. Why do they keep the rest of their formation inside that narrow cliff road?"

"Hm... Well. The leader is weird. Probably he just doesn't care about his troops' comfort. You can't truly understand how a weird outworlder thinks. See? He even keeps on shuffling his formation back and forth. What's the point? That is the weirdest training drill I have ever seen."

"I guess you are right...," Sierra said.

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A few more hours passed. The sun was almost set.

"... Sierra."

"Yes, brother?" Sierra came to Ezekiel.

"Use your Shadow Sneak and go behind that cliff and see what the human army was doing back there."

"Why? Do you suspect something?"

"The troops in the human army... I have been using my long-range vision for a while now. I've noticed a few of them look the same."

"Can't they be twins?"

"There are more than five people who look identical."

"... All right. I'll go now," Sierra said. She moved away to a place with many shadows. Thanks to the hour, it was easy to find such a place. He then merged with the shadow.

She moved through the shadows, unseen and undetected. She made her way to the cliff where the back part of the Themisphere army was. When she arrived there, she was baffled to find that the back side of the cliff was mostly empty. What was there was an army of illusionists who took turns casting Illusion Copy on a legion of regular soldiers. These new copies moved to the front while the old copies that almost ran out of their two-hour duration came behind the cliff and vanished.

Chapter 1464: A Race to the Secret Crossing

Despite appearing leisurely, John paid close attention to Ezekiel in the distance. He had caught the change in how the relic marshal moved. Not long after, he couldn't see the female vampire that was always by Ezekiel's side.

He called Arther and said, "Have everyone ready to move at a moment's notice."

Arther relayed the command.

He then asked Meryl who had a communication device to contact Salem and asked how was the progress of the crossing. Meryl made contact and told John that there was still around one legion of troops that needed crossing.

"Tell him to hurry his ass up," John said.

"Why the rush?" Meryl asked.

When John was about to reply, he caught sight of the female vampire who had gone out of sight. The woman was running back to the Sangrod army while shouting something at Ezekiel. She was pointing at John at the same time.

"We have been found out!" John exclaimed. He hurriedly stood up and yelled at everyone. "Move! Mount up! We are leaving!"

Everyone had received Arther's instruction prior, so they were swift in carrying out the command. Everyone summoned their steeds. The illusion copies did the same. Meryl mounted up as she shouted into the communication device, telling Salem that they would be coming in fast.

Everyone rushed back to the cliff. The illusionists and the regular troops behind the cliff had also mounted up. They all rode back to where they came from while the illusionists controlled the copies to spread out in different directions in an attempt to confuse the Sangrod army.

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"Copies?" Ezekiel was still confused after listening to Sierra's report.

"Yes! A large portion of the army they brought are fakes!" Sierra said. "We have to chase them!" She saw John and the others ride towards the cliff.

Ezekiel was uncertain. "Why? They can't cross through Sangrod without going through here. If we leave this place, they might sneak back and cross when we are not looking."

"I don't know, but they must have done this for a reason!" Sierra exclaimed. Half of the Themisphere army had disappeared behind the cliff. "If we don't do anything, we might fall into their traps!"

Ezekiel finally decided to act. He summoned his steed. "I'll take half the army and chase them. You stay here with the other half. If they try to charge through here. Send a flare signal. I will come back as fast as possible."

"Got it," Sierra said. She then added, "Be careful, brother."

Ezekiel nodded. He looked at the army behind him that had mounted up. They then charged forward chasing after the Themisphere army.

After Ezekiel left, Sierra called two of her lieutenants.

"Take this," She gave each lieutenant one of her flare signals. "Go along this chasm. If you find anything suspicious, fire this signal."

The two lieutenants then rode off in two opposite directions.

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The chase went on for some time. Ezekiel again called his pet to scout the escaping army from the sky. This time, he had the blood vulture to focus on the head of the army, where John and the two lord marshals were. There had been several instances where the Themisphere army split and went in different directions. He just followed the one John led and ignored the others. He bet those split troops were just copies from the illusionist's spells.

"It seems that relic marshal has wisened up. He is no longer fooled by the copies," John said.

But this also worked to John's advantage. Because Ezekiel didn't bother with the troops that were not led by John, John sent some of the real troops away among the copies. These troops went to the secret crossing while John continued to lead Ezekiel around in a merry chase.

At this time, only around 10,000 real troops were with him. These were the ones with the fastest steeds. Another 30,000 riding around them were copies.

John turned to Meryl. "How is the crossing going? What the hell took Salem so long?"

Before Meryl could answer, they saw something shooting up into the sky while producing a shrill sound. This something exploded into a bright flare.

"That is in the direction of our secret crossing," Arther said.

"That is not our flare," Meryl added.

"F*ck! That place had been found," John said. "No more distraction. We go to the crossing now!"

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Ezekiel saw the flare. That was their signal flare, but why was it shot from an unknown place? Only Sierra and he carried these flares.

From his blood vulture's eyes, he saw John's army change direction.

He made a decision then. "Everyone, head to where that flare was shot!"

It now became a race to reach the place with the secret crossing.

John sent the 30,000 copies that were still riding with him to Ezekiel. Ezekiel saw the incoming army and his blood vulture swoop down at one of them. His blood vulture just went through the copies. He told everyone to ignore these copies and just march forward.

However, as they marched, the copies turned around and marched with them. They didn't march properly but did multiple zig-zag and confusing movements. This disrupted Ezekiel's army march. They had trouble riding straight with such a visual disturbance.

Some even stumbled into their comrades and fell. The whole march was a mess.

Ezekiel told everyone to not stop. The ones who fell were not in danger. They had to keep on marching forward.

Then another thing came. A volley of arrows. These arrows struck the area right in front of Ezekiel's army. If they forced themselves to march forward, they would be hit by the arrows.

Ezekiel did so. He called everyone to use their defensive skills and marched forward under the rain of arrows.

Once they were hit, they realized these were no normal arrows. They contained ice enchantment. They were not in danger because the arrows spread out in a very large area, so one arrow only hit one target. However, those who were hit had their movement speed reduced.

Another batch of arrows came. These arrows landed in front of the army. These were very long arrows. Rather than arrows, they were more like javelins. These arrows formed a line. They then emitted electricity, forming a lightning fence.

Those who tried to ride past the fence were electrocuted and paralyzed.

Ezekiel jumped from his steed. The dual curved twinblades on his back were now in his hands. His body zoomed forward at high speed. He landed right before one of the javelins and struck it. An HP bar appeared from the hit. His dual twinblades created a tornado of slashes. The javelin was destroyed then. The lightning fence disappeared.

His steed arrived at this moment and he jumped back up. As he rode forward, he saw the one who had been sending these arrows. It was Meryl, one of Themisphere's Lord Marshall.

As they rode forward. He finally realized what this was all about.

"No...," He uttered. He saw the wooden bridge. He saw John and his armies crossing the bridge. What was worse was he saw the large army of Themisphere was mostly already on the other side, in Palgrost.

"No!!" He yelled. He had his super-rare-grade steed ride ahead. He no longer adjusted his speed with his army.

Only Meryl was left to cross the bridge. She rode behind to fire movement-restriction arrows to slow Ezekiel's army. She was now entering the bridge.

"You stay!!" Ezekiel thundered. He used Air Charge, which was similar to Wind Jet but was a skill instead of a spell.

He was about to reach Meryl when a silver meteor crashed into him. The impact threw him backward. He looked up and saw Arther who was flying using his wings tool. Around him was a silvery sphere, his Sphere of Aegis.

"Stop it, marshall," John called from the opposite side. "Your mission has failed. We are already in Palgrost now. There is no need to chase after us anymore."

Ezekiel scowled. Should he have his army cross over as well? But what then? Attack the Themisphere army? That would be a full-blown battle then.

While he was confused about what to do, he heard a notification. Not just him, but all the soldiers in his army also heard the same notification. The notification had something to do with their country's sovereign.

Chapter 1465: Blood Debt

Leavemealone led Jack and Arlcard to the stairs into the basement. Down there, the corridor branched into two paths.

"I was taken in that direction, to the dungeon where they keep prisoners," Leavemealone pointed to one of the paths.

"Then we should try this one," Jack pointed at the other path.

"What are we waiting for?" Arlcard took the lead and headed down the corridor.

"Can you not be so eager? There could be traps down here," Jack called as he and Leavemealone chased after Arlcard.

Luckily, no such traps sprang in their path, but a locked door barred their way at the end of the path.

"Okay, let me unlock this door using my..."

Jack was still taking his lockpicks out when Arlcard started bashing at the door. Damage number appeared. It was not too sturdy to nullify Arlcard's attacks.

"... Or we can do that," Jack stored his lockpicks and joined Arlcard in attacking the door. Leavemealone lent his fists.

The door soon fell under their valiant efforts. The three entered into a large hall and came face to face with fifteen armored statues.

As the three took a step forward, these statues opened their eyes. Jack knew then what these statues were. They all had bloodshot eyes.

"The blood guards!" Jack used his Inspect. The same as Horatio informed, fourteen were level 70 rare elites and one was level 75 mythical. They were all classified as demons.

"Arlcard, use your instant-killed red smoke skill!" Jack exclaimed.

"... It won't work on them," Arlcard answered. "Also, it's still on cooldown."

The blood guards rushed forward. The lead mythical grade arrived first. Jack used Flame Strike and clashed with it. Jack was thrown back.

Jack had not used any buff skills but from the clash, he agreed with Horatio's statement that this blood guard was stronger than the level it showed. He estimated the mythical blood guard was as strong as Arther in terms of raw power.

Then, some kind of dark red aura came out of the blood guard. Jack sensed the blood guard's power increased. The other blood guards emitted the same aura.

"Sigh... And here I thought I could save my mana cores," Jack said. "Let's finish this fast!"

Jack injected 50,000 mana cores into his pendant. A flaming tornado poured out of his pendant. As it subsided, the archdemon lord was in the room with them.

The archdemon lord laid eyes on the fifteen blood guards in front of him. There was disdain in its eyes. It then uttered a shrill cry. One so loud that Jack and the others had to close their ears.

The blood guards had a more severe effect from the cry. Their bodies shivered as damage numbers popped up on them. They also completely stopped.

After the cry stopped, the archdemon lord floated forward casually, as if not putting these blood guards in its eyes. The blood guards attacked it then, which drew a clear surprised expression from the archdemon lord.

"That just now is the Demonic Dominance," Peniel said. Her ears were still slightly ringing from the cry just now. "It damages and disorients all enemies in the vicinity, but it has an extra effect on demon-type monsters. It could take control of the demons and turn them into allies for a short period."

"But since these blood guards were controlled by the Chalice of Blood, the controlling effect is not working," Jack surmised.

"Yes," Peniel confirmed.

The archdemon lord's surprise expression turned into anger. How dare these lowly demons offend him?

It struck the end of its long staff into the floor. Spell formation formed on the floor. Pillars of infernal fire shot out of the floor and engulfed them.

The archdemon lord had drawn the attention of all fifteen blood guards. Hence, Jack and the others were unhindered. Arlcard took the chance and went to the door on the opposite wall. This was the door the blood guard was guarding.

That door was similarly locked. Arlcard hit this door. It could be damaged but this door's HP was significantly higher. Arlcard used his dark lord's sword and other skills to drain the door's HP fast.

Jack decided to go to the door as well. The archdemon lord didn't like taking his order. He doubted it would appreciate his help, so Jack left the archdemon to deal with those blood guards. Leavemealone followed Jack closely.

Using his powerful skills and spells, Arlcard managed to break the door before Jack arrived.

"Hey! Wait up, will you?" Jack called when he saw Arlcard dash ahead through the broken door by himself.

Jack and Leavemealone entered right behind Arlcard. They came into an even larger hall. One in which the walls and the ceilings were filled with murals. Jack didn't have the time to study these murals and guess their meanings. His attention was on the far wall of this hall, where a pedestal was standing on an elevated platform. On this pedestal was a red goblet.

Standing beside this goblet was Emperor Marcus and Motherboard. Motherboard moved away when she saw the intruders. It didn't seem like she was there willingly.

Jack fired an Ice Bullet while approaching. His target was not Marcus, but the goblet beside him. Jack did not doubt that was the Chalice of Blood.

Marcus simply stood there and looked at the ice bullet as it approached. It came half a meter from the chalice when it hit an invisible barrier. A damage number and an HP bar appeared above the barrier. From the proportion, the damage was not even one percent. It would take some time to deplete the barrier's HP. Additionally, an energy came out of the rune diagram on the floor. This energy healed the barrier and brought its HP back to full.

Jack wasn't surprised. Horatio had told him about the protective rune diagram around the chalice. He just wanted to make sure if this protective rune diagram was separate from the palace's rune diagram. It was now proven to be so.

Arlcard stopped below the elevated platform where Marcus and the chalice were.

"Marcus...", Arlcard uttered. There was a mix of emotions in his voice. Something that Jack rarely heard from his companion.

"You... Do I know you...?" This was the first time Marcus laid eyes on Arlcard. Yet, he couldn't shake the familiar feeling when Arlcard stood before him.

"I've waited hundreds of years for this. You will finally pay for your betrayal," Arlcard said.

Marcus' forehead creased. He didn't understand what Arlcard was saying but it also somehow made sense in a way.

"You still can't guess who I am, can you? Brother?" Red smoke came out of Arlcard's body. It formed a person above him. Someone who looked much older. "I am here for our blood debt."

"Ca... Cain...?" Marcus uttered in surprise.

Chapter 1466: Founding Elders

"Blood Debt? Hey, that's the name of my companion quest," Jack said. He realized then that all this time Arlcard's target was emperor Marcus, but who was this Cain that Marcus called?

Arlcard sneered upon Marcus mentioning the name. The red smoke apparition above him did the same. When he next spoke, it was like two persons were speaking at the same time. One was Arlcard's voice. The other came from the red smoke apparition. A voice Jack had never heard before.

"Hehe, you must never expect to hear from me again. How do you enjoy the throne? From this young vampire's memory, I learned that you have ruled for a thousand years. Has it been that long?"

"... How do you survive?" Marcus asked.

"Survive? Do you call this survive? Hmph. This is just my lingering spirit. I know you fear that I will somehow come back from the dead. You know I practiced an ancient secret necromancy technique. You burned my body and tethered my remaining in an urn before locking it away at the bottommost floor of your royal mausoleum. All because you feared that I had some sort of enchantment on myself."

"Since you are now before me, I guess I've been correct?" Marcus said.

"You are, but what you didn't expect is that I place two enchantments at separate places. One was in my body. The other was inside the conspirator who helped you to backstab me. Our brother, Auberlard."

Marcus' eyes narrowed after hearing it.

"Yes. That time during my final struggle, I bit Aubelard. Have you heard about the unholy reincarnation, brother?"

"That is just a myth," Marcus uttered.

"And here I am!" Arlcard or Cain exclaimed. "I poured my mind into studying that ancient technique. If I had mastered it, I would have become immortal! This technique allows us to reincarnate inside our vampire offspring. Even if our real body dies, we can be reborn again. When Aubelard created this young vampire, the unholy reincarnation that I'd planted in him was passed. My will grew inside this new vampire."

Arlcard's face seemed jubilant when he spoke of the unholy reincarnation, then it suddenly turned into an ugly scowl.

"Now, my consciousness is strong enough to come to you. We will settle our debt today! The debt you owed me when you betrayed me. A betrayal so you could become the sovereign of the country we had just united when it should have been mine by right!"

"What right?" Marcus snickered. "You were simply older and stronger, but you lacked the cunningness and the charisma of a leader. That was how you fell. That's how our brothers and sisters were willing to follow me instead of you."

"And where are these brothers and sisters?" Cain asked. "I bet you have gotten rid of them as well? From this young vampire's memory, I learned that Aubelard betrayed you and stole your Book of the Damned. How did it feel to get betrayed? It didn't feel good, did it?"

"Hmph! What a load of bull. You are just an incomplete soul. Don't think that you can trick me," Marcus said. "As you said, if you have mastered the unholy reincarnation, you might have fully reincarnated, but you did not. What you are using is just an incomplete technique. I wonder how long you can last in that state."

"Even if so, it is enough to take you down!" Arlcard and Cain bellowed. The red smoke that formed Cain's visage enlarged exponentially and headed for Marcus.

Marcus formed a spell formation speedily. It was completed before the smoke engulfed him. A blinding radiance exploded. The entire room suddenly turned especially bright. Jack and Leavemealone had to shield their eyes.

Cain's smoke form was burned by this extreme light. He screamed from the pain. He was blown back and Arlcard stumbled backward due to the pull.

"You might be stronger than me in the past, brother, but a thousand years have passed. Do you think I'm still weaker than you?" Marcus laughed.

"Grggh..." The smoke was in shamble. It formed back into Cain after much difficulty.

Cain looked at Marcus who was now a level 85 mythical. Even during his prime, Cain was a level 82 mythical. He turned to Jack and said, "What are you waiting for? Attack...!"

Jack was unsure. This grudge between these two ancient vampires had nothing to do with him. He was unsure if he could still consider the person before him as his companion, Arlcard. But then he remembered killing Marcus was also the objective of Horatio's quest, which had something to do with him.

Jack transformed into a supreme dragon form. "Let's kill this blood-sucking motherf*cker," he said.

Leavemealone followed suit and transformed into the white tiger emperor.

"Brother, you asked before where our brothers and sisters are, do you?" Marcus chuckled. He didn't seem worried about being outnumbered.

"Let me call them out!" He exclaimed. The regal robe he wore shone.

"He is using his equipment's ability," Peniel informed.

"Like my Judgement of Past Kings?" Jack asked.

"Yes, but Marcus is the first emperor. This country doesn't have any past sovereigns. What the equipment summoned are the spirits of its founding elders who have died."

"That's right! The founding elders are my brothers and sisters," Marcus heard Peniel's words. "Even in their death, they serve me!"

The first one appeared. It was a tall male vampire who held a long halberd.

"Isaac....," Cain recognized the spirit.

When Isaac was about to unleash his attack, a crimson tentacle suddenly pierced his back. He stopped moving then.

This took everyone by surprise. They turned their attention to the tentacle and saw that it came from the Chalice of Blood.

A second spirit appeared. This time, it was a female vampire. Cain identified her as Zara. Same as Isaac, another crimson tentacle came out of the chalice and stuck onto Zara's back before she could do anything.

Marcus stood at the side, smiling.

"Stop him!" Cain commanded.

Jack and Leavemealone had the same thought, but Marcus was ready. He cast another spell and a wall of light barred them from approaching.

Behind the light barrier, the process continued repeatedly. The spirits of Sangrod's founding elders appeared but they didn't unleash their attacks like they were intended. Instead, they were stopped by the Chalice of Blood.

"What did you do?!" Cain yelled at Marcus, which was only replied by the vampire emperor's wide grin.

Jack and the others never stopped hitting the light barrier, but the light barrier was very sturdy. Jack decided to use his Brave Slash combined with One-word Slash empowered by mana manipulation. The barrier was destroyed then, but Marcus' skill was completed.

Nine founding vampire elders were before Marcus. They didn't disappear as his equipment's skill intended. They were forced to stay in this plane by the Chalice of Blood.

Chapter 1467: Facing the Emperor and His Siblings

"The Chalice of Blood can do that?" Jack asked.

"I honestly have no idea that it can....," Peniel replied.

Jack noticed Aubelard among one of the nine vampire elders. He was a level 80 Rare elite, which was what Horatio said his original power was.

From the eyes of the nine vampire elders, Jack saw that they were aware of what was happening. Their eyes darted around surveying their surroundings. Aubelard's eyes expressed hatred and fury when they landed on Jack and Arlcard, but his expression was more intense when the dead vampire noticed Marcus. All those dead vampire elders showed hatred when they looked at Marcus.

They couldn't talk though, nor could they move without Marcus say-so. They were nothing but puppets under Marcus' control.

However, they were a collection of powerful puppets. The weakest among them was Aubelard. The strongest were Isaac who was a level 82 mythical. Zara was a level 81 mythical. Another two elders were

level 80 mythical. The remaining four ranged from level 81 to 85 and were rare elite grades. All of them were ancient vampires except for Aubelard who was an archaic. The older a vampire was, the more skills they were more likely to possess.

"I'm glad all these backstabbers met their demises, but to think they are all used by you even after death makes me almost pity them," Cain said.

"Almost?" Marcus chuckled. "You were also one of the vampires under the blood contract when this kingdom was formed, but you never appeared when I used my regal outfit's ability. That's how I know you must have done something to your soul. I've been waiting for centuries for you to come, Cain. Now, I can finally get rid of you for real. Destroy them!"

The nine vampire elders acted then. Each of them used different skills and spells.

"You can call your siblings, I can also call my predecessors!" Jack exclaimed. He used Judgement of Past Kings. The ghosts of past Themisphere kings appeared and unleashed their powers.

However, Themisphere kings only attacked once. They vanished after carrying out their attacks, while the vampire elders remained. They used their defensive skills and reduced the damage they suffered.

Jack called out Terras, his spirit weapon, and the ten golden wolves during the interference. Cain cast a spell and a giant crimson bat appeared. Leavemealone called the Lesser Tiger God Manifestation using his pendant. Unfortunately, Leavemealone couldn't summon Ihhi just as Jack couldn't call his royal agents due to the lockdown.

"Hahaha! I've expected you people to call out reinforcements immediately to even the number," Marcus laughed.

Zara was casting a spell while Marcus was speaking.

"Shit!" Cain cursed as he recognized the spell formation.

"That's Zone Banishment!" Peniel also identified the spell when the spell formation was almost completed.

Jack didn't need to ask what the spell's effect was because it took effect soon. The giant bat, Lesser Tiger God Manifestation, and Jack's ten golden wolves all went poof. Terras and Jack's spirit weapon remained, though, which drew surprised gazes from everyone, including Jack himself.

Jack later understood after Peniel's explanation. The Zone Banishment was similar to Master's Forced Unsummon. The success depended on the target's grade and the intelligence stat difference between the caster and the summoner. Leavemealone's summon was banished because his intelligence stat was low. Cain's summon was banished because the bat was a rare elite grade.

Jack's ten wolves were only elite grades, but Terras was a mythical grade. Jack's spirit weapon didn't have a clear description of a grade. But since it was summoned from a unique-grade weapon, it had power equal to a mythical grade even if its HP was not.

Zara's intelligence stat was very high, but it was not more than four times Jack's. Hence, her spell failed to unsummon Terras and the spirit weapon.

"Hmph, never mind," Marcus said. The nine vampire elders who could summon helpers now did their summon.

The enemy's number increased even more. A pack of five red-furred werewolves, a giant iron-skinned snake, a giant blood bat like the one Cain summoned just now, and an armored minotaur.

"Cunning piece of shit! They banished our summons before they summon theirs," Jack cursed.

"Doesn't matter! We just need to beat them all!" Leavemealone exclaimed. His large tiger body was covered with flame as he activated the Fire God Suit. He used Fire God Barrage and rushed forward.

"I like your spirit!" Jack followed suit. His body was covered by the Lightning God Suit. He used Reset and twenty large lightning balls shot ahead following Leavemealone's fireballs. Terras also fired its Earth Core Bomb.

The founding elders were ready. As ancient vampires, they had plenty of powerful defensive skills and spells. These defensive skills protected them from getting hit directly by the two divine skills. They still received damage but it was greatly mitigated.

"Take out Marcus! Once he is down, all these dead vampires will be gone as well!" Cain told them. Arlcard's body thrust forward using his rapier while his red smoke form enlarged and struck at nearby enemies.

Jack used the Strength of Hope. His dragon's body glistened with brilliant light. He then cast Perpetual Lightning Judgement. His runestone of spellcasting was right beside him. This runestone had no duration, he could keep it on indefinitely for as long as his mind could afford. This was no problem thanks to his Hundred Synchronous Thoughts.

While the enemies were defending against his lightning snakes, he shot forward.

Isaac brute-forced his way through the lightning and came to block Jack's path. Isaac's halberd was coated with blood-red energy.

Jack used Devouring Cross. The skill hit and stopped Isaac. Jack then used the burst attack of his sword art.

Under the effect similar to the Strength of Hope, Jack could fight Arther when he was level 70. Now, his level was higher. Isaac was forced back by his swords. He resumed flying forward again.

Marcus came into Jack's sight. The emperor was surprised when he saw Jack successfully break through the barricades to get to him.

However, the emperor's surprised expression lasted only an instant. His face was soon back to his cold contemptuous expression, which unsettled Jack. Did Marcus have something up his sleeve?

He then saw Zara not far away. She was casting a spell and she was aiming at Jack. It was almost completed and it was a nine-rune spell.

"What?!" Jack was taken aback by the number of runes. He wanted to use Cancel Magic but he had noticed Zara's casting too late.

Zara's spell took effect. All of Jack's buff was suddenly gone, including the Strength of Hope and his beast form. He landed before Marcus in his human form.

"It's... It's Greater Dispel," Peniel said about Zara's spell just now.

Chapter 1468: Battling while Outnumbered

Jack was taken aback because of the sudden transformation back into the human form. This caused him to react late when he sensed an incoming attack. Luckily, his cloak covered him and slapped Marcus' hand away. Jack noticed then Marcus' hand was glowing an eerie light.

"That's the Hand of Death!" Peniel exclaimed. "Don't get touched by it! It has an instant death effect."

Jack sensed something from underneath at the same time. Marcus had cast another spell when he was reaching for Jack with his Hand of Death.

Jack jumped away. Several tentacles of light came out of the ground as he jumped. His super jump let him jump very high. Yet, it was not high enough. The tentacles extended at an incredible speed and Jack was snatched by them in the air. His Lightning God Suit was also dispelled by Zara's greater dispel so the tentacles successfully attached themselves to his body.

He used his race skill, Willpower. The tentacles were blown off for a fraction of a second but they returned incredibly fast. Jack used his sword art to try cutting the tentacles but they regrew instantly. He was bound again soon after. He was then pulled powerlessly to the ground. The spell was from a mythical grade nine levels above him. Without the Strength of Hope, he couldn't resist the power.

Marcus' shining Hand of Death came again as Jack landed back on the ground. The Hand of Death was a spell with a duration. Its duration had not run out yet.

Jack couldn't move due to the light tentacles. The cloak's automated defense was also still on cooldown, but he was not out of options yet.

Before Marcus' glowing hand touched Jack, the air underneath Jack shimmered. An exceedingly sharp black light pierced out of the ground. This sharp energy cut through the tentacles while making its way up and accurately struck Marcus' approaching hand.

"Aarghh...!" Marcus yelled in pain from the sudden strike while a damage number appeared above him.

Jack's Nine Yin Phantom Sword was unable to wound Marcus' hand, but the pain it caused was still severe. His hand was also thrown upward from the collision. As for the light tentacles, they didn't regrow this time. The nine yin's cold energy seemed to not only sever their forms but also devour the mana that sustained them.

Jack used the chance to attack Marcus who was still stunned by the pain, but a large ominous gate suddenly came in between. His swords clanged at the hard surface of the gate.

Jack recognized this was Warlock's Hell Gate. The gate was starting to open. Jack jumped back before it completely opened and unleashed hellfire. Five hellhounds ran out of it.

It was the female vampire, Zara, again. She was the one who protected Marcus using this Hell Gate.

While fending off the hellhounds, Jack retaliated at Zara by casting Tracing Beams. Zara erected a large magic shield while casting another spell. The tracing beams swerved away before hitting Zara's magic shield.

Jack used mana manipulation on the spell. After constantly using the Nine Yin Phantom Sword during battles all this time, Jack's mana numbness after using the ancient art had greatly reduced. It now only lasted an instant. He did not doubt this had something to do with his mana affinity talent. He could now even execute Nine Yin Phantom Sword every ten minutes.

Controlled by mana manipulation, the tracing beams moved as Jack wanted them to. The beams zoomed at high speed and turned at sharp angles several times before hitting Zara on the back. She stumbled forward and whatever spell she was casting was canceled.

Marcus had recovered by then. He cast a spell and a giant light bow was constructed in his hand. He used that light bow and shot arrows made of light energy. These arrows didn't travel in a straight line. They swerved as they chased after Jack.

At the same time, Isaac and the other vampires came from behind Jack.

Jack activated Asura and Dances of the Brave. He also cast Time Realm and Accelerate. With the increased speed and the enemies being slowed, he fended off the arrows, the hellhounds, and Isaac's group using his extra limbs and swords. He also used Beast Command to take control of the giant blood bat among Isaac's group and turned it against its previous comrades.

However, he was forced to move further away from Marcus. Without the Strength of Hope, he couldn't defeat these many powerful opponents, much less get to Marcus.

But he was not going to just lie down and give up. He cast another spell which was completed very fast due to acceleration. His body split into three. He then ran in three different directions. This forced Isaac and the hellhounds to also split up.

The light arrows were still chasing after Jack. But now that his pursuers reduced in number, he could make the time to deal with them. With the accuracy and reflex from his Sword's Heart, his swords struck these light arrows. The arrow's damage didn't eclipse three times his power, so the arrow he cut didn't cause him any damage.

Marcus continued to fire the light arrows. They just came without any sign of ending soon.

Throughout the fighting, Motherboard stayed behind. she didn't stay idle, though. Even if she was here not by her will, she was still Marcus' ally. She played music using her violin and rapier, which further boosted the power of Marcus' camp.

*

Leavemealone tried to charge through the dead vampires' barricade as Jack did, but he didn't have something as powerful as the Strength of Hope. He also didn't have the combined strength and speed of three classes like Jack had. However, he didn't get hit by the Greater Dispel as Jack did. He still retained his beast form and Fire God Suit. He also activated his bloodline skill, Wrath of the Beast, and his special class skill, Tiger Soul. Hence, he could still go toe-to-toe with the opponents.

His main opponent was one of two level 80 mythical vampires, one named Xenos Maxius. Leavemealone was level 71, so this opponent was too strong for him. But luckily, this opponent used fist weapons and his movements were not so refined, so Leavemealone could still cope using his superior expertise in martial arts.

He accurately read his opponent's punches and reacted accordingly, sending counterattacks afterward using the white tiger claws.

However, he didn't fight only one opponent and his opponent didn't just use normal punches all the time. The red-furred werewolves came to flank him. While they did, Xenos' body split into multiple images which then punched at him from multiple angles.

Leavemealone blocked the punches with much difficulty. He received damages from the blocks. Luckily his Fire God Suit mitigated much of the damage.

Cain's red smoke came to his rescue then. Cain took on the bulk of the enemies. His red smoke form produced multiple giant tentacles that fought lots of enemies at the same time. Therras and Jack's spirit weapon also came to his sides. Unlike Jack who was behind the enemies' line, he fought with comrades out here.

Still, the enemies seriously outnumbered them. If they couldn't penetrate through this barricade and assist Jack in taking down Marcus. The enemies would slowly wear them down.

Chapter 1469: Nine Yin Abyssal Finger

"Cover me!" Cain shouted.

Leavemealone was puzzled. Cain had so many arms from his red smoke form. Why did he still need others to cover him?

Despite Leavemealone being cold and almost antisocial, he could still work with others, especially during a battle. He used Illusive Movement, the skill that increased his movement speed and created afterimages to confuse enemies. Added with a few acrobatic moves, he arrived at the base of Cain's red smoke, which was Arlcard.

Arlcard started casting a spell when Leavemealone arrived.

Leavemealone expected the enemy to turn into a frenzy and come at them. But no, they still fought carefully. He chuckled it to Cain overestimating his spell or the enemies didn't recognize the spell he was casting.

Cain also didn't expect this. He thought the enemies would be stopping Arlcard from completing the spell. It didn't matter. When the spell was completed, they should be able to give Jack a hand.

Arlcard completed the spell under the red smoke and Leavemealone's protection. Sonata of the Night was cast.

Ominous mist covered the place, hindering the opponent's view while leaving allies unhindered. Ghouls also came out from within the fog and from the ground.

"Forward!" Cain commanded.

Both Terras and Jack's spirit weapon had intelligence. They understood the situation. Following Cain and Leavemealone, they all slipped among the blinded enemies to get to Marcus.

One disadvantage these dead vampires had was that they lost their mana ability upon death. Even if they could sense mana and do mana manipulation when they were alive, they couldn't do any of those now. Hence, Leavemealone and the others could slip past them under the mist, even when the mythical-grade enemies were right beside them.

Suddenly, an intensely bright light washed over everything from above. Leavemealone and the others received light element damage from the light, but that was not the only thing the light did. Arlcard's mists receded when they were touched by this light. In a short time, the mists covering the hall vanished. The ghouls also fell to the ground and turned to dust.

"Damn it!" Cain cursed. He glared at Marcus in the distance who was grinning.

Marcus was the one who conjured the bright light. The spell was called Purifying Brilliance. It dealt light damage and dispelled dark-based enchantment within its area of effect. The dark energy that was shrouding Arlcard's rapier also disappeared from the spell.

Their cover was gone while they were still mid-way. This put them in a bad position. The enemies now attacked them from all directions.

Cain was still fine thanks to his multi-appendages smoke form. He could strike in all directions. Terras had to activate its supersonic mode to keep itself from becoming a punching bag. The spirit weapon slashed in all directions using Jack's sword art but it didn't do so well.

Leavemealone relied on his martial arts to deal with this difficult situation. He first used Cycle of Shade and Shadow to throw all the enemies around him off-balance. He continued spinning his body and performed Death Carrying Cyclone using his leg.

Arlcard's Sonata of the Night might have failed to help them penetrate the enemy's barricade, but they were deeper than they were before. Leavemealone was intent on pushing in deeper. He used White Tiger Charge when the enemies around him were still stumbling, but his charge was stopped when Xenos came in his way again.

White tiger charge was usually unstoppable, but Xenos was simply far stronger than Leavemealone. Xenos' punch sent Leavemealone's large tiger body stumbling backward.

Leavemealone forcefully stopped his body from moving back by using One Thousand Pounds Mountain, a martial art that multiplied one's weight. He then took a stance. His right hand formed into a fist with his index finger and middle finger extending out. Cold mana gathered rapidly at the tip of those two fingers.

Xenos lunged forward when he saw Leavemealone was still standing from his punch. His fists turned into a blur as he used Infinite Lightning Punches. All Leavemealone saw in front of him was a wall of fists.

Before those punches arrived, Leavemealone activated his weapon's Overlimit. He then stabbed forward with his extended finger. The cold mana on those fingers exploded into a spiraling black energy that drilled forward. This spiraling black energy was the Nine Yin Abyssal Finger.

When Murong Shu used the Nine Yin Abyssal Finger on Domon during the Verremor invasion war, she had just successfully learned the martial art and was using that art in a real fight for the first time. It was a version of the art in its weakest form.

Leavemealone was also using this art for the first time at this moment, but he had continued training inside the Space-time Chamber when Jack was dealing with the murders in Themisphere's border towns. During that training, he successfully grasped a mastery that surpassed even Murong who had learned this art earlier.

When Murong saw this achievement, she was conflicted about how to feel. She was glad that the student she was teaching could reach such a height, but she was also sad because Leavemealone was not her direct disciple.

The energy produced by Leavemealone's Nine Yin Abyssal Finger was as if a giant drill. This energy shot forward. It punctured Xenos' wall of fists. The black drilling energy continued onward without any sign of weakening and pierced into Xenos' abdomen.

Xenos' body jerked backward from the impact. His infinite lightning punches were forcefully ended. Yet, the drilling energy continued to persist. He felt as if his inside was ravaged. The drilling energy then punctured out from his back. At the same time, blood spurted from the two spots where the black energy entered and exited. Xenos also lost one-fifth of his HP from that one stab.

Among the three martial arts within the Nine Yin Scripture, the Nine Yin Abyssal Finger had the highest destructive power and penetration ability. That's how Leavemealone was able to wound Xenos with this art when Jack was unable to when he attacked Marcus with the Nine Yin Phantom Sword.

The Nine Yin Abyssal Finger not only wounded Xenos, it also weakened and stunned him. Leavemealone took the chance to dash forward. He gave Xenos another punch while passing by him. This sent the elder vampire tumbling away.

After beating Xenos back, Leavemealone finally reached the back line of the enemy's barricade. He found Jack right ahead of him. Jack was down on the floor and Isaac was holding his halberd high, ready to strike Jack with it.

Chapter 1470: Eternal-grade Reinforcement

Leavemealone rushed forward. His fiery fist was positioned low. It almost touched the ground. He reached Jack and brought his fist up, just as Isaac's halberd came slashing down.

The image of an eastern dragon and its roar followed his rising fist. The fiery fist and the blade of the halberd collided. Leavemealone was thrown to the ground by the impact, but Isaac's halberd was also smashed away. Isaac himself backstepped a few times from the force.

"Yo, thanks for the save!" Leavemealone heard Jack's voice. Strangely, it didn't come from down there where Jack was. It came from his back.

Leavemealone turned around and saw another Jack there, fighting other opponents. Not far ahead, another Jack with golden wings was flying around trying to get close to Marcus while being bombarded by spells.

Leavemealone had never seen Jack use Double Clone before. What he knew was Jack's Body Double, but the copies from that spell couldn't fight enemies, so he was rather astounded when he saw this scene.

"Hey! No time to be daydreaming!" Jack who was on the ground rose and said to him. "You hold this vampire down. I need to deal with that vampire chick."

Jack ran toward where Zara was, leaving Leavemealone with Isaac.

"What...?!" Leavemealone looked at Jack going away in disbelief. He was already having trouble fighting Xenos. This Isaac had an even higher level than Xenos. He couldn't use the Nine Yin Abyssal Finger often. Like Jack who couldn't use the Nine Yin Phantom Sword continuously, Leavemealone also experienced the same thing.

From the corner of his eyes, he saw Xenos coming at him again.

"F*ck!!" He cursed. He used his Tiger Brawler's level 70 skill, Tiger King's Dominance. This skill applied debuffs on all the enemies around him. The debuffs included reducing the attributes, the damage the enemy could inflict, and their defenses. Now that he was amid the enemy's rank, this skill hit almost all the enemies.

He then followed with Tiger Multi Strikes. His body split into multiple images, similar to the multi-sided strikes Xenos had pulled earlier. The Tiger Multi Strikes produced more images and dealt higher damage.

The skill hit all the enemies that surrounded him and stopped them from advancing. He knew he wouldn't be able to survive with so many powerful opponents attacking him, but he wouldn't just give up. He would try to last for as long as possible. He just hoped Jack didn't take too long time to deal with Marcus.

While Leavemealone was having that bleak thought, a big explosion shook the hall. Everyone turned to where the explosion had occurred, which was the door where Jack and the others had entered from.

The door was no longer there. In its place was a huge hole. A hole where its edges were still melting. Flames spread around the floor near the hole. Floating in these flames was a tall high demon, the archdemon lord.

"Hell, yeah! Reinforcement has arrived!" Jack exclaimed after seeing the archdemon lord. That archdemon lord must have just finished dispatching all the blood guards outside.

The archdemon lord didn't waste any time. It cast one of its spells, the Blade of Doom. The colossal blade of fire sliced through the floor, leaving a trail of fire.

"Shit!" Jack cursed when he saw the blade's trajectory. It was heading to Marcus, but Jack was coincidentally in the way when he was going for Zara. He quickly jumped to the side. The archdemon lord didn't care if it hit its conjurer during the battle.

Marcus quickly cast a defensive spell when the blade of doom cut through some of the dead vampire elders and their summons. A giant shield of light materialized in front of him. The blade of doom hit the

shield and the shield was cut in two. But before it was cut, a giant translucent wall materialized between Marcus and his light shield. That was Phantasm Wall cast by Zara.

The Blade of Doom had expended a portion of its energy destroying Marcus' celestial shield. When it hit Zara's Phantasm Wall, it destroyed the wall but the blade itself was also spent. Marcus was safe.

Marcus didn't feel safe, though. That archdemon lord was an eternal grade. Even if it was nine levels lower than him, it was still an opponent stronger than him.

He sent a mental command to Zara who then cast a seven-runes spell.

"Forced Unsummon!" Leavemealone recognized the spell. Master once used it against his Lesser Tiger God Manifestation in the past.

The spell hit the archdemon lord, but it didn't disappear.

"Hah! Don't you think my intelligence stat is that much lower than you!" Jack exclaimed. If Zara failed to banish Therras previously, she was sure as hell wouldn't be able to banish the archdemon lord.

"The forced unsummon has another effect if it fails to banish the summoned creature," Peniel told Jack.

"What effect?" Jack asked.

"His duration will be halved!"

"What?" Jack checked his pendant. It was true. The archdemon lord's normal duration was one hour. There should still be a bit over half an hour left. Now its duration was only three minutes.

"Crap!" He cursed. He didn't think the archdemon lord could finish this fight in three minutes.

He did a quick thinking. His copy with the gold dragon wings changed his flight path and flew back to where Arlcard was. While flying back, he noticed that Cain's smoke form had separated from Arlcard.

Using the path cleared by the Archdemon Lord's Blade of Doom, Arlcard and Cain rushed ahead. The dead vampire elders quickly returned to block that path, but the two had gotten close enough. The sight of Marcus being so close sent Cain into a frenzy. Its smoke form lashed out and forced its way forward. It even left its host, Arlcard, behind, because Arlcard was being hindered by the dead vampire elders.

Cain couldn't survive for long without Arlcard but the elder spirit seemed to have thrown caution to the winds. It slapped the obstacles in its way as it forced its way toward Marcus.