

## **World 1671**

### **Chapter 1671: Old Conflict**

The reinforcement that came to Aurebor was only the mobile fortress. The main army at Hydrurond was moving at a slow march toward Liguritudum. It was difficult to mask the movement of such a large army. Hence, John had the main army continue heading to Liguritdum.

He intended to attract Liguritudum's attention. With Liguritudum believing the combined force of Themisphere, Sangrod, Palgrost, and Hydrurond was heading in their direction, it would be unlikely for them to send reinforcement to Aurebor.

The second reason was that the joined army had a slow marching speed. Some of the soldiers still rode common steeds. Additionally, they needed to build a supply line while marching into Liguritudum. They couldn't move fast.

The mobile fortress, however, could. With the upgrade of its movement speed, it could travel at a speed equal to a rare-grade steed.

It might be difficult to mask something as large as the mobile fortress, but with the knowledge John and Peniel possessed, they were able to pick a route less conspicuous. They picked a route where high-level monsters used to roam. If enemy scouts entered the areas they were passing, these scouts would most likely be killed by the monsters.

Most monsters scuttled away after seeing the mobile fortress. Only mythical-grade monsters dared to come in the fortress' path. If such a monster appeared, Jack and the others happily dispatched it for exp points.

Hence, the mobile fortress was able to move toward Aurebor without the enemy's detection.

Since the mobile fortress marched by itself, it didn't bring an army except for the one staying inside it. They cleared out most of the supplies inside the mobile fortress and let the main army bring those supplies. The mobile fortress was filled with players to the brim. A lot had to camp out in the mobile fortress' courtyard using tents because there was no space for them inside the keep.

Around 25,000 players came out of the mobile fortress and joined the invading force. The ones brought here were the top experts. Almost half were the members of Everlasting Heavenly Legends.

On the top of the keep were Jack, John, Paytowin, and Grace. They combined their Hope's Sanctification and aimed Hope's Light at the eldritch beholder. It was not a full-power Hope's Light since Jeanny was not available but it was still powerful enough to keep the eldritch beholder from dodging it.

The eldritch beholder was taken by surprise. This ball of light that was assailing her looked like a spell but her anti-magic planar wall didn't work against it. She tried casting teleportation but the ball of light confined her position. She couldn't teleport away. She sensed strong divine power from the light and she felt her soul getting burned.

She emitted a cry that caused a massive mental blast to the nearby soldiers. Whether they were allies or foes, they dropped to the ground with their head reeling.

When Hope's Light ended, the eldritch beholder lost 20% of her life and she lost her flying ability. Her titanic body fell to the ground, crushing many soldiers under her. She was unable to move. The Verremor and Themisphere troops in the vicinity immediately sent their attacks to the powerless country guardian.

The eldritch beholder had been too cocky that she only relied on her anti-magic planar wall to defend herself. She didn't cast any defensive buff on herself. Thus, she received the full damage and effects of Hope's Light, unlike the Herald in the ancient battleground.

"Too bad Jeanny isn't here. Our Hope's Light should be able to take out more HP from that abomination if she is here," Paytowin remarked.

"We should be grateful we successfully get a jump on it," Jack said, adopting a half-glass-full attitude.

Jack took out his king badge and companion badge. He first summoned his eleven royal agents, most of whom he sent back to Themisphere to train after the battle in Hydrurond. He instructed these royal agents to aid the invading armies against the Aurebor army. Paytowin and Grace advanced with these royal agents.

Jack then summoned Broidrireg and Arlcard.

When Broidrireg descended from heaven, he was surprised when he laid eyes on the eldritch beholder.

The eldritch beholder had recovered from the Hope's Light's after-effect. She immediately unleashed a shockwave that threw the soldiers attacking her to the ground. She followed up with a spell that conjured multiple dark balls that spread out and exploded upon impact, damaging those helpless soldiers.

The eldritch beholder was angry that these insects dared to attack her when she was vulnerable. She was about to continue teaching these soldiers more lessons when a voice drew her attention.

"You... How did you break out from your seal?" Broidrireg asked from above.

The eldritch beholder looked up upon hearing Broidrireg's voice. At that instant, she forgot about taking revenge on the soldiers around her. A bigger subject of her vengeful desire had appeared. Her giant body floated back up into the air.

"The person who broke me out promised me that I would face you as long as I became her country guardian. She didn't lie," The eldritch beholder said.

"The queen of Aurebor broke you out?" Broidrireg asked.

"Didn't I tell you that your seal won't hold me forever?" The eldritch beholder then noticed a peculiar tattoo on Broidrireg's chest. "I see you seal another one. Who is the poor thing? I'm surprised you use yourself as the object of the sealing. This one must be special."

"There is no need for you to worry about others. You have more to worry about."

"Haha. Very confident you are. The last time, you brought your entire family to take me down. I don't see any true dragon with you. You are alone this time," The eldritch beholder said mockingly.

"I might be old, but I'm not senile yet. I also remember you had your entire brood with you at the time. Not those newly-born critters below."

"That might be true, but you should know that I am the worst opponent for you. When you sealed me, you had your brother who excelled in physical battles to weaken me. I don't see him. You won't seal me again this time."

"I don't need to seal you anymore," Broidrireg returned. "After the incident with you the last time, I've studied hard and created a new spell. One that can kill even an undying creature such as you."

"I thought you said you aren't senile yet? Whatever you created, it is still magic, isn't it?" The eldritch beholder laughed mockingly.

"We will see," Broidrireg wasn't upset by the eldritch beholder's mockery. "Oh, and one other thing. Who said that I'm alone?"

The eldritch beholder then found four other beings surrounding her. One was a vampire. Another was a strange construct with bladed limbs and bladed wings. The third one was something she remembered to be called a Therras Beast, but this one was larger, wore armor, and had weird wings. It was also covered in horns. The last one was a humanoid being composed of pure lightning.

All four gave off an aura that gave even a being like her a sense of danger.

## **Chapter 1672: Track Missing Object**

Before Jack went up to join Broidrireg to face the eldritch beholder, he first went to Verremor's field command base. This command base was almost overrun by the enemies before his arrival. Both the war table and Kima who was operating it only had 50% of their HP left. Kabaka and the soldiers who formed the perimeter tried their best to defend the two but they were also in trouble.

Jack arrived just as a couple of elven soldiers broke through the barricade and arrived before the war table. Jack used Shooting Dash to come between them and the war table. With Power Swing, he sent the two elven soldiers flying away. The orc soldiers took over then.

Jack cast Remote Magic Field followed by Perpetual Lightning Judgement. With the enhancement from his runestone of spellcasting, all his spells now triggered double cast. The nearby Aurebor soldiers were assailed by a calamity of lightning from Jack's double spell. Many perished, including the nearby beholders.

Peniel used Group Fast Heal while Jack cast his spells, healing Kima and the others. The war table was not affected, though. A nearby mechanic resumed repairing the war table once he saw the enemy soldiers were beaten back.

Jack then cast Double Clone. With the double-cast effect, four clones appeared instead of the usual two.

Clones were considered different than summons. If summoning spells triggered a double cast, it won't add the number of summoned creatures. The new summon would simply replace the old summon, so basically what it did was refill the summons' HP back to full. That's why Master didn't use the

Necronomicon to continuously refresh his summoning spells' cooldown and repeated his summoning spells, replacing the weak zombie soldiers with his stronger summons.

As for cloning ability, Jack had experienced having two identical clones existing at the same time when he used Mirage Beast. Mirage Beast was not a spell so it wasn't affected by the Remote Magic Field. But last time, Jack conjured two of Therras' clones due to using Reset before the first clone disappeared. The second clone didn't cause the first clone to end. That showed him his Double Clone could also function the same way.

Jack sent three of his four clones to aid his army. His fourth clone stayed at Verremor's command base while his real body used beast form and Lightning God Incarnation before taking to the sky with Therras and Spark to assist Broidrireg.

Jack's clone who stayed behind asked Kabaka why he didn't summon Verremor's country guardian. Kabaka informed Jack about what had happened. After listening to the story, Jack used his King Badge to call one of his royal agents over.

Soon, Hatori arrived. When he did, he just appeared amid Jack, Kabaka, and Kima without warning. Kabaka and Kima were taken aback by his sudden appearance. Jack wasn't.

"Do you have an order for me, Your Majesty?" Hatori asked.

Jack nodded. "Please use your track object skill to claim back Chief Kabaka's badge," he commanded.

"Excuse me, Chief Kabaka," Hatori extended his hand to touch Kabaka. Kabaka let him.

After some time, he looked in a direction. "It seemed that the thief had not gone far. The scent is still strong," Hatori said. "But I will have to leave the battlefield, Your Majesty."

"Go ahead," Jack replied.

Hatori vanished after receiving the confirmation, in a way that was as mysterious as when he appeared.

What Hatori used just now was a special skill for elite classes that branched from the ranger class. The skill was called Track Missing Object.

During the time the mobile fortress traveled from Hydrurond to Aurebor, Hatori stayed with Jack. As promised, Jack trained him in mana concealment. During that time, he also got to know Hatori better. One of the things he learned was Hatori's skills.

Hatori had all the tracking skills. Track Person, Track Object, Track Monster, and Track Missing Object. Track Object was similar to track person, except the mark was placed on an object. Afterward, the skill's user would know the position of this object for twenty-four hours. As for max-leveled skill, it could trace the object's position for three days.

Track Missing Object functioned by getting into contact with an item's last position or its owner. Once a link was established, the skill's user could track the missing item's position as long as the item was not removed from its previous position or owner for more than twenty-four hours. That was when the skill was level 1. At max level 20, the time limit was three days.

The trace of the missing item could be strong or weak depending on how far the item was. In the case of Kabaka's badge, the trace was strong because Speedrun decided to stay inside Lorethion. With such a strong scent, it shouldn't take long for Hatori to find Speedrun.

Jack didn't worry about how Hatori entered the capital. The ex-assassin had a vast library of skills for stealth sneaking.

Jack also found Duchess Isabelle who was recuperating near the field command base. Duke Alfredo came to his wife after learning about her condition. Unfortunately, none of them possessed a spell to regrow her missing left arm. They would have to ask for aid from the Church of Creation for that.

After the incident with Evil Janus, Jack believed the Church of Creation wouldn't deny if he asked them to heal Isabelle. For now, he sent Isabelle into the mobile fortress. She was not in the condition to participate in the battle.

Seeing his wife's condition, Duke Alfredo almost flew up to face the eldritch beholder out of anger, but Jack stopped him. If Isabelle couldn't fight the eldritch beholder, what more of him? He instead vented his anger on the Aurebor troops.

Jack asked about Emris and learned of his demise. He wasn't too sad since Emris' life was protected by the revival pool, but it was still a pity to lose a major fighting force in the current battle.

Although only the mobile fortress came, the situation on the battlefield turned around almost immediately. Aside from players' reinforcement brought by the fortress, there were also guild armies. These guild armies were from the guilds from Themisphere, Palgrost, Hydrurond, and Sangrod.

The mobile fortress mostly carried players, but John fit in small regiments of troops from the four countries. This was so the guilds could summon their guild armies when needed. The roof of the mobile fortress' keep was filled with these guild players and their guild army summoning platforms.

### **Chapter 1673: A Reversal on the Battlefield**

"Keep fighting! Keep fighting!! Repel the invaders...!!!" White Death continued shouting to rally his guild mates and the native elven soldiers.

"Give it up! You are losing!" Jennifer exclaimed.

Wicked Witches had lost many members before the reinforcement arrived. Other guilds that supported the invading force also suffered many losses. Some of them were about to flee. Luckily, the arrival of the mobile fortress turned the tide.

"The battle is not over yet!" White Death said to Jennifer. "And whether we win or lose, you will not see through this battle."

Jennifer was in a bad position. She had been covering for many of her guild members when they got pushed back. Aside from White Death, she was also surrounded by Grimclaw, Green Death, Violet Death, and Yellow Death. Her HP bar was down to half.

"I will take you down before I'm defeated!" Jennifer said defiantly. She used Piercing Spear. A spear energy shot at White Death who stayed at the back.

"Hah, pathetic attempt!" White Death mocked. He didn't acquire his title for being weak. He was also an expert. He sidestepped and deftly dodged the spear energy.

He then cast Reaver's ultimate spell, Soul Annihilation. He wasn't boasting when he declared his desire to take down Jennifer.

Someone swooped down from the sky and landed next to Jennifer. That person had an open palm placed right in front of Jennifer. Cold black energy swirled from that palm. As it did, the ball of light that was supposed to be the visual effect of Soul Annihilation was sucked into the person's palm. The ball of light disappeared into the palm and a recovery number appeared above the person.

The person who just saved Jennifer was Grace. Her expertise using the Nine Yin Devouring Palm had improved. White Death's spell was also much weaker than Uddroth's divine flame wrath, so Grace was still fine after sucking the soul annihilation.

"Thank you!" Jennifer expressed her gratitude. She didn't understand what Grace had just done, but she knew she would most likely be a goner if White Death's spell hit.

Grace split his mace into two and swung them using her martial arts. Each swing created a short shockwave that dealt chaos damage. Normally, her weapon only produced this shockwave upon impact. But after she leveled up to level 80, her mace also upgraded to the legendary rank. This shockwave was now produced from a simple swing, effectively turning her into a mid-range combatant. The foes that surrounded Jennifer were beaten back by these shockwaves.

Jennifer's HP recovered even when no one was casting healing spells on her. She realized soon that it was the effect of standing close to Grace. It was the aura of her legendary-grade armor.

Grace also cast a spell on nearby Wicked Witches' members who were in trouble. Her spell covered an area with soft light and those Wicked Witches' members had their HP refilled. They also found that some sort of light was attached to them.

This was Grace's new skill after leveling up to level 80, Gift of Avarice. The skill healed 20,000 HP to all allies in an area of a 10-meter radius. Healed allies received marks of avarice which lasted ten seconds. If those allies received hits while the marks were active, they were healed another 20,000 HP and the duration of the marks was refreshed. These marks could be refreshed a maximum of ten times.

Following Grace were the members of True Death Associates. They were not going to let go of the chance to beat down the guild that had stolen their name. White Death could see the situation was not good. He ordered his members to retreat to where there were more native elven soldiers.

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Not far away, Four Winds was back to clashing with Abasi. After the arrival of the reinforcement, he left the eldritch beholder to Jack and the others. He had tasted fighting that monster. He preferred to fight other opponents if there was a choice.

Abasi and his clan had been wreaking havoc on the invading troops with the aid of the small beholders. Many orc players fighting beside his clan. These orc players were members of Warsong Rising. Warsong Rising had been expelled and banned from Verremor. This guild had no choice but to go seek shelter in Abasi. These two outcast groups had now become mercenaries for World Maker.

Cipher Flight's members fought alongside their leaders. Beside them were Liberty Fighters' members led by Vivian and Ursa. These two top guilds from Verremor worked well together. When Warsong Rising was Verremor's number two guild, the relationship between Verremor's number one and number two was full of hostile competition. After Liberty Fighters occupied the spot, the number one and number two interacted with more collaboration.

Among the Cipher Flight members fighting in the battle, Coca and Jim were on the front line. Both of them had improved tremendously. Not just their levels, but also their martial expertise. They were among the Cipher Flight members who were granted the chance to train inside Everlasting Heavenly Legends' Space-time Chamber.

As they were fighting, they noticed one very odd scene. One of the enemies was fighting while sitting on a stool.

"F\*ck me...!" Jim cursed after seeing the weirdo who fought with such an unconventional method. He then shouted at the person, "Stu! How lazy can you be? You are giving us ex-action stars a bad name!"

Seagull who heard his real name getting called looked in Jim's direction. "You, imposter! Did I still not beat you enough the last time?"

Jim almost fell hearing it. "Motherf\*cker! How delusional can you be? You are the one down on the floor the last time we duel!!"

"You can spread lies all you want, but true fans know who is the best between the two of us," Stu shouted but refused to get up from his stool.

"Okay, I have had it with him. I won't be satisfied if I don't kill him in this battle," Jim said as he fought his way toward Stu.

"I will open the way for you!" Coca exclaimed. "F\*ck! Hearing him also pissed me off!"

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As the battle continued to rage, a part of the invading force found healing light on them even when no healer was nearby. They then realized it was the presence of the mobile fortress. Some sort of soothing light spread from that moving fortress. They not only got healed but their negative status effects were also cured as they continued to stay near the fortress.

Those who didn't know about the existence of the rune tree inside the mobile fortress thought that it was one of the special abilities of the fortress. The beholders' mind controls were even included among the negative effects cured by the rune tree, even when it was not classified as a standard status ailment.

With these recovery abilities, the invading force that was previously losing recovered enough and was able to fight back with the help of the reinforcement players.

Additionally, the Themisphere soldiers found their attributes increased once the mobile fortress appeared. This was due to Jack using the War Rally which cost 20 ruling powers.

There was also the debuff to Aurebor soldiers due to the coordinated strike's effect.

With all these buffs and debuff, the aurebor soldiers who were already outnumbered were now also outclassed, outpowered, and outskilled when they fought the Themisphere soldiers. Their number kept on falling.

## **Chapter 1674: Mental Block**

On the sky, Jack and the others tussled with the eldritch beholder. The ones who could do any meaningful damage were Arlcard, Therras, and Spark.

Broidrireg's spells were useless. He had to resort to becoming a tank for his four allies. A role that he was neither good at nor fond of. He kept his body close to the eldritch beholder and used his claws and fangs to keep the eldritch beholder's attention on him. He kept on getting hit by eldritch beholder's spells in return, but he endured.

Jack was the same. He regretted using the Lightning God Incarnation. All his lightning attacks were as if sinking to a bottomless well before they touched the eldritch beholder. He had been told about the eldritch beholder's anti-magic ability, but he thought the divine skill could somehow trump that ability as Hope's Light did.

Fighting with a handicap such as this, he thought it was better if he didn't use Lightning God Incarnation. Arlcard refrained from using his dark lord incarnation after seeing how ineffective Jack's lightning form was.

While Jack was feeling miserable, he was hit by a heavy mental attack. Not as powerful as the time when Evil Janus used the Illios Stare on him, but it's close. This time, the result was different. He had now trained to use mana manipulation to protect his mind.

The last time he fought Evil Janus, his mana manipulation might have been powerful and better than most, but his application was mostly on his martial arts and game skills. Compared to other martial artists who had trained for most of their lives, he only focused on training recently.

With masters like Wong and Murong, martial artists like Long and Four Winds were trained with a regular meditation technique that honed their minds. Hence, Four Winds was able to protect his mind even when he had just become proficient at mana manipulation not long ago. Domon also taught this technique to his disciples but Jack was always too busy so he only taught the more practical arts and never had the chance to teach this mind technique to Jack.

During the journey from Hydrurond to Aurebor, Jack learned about this technique from Grace when they chatted about Jack's battle with Long in Hydrurond. Jack was intrigued by how Long wasn't affected by the Illios Stare as severely as he was.

Grace asked Jack to hit her using the Illios Stare. Rather ungentlemanly, Jack complied. He was surprised to find Grace could still do things even with the Illios Stare on her. Grace informed Jack that Murong had taught her the mind technique during her tutelage in the space-time chamber.

Jack went and asked Domon, who was also inside the mobile fortress, about this technique. Domon happily gave him pointers about how to train. While Jack taught Hatori mana concealment, he spent his time training how to use mana manipulation to block mental attacks.



With his mana affinity, it took him only a short time to master the technique. Hence, he wasn't affected by the eldritch beholder's mind blast.

Arlcard was slightly affected. But like how he could do mana concealment naturally, this mind block also came to him without him ever doing any real training. Jack wondered whether these abilities came from Cain.

Therras was affected more heavily. However, it could still force itself to continue fighting. Therras was more like a feral beast than a thought-based combatant. It relied more on its instinct when fighting.

Broidrireg was unfazed. Tiemezzys was able to resist the Illios Stare when Jack used it on him. Being an older dragon, Broidrireg's mind was much stronger and his mastery of using mana manipulation to protect his mind was also already top-notch.

Yet, out of all of them, Spark was the most unaffected. This was because Spark didn't have a mind as natural creatures did. Its thoughts were more like the outcome of computerized circuits. The mental blast was unable to cause Spark any disruption. He continued to slash the eldritch beholder while his wing blades repelled the tentacles that came at him.

Jack might have been able to block mental attacks, but it still didn't solve his predicament. His Lightning God Incarnation didn't last long. He felt bad about wasting such a powerful skill. He had a brief thought of heading back down to use his lightning on the enemy army below, but then he thought of Emris.

He had heard about the lord marshal's demise when he checked on Isabelle. He also heard how he died. Without wasting more time thinking, he turned into a lightning bolt and got into a position. He then cast Wind Jet and shot forward. Before hitting the eldritch beholder's anti-magi planar wall, he cast ghost form.

His ghost form had lightning shape but they were intangible, so he wasn't affected by the anti-magi planar wall. Jack was copying Arlcard's method. He flew passed the anti-magi planar wall and continued ahead. He had been aiming his flight at the eldritch beholder's mouth. Without slowing, he flew forward and entered the gigantic mouth.

The eldritch beholder didn't expect that. She thought Jack would be stopped by her anti-magi planar wall because Jack was in lightning form. Jack was already inside her when she realized what was going on. She couldn't believe another fool entered her mouth for the second time today. She clamped her mouth shut, eager to teach the same lesson to this second fool.

When Jack's ghost form ended, Jack was deep inside the eldritch beholder's mouth. He didn't see the anti-magic planar wall inside here. Since it was so, he didn't dawdle. He unleashed one attack after another, all buffed by the lightning elements.

The same as when Emris did it, the eldritch beholder suffered damages for elemental attacks done from the inside. The most troublesome part of Jack's attacks was the pain the attacks caused. The attacks were powered by divine skill. The eldritch beholder experienced torture from Jack's lightning assaults.

"Despicable worm! I will devour you...!!!" The eldritch beholder exclaimed angrily. A massive torrent of dark energies filled her inside, drowning Jack.

Jack was protected by the Lightning God Incarnation. He had also cast Barrier after entering the mouth. The damage he received was greatly mitigated.

Hence, Jack continued dispensing lightning punishments for the duration of his divine skill.

### **Chapter 1675: Ravaged from the Inside**

With Jack wreaking havoc inside her, the eldritch beholder had trouble thinking straight. Her reaction and spellcasting became slow. She even experienced brief paralyzes from Jack's attacks. The four outside didn't let go of this chance.

Broidrireg swerved around the eldritch beholder before sinking his claws and fangs from behind. The rest of his lengthy body coiled around the eldritch beholder and held her in place.

Arlcard's crimson rapier slashed and thrust with lightning speed. He couldn't deal much damage because most of his skills and spells had dark elements. He could only use normal attacks or physical skills, which didn't pack much of a punch.

Spark was the weakest among the five but its expertise was second only to Jack's. The multiple blades on its body accurately struck the tentacles that came at it while its bladed limbs slashed the eldritch beholder's real body. It stayed close to the eldritch beholder like glue and only moved away when it sensed a spell targeting it, which it could easily detect due to its advanced mana sense.

It also used the Nine Yin Phantom Sword regularly. This ancient art was able to cause a hole in the eldritch beholder's anti-magic planar wall, but the hole was too tiny to have any significant effect. The hole was also quickly mended, so the ancient art couldn't disrupt the eldritch beholder's ultimate defense. Perhaps things would have been different if it was the Nine Yin Abyssal Finger.

Therras shone the most in the fight. It mostly relied on its physical prowess, after all. It forewent defense and focused on bashing the eldritch beholder from its flank. With Broidrireg taking the eldritch beholder's attention, it was free to dish out attacks. It relied on its armor and high HP to tank the tentacles battering its body while continued sending one attack after another.

Jack's Lightning God Incarnation didn't last long. After the three-minute duration ended, Jack focused the accumulated mana and punched upward onto where the eldritch beholder's brain should be located. The impact from the finishing move sent tremors all over the eldritch beholder's body. She also suffered massive damage.

Without the protection from Lightning God Incarnation, Jack's HP quickly fell. He activated Lightning God Suit and Gold Scale Armor. Even after using the two defensive skills, Jack's HP still dropped at a dangerous speed. The dark energies swirling around him were extremely thick and eroding. If he didn't have mana sense, he wouldn't be able to know which way to aim.

Jack didn't panic. He continued sending attack after attack. When his HP almost zeroed, he used Gold Dragon Vitality. His HP was back to full and his max HP increased again. He was already in beast form. His beast form had ten-star upgrades, which added his max HP by 200%. With Gold Dragon Vitality, his max HP was added another 100%. At this moment, he had an HP bar of 266,666 HP.

Jack didn't stop there. He also activated Life Elevating Art. His attributes increased and he gained a boost in HP recovery. As his HP lowered, his HP recovery increased.

Yet, even with these recovery boosts, his HP still returned to a dangerous level very fast. When his HP fell to critical, Jack used his cloak's Elemental God Barrier which had been switched to the dark element.

The Elemental God Barrier absorbed the damage from the dark energies while the Life Elevating Art slowly brought Jack's HP up. Protected by the Elemental God Barrier, Jack activated Overlimit, cast Superior Acceleration, and cast his mega spell before continuing with his rune technique. After completing his rune technique, he stabbed his rune technique into the ground where he was standing, which was also part of the eldritch beholder's body.

When the Elemental God Barrier was destroyed, Jack's HP was already back to full.

He continued to exhaust all his high-level and mid-level skills and spells. When his HP almost fell to zero again, he cast Reset. He used Lightning God Incarnation and then repeated everything all over again.

The eldritch beholder was in anguish. Jack continued to ravage inside her while outside, the four never stopped hitting her. She was very bewildered as to why the ant inside her had not died yet. That ant was an outworlder who was supposed to have much lower HP than a native. Even the native spellcaster who had audaciously entered her the first time didn't last this long. How did this outworlder achieve the feat?

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Mistress saw events transpiring from the top of her palace. The roofless and wall-less throne room granted her a full view of the battle. Either the battle of the eldritch beholder in the sky or the battle of the armies on the ground outside the capital wall, both didn't look good for her force. No matter how she wished, she could see that they were losing.

Lead Designer came to her side. He let another member use the war table. There was not much he could do under the situation, anyway. He hesitantly asked Mistress, "Perhaps... Perhaps it's time we think about cutting our losses...?"

Mistress continued to be silent. When Lead Designer was about to ask again, she said, "I'm going to activate the scorched wall enchantment."

"But... That will leave us defenseless," Lead Designer said.

"Didn't you propose we cut our losses?" Mistress replied. "We can no longer keep this country. We will take down as much of those bastards before we leave."

She walked to the throne. She sat on it and activated the monarch system. She then opened the enchantment window.

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Outside, the battle continued to rage. The defenders continued to get pushed back. They suffered many casualties. Many of the defenders wondered why their leaders had not yet ordered them back to the wall. Even if it was only delaying the inevitable, it was still better than an open battle like this.

As they were hoping for the sound of the horn to retreat, they heard rumbling from their backs instead. They turned and saw the walls they hoped to return to shudder violently. When they were still confused as to what was happening, the wall crumbled.

They were baffled. No enemy was hitting the wall. The enemy siege weapons had retreated when the battle outside the wall started. Those siege weapons remained at the back. Why was their defensive wall destroyed for no reason?

While puzzlement filled their minds, they saw the remnants of their wall move. The thick vines that used to compose Lorethion's wall started gathering together. They gathered into many lumps which then grew limbs. These lumps reformed themselves into gigantic humanoid shapes. There were more than a hundred of these automatons.

These automatons then started walking toward the battlefield.

### **Chapter 1676: Nature Constructs**

The size of these automatons was bigger than a standard large-size monster but smaller than a titanic-size creature like the true dragons. With more than a hundred of these things walking toward them, the defenders couldn't help but feel intimidated.

When these automatons came into range, the defenders used their Inspect skills. These automatons were called Nature Constructs. Almost all of them were level 80 rare elites except for twenty in the middle. These twenty were level 80 mythical grades, and they were all classified as magical monsters.

With their giant size, they had higher HP, defense, and strength compared to other monsters of the same level and grade. In return, they were slow, but they were still enough of a menace.

Each swing of their arm caused a tidal wave of energy. Each stomp caused a small earthquake. The surfaces of their bodies were filled with living vines that lashed out at any hostiles who came near, which made them very troublesome for melee attackers.

Their arms could elongate into a whip and strike the enemies from a distance. They could release poisonous fumes from the various cracks on their bodies. The mythical-grade nature construct could also shoot multiple poisonous thorns the size of a spear to hit ranged enemies.

With the addition of these Nature Constructs, the Aurebor soldiers received a boost of morale. Even though these Nature Constructs were only a little more than a hundred in number, they were powerful enough to halt the advance of the invading force.

These Nature Constructs were formed from the Scorched Wall enchantment Mistress cast using Aurebor's monarch system. This enchantment was available from a research tech available only to Aurebor Dynasty. The enchantment was a last-ditch attempt against a siege.

The enchantment sacrificed the city's defensive wall to form these Nature Constructs. The number of formed constructs depended on the condition of the wall. Verremor's siege weapons only damaged a tiny part of the wall. A majority of the wall was still in good condition. Hence, the enchantment was able to create more than a hundred Nature Constructs.

The levels and grades of the constructs were determined by the kingdom mana. Upon using this enchantment, all the reserved mana within the kingdom was used up. Aurebor still had almost a million points of kingdom mana available. These were all dried now. In exchange, this mana gave them more than a hundred powerful combatants. If Aurebor had more kingdom mana when this enchantment was cast, the Nature Constructs would have higher levels and grades to a maximum of level 95 mythical.

Using this enchantment was a last resort because the constructs only lasted a day. Afterward, it crumbled into decayed vines. The wall was gone once the enchantment took place, leaving the city without a defensive barrier. The wall also couldn't be rebuilt for at least one week, even spending ruling powers was useless.

Additionally, with the kingdom mana being emptied, a lot of facilities that required mana upkeep would stop functioning, which in turn would cause the stats in most settlements to drop.

If there was a choice, no ruler would have used this enchantment. Mistress had finally accepted the fact that she couldn't win this war. She didn't want to accept it. She didn't want to lose what she thought was rightfully hers. This crown was something she had fought for and won, but she was also not a delusional person.

After activating the scorched wall enchantment, she asked Lead Designer to pull back World Ruler's guild army. She also sent messages for her members to secretly retreat. As for the other players, she only told the guilds that she deemed worthy. Death Associates was one of these guilds. The players from these guilds secretly left the battlefield when the nature constructs took the enemy's attention.

The native elven soldiers and most of the Aurebor players supporting Mistress didn't know that they were being abandoned. They continued to fight because they thought Mistress still had other things up her sleeves.

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Based on Hope's knowledge, John knew that Scorching Wall was one of the possible techs in Aurebor's research tree. He just didn't know that Mistress had researched this tech. He didn't panic seeing the appearance of these Nature Constructs.

He told Tip to give instructions for their guild's best combatants to engage the mythical-grade nature constructs. The enemy soldiers were of no menace anymore. Verremor and Themisphere forces originally outnumbered the Aurebor force. They only got into trouble due to the eldritch beholder and its brood's mind-controlling power.

With the eldritch beholder forced back and the mind control from the small beholders nullified by the rune tree, the advantage returned to the invading force. With the addition of the reinforcement players, they had even killed a good number of the small beholders.

As long as they could hold the Nature Constructs, the Aurebor force would surely be routed.

Tip followed John's instructions. He sent Everlasting Heavenly Legends' guild guardians and guild heroes to face the nature constructs. For the guild heroes, only Rahab and Nilrem advanced toward the mythical-grade nature constructs. Uruk was not strong enough. He was a level 80 rare elite, so he went and fought one of the rare elite grade nature constructs.

Rahab was level 81. He was more than enough to challenge the mythical-grade nature construct.

Nilrem brought her knight of the rounds with her. With the intelligence stat from her current level 79, the knights of the rounds she summoned were level 88 rare elites. All twelve knights were still alive. Although they were weaker than the mythical-grade nature constructs, their levels were high enough to keep those constructs busy.

Penny and Gumeru each took on a mythical-grade nature construct on their own. Czar was brazen enough to try to take on two. With his speed, he zipped around hitting two constructs that were close to one another, drawing their aggro. The constructs tried hitting the tygre, but Czar was already out of harm's way before their attacks arrived.

Makubwa and Samuhn also took on the mythical-grade nature construct. Four Winds did so as well. Abasi had somehow retreated with his clan. Four Winds didn't know that it was because Mistress had called for the retreat. With a worthy opponent gone, four Winds went and tackled the imposing nature construct.

Eyrene led Jack's royal agents to fight the nature construct. She was more than enough to face one of these nature constructs but the others were not as powerful. Elayne boosted them by playing music. She was an eternal grade but she was many levels lower. She chose not to engage the nature construct directly.

Domon, Paytowin, Grace, Wong, and the other guild members with their powerful companions from the ex-members of the Council of Charites also went and faced the nature constructs.

This last resort weapon from Aurebor might be powerful, but they were still not enough to turn the tide.

## **Chapter 1677: A Covert Payback for a Covert Transgression**

From one of the palace's windows, Speedrun saw Mistress and her subordinates leave the palace. He didn't care what those people were doing, but the palace had become even emptier with them gone. He could freely move around.

He continued walking around the halls looking for valuable items. Normal people might think that if there were any treasures inside a palace ruled by a player, those treasures would have been taken already. A player had an inventory system, they could store valuables in their inventory rather than letting these valuables lay in the open. Players' inventory system might have limited space but there were some ways to solve this, such as the bank or guild vaults. Hence, most would think what Speedrun was doing to be pointless.

Yet, Speedrun knew from experience that players were mostly insensible. Whether in real life or games, people tend to overlook the mundane. In games, valuable items used to be marked with glows or glitters. In real life, valuable items were usually associated with things that appeared ornate or were made of expensive materials. Most wouldn't spare a glance at things that seemed like everyday stuff, much less bother to use Inspect.

However, Speedrun had found several valuable items among this so-called mundane-looking stuff. As proven, since he started searching around the palace, he had found five such valuables. They were all only rare grades and below, though. He hadn't found any real valuables so he continued to search.

He entered a deserted warehouse which from a first glance, seemed like the place where people stored unwanted items. A normal thief would have turned away at a glance, but not Speedrun. He walked inside and gave the room a quick sweep. He then started rummaging the place.

There were many closed crates in this room. He opened them up and browsed their contents. It would take too long if he constantly used Inspect on every item he saw, but he always had a good eye and nose for covert valuables.

As he was still rummaging, he thought he heard something from behind. He quickly swiveled to his back. No one.

He needed to make sure. He looked around the room to see if any people were hiding. There was no one. Now that he thought about it, why would people hide from him? He should be the one who hid. If palace occupants saw him, they would have shouted at him. Realizing this, he turned back to check the stuff. But first, he closed the door to the room. Couldn't hurt to be cautious. If someone did come, he should hear the door getting opened and have a brief time to hide.

He continued opening one crate after another and checking their contents. After opening almost ten crates, he held in his hand the first thing that drew his attention. It was a blank picture frame. Anyone would see this thing as junk but his instinct told him that what he held was more than a normal picture frame. So, he used his Inspect and found that the picture frame was a unique-grade item.

"Bingo!" He exclaimed.

As he declared the triumphant statement, he sensed a tingling from inside him. Or more correctly, a tingling from the link between him and his inventory. His mind instinctively went into his inventory just in time to see a hand inside there before disappearing soon. He briefly saw something in that hand's clutch.

"What...?" His mind returned outside. He again acted on instinct and turned back. This time, he found someone there. A native who was dressed up in some sort of a black ninja suit. He recognized the native's hand. It was the same hand that was inside his inventory earlier. He then noticed this native's other hand was holding a dagger.

Before Speedrun could react, that dagger pierced into his heart. A damage number appeared above him and he found himself unable to move. That stab just now produced a Stun effect. The ninja in front of him then turned into a blur as multiple lights flashed around him.

Before he knew it, he was down on the floor with a grey vision. As he lay there, still confused, he realized he hadn't stored that picture frame in his hand in his inventory. It's too late to do that now.

The ninja who had killed Speedrun was Hatori, Jack's newest royal agent. The scent from his Track Missing Object brought him to Aurebor palace. With how the palace was deserted, he searched for Speedrun without obstacles, but he still used Hide to keep himself unseen.

When he sensed the scent was getting stronger, he knew Speedrun was close. He cast the Invisibility spell then. Hide skill maintained its invisibility by staying away from people. If someone got close, the hide skill was deactivated. So, he used the spell to get close to Speedrun.

The reason he needed to get close and not directly attack Speedrun once he found the thief was so he could get the stolen item back. Track Missing Object didn't just let one track the object, it also gave the skill user the ability to retrieve the missing object, even from an outworlder's inventory. He needed to get close, though, just like how Speedrun needed to be close to Kabaka when he used the Master Steal skill.

Unlike the Master Steal, Track Missing Object only let Hatori get the missing item, he couldn't get any other item from Speedrun's inventory. There was still a chance of failure to get the item out unless the skill was fully leveled, which was so in Hatori's case. But even with a 100% success chance, Hatori could still fail if he was found out by Speedrun before his hand grabbed the stolen item. If the missing object failed to be taken out and the thief fled, the Track Missing Object was ended and its cooldown began. Hatori wouldn't be able to track the missing object again until the cooldown was done. He would then have to restart the skill by touching Kabaka again.

Luckily, he was successful in his mission. Once Kabaka's chief badge was safe in his hand, he no longer needed to be covert. He used Critical Stab, a non-standard Assassin skill that guaranteed a critical. Additionally, he had an ambush bonus because Speedrun was caught by surprise.

The ambush and critical effect of that one stab almost took out Speedrun's HP. When Hatori saw that Speedrun had not died, he followed up his attack using Deadly Flash Strikes.

Speedrun carried a sacrificial dummy that was given by Master. Unfortunately, deadly flash strikes delivered multiple slashes. The sacrificial dummy was used in the middle of the slashes and the next slash after that took out Speedrun's life.

Speedrun died in disbelief that an expert covert agent like him fell into the hands of another covert agent.

Hatori was just about to leave but he noticed the blank picture frame Speedrun had been clutching at the moment of his death. Out of curiosity, he used Inspect. He was surprised after reading the description. He picked up that picture frame and ran out of the room.

## **Chapter 1678: Giving up on the Thorn in the Inside**

When Mistress fled the palace, she also warned the eldritch beholder. If the eldritch beholder followed them to Liguritutum, she would be a formidable ally.

Normally, if a sovereign lost a country but was still alive, the country guardian didn't have the duty to continue following said sovereign. The country guardian was released from his contract and was free to leave. So, unless the relationship between the country guardian and the sovereign was deep, the country guardian most likely left once the country lost.

The eldritch beholder didn't have any meaningful bond with Mistress. She came into Mistress' service out of the agreement for freeing her from Broidrireg's seal. So, rationally, Mistress shouldn't have told



the eldritch beholder about her relinquishing her throne because this should just caused the eldritch beholder to leave both her and the country.

However, Master had built another nest in Liguritutum suitable for the eldritch beholder's broods. He even installed a high-grade dark mana site inside the nest, which gave the beholder eggs a fast-growing effect.

When the joined Verremor and Themisphere forces were on their way to Lorethion, the eldritch beholder traveled to Liguritutum with a few of her more mature broods. There, she laid her eggs for a few days before returning to Lorethion to deal with the siege. She left the mature beholders to look after those eggs.

So, even if the eldritch beholder was no longer tied to a contract with Mistress, she should still go to her second nest in Liguritutum if she was freed. This nest was near Liguritutum's capital, Dritzuut.

Unfortunately, even if she wanted to, she couldn't remove herself from combat. Broidrireg and the others kept her on a tight leash. The four didn't group in one place. They spread out and covered all four corners while Jack continued to drain the eldritch beholder's HP from inside her body.

Even Broidrireg was amazed by Jack's feat. He knew how erosive the dark energies inside the eldritch beholder were. It was nothing compared to the dark fume she breathed out.

Jack wouldn't have been able to last as long as he did if not for the Life Elevating Art. Not only did the skill give him incredible HP recovery on top of his already high HP recovery, but it also lasted for a long ten minutes and shortened his skills and spells' cooldown, allowing him to dole out more punishments to the eldritch beholder. The skill also lowered the loss of his equipment's durability, but almost all his equipment was indestructible anyway.

The eldritch beholder had tried all she could to drive Jack out. She tried blowing with all her strength. Dark fume poured out violently as she did. Arlcard and the rest had to move away to avoid getting hit by this fume. Only Broidrireg dared to remain close to the eldritch beholder after casting a protection spell.

But even after that forceful blowing, Jack remained inside. Jack stayed by stabbing his Storm Breaker into the fleshy ground. With his Gold Scale Armor active, he cast Myriad Venomous Vipers. He was using the same trick as when he tried to stay on Broidrireg's back during his beast form trial. The vipers coiled around his body and held him in place.

With those tricks, he resisted the eldritch beholder's effort to drive him out. All the eldritch beholder did was push out most of the dark energies inside him. With those dark energies significantly decreased, so was the damage Jack received. The eldritch beholder ended up giving Jack a breather.

After the Lightning God Incarnation ended for the second time, Jack used the Strength of Hope. Previously he had used it to conjure Hope's Light when he first arrived. After using Reset, this divine skill was available again. With that boost, Jack again unleashed his mega spell and rune technique.

The eldritch beholder's HP was now down to one-fourth. She had run out of ideas to drive Jack out of her. While her mind was tormented by Jack who never stopped ravaging her inside, the four outside gained many opportunities to get close and land free strikes.

Out of madness, the eldritch beholder unleashed another mind blast with a soul-piercing shriek. She decided to give up on driving Jack out. If that outworlder wanted to stay inside, then so be it!

Broidrireg and the others were in close range again, sending as many physical hits as possible. Broidrireg noticed the change in the eldritch beholder's disposition.

"Be careful!" Broidrireg yelled.

But it was too late. The eyeball tentacles around the eldritch beholder's body suddenly moved with lightning speed. Arlcard and the others had become complacent after scoring multiple easy hits with the eldritch beholder's mind occupied by Jack's torment. Now that the eldritch beholder calmed down and focused on them, it was them whose reaction was slow.

Only Broidrireg managed to break free of the tentacles' attempt at grabbing him, but that could also be attributed to Broidrireg's powerful strength. As for Arlcard, Terras, and Spark, they were fully entangled by the tentacles.

Arlcard broke free by turning into a swarm of bats. The eyeballs on the tentacles shot their green rays, incinerating several bats, but most managed to escape.

Terras was incapacitated but its defense was high. It was also protected by its armor, so it was still fine. However, its Elevate Beast was coming to an end soon. If the skill ended while it was still in the eldritch beholder's grip, then it would likely be a goner. It used its two powerful hands to try tearing apart the tentacles that bound it, but more and more grabbed onto it. All the while, they continued shooting green rays at Terras.

Spark had it the worst. Its defense was not as high as the other three, and so was its HP. As the tentacles continued to shoot green rays at it, they also tightened their grips, causing continuous damage number as the pressure was applied.

With its bladed limbs completely ensnared, it couldn't use them. It resorted to using the Nine Yin Phantom Sword to try cutting the tentacles. But many more replaced the one it cut and it couldn't use the ancient art that often.

Seeing that it had no way to break free and its HP was dropping to a critical, it activated its finishing mode. Unfortunately, the powerful explosion only blew apart the tentacles that bound it. It didn't harm the eldritch beholder because the explosion was chaos damage. Even chaos damage was nullified by the eldritch beholder's anti-magic planar wall.

## **Chapter 1679: Damage Over Time**

The eldritch beholder looked at the two opponents she failed to constraint. She no longer had that haughty attitude from before Jack and the others arrived. With only 25% HP left, no one could blame her.

She cast Teleportation and vanished. She reappeared below them.

"She is trying to flee for her life," Arlcard uttered. His large bat wings flapped and he dove down chasing after the eldritch beholder.

"She has no fear for her life...", Broidrireg muttered. He also cast Teleportation and reappeared right next to the eldritch beholder.

Broidrireg slammed his body into the eldritch beholder but the eldritch beholder ignored him. She continued flying down with Terras in tow. A giant dark spear cast by her stabbed into Broidrireg's shoulder which still had the wound mark from Suzaki's giga flame burst. Broidrireg roared from the pain.

The eldritch beholder cast dark prison at Arlcard who was flying toward her. The vampire was trapped inside the dark-element cage. Arlcard struck the cage using his rapier and cast spells in an attempt to break the cage.

With its three opponents momentarily disabled, the eldritch beholder proceeded to fly down. She was pissed, pissed at Jack who was still inside her. She wanted to hurt him but she couldn't, so she decided to hurt his friends. She knew it would take time to hurt the three opponents fighting her. The army below, on the other hand, they were vulnerable to her spells.

There were two main targets down there. One was the mobile fortress. The other was the field command base with the war table. She knew it would take more effort to deal with the mobile fortress, so she chose the other target. Additionally, she saw a copy of that detestable person inside her at that field command base.

Jack's clone was there at Verremor's command base, protecting the war table with Kabaka. Peniel was with this clone, using her healing abilities in case enemies broke through. The clone's duration was going to end soon, though.

The eldritch beholder cast Telekinesis once she got into range. Clone Jack felt his body lifted against his will. His clone was without any buff. Without those buffs, he was powerless against the full might of the eldritch beholder.

While crushing Jack with her telekinesis, the eldritch added her offensive by casting a spell that conjured a dark fog that blanketed Jack's body. This dark fog exerted extreme pressure on Jack. Together with telekinesis, this spell caused damage numbers to appear above Jack every second.

Jack fought back by using long-range skills and spells. Mostly low-level ones, since the big ones were all used by Jack who was still inside the eldritch beholder.

Peniel used her healing skills to keep Jack's clone alive. The eldritch beholder countered by casting Dark Plaguing Spears. A volley of dark spears rained from the sky. These spears not only hit Jack but everyone down there, including Kabaka and Kima.

This Dark Plaguing Spears caused DOT after the initial damage upon impact. Aside from that, it also prevented the hit targets from getting healed or cured for a period. This prevention included the target's natural recovery abilities.

Without the ability to recover or receive healing, Jack's clone perished in no time.

The eldritch beholder turned her attention to Peniel, who immediately phased out and appeared next to Jack's other clone on the battlefield. She didn't go to Jack who was inside the eldritch beholder because she wouldn't last long from the dark energies inside. She would just end up spending most of her time hiding inside her hidden dimension. She could contribute better by accompanying Jack's clone.

The eldritch beholder knew that the Jack she killed was only a clone. The real one was still inside her, pissing her greatly. She had sensed the connection between Jack and the high fairy just now. Using the fairy to vent her frustration would have been ideal but the fairy fled before she could act.

She turned her attention to her previous target, the war table below. She cast a spell to hinder Broidrireg who was lunging from behind her. Arlcard was still trying to break out of the dark prison. The ranged soldiers below shot ranged attacks at her. Their magical attacks were ineffective. Their physical attacks dealt very little damage and she ignored them.

With no one stopping her, she cast Hellish Black Drill. This spell delivered high penetrative damage and had a high chance of wounding. It had killed one of the war chiefs, Katili Strongbone, earlier. She was aiming this spell at the war table.

Kima, who was behind the war table, was too shocked to move. She was not a combatant. She was more of a planner and organizer. That's why she was the one using the war table. She just stood there and watched when the black drill approached.

One orc didn't stay still. Kabaka jumped above the war table. He used his weapon and his body as a shield for the war table. His weapon was easily knocked aside. The black drill punctured into his body. It took out his entire left arm and half of his shoulder. Kabaka screamed in agony.

His sacrifice wasn't wasted. The war table would have been destroyed if it received the full damage from the hellish black drill. It was not in tip-top condition. It had suffered damage when the invading force was losing the war before the mobile fortress arrived. Kabaka's block had absorbed more than half of the black drill's power. When it hit the war table, it didn't produce full damage.

Broidrireg came at the eldritch beholder while she was assailing the war table. With a powerful tail swipe, he slapped the eldritch beholder up into the sky, away from the war table. The eldritch beholder's round body was like a giant ball getting a home-run hit. Broidrireg then flew after her to keep her from returning.

Jack's other clone arrived with Peniel then.

"Heal him!" Jack told Peniel.

"I can't!" She replied. "The hellish black drill had an effect to refresh any debuff on its target. He had been hit by the dark plaguing spears earlier. He can't be healed or cured. The duration of that debuff has just been refreshed."

Jack looked at Kabaka. He still had HP but it was not much. The problem was his HP was still dropping. Both the Hellish Black Drill and the Dark Plaguing Spears had DOT, and Kabaka had been hit by both. From the looks of it, Kabaka's remaining HP won't be enough to survive the DOT's full duration, and there was nothing they could do to stop it.

## **Chapter 1680: Passing the Banner**

"You, old fool! Why did you sacrifice yourself? You should've just let the war table get destroyed!" Kima scolded. She left the war table and was holding Kabaka in her arms. Blood was dripping from Kabaka's

body parts that had been torn off by the black drill, giving Kabaka a Bleed status effect on top of the DOT. Kima took off her cloak and wrapped it around the wound to try to stop the bleeding.

"My... My body just moved by itself...", Kabaka said weakly. "We still need that war table... This war is not yet over. After winning here, we still have to move into Liguritutum. We have to see this war to the end. Our army has to return to Verremor bringing triumph, glory, and honor!"

"... You will be remembered as the hero with the courage to stand up to the eldritch beholder," Kima said with a resolute face. The orcs were a warring race. They dealt with death often. They didn't let grief paralyze them.

Jack frowned. He couldn't accept treating Kabaka as a goner when the orc still had some HP left. He turned to Peniel, asking via his mind if there was anything they could do. Peniel replied by shaking her head.

"Maybe Grace's Generosity of Hope is strong enough to bypass the healing prohibition?" Jack asked.

"No use. He can't be healed for a duration. Even that divine skill won't help him," Peniel said to Jack.

"Furthermore, Grace had already used that skill when you four used Hope's Light. She can only use that divine skill again tomorrow."

Hearing that, Jack sent a message to John, "John. Do you still have a resurrection potion?" It would be best to cure Kabaka before he died. But failing that, he would have to resort to resurrection.

"We've already used it all in Hydrurond," John replied. "I've sent words for Thaergood to deliver the newly crafted potions to Arther to bring back to the front line, but he is on his way to the army marching to Liguritutum, not here."

"No use!" Peniel said after hearing the message between the two. "The Dark Plaguing Spears from the eldritch beholder also prevent normal resurrection if he dies while being afflicted by the spell. Unless you have a stronger revive spell or if he is protected by a resurrection slot from a wonder building, he can't be brought back to life."

Jack was just about to use his king badge to call Laurent and Amy to come over, but Peniel's words doused his hope. Neither Laurent nor Amy had the revive spell.

"Damn it!" Jack punched the ground.

"Thank you for your concern, King Storm Wind," Kabaka said. "You are too kind to be a ruler, but I don't disapprove. I hope more rulers are like you... Speaking of which, where is Four Winds? I don't think my HP can last for much longer..."

Kabaka had sent words to call all the lord chiefs that were on this war campaign.

"I'm here! What happened...?!" Four Winds arrived using his wings tool. He had seen the eldritch beholder attack this command base. He was already on his way when Kabaka made the call.

"Why is no one healing him?!" Four Winds yelled. Kima then explained the situation to him.

The other lord chiefs, Mkulme and Vivian, arrived soon after.

"Good, you have all arrived," Kabaka said. He tried to sit up. Kima helped by propping him up. "I don't have much time so I will make this brief. After winning the battle here, which I have no doubt will be the case, our army will continue as planned into Liguritutum. We will finish this war and return as victors. I will not accept anything else. Even if I'm no longer with you, you all must make sure this happens..."

Kabaka paused to take a deep breath. The eldritch beholder's black drill left an excruciating agony to its victim. "For this war campaign to proceed smoothly, the army needs a leader. I hereby appoint Four Winds as the temporary grand chief. The three of you will be my witnesses."

Mkulme, Kima, and Vivian didn't find Kabaka's decision as surprising. Though they had the same rank as Four Winds, which was lord chief, they had seen Four Winds' leadership during this campaign. After Kabaka, Four Winds was the one who did the most commanding work on the army. Kabaka even looked for Four Winds to consult most of the time when he had to make difficult decisions.

They didn't doubt Four Winds was the best orc for the job.

"There will be many who oppose this decision, especially those lord chiefs back in Verremor," Kabaka continued. "But you can go back after the war to decide the position through the grand election. For now, you will have to accept this responsibility."

Kabaka's right hand was holding the totem banner. He offered it to Four Winds. At the same time, a notification voice sounded inside Four Winds' head.

Four Winds accepted the totem banner without saying anything.

"Bring us glory and honor," Kabaka uttered.

"I won't let you down," Four Winds replied.

Kabaka's HP fell to zero then. His hand that was still grabbing the totem banner fell to the ground and remained still.

Four Winds stood up. He looked up at the eldritch beholder who was still battling Broidrireg and Arlcard. As much as he wanted to exact revenge for Kabaka, he knew that was not what Kabaka expected of him. Kabaka wanted him to be the leader because Kabaka knew he would make the best decision based on the situation, not because of fleeting emotions.

Someone dressed in black came into their midst at a high speed. It was Hatori. Hatori had the grand chief badge in his hand, but he was confused when the person he was supposed to return it to was dead on the ground.

"That was fast," Jack said to Hatori.

"The thief is inside the palace and the palace is empty, so I managed to get back this thing and killed the thief without any complications," Hatori replied.

"Wait! The palace is empty, you said?" Four Winds asked.

"It was so when I roamed inside. I don't see any soldiers."

Four Winds thought for a while before saying, "We are going to storm into the palace. There is no need to waste our time eradicating the Aurebor army. If the palace is empty, we should have no problem taking the throne."

The Aurebor army had been greatly reduced. The wall was also no more. If they wanted to storm the capital, they should be able to. The reason they didn't do so yet was because they wanted to avoid fighting inside the capital. Civilian casualties would be high if they did that. If the palace had no soldiers, they could just charge in without a battle. Thus, no civilian casualties.

"Can I have that please?" Four Winds pointed at the badge in Hatori's hand.

Hatori looked at Jack who nodded. Hatori handed the badge to Four Winds.

"Oh, my clone's duration is ending," Jack said. He disappeared then.

Four Winds didn't bother with Jack. He knew the real one was still up there dealing with the eldritch beholder. He was holding the grand chief badge. Kabaka had granted him the temporary grand chief status, so he could use this badge. He saw the option to summon Verremor's country guardian. He did so.