

World 1681

Chapter 1681: Storm into the Capital

Inside the eldritch beholder, Jack continued to rain one attack after another. When the eldritch beholder tried to forcefully blow him out, the dark energies became thin. It slowly built up its density again since then. It was now as thick as before and maybe even more. Jack's HP was going down at a dangerous rate. If not for his insane recovery speed boosted by the Life Elevating Art, his HP would have been zeroed long ago.

Unfortunately, Life Elevating Art was nearing the end of its duration.

"I guess it's time for me to leave," Jack said. He couldn't see the eldritch beholder's HP bar from inside here. He hoped he had reduced the monster's HP enough.

When Jack first entered the eldritch beholder, she had clamped her mouth shut to trap Jack inside. Midway through the unending torture Jack brought about, she opened her mouth, trying to drive Jack out. When she failed to do so, she continued to leave her mouth open, in hopes that Jack would leave by himself.

Jack finally did.

Jack cast Wind Jet and shot right out. Since he was not in lightning form, the anti-magic planar wall didn't block him.

When the eldritch beholder felt the torment inside her stop and that hateful flea flew out of her, she was extremely relieved. It was as if the small prickle stuck inside her skin and caused her incessant agony was finally pulled out. That relief soon turned into anger.

"You, insect! I will destroy you...!!!" The eldritch beholder shouted with a directed mental attack that was focused on Jack.

Jack felt as if something had banged his head with an iron mallet. If he hadn't trained to protect his mind using mana manipulation, his thoughts would have gone blank.

Several tentacles on the eldritch beholder's body huddled into one and their eyeballs all glowed a green light at the same time. These combined green rays became a thick green beam that shot at Jack.

Luckily, Jack could still think straight. He used Wind Dash. His body shot to the side and dodged that dangerous-looking beam. He cast Hundred Mirages on the way and then used his staff's Vision Bending. The eldritch beholder couldn't find Jack from all the illusive copies that appeared.

Arlcard and Broidrireg attacked when the eldritch beholder focused on Jack.

Arlcard spun at high speed with his rapier pointed forward. He turned into a drill and stabbed into the eldritch beholder's gigantic eye at high speed. The eldritch beholder screamed in pain, but a quick spell of force impact sent Arlcard flying away.

Broidrireg again coiled his long body around the eldritch beholder and sunk his claws into the giant eye that Arlcard had hit earlier. The eldritch beholder thrashed about trying to throw Broidrireg off her.

Jack noticed now that the eldritch beholder was close to death. Her HP was below 10%.

Jack then heard multiple thunderclaps followed by lightning. Another dragon with a lengthy body appeared. But different than Broidrireg, this one only had two legs near the tail. The wings were larger, though. This was the first time Jack laid eyes on this dragon but he knew this dragon was Quetzalcoatl, Verremor's country guardian.

Jack thought at first the lightning dragon would come and aid them, but Quetzalcoatl continued flying down.

Quetzalcoatl looked in their direction. He gave a reverential nod at Broidrireg as he flew by. Broidrireg just responded with a glance. He was too busy clinching the eldritch beholder.

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Four Winds was going ahead with his plan to storm the palace. He sent a message to John informing his intention. John agreed after learning that the palace was empty.

John sent some guild members with hang gliders to head into the palace ahead of the army. They would be the scouts to make sure the palace was truly empty. He also organized the Themisphere army to open the way while Four Winds rode ahead with a legion of Verremor troops. Four Winds called Wicked Witches members to follow his legion.

With the Aurebor army losing, they were unable to prevent this legion. The gate was gone with the wall, there was no barricade stopping the legion. The elven soldiers that were originally stationed at the gate immediately reacted when they saw the enemy troops approaching. They tried to form a fence.

While they were still halfway into forming a formation, a thunderous roar startled them. They looked above and saw a giant dragon swooping down at them. This dragon opened his jaws and a thick lightning breath shot out.

This lightning breath slammed into the middle of the formation. The soldiers who were hit directly by the breath were incinerated. The rest was shoved back by the force of the impact. They were flung far away.

Four Winds and his troops charged in then. These elven soldiers were unable to stop them. Four Winds ignored these soldiers. They continued charging through the capital straight toward the palace.

The nature constructs were defending the capital with an automated response. Since the enemies went inside the capital, they disengaged from their battle, turned back, and chased after Four Winds' troops.

Those who were fighting these nature constructs struck these automatons and prevented them from chasing Four Winds. Not everyone could stop these giant automatons. Some nature constructs drove their attackers off and ran toward the capital, but a massive torrent of lightning stopped them in their tracks.

Quetzalcoatl hovered above the place where the wall gate used to be. His pose signaled that nothing should get past him.

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In the sky, Jack re-cast Double Clone. It was without the double-cast effect this time. He had already used the remote magic field after using reset inside the eldritch beholder's mouth to boost his offensive spells. These two clones flew toward the capital to help Four Winds' force.

His true self stayed. He flew to the eldritch beholder's side while his hundred mirages were still in effect. He found Therras. His pet was still bound by the tentacles. The worst thing was it had lost all its buffs. It was now losing HP faster because of it.

Jack used Beast Howl, healing Therras. Therras' previous buffs were given before Jack entered the eldritch beholder. They were now available again since Jack used Reset while inside. He was now reapplying all the buffs. Therras turned into eternal grade again and his body became larger.

Jack also resummoned Spark. With Spark, the two performed a one-word slash on the tentacles that bound Therras. Jack's one was performed by combining Brave Slash empowered by mana manipulation. Their moves cut off more than half the tentacles that bound Therras.

With half of its bindings removed, Therras pulled with full force and finally tore itself free.

The eldritch beholder's HP hit 5% then. As it did, the anti-magic planar wall faded.

"She lost her protection. Time to finish her...!" Jack exclaimed. He was about to ask Arlcard and Therras to use their elemental finishing moves but Broidrireg stopped them.

"Hold!! She can't be killed," he told them.

Chapter 1682: Unkillable Being

"What...?" Jack stopped his attempt upon hearing Broidrireg's call.

Broidrireg himself was casting two spells, Space Lock and Oppressive Water Prison. These spells were targeted at the eldritch beholder who had lost her anti-magic protection. The eldritch beholder just floated there receiving the spell. She didn't show any sign of fighting back.

"So, are you going to seal me again?" The eldritch beholder asked Broidrireg. "But I can sense that seal on your chest is still fresh. You can't do it anytime soon, can you? Hehe."

"Seal?" Jack came to Broidrireg's side.

"This creature and me go way back," Broidrireg explained. "Back then, Suzaki was not the only unkillable being. This eldritch beholder was one as well."

"Unkillable...?"

"This creature was born out of pure darkness. When it died, it returned to formless dark energies. These energies will gather at a place where malice thrives. They will feed on the malice and use it to reborn. Hence, it can never truly die."

"Hehehe," The eldritch beholder was chortling with a mocking tone. "So, what are you going to do? Are you going to kill me or let me leave? Or, do you want to spend every day keeping me at low HP?"

As an eternal creature, the eldritch beholder's HP kept on recovering. Her anti-magic planar wall returned once it went past the 5% HP threshold. Arlcard and Therras had been sending small attacks to keep her HP low.

Broidrireg grinned. The eldritch beholder was bewildered by the grin.

"Why are you smiling?" She asked.

"Ever since our ancient conflict, I have been working hard in preparation in case I met another opponent like you," Broidrireg said. "Out of my centuries of study, I've created a new spell."

"New spell...?" The eldritch beholder no longer spoke in a patronizing tone.

Broidrireg started casting a spell.

"I must say, this can be considered my most powerful spell, and I've never cast it on a real target before," Broidrireg said. "Well, I almost cast it some time ago but I changed my mind in the last second. I didn't expect I would have the chance to cast it again so soon. You should have hidden after escaping your seal instead of creating trouble that attracted my attention."

The eldritch beholder had the skeptical expression as Broidrireg was casting. She didn't believe that Broidrireg could have such a spell. When Broidrireg's spell formation reached its fifth rune, she expressed her thoughts, "You're bluffing..."

Broidrireg simply grinned at her words. When the sixth rune was completed, Broidrireg said, "This spell is a single-target spell. It erases the existence of the target. Its essence, its soul, everything! It will be as if you never existed."

Hearing Broidrireg's confident tone and seeing the spell formation continue to form its runes, the eldritch beholder didn't feel so certain anymore. A thought surfaced in her mind, 'What if Broidrireg was telling the truth?'

The countless eyeballs on her body flared green. They were shooting their green rays but those rays were muffled by the oppressive water prison that was drowning her body.

She struggled about trying to break free but the water prison applied heavy pressure, keeping her from moving. Broidrireg was channeling his mana manipulation to strengthen the water prison while maintaining his spellcasting. Without her anti-magic ability, she was unable to fight Broidrireg's spell dominance. Arlcard and Therras continued sending attacks to keep her HP below the 5% threshold.

The eldritch beholder cast a fast spell in an attempt to disrupt Broidrireg. A large dark spear was conjured in front of Broidrireg.

Jack sensed the spell forming. He flew in front of Broidrireg while shouting, "Peniel, invulnerability!"

Peniel had returned to Jack after his clones were gone. She used the skill as requested.

The dark spear hit Jack and sent him flying, but he wasn't hurt. Broidrireg lifted a hand and caught Jack's flying body.

"You don't need to do that, you know," Broidrireg said. "That small spear won't stop my casting."

The eldritch beholder knew that as well. Broidrireg's mind was extremely strong. A normal attack won't cause any disruption. She cast the offensive spell out of desperation because she didn't know what else to do.

Broidrireg's spell formation completed its eighth rune and continued to its ninth. The eldritch beholder was speechless at the display. She knew for sure then that Broidrireg wasn't kidding.

For the first time in her seemingly eternal life, she felt danger for her life. She felt fear, an emotion she had seen many times in the eyes of her victims but never truly understood. All the eyes on hers were now displaying the same fear when Broidrireg's spell formation completed its ninth rune.

"No... NOOO...!!!" The eldritch beholder screamed. The mind blast she produced was many times stronger. Despite protecting his mind using mana manipulation, Jack still had to move away otherwise his head hurt like hell. He summoned his Runestone of Luck while moving away.

Broidrireg was unaffected. His spell was cast.

Multiple runes appeared around the eldritch beholder's body. These runes stuck onto the eldritch beholder like a net. The eldritch beholder's body slowly became translucent, starting from her outermost parts.

The small eyeballs on each tentacle turned transparent before disappearing altogether. The waning process continued. After the eyeballs, the tentacles also slowly faded. It was as if someone was using an eraser to erase them bit by bit.

The eldritch beholder never stopped screaming. The sheer terror in her voice was clear for everyone to hear. Despite being undying, she wasn't like Suzaki who was bored with her unending life. On the contrary, she was very fond of her life. She had so many corrupted desires she still wished to pursue. So many depraved delights she wished to relish. She was not ready to die yet, whether now, or ever.

Her terrified voice continued resounding on those nearby even when the eldritch beholder's mouth vanished. The sound was produced mentally, so the absence of a mouth didn't make the sound disappear.

It was only after half of the eldritch beholder's huge eyeball was left that the scream weakened. Then it was gone altogether with the remaining of the eye. There was no remaining trace of the eldritch beholder at all.

Chapter 1683: Securing the Aurebor's Throne

There was nothing but empty air at the place where the eldritch beholder used to be. Jack wondered if Broidrireg's spell also erased the loot that was supposed to drop with her death. Then he heard the notification that he gained exp points from killing the eldritch beholder. At the same time, several things popped out in the air. Those were the eldritch beholder's loots.

Broidrireg's eyes caught sight of one of the loots. Under the world system's influence, natives normally didn't have an interest in loots dropped from a kill, but he had a history with this one particular item. He was about to head over when he saw Jack had already flown over and quickly snatched the loots before they fell to the ground below.

After seeing that, he decided to forget about it. Let Jack have that thing, he said to himself.

Jack didn't spend the time to check the loot. He just caught the loots mid-air and shoved them all inside his inventory. The war hadn't ended yet. He flew back to Broidrireg afterward.

"Mighty one! That spell is damned impressive. Nine runes! I don't see any damage number from the spell, so I assume it is an instant kill? Why didn't you use that spell in the previous battles?" Jack asked.

"That spell needs the target to be at least 30% in health before it can be used," Peniel was the one explaining. "Plus, it had one other limitation."

Broidrireg was silent while Peniel was explaining. Jack noticed then that the dragon was a little pale.

"Hey, mighty one. Are you okay?" Jack asked.

"That's the other limitation. He will be in a weakened state after using the spell," Peniel said.

"That spell is designed to deal with unkillable beings. It's not effective against normal opponents," Broidrireg explained. "I'm sorry. I will have to go back and rest. I hope you don't mind. I will be in this weakened state for at least a week."

"Go back and take a good rest," Jack said. "I can't summon you for a week, anyway. The battle here will be over soon, so don't worry about it."

Their force down there was mostly doing crowd control now. After hearing that the palace was empty and Four Winds was heading there to claim the throne, John instructed the army to kill as few of the Aurebor army as possible. Once the throne was taken, those soldiers would switch sides and join their forces. The ones the army was focused on vanquishing were the nature constructs. Those automatons would be gone after they claimed the throne, so there was no need to keep them alive.

Broidrireg nodded. He turned into a blue light and vanished with a flash.

Arlcard, Terras, and Spark flew down to take care of the nature constructs.

"What was that nine-rune spell called?" Jack asked Peniel.

"Permanent delete," Peniel answered.

"Why does the name sound like a computer's term?" Jack remarked.

"What's a computer?" Peniel asked back.

"Never mind, I guess the name does suit the effect. Hm... Hey, what would happen if he used that spell on an outworlder?"

"Well... I don't know."

"Will it give us permanent death?"

Peniel shrugged. "I guess... That spell is supposed to be able to kill immortal beings like Suzaki and the eldritch beholder. So, I think in theory it should work."

"What about if it is used on someone who wears the amulet of rebirth?" Jack asked.

"As I've said. I'm not sure about its effect on outworlders, but technically, the spell doesn't kill you. It erases you from existence. So, it should bypass all those rebirth effects."

"Erased...? But I still get the exp and loots when that eldritch beholder was gone. So, it is still considered dead?"

Peniel shrugged again.

"Let's have Broidrireg try the spell on Master. If the spell can bypass his immortal soul, that will be for the best." Jack said.

"Aside from the target has to be below 30% health, the range is also very short. The spell takes a long time to cast and needs precise targeting. You think you can hold Master long enough for that?"

"We can always try. Well, let's leave that for later. We will finish the battle here first," Jack said and flew toward one of the mythical-grade nature constructs.

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Four Winds and the others had broken through the palace's gate. They met John's scouts who arrived earlier. They reported that there were truly no soldiers except for the few guards in the throne room.

Four Winds went to the throne room with Nova, Jennifer, and a squad of elite soldiers. The legion he brought stayed at the palace's entrance and prevented enemies from entering. Jack's two clones followed Four Winds.

Entering the throne room, the few enemy guards stationed there automatically attacked. They were no match for the elite squad Four Winds brought. They were not killed, though. Some surrendered after their HP was low. They knew their queen had abandoned them. Their morale was not high enough to fight to the death to protect an empty throne. The others who were stubborn enough to not surrender were incapacitated by runic ropes.

Four Winds, Nova, Jennifer, and the two Jacks assaulted the throne once they entered the throne room. Jack's power output was still tremendous even when he only used low-level skills and standard attacks. There were even two of him. The throne's HP dropped at a rapid rate.

When it was neared zero. They stopped and let Nova do the honor. As agreed, Nova would take the throne as a temporary queen. Once the war with Liguritutum was over, they would have another discussion if Nova was to keep the throne or if another candidate was to be considered. They would worry about that later.

Nova thrust her spear into the throne and the throne broke to pieces. A voice notification sounded in every Aurebor citizen, both natives and outworlders. Nova had been acknowledged as the new Aurebor queen by the world system.

The elven soldiers fighting outside stopped their fighting. The elven players who had supported World Ruler knew they were finished when they heard the notifications. They ran away before the elven soldiers who fought with them turned on them. Players from the other races were confused as to what had happened because they didn't hear the notification, but they also ran when they saw their allies were fleeing.

Since Mistress no longer had a functioning army inside Aurebor, the war was considered over. Jack received notification that he received 500,000 merit points for winning the war.

Chapter 1684: A Rest before the Final Push

The Themisphere and Verremor soldiers released the Aurebor soldiers who had surrendered or captured earlier. The nature constructs, which weren't destroyed, stopped moving after Nova took the throne. The invading force was no longer considered hostile. The nature constructs just stood watch around the capital. They would continue to stand guard until their duration was over.

The Themisphere and Verremor troops stayed outside the capital while the Aurebor troops went into the capital to restore order. They went around telling the civilians that the war was over and it was okay to return to their activities. Luckily, none of the buildings within the capital was damaged. Lorethion only lost its defensive wall.

Reconstruction would take time. The enchantment made sure they couldn't start rebuilding the wall after one week passed. Aurebor also lost its entire kingdom mana. Nova was currently operating the monarch system. Peniel was giving her advice on how to use the system. The first order of business would be to build mana-generating buildings to recover the kingdom mana.

Themisphere and Verremor had won, but it was not without casualties. Verremor lost the most. They lost their grand chief and one of their war chiefs. It was a great demoralizing incident. Four Winds gathered the Verremor army and gave a speech to mourn the passing.

Quetzalcoatl didn't leave immediately after the battle was over. His one-day duration hadn't ended. He came to where Kabaka's body was and stayed there in silence. He didn't truly have a deep relationship with Kabaka. The ancestor he made a pact with was not even Kabaka's ancestor. Verremor's ruling head wasn't decided by blood but by election through combat.

However, since Kabaka had been a grand chief for a long time, there was still some bond between them. Quetzalcoatl couldn't help but feel sad. He knew that Kabaka had died when he was summoned into battle, but he didn't show his feelings then because the battle was still ongoing. He was now paying the former grand chief his respect in silence.

After Quetzalcoatl decided to leave, Kabaka and Katili's bodies were wrapped with shrouds. A battalion of orc soldiers was ordered to take these bodies back into Verremor to be given proper burials.

Verremor lost another 400,000 soldiers in the war. Their army that could continue with this campaign was down to 500,000 troops.

Themisphere lost 300,000 soldiers. They were still 1,100,000-strong. They lost some high-ranking officers in the war. But thanks to the mobile throne room inside the mobile fortress, Jack was able to appoint the decorated soldiers from this war to refill the empty ranks.

Four Winds couldn't do the same. He could only do that if he returned to Verremor. Learning this, Four Winds asked Jack the secret of getting a mobile fortress. Jack didn't hide the fact, he told Four Winds how he got it. Four Winds vowed to build a good relationship with the Blacksmith Circle once the war was over.

Aurebor lost 1,200,000 troops. Their remaining troops were 700,000 soldiers. It was good that Jack and Four Winds found out about the empty palace early. Otherwise, both sides would continue fighting and losing more soldiers. Right now, these Aurebor troops had become a part of their fighting force and would be joining them in their march toward Liguritutum.

A majority of the small beholders were killed. The ones that were still alive fled haphazardly when their brood mother was slain. Players chased them for exp points and loots. The chase was still ongoing by the end of the day.

The leaders of the Aurebor army were brought to Nova. Nova gave them the freedom to choose whether to serve her or leave. She wouldn't punish them if they chose to leave. But if they chose to serve, she expected obedience. She warned them she would punish them severely if they betrayed her after choosing to stay.

A few left, but most remained. Mistress' rule didn't truly give them much of an impression. Their loyalty points to her were not that high. Of course, Nova could see that these officers who chose to stay also didn't have high loyalty points to her. Nova would have to slowly gain their loyalties.

Like most countries that had just been conquered, Aurebor no longer had a country guardian. Nova asked Peniel how to get one, Peniel told her getting a country guardian was more about fate. She changed her question to asking how Master, Mistress, and Jack got theirs.

Peniel said he didn't know about Master and Mistress. In Jack's case, she said Nova would have to ask Jack on that one. She didn't know if it was right for her to tell Nova.

That evening during the gathered dinner, Nova asked Jack. Jack happily told everyone who gathered there the story about how he secured Broidrireg's pact. He didn't consider it a secret to be kept from his allies. Plus, after hearing the story, Four Winds and Nova agreed that the method was very personal. Not something that could be imitated simply by knowing.

They speculated about Master and Mistress' methods. Since those two could get one before, there was a high chance that Master could get another country guardian to replace Suzaki. They agreed to march into Liguritutum with the assumption that was the case.

Aurebor's only remaining Lord Protector, Ashira Sharpshot, survived the war. She chose to stay with the army when Mistress took the throne. She chose to do so again with Nova in the reign. All she wanted was to stay in the army. She didn't have real loyalty to the one on the throne. Nova, of course, planned to change that by building a better relationship with this Lord Protector. She used the monarch system to send gifts to Ashira to increase her loyalty.

The army decided to rest in Lorethion for three days before beginning their march into Liguritutum. Aside from rest, these three days were also used to refill the supplies. Lorethion's facilities were not damaged, so they easily secured the supplies.

John also ordered every soldier to fix their equipment to full durability during these three days. They needed to be in the best shape for their final push in this campaign.

Since the mobile fortress was not moving. Jack looked for an upgrade option that required only three days. He found one which was the option to upgrade the fortress' mechanical arms. This upgrade added

an energy gun on the pincer at the end of the arm, giving the arms the ability to deliver range attacks. A veil covered the arms the same as the last time when he upgraded its legs.

Jack only had the time to check his gained loots at night after he retired to his sleeping quarter inside the mobile fortress. On his hand was a picture frame. Hatori gave it to him after the war was over. It was the picture frame Speedrun found in the warehouse inside Lorethion Palace.

He was flattered that Hatori gave this item to him because this item was beneficial to both natives and players. For Hatori to not keep this item showed that Hatori's loyalty to him had grown throughout their time on the road.

Chapter 1685: Soul Frame

Soul Frame (Unique artifact)

Register 1 player or NPC (Target has to be willing)

+10% to the player/NPC's stats, HP, stamina/MP.

If the player/NPC dies, they are resurrected at the place where this soul frame is located. Cooldown: 1 week.

Soul frame has an HP bar after a target is registered. If the HP bar is depleted, the registered player/NPC loses 70% HP, cannot be healed for 1 hour, enters a weakened state for 1 day, and is forcefully unregistered.

Soul frame cannot be stored inside a player's inventory after a target is registered.

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This item was like a personal version of the Chapel of Resurrection for players and the Revival Pool for natives. It also added some buffs to the registered target.

After reading the complete description, Jack could guess why Hatori didn't use this soul frame. If Hatori did, he needed a safe place to store it. Otherwise, he was in big trouble if this soul frame fell to his enemy. They could destroy this soul frame and weaken him.

Carrying the soul frame with him was risky. NPC didn't have an inventory system. Even if they did, the artifact couldn't be stored inside after being registered. During combat, the soul frame could suffer damage. If it was destroyed mid-combat, then it would be a disaster.

Jack sighed. "If only Hatori handed me this soul frame sooner, the grand chief could still be alive."

"Kabaka already died when Hatori returned," Peniel reminded.

"I know. I mean if he returned earlier. Well, it had happened. There is no use thinking about a what-if scenario."

"Who will you be using this soul frame on?" Peniel asked.

"On the person who gave it to me," Jack said. "I guess Hatori wants this as well. He just didn't want to say it out loud. I will be able to provide this soul frame with a safe place to store. For example, my throne room or the mobile throne room. I can even station guards to protect it. This comes at the right time, I originally thought about giving Ana or Stewart's spot in the revival pool to Hatori. Now, I don't have to."

"You know, transferring the soul-securing shrine or revival pool's slots is not without repercussions. If the person whose life is protected by those wonders finds that you remove their protection, they won't feel good about it. If you checked their loyalties when you gave them the resurrection slots, you should see their loyalties went up. If you take these slots off them, their loyalties will fall. It will fall to maybe even lower than before they were given the slots."

"Why didn't you advise me about this before?" Jack complained.

"It's common sense," Peniel shrugged.

"Sometimes the common sense in this game world is different from the common sense in the real world," Jack countered.

"I have no idea about the common sense of your so-called real world so don't expect me to know," Peniel countered back.

"What's done is done, there is no point in arguing," Jack said.

"I agree, so stop complaining," Peniel returned.

"You are getting more sharp-tongued, lady. It's unbecoming of you."

"I guess your bad habit rubs off onto me."

"I admit defeat," Jack ended the argument.

The soul frame needed to be in direct contact with the target to be activated, so Jack left it for tomorrow when he met Hatori again.

After storing the soul frame, Jack laid the loots dropped by the eldritch beholder. He only placed the items with the utmost value. Other less valuable loot like materials and ingredients were set aside to be donated to the guild. Among the dropped equipment, two were unique grades. A bow and a magic staff. Jack gave those two weapons to Howard and Nerd.

The loots that had been laid down before him were six items. The first one was a small chest. His Inspect informed him the chest was called a Mana Core Chest. It was a unique-grade consumable. Peniel informed Jack that upon opening the chest, he would receive a pile of mana cores. The number depended on the chest's grade.

Without prolonging, he opened the mana core chest. Bright light poured out the same way as when he opened a treasure chest. Streams of light entered him. At the same time, he received the notification that he received 15,000 mana cores from the chest.

From slaying the eldritch beholder itself, Jack received 12,000 mana cores. With the additional mana cores from this mana core chest, he now had 41,000 mana cores in total. With this number, he lacked only 9,000 to be able to summon the archdemon lord again.

The second item was a recipe for a war tool. The name of this war tool was Accursed Psionic Bomb. Peniel explained that the Accursed Psionic Bomb was a powerful offensive consumable that caused dark element damage to a large AOE. Aside from that, those who were in the area of the blast also received mental disruption. Those with weak minds were most likely stunned for some time after the explosion, opening them up for more attacks.

Jack put this recipe with the other items that were to be donated to the guild. The third item was a lump of dark stone that emitted strange light.

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Heart of Darkness (Legendary material)

For crafting purpose

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"Oh...? Isn't this the type of item I can use with my Amulet of Summoning?" Jack asked after reading the description.

"That's right," Peniel confirmed. "Do you want to exchange your archdemon lord with this one?"

"Will it be stronger than the archdemon lord?" Jack asked.

"No," Peniel answered flatly.

"How can you be so sure? That eldritch beholder was insanely strong. Especially her anti-magic ability. If I have that, Master who relies on magic spells are surely done for," Jack argued.

"First of all, it's not a guarantee you will get a beholder monster when you merge this heart with your amulet. Secondly, the eldritch beholder is special among her kind. She could be said as the Goddess of all beholders. The other beholders had high magic resistance, but none shared a total anti-magic ability like hers. Thirdly, the archdemon lord you summoned follows your low level. You can't compare it to the eldritch beholder who was level 95. A level 95 archdemon lord is a force to reckon with."

Chapter 1686: Void Displacement Eye

"Tsk, you are calling level 85 low?" Jack protested.

Jack and the reinforcement he brought arrived pretty late in the battle and he spent most of the time in the air battling the eldritch beholder, but he still managed to increase by three levels from slaying the eldritch beholder and from the exp his nearby armies reaped for him. Each of his classes leveled up one time. His Time Sage was level 85, while Brave Swordsman and Beast Monarch were both level 84.

He received 9 free attribute points for those three level-ups. He invested them all into his endurance again.

He also gained 3 free skill points for each of his classes. He spent Brave Swordmaster's 3 free skill points on Teleport Slash, bringing it to level 4. The Beast Monarch's free skill points were spent on Beast Dominance. It was level 19 now. The Time Sage's free skill points were used to level up Telekinesis to level 18.

In his container of souls were 3,400,000 souls. Around three-quarters came from the eldritch beholder.

Jack first used 300,000 souls to level up Beast Dominance and Telekinesis to level 20, since they were close to the max level. Beast Dominance at max level took control of hostile pets and summoned creatures in a 100-meter radius area. They remained in control for five minutes. Telekinesis at level 20 affected five targets that were within sixty meters of Jack.

Jack then used 2,400,000 souls to fully upgrade the Perpetual Lightning Judgement to ten stars. It could now better absorb the lightning elements in the environment, increasing the spell's damage output.

For the remaining 700,000 souls, he spent 600,000 to upgrade Remote Magic Field to its fourth star. Its double-effect ability to allies was now 50%. To himself, it was 100%. Even without using Runestone of Spellcasting, he would always double-cast when this spell was active.

The remaining 100,000 souls were spent to again level up Teleport Slash to level 5. Each level increased the teleport distance by 1.5 meters. At this level, the skill's maximum teleport distance was 26 meters.

All these level-ups were done earlier before Jack retired to his sleeping quarters. He was currently still holding the Heart of Darkness in his hand.

"So, do you still want to replace the Heart of Archdemon Lord with this one?" Peniel asked.

"No. I will keep the archdemon lord," Jack replied. "What can we use this thing for then?"

Peniel shrugged. "You can use it as it was generally meant to, as a crafting material."

Jack remembered Tip mentioned they used the Heart of Ice to craft stronger ice cannon tanks. Perhaps this one could be used the same way. He stored the heart of darkness to give to John tomorrow.

He now looked at the fourth item. He at first thought it was equipment because it looked like a helmet.

*

Mind Breaker (Legendary Artifact).

Only work on an incapacitated target. Need to touch the target's head to work.

Target loses consciousness for 1 minute.

Within that 1 minute, the target will truthfully answer all the questions from the Mind Breaker's user.

Or, the user can search through the target's specific memory within that 1 minute.

Cooldown: 8 hours

*

"Wow, a legendary artifact. Lots of legendary loots," Jack remarked. The last two were indicated with purple color, so they were also legendary grades. "The eldritch beholder truly didn't disappoint."

"Your Runestone of Luck also helps," Peniel said.

"Hm... This artifact sounds like an interrogation tool from its description," Jack said. "It mentions target. Does it mean it works on Outworlder as well?"

"It does," Peniel answered.

"Okay," Jack stored the Mind Breaker. Even though the artifact was a legendary grade, it had a specific use. He didn't know if he would ever use this thing.

He was now down to two of the last loots. One was an accessory. The other was a technique book. Both were legendary grades. The accessory was a ring.

*

Ring of Dark Abyss (Legendary accessory)

Intelligence +50.

Dark resistance +100.

50% chance to avoid the instant-kill effect.

When receiving an attack that exceeds 50% of max HP, all damage above 50% is nullified. Half of the nullified damage is reflected to the attacker as dark-element damage. Cooldown: 1 hour.

Magic Immunity (active ability): Immune to spells, magical damage, and elemental damage for 3 seconds, cooldown: 6 hours

*

"Awesome!" Jack exclaimed. He replaced his Ring of Inheritance with this new legendary-grade ring.

The ring's magic immunity might seem like an ultimate defensive ability, but it could be used for an offensive move when he next went up against Master. The ability had a very short duration of only three seconds. If he could combine it with Peniel's invulnerability, he could create a short period where he was unstoppable.

He needed to choose the correct time, though. Best to use them when he was going for the push when Master had already used up all his defensive spells. Yet, from all the battles he had gone through when facing Master, it was mostly him who ran out of defensive options first. He might end up being forced to use this ability for defense.

Even so, he didn't give up. He believed one day he would defeat Master.

He picked up the last loot, the technique book. The name of the skill contained inside the book was Void Displacement Eye.

"Oh? An eye skill. This is a great find," Peniel said.

"Really? I was kind of expecting the greater dispel when I saw it was legendary grade," Jack commented with a disappointed tone. Peniel was itchy to slap Jack hearing his remark.

"It doesn't have a class restriction," Jack said after inspecting the technique book.

"This skill is the same as the Life Burning Art and Dragon Eye. It is classless. Any class can learn it," Peniel informed.

"This means it doesn't need skill points to level up?" Jack asked.

"Yes," Peniel confirmed. "You can upgrade its stars, though. You shouldn't have spent all the gained souls earlier."

"We can always get more souls later," Jack replied with optimism. "The war is not yet over."

He proceeded to interface with the technique book and learn the skill.

*

Void Displacement Eye (Special skill),

Select a target within the user's field of view. A black hole appears on the target and deals 500% dark damage.

The black hole lasts for 3 seconds. If the target is still within the black hole's scope after the duration, the target is teleported to another location of the user's choosing. The teleport's location also has to be within the user's field of view.

After being teleported, the target receives another 500% dark damage.

Throughout the skill's duration, the target receives a strong mental disruption.

If the target is an ally, the skill doesn't cause damage or mental disruption. The black hole also happens instantly.

Range: 50 meters

Cooldown: 2 hours

*

"Hm...," Jack muttered after reading the skill's description.

"What do you think?" Peniel asked, but she then noticed Jack was looking at her with eyes that glowed with ominous dark light.

A small black hole abruptly appeared where Peniel was floating. It vanished as soon as it appeared, with Peniel along with it. Another black hole appeared at one of the corners of the room. Peniel materialized there.

Chapter 1687: The Situations on the Other Fronts

"Can you please warn me if you want to test your skill on me...?!" Peniel scolded while flying back to Jack.

"Hehe, sorry," Jack chuckled. "This spell is similar to Teleport Other."

"That's true, but teleport others can't be used to target enemies," Peniel said.

"Hm...," Jack thought about the possibility. If he could readjust an enemy's position, that could indeed turn the advantage depending on the situation. "But I can't tell how strong this spell's pulling power is. I need to go find an enemy to get an estimation."

"The power of the spell's black hole depends on your intelligence stat," Peniel explained. "If you upgrade its stars, it will also increase its pulling power and the strength of its mental disruption, making it more difficult for the enemy to escape the black hole. With more stars, you can teleport bigger targets. At the moment, you will not be able to teleport a target bigger than a normal human."

"Oh. So, I can't teleport the mobile fortress...," Jack muttered.

"Yet," Peniel said. "But please note, you will never be able to teleport static structures. Additionally, after reaching five stars, the duration of the black hole is shortened to two seconds. When you fully max the spell to ten stars, the duration of the black hole will become only one second. It will be very difficult for the enemy to escape then."

"I see. Okay then. This skill will be the priority when my container of souls is filled up again."

*

The next morning, Jack met up with John and Tip. He gave John his Ring of Inheritance, to which John responded with, "After all this time, you only get a legendary-grade cloak and a legendary-grade ring? You should work harder. If not, I might already get better equipment. If that happens, you won't be able to give your things to me anymore."

"Motherf*cker," Jack cursed. "A thank you will make me feel a lot better."

"You should know by now I'm not in the business of making people feel better."

"Despite you being an unbearable ass, here," Jack handed him a pile of goods that he wanted to donate to the guild.

John took the goods from him and passed it to Tip who was next to him.

"Go back to headquarters," John said to Tip. "It will be some time before we enter Liguritutum. Spend one week to manage the guild and the guild army. You can teleport back to the border town of Hydrurond or Aurebor then cross the border zone. With your super rare steed, you should be able to catch up to us before the next battle happens. I will send you detailed instructions via messages."

Tip nodded.

"I also have this," Jack uttered before Tip left. He took out the heart of darkness and showed it to John.

"What do you think?" Jack asked.

John took the heart of darkness and gave it a good look. Since he had Hope's knowledge, he should know how best to use this thing.

"Breathtaking," John said. He threw the heart of darkness at Tip like it was a common stone. Tip didn't expect that, but he was quick enough to catch the thing before it fell to the ground.

"You should learn more on how to show appreciation," Jack said to John while shaking his head.

"And what use is that for?" John asked.

"So, you don't get accidentally killed by, let's say, a king who happens to be not in the mood at the time," Jack replied.

"Duly noted," John returned.

"Uh... Do you still have any other things you want to pass to me?" Tip asked. Jack said no, so Tip took his leave.

After Tip left, Jack said, "I'm honestly still conflicted about whether to give this to you, but I think you can make better use of it than me."

Jack showed John the Mind Breaker.

"Wow. Now, that is a good find," John snatched the Mind Breaker from Jack's hand and stored it inside his inventory. Jack waited for John to say something but he didn't.

Jack sighed. He then asked John, "What now? We just wait until it's time to march?"

"You can go and dance among the troops to entertain them if you want," John replied.

"#*\$@..."

"I will go and give Nova some tips in managing the country. She might be experienced at leading a guild but a country is a whole different beast," John said. "You do whatever you want."

"Before you go, do you have any news on our other fronts?" Jack asked.

"The force marching from Hydrurond is making steady progress. I gave them the instructions to march slowly and build a secure supply line. This way, we can catch up to them with our force here. We will be bringing Verremor and Aurebor's siege engines with us, whatever was left of them."

"Do you think Liguritutum might attack while our troops are marching?"

"With the losses they suffered, I doubt they will attack our force before we enter Liguritutum. No, I don't think they will."

"What about the third force? The one Thelgrun led."

"They were on the inland sea for some time already," John answered. "The Liguritutum armada showed up when they sailed near Liguritutum's territory, but I instructed them to avoid contact. So, there hasn't been any battle on that side. The Liguritutum armada has more ships. A few days ago, the enemies tried to force a battle, but Thelgrun followed my instructions and his armada retreated. They kept a distance

from the enemies. They continued to retreat and now they were positioned close to the strait that linked the inner sea to the outer sea."

"If the enemies continued to chase?" Jack asked.

"Then they will sail out to the outer sea," John answered.

"Isn't the outer sea dangerous?"

"As long as they sailed near the land, they should be okay. I don't think the Liguritutum armada will do that. They will surely return once their scouts report about our force nearing their border. The border of Liguritutum is marked by a wide river that flows to the inner sea. My mother will surely send a portion of the armada to rain fire at us when we try to cross that river."

"I see."

"Oh, one thing you should be aware of," John said. "I had a chat with my father yesterday. He said the attempted rebellion in Sangrod was over. Emperor Horatio is marching with further reinforcement to join us."

"Archibald has been defeated?" Jack asked.

"Not really. He just up and disappeared with his people," John answered.

"Huh?"

"My father said Horatio was also puzzled by the occurrence. They thought maybe Archibald sensed their ploys and realized that he had been cornered, so he ran. Horatio left 500,000 troops in Sangrod in case Archibald attacked when they were out of the country. Without a settlement as a base for Archibald, those half a million troops should be enough to take care of him."

Jack nodded. Horatio previously stayed in Sangrod with a million troops. If he left half a million, that meant he came with a half million reinforcement. When Jack was about to leave for exp farming, he noticed John was deep in thought.

Jack waited until John looked at him again.

"The battle on the sea is about to begin," John said to Jack. "I've left them a recall plate to summon me when it is time. I will go into Liguritutum with the sea fleet. You will lead our force from here. March once the resupplying and the mobile fortress' upgrade are complete."

With that advice, John vanished.

Chapter 1688: Another Sealed Being

A few days before the siege of Lorethion, a small battle raged in the northern part of the Sylvan region. This northern part had the lowest temperature in the continent and was mostly covered in snow all year long.

A small figure crashed through the side of a hill, breaking the snow-covered rocks of the hill. A colossal figure followed behind this small figure.

The small figure crashed onto the ground but quickly got back up. This small figure was an ethereal with demonic features. This small figure was Master under demonization.

"Begone, you wretched ethereal, or I will vanquish you!"

The colossal figure that followed after Master was a huge dragon whose body seemed to be made of diamond. Her glistening skin was as if mirrors. Her voice was booming and yet also chilling. She gave Master a menacing stare.

"I admit you are more than what I thought," the diamond dragon said. "But you are still not my match. You have used up all your divine skills. You should know your limits. Leave now and I will forget this transgression. Believe me, I'm doing your kind a favor. If you release the being from that seal, you will doom your kind. You don't know what you are dealing with. You don't know the kind of evil locked inside that seal."

"Oh, but I know precisely who I am dealing with and what is behind that seal, Zorvis," Master said with a grin.

"Then you should know better than trying to break the seal!" Zorvis roared. A thick stream of ice poured out of her mouth.

Master cast teleportation and vanished from the breath's trajectory. He reappeared a distance away with his other hand in mid-casting. The spell that was being cast was an eight-rune spell. The casting was completed and a tiny orb shot toward Zorvis. Encased within this tiny orb were the essences of fire, lightning, and ice.

Zorvis used one of her wings to block this orb. The tiny orb came into contact with Zorvis' wing and it exploded into a chaotic storm with the three elements intertwined haphazardly. The force of the eruption shattered Zorvis' wing which she used to block the attack. She also suffered massive damage.

The spell Master cast was a new spell after his Elemental Master reached level 80. The spell was named Elemental Singularity. It was a powerful single-target attack that was effective on a target with high defenses. The attack not only bypassed the target's defense but also reduced that defense for the remainder of the combat. It also had a high chance of wounding an opponent. That's how the skill managed to shatter one of Zorvis' wings.

Zorvis was a true dragon with the highest defense among her kind. Master's attack not only broke one of her wings but also caused many cracks along the glistening surface of her body.

"Graagghh...!!! You, wretched mortal!" Zorvis screeched. "This is it! You have dug your own grave!!"

Zorvis lost her ability to fly after losing one of her wings, but she was still fast enough. The air exploded behind her and she shot forward with a similar ability to wind jet.

Master's demonic wings flapped and he dodged the dragon's menacing lunge. Zorvis didn't let up. She continued to rush at Master, attempting to bring him into melee, but Master continued to dodge her assaults.

Master didn't fly up despite his opponent losing the ability to fly. He stayed near the ground while continuing to retreat. Zorvis never stopped chasing him.

The cat-and-mouse chase carried on until they arrived at a pass between two low cliffs. When Zorvis crossed the pass, Master yelled, "Now...!!!"

The ground below Zorvis suddenly glowed. The glow revealed a circle with runic symbols.

"A... a weakening rune diagram...?!" Zorvis exclaimed with surprise. She felt her strength seeping as the rune diagram brightened.

Several figures came out from above the two cliffs. They were Master's royal agents, his companion, Long, Ronald, and Linda. Among his royal agents was one level 90 mythical-grade ethereal. From behind the ice-covered trees a distance away, hundreds of ethereal soldiers emerged.

"You... You prepared this trap for me...?" Zorvis looked at Master in disbelief.

"Didn't I tell you I know who I'm dealing with?" Master said with a grin. He cast Hell Prison. Even if Zorvis could cast the Fly spell or somehow reform her broken wing using the ice element, she would still not be able to flee.

*

A couple of hours later, Master was standing amidst hundreds of fallen ethereal soldiers. He left those corpses because he was tending to the most valuable corpse. The Book of Necronomicon was in his hand glowing an ominous light as it exerted its power on the corpse of the colossal icy dragon.

The dragon jerked before rising. All the cracks along her skin were gone. Even her broken wing was reformed to perfect condition. The only thing missing was the life in her eyes. She stood before Master with absolute obedience.

Master proceeded to revive the rest of his fallen troops, raising them to serve him a second time in their death.

After he was done, he sent these fresh zombie troops away in Liguritudum's direction. His companion, royal agents, and surviving soldiers went with those troops. He went in the opposite direction, accompanied by Long, Roland, Linda, and zombie Zorvis.

They returned to the place where Master first encountered Zorvis, a huge icy cave. Inside the cave was pitch black. Master and Zorvis had no trouble seeing. Linda cast Illumination to let Ronald, Long, and her perceive their surroundings.

Zorvis stood guard near the entrance while the four went deeper. The cave hall was extremely large since it used to be Zorvis' nest. They came to the end of the cave hall where they saw a large symbol on the cave wall.

"Behind this seal is the one who is going to be our country guardian?" Linda asked.

"If she agrees to the offer," Master answered.

"The eldritch beholder agrees. No reason for her to be different," Linda said.

Long, who was clueless about what the two were talking about, said, "While I don't care what we are here to get or face, I'm still annoyed when I have no idea what is going on."

"In an RPG game, there are post-game contents," Master explained. "Most of these post-game contents are in the underworld after players complete the main story, but a few are scattered in the far reaches of the wilderness, like this place. One of the post-game contents comes in the form of secret bosses for players to defeat."

"I assume the one behind this seal is one of these secret bosses?" Long asked.

"That is correct," Master answered.

Chapter 1689: The Ancient War

"You want to blackmail the secret boss behind this seal to become your country guardian in exchange for her freedom? Nice," Ronald said.

With Spring Crown, Linda could tell it was mostly sarcasm when the gamer spoke. With Ronald, she couldn't.

"Freedom is not the only thing I will use for negotiating," Master said. "By joining us, she has the chance to exact revenge on the one who sealed her."

"And who was that?" Long asked.

"Linda, you explain the lore. I need to work on this seal," Master said. "I need to unravel it only a little so I can communicate with the one behind the seal, but not too much that she can break out."

Master's body floated to the center of the seal and started working. The seal functioned similarly to a rune diagram.

Linda resumed Master's explanation, "In this game world's lore, there was a huge war during the ancient time. Although the war encompassed the entire continent, two races were the key players. On one side were the true dragons, and on the other side were the beholders. The true dragons were led by the then lord of dragons, Broidireg. The beholders were led by their brood mother, the eldritch beholder."

"The one who is currently serving Aurebor?" Long asked.

"That's right," Linda answered. "The war went on for years. At that ancient time, the true dragon's number was more than five times their current number. That ancient war was the reason their number had dwindled significantly. The beholders were nasty enemies. Their brood mother couldn't die. Even if she was defeated, she came into existence again around a week later. She could continue to breed more beholders as long as she lived, and she bred fast. Another troubling thing about the beholders was their mind control ability. With enough number, they almost enslaved the entire population of a country, forcing the dragons to fight an innocent race instead of fighting them directly."

"Hm... What does that history have to do with the one behind this seal?" Long asked. "The eldritch beholder was already recruited by Aurebor. She is the most powerful among the beholder's forces, isn't she? We are not here to recruit a weaker beholder, are we? Or, are you telling me the one behind this seal is a true dragon?"

Linda responded to Long's question with silence and a meaningful stare.

"For real?" Long asked.

"Hehe, interesting," Ronald remarked with a chuckle. He wasn't interested in this world's history but he was always interested in strong prey. The beast behind this seal might become an ally, or things might go south and they might end up in a fight.

"Behind this seal is the true dragon who turned against her own kind," Linda explained. "She schemed with the eldritch beholder and caused a catastrophe upon the continent. She was also the reason the true dragons became an active participant in the war against the beholders."

"What did she do?" Long asked.

"She was fascinated by the eldritch beholder's mass breeding technique. She wanted the eldritch beholder to help her create her brood. In return, she gave the beholder a secret artifact originally owned by the true dragons, the Mind Breaker. The eldritch beholder absorbed this artifact and gained the mind control ability. The worst thing was all other beholders born by her after that inherited the same power. This was how they rose and carried on their attempt to conquer the continent."

Ronald didn't care about the story. What he cared about was how strong the dragon was. "Okay, she is a true dragon. So what? Broidrireg is the lord of the dragons. He is the strongest there is. Even if the dragon behind this seal joins us, she is still not Broidrireg's opponent."

"That's where you are wrong," Linda said. "Broidrireg was chosen as the leader because he was the wisest, not the strongest. Even at that time, Broidrireg had a brother and a sister who were stronger than him. His brother was a true dragon with the soul element. He was also the father of the current lord of dragons, Eoranth. Her sister was the true dragon that embraced the chaos element."

"So... I assume it is Broidrireg's sister we are recruiting?" Long asked.

"Yes," Linda nodded. "Broidrireg sealed the eldritch beholder because she couldn't be killed. He sealed her sister because he couldn't bring himself to kill his kin, even when his sister has killed his brother."

"Eoranth's father?" Long asked.

Linda nodded.

Ronald chuckled. He had seen Eoranth in action. That dragon's father was sure not less formidable. To be able to kill a dragon that powerful, the one behind this seal was certainly not to be taken lightly."

"However, the lore also said that she had been turned mad by the chaos element she embraced," Linda continued. "That's why she turned against her kin and got together with the eldritch beholder. The chaotic energy turned her secret desire for a brood into madness."

"What's her name?" Long asked.

"Her name is Azzarilth," Linda answered.

The moment the name was uttered, a shrill voice entered their mind.

"Who dares utter my name?"

The voice was soft, yet Ronald and Linda felt as if something was gnawing inside their head. Only Long and Master were unaffected.

"Azzarilth, I'm here with an offer," Master declared.

"Hahaha!" A laughter filled with madness reverberated through the cave. Linda and Ronald felt as if hundreds of gongs were struck right next to their heads. They had to move further away from the seal to reduce the pain.

"What does a tiny mortal like you can offer me?" Azzarilth asked.

"For starter, your freedom," Master answered.

The cave suddenly shook. The seal on the wall flared brightly.

"Your act has caused the seal to weaken. I don't need your help. Given time, I can break out myself," Azzarilth hissed.

"I can always use a rune diagram to repair the seal, or maybe even strengthen it," Master threatened. "You will not leave your prison without my say-so."

"Do not bluff. I can sense that you are an outworlder. You don't have that kind of knowledge."

"Are you willing to take the bet?" Master asked.

There was a long silence after that. It was some time before Azzarilth's voice was heard again. "What is your offer?" She asked.

"Firstly, a chance to take down Broidrireg," Master answered.

"... I'm listening," Azzarilth said.

"Secondly, I will help you build your brood."

"I can see that you know who you are talking to. All you are offering sounds too good to be true. I expect a high price for all that."

"I only have one demand. Serve me as my country guardian," Master uttered.

"Hahaha...!" The mad laughter was heard again.

"Do you accept?" Master asked after the laughter died down.

"Hehe. Let's do it then, and I wish our cooperation will one day conclude in a violent culmination."

Chapter 1690: The Two Armadas

On the inner sea that separated the Daflue region and the Liguritudum Realm, two armadas were keeping a distance from one another. One was moving toward the other armada, while the other armada was moving away. They moved at a casual speed. Neither were in a hurry.

The armada that was doing the chasing had a larger number. They had a total of 215 ships. These ships were comprised of 5 men-of-war, 20 galleons, 36 galleasses, 42 carracks, 38 frigates, and 74 caravels.

The armada that was being chased was roughly half the adversary's size. They were comprised of 1 man-of-war, 11 galleons, 22 galleasses, 19 carracks, 26 frigates, 33 caravels, and 10 gigantic transport vessels. They totaled 119 ships. However, the ships in this armada had slightly different appearances. Their hulls were covered in metal, giving them a tougher look.

The larger armada was the Liguritudum armada while the smaller one was the Palgrost armada

One of the five men-of-war in the chasing armada was Liguritudum armada's flagship. This flagship was also the largest among the five. On this flagship, a native ethereal stood on the upper deck of the ship's bow. This native ethereal was the leader of the armada. His name was Kaghash. He was a level 80 mythical grade.

He never joined the previous wars despite his high level and grade because he had made it clear to Master when Master assumed the Liguritudum throne that he would only lead the armada. He wouldn't join any other campaign that didn't involve the armada. Master let him be because otherwise, Kaghash would have resigned like most of the high marshalls.

Beside Kaghash were World Maker's big shots. Gridhacker, GraphicZ, and Soundeffect. After getting killed by Jack and losing the Hydrurond throne, Gridhacker revived back in Liguritudum. Master ordered him to join the armada that was sailing out to block Palgrost armada at the time.

"They just keep on evading us. What is the point of coming to our doorstep without the intention to fight?" Soundeffect complained. He was getting bored of the days when nothing happened. "I heard the enemy force invading Aurebor was already sieging Lorethion. Does anyone know how the battle is going?"

"It was already over. The enemy won," Gridhacker informed.

"Damn! That doesn't sound good. How come it's us who are on the back foot? We are supposed to conquer this world!"

"There is no use complaining," Gridhacker said to him. "It doesn't matter even if the enemy wins the war. As long as Master gets all the divine treasures, we will still win."

"But the last divine treasure is with the Themisphere king, isn't it? We will have to beat the enemy army to get to that guy."

"Not to mention that guy himself is a monster," GraphicZ said.

Gridhacker didn't deny. The memory of Jack in lightning form, destroying the throne and killing him, was still fresh in his mind.

"So, now that they are done with Aurebor, they will be coming for us soon," Soundeffect said.

"I heard there is already another army heading toward us from Hydrurond," GraphicZ added.

"Then what are we doing playing cat-and-mouse with those dwarven cowards here? If they don't want to fight, just leave them be. We should turn back and guard the river at the border to at least reduce the enemy army crossing into our territory."

"We can't let those transport ships dock at our shore," Gridhacker said, indicating the ten transport vessels within Palgrost Armada. "Those ships carried Palgrost's land troops. If they enter our territory, we will have two fronts to worry about. Don't worry about the border river. We've already sent a few ships back to guard that river,"

"That's right," Kaghast said. He had been listening to the three. "Once we vanquish the enemy armada here, we will join those ships."

"How do we vanquish them? They keep on avoiding us," Soundeffect argued. "When we increased our speed, they did the same. I hate to say it but even though they have a smaller armada, Palgrost's ships are better. Our ships can't match their maximum speed. We won't be able to catch them if they keep on evading us. They will soon reach the outer sea. What are we going to do? Follow them out?"

"They have better ships but we are more accustomed to this inner sea," Kaghast said. "They won't be able to evade us today."

"Do you have a plan?" Gridhacker asked. He could hear the confidence in Kaghast's tone.

"It is going to rain soon," Kaghast replied.

"How do you know?" GraphicZ asked.

"A good sailor has a good nose for the weather," Kaghast answered.

Via message, Gridhacker told GraphicZ, "He has a talent called Weather Prediction."

"The rain will be a heavy one, with a storm. It will limit their visibility," Kaghast added.

"It will also limit ours," Gridhacker said.

Kaghast smiled at the remark. "Like I said, we are more accustomed to this inner sea."

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In the Palgrost armada, the lone man-of-war was the flagship. On this flagship was Thelgrun. Viking and Helga Flameforge stood beside him. They were looking at their rear at the pursuing enemies. They had to be vigilant and adjust their speed when the enemy increased theirs.

When they sailed out, they intended to land on Liguritutum's southern shores and let the land units disembark from the transport vessels, but the Liguritutum Armada was quick to spot them. Following John's instruction, they avoided a battle. They had been constantly evading the Liguritutum Armada since then.

"Why do we have to keep on evading them?" A dwarf officer behind the three asked. He was a level 80 rare elite dwarf named Mamunic Rockguard. He was the person in charge of the naval base in the Daflue region where Palgrost ships were moored. In this campaign, he served as Thelgrun's right-hand man.

"Are you questioning our president's order?" Helga admonished.

"I wouldn't dare," Mamunir apologized, but his expression didn't show that he was sorry. "I simply didn't understand our course of action. The enemy might have more ships, but our ships are faster. Our guns' range is longer. I don't see the need to avoid them."

"I appreciate your confidence, Mamunir," Thelgrun said. "But blind confidence can lead to disaster. Compared to our armada, the enemy is more experienced sailing this sea. We can't underestimate them."

"So, are we going to just evade them like this?" Mamunir asked.

"We are not evading them. We are luring them," Viking said.

"Luring them? To where?" Mamunir asked.

"You will find out soon," Thelgrun said to Mamunir. He then turned to Viking and asked, "It should be today, isn't it?"

Viking nodded.

At that time, a thunder was heard.

"What luck. It seems like a storm is coming. It has to be today out of all the days." Thelgrun said.

"It shouldn't affect our plan," Viking said. "We just have to keep a straight line and make sure the enemy stays on us."

Thelgrun turned to Mamunir. "Warn the ones on the crow's nests to pay attention to the enemy ships. Make sure we are not caught off-guard during the storm."

Mamunir didn't understand what plan the two were talking about, but he didn't try to pry. Despite his dissatisfaction with their evasion tactic, he was an obedient officer. He went away to carry out Thelgrun's order and warned the lookouts on the crow's nests.

"It shouldn't be long now," Viking said.