

World 391

Chapter 391: Registering The Guild

"Let's meet up with the others first before we go to the Guilds Association to register our guild," Jeanny said. Guilds Association was another neutral faction that dealt with most everything pertaining to guilds. It is where a newly formed guild go when they wanted to establish their guilds formally in this world. Also, the place where they could find postings about general guild quests. There were also counters inside that sold items that were useful only to a guild.

"Do you know where this Guilds Association is located?" Jack asked.

"I do," Jeanny said. "But we go to Raven's Den first, that's where everyone else is waiting."

The eight of them, no, nine, as Peniel did not bother to hide anymore, went in the direction of the capital's number one tavern. Peniel nested lazily on Jack's head as they walked.

"Can't you fly on your own?" Jack protested.

"Tee-hee, it felt cozier this way," she replied.

On their way, the eight of them did regular inspect on other players they passed by, and they felt extremely good about themselves. The reason was that most of the mass in the capital was still at level 24, with a minority being at level 25 or 23. Their group, on the other hand, were all at level 29 with the exception of Jack at level 28. Most of the mass was unaware of their group's level as they could not see Jack's group's levels, but there are several who had high level Inspect who managed to scan them, these people's eyes turned wide when their Inspect came through.

Bowler was especially pleased about all this. He even took the initiative to walk in the front with his chin lifted high, fully exhibiting his pride. Everyone was stupefied by his act, the fellow could be said as the least skilled amongst those who had survived the Temple of Divine Squall's dungeon. Jack even wondered how the heck he had managed to survive while the others failed. His luck might be as potent as Jack's.

When they entered Raven's Den, they met with all the ones that had joined them in the expedition, added with some new faces who were Jeanny's other friends and The Man's remaining underlings.

"What's that on your head?" Sweet Talk who was now a warrior, asked.

"Oh, how rude! It should be a who instead of a what," Peniel complained.

"It talks!" Sweet Talk said with a gasp.

"Damn right I talk, miss!" Peniel flew down from Jack's head and approached Sweet Talk. "My name is Peniel. You better make sure to remember that. This goes for all of you as well!"

All those apart from Jack's group of eight were in fascination as they stared at the little fairy and her bossy attitude.

"Yes, anyone who did not give Peniel the respect she deserves will have to face me!" John announced.

Jack turned to him and said, "stop sucking up to her. She will not give you any more knowledge just because of that."

Everyone started to crowd around the little fairy and started to make conversation with her. Jeanny made a count on those presents in the meantime. They numbered fifty-four people.

"We are more than enough to fulfill the minimum member qualification," Jeanny said with a smile.

"All right, no point to delay then. Let's head to the Guilds Association," Jack suggested.

Before Jeanny could reply, someone came over. "Sister Jeanny! I was worried sick about you. Are you all right? Did that Storm Wind bully you?"

Jack had known the owner of that annoying voice before he turned to the guy. Swellgoing was bombarding Jeanny with questions and displays of concern.

"As one of the leaders of the coming guild, can I employ my executive power to reject an applicant?" Jack asked Jeanny.

Swellgoing who heard it, shot back fiercely, "who would want to join a guild you lead? If not for sister Jeanny here, no one would have been interested!" Then he turned to Jeanny and said, "sister Jeanny, why do you even want to form a guild with this questionable character? If you want to be in a guild, there are plenty of top guilds that we can try to apply to. I have many friends in those guilds and they will be more than willing to put in good words for me to their top brass. Do not get cheated by someone with nefarious intention."

Jack said to Jeanny, "you see? He has no interest to join. Let's just ditch him and be on our way."

Jeanny gave Swellgoing a serious look and asked, "I am going to start our own guild with them. This matter is a done deal. Do you want to follow me or not?"

"If sister Jeanny is in, of course, I won't be anywhere else. You can count on me!" Swellgoing replied.

Jack rolled his eyes at him and said, "tsk, the guild is not even formed and already a thorn inside."

"You are the thorn!" Swellgoing retorted.

"Do you want me to kick your ass again?" Jack threatened.

"Try it! This is a safe zone, I will place a report to the authority and have you arrested!"

"Dream on! I am a Baron now, a small assault like that won't be considered as an offense," Jack said with a ridiculing tone as he showed off his Nobility Faction Badge.

"Could you two stop acting like ten-year-old kids?" Jeanny scolded the two. "Now be quiet and follow! I don't want a word from the two of you anymore!"

Everyone started walking out of the tavern following Jeanny. Jack and Swellgoing didn't say anything more to each other after the scolding, but Jack nudged at Swellgoing when he passed by, causing him to almost double over. He stared at Jack in anger, but Jack ignored it as he dared him to push back. Swellgoing didn't take the bait as he knew Jack's strength stat was way over his.

Trinity Dawn who saw the two could only shake her head. Maybe she should rethink the decision of joining this guild? She thought.

The building of the Guilds Association had a unique design with its center part going up high, like a sword that pierced the sky. Its total size appeared to be even larger than the Adventurers and Hunters Association which Jack considered was a pretty massive building complex already.

When they entered. There were many players on the move around the hall. All of them had guild tags on their names, Crowd of Sins, White Scarfs, Death Associates, and the likes. Jeanny went and asked the receptionist about where to register for a guild and its process while the rest waited by the side.

"Storm Wind?" Jack heard someone calling him. He turned and saw Bluedaze and Dashrunner from White Scarfs.

"Hey! The beauty and the shortie from White Scarfs, how you doing?" Jack greeted.

"Who the hell do you call a shortie?" Dashrunner complained.

"Just joking," Jack chuckled. "How goes your guild? How is Silverwing? Hope everything is fine."

"Everything just going okay," Bluedaze replied.

"Really? You didn't get any problem from the coalition?" Jack asked.

"They have been quiet for a while already, ever since your fight that time. So things have actually been peaceful around here. You don't know this? Have you been away? Rumors said that someone saw you leaving with that army three weeks ago. Was that true? Our leader had tried to message you but he said you didn't give him a clear answer."

Silverwing did send him several messages, but Jack simply replied to him that he was on a quest outside of town. "As a matter of fact, yes, I was indeed with that army," Jack replied.

"Really? Where had you gone to? The news was that the army went rather far away from the capital. Did you visit another city? How was it?"

"Maybe we can talk about it another time. About the coalition, it was a bit odd. Shouldn't have taken them so long to recover, right? Why are there no movements?"

"Not sure. Words are they are focusing their effort elsewhere. Rumors are they have a pretty big guild quest that required long and complete attention. Perhaps after their loss last time, they could no longer divert their attentions."

Jack gave the matter a thought. Should he change into Unrivalled Arcaner to gather some intelligence? But he dismissed it, he had many other things to do at the moment. No time to involve himself with the coalition. As long as they didn't cause him trouble, he would leave them alone as well. Everyone was entitled to doing quests. If they were focusing on their quests without causing a problem to others, then to Jack, that was the right way of gaming.

"How about we go to our base and have a talk?" Bluedaze offered. "Our leader will be eager to have a chat with you."

"You just want to find out about the information of the outside world, right?" Jack asked. "But sorry. I'm truly busy right now."

"Busy? Come to think of it. Why are you here? Don't tell me..."

"That's right! We are here to register a guild!" Jack declared with a wide grin.

Chapter 392: Guild Name

"All of you?" Bludaze looked at the crowd that was with Jack. They looked like a bunch of ragtag, especially since The Man's group was at the forefront.

"Why bother? Just join our guild," Dashrunner said. "Save you the hassle. Our guild is developing fast! Your future will be bright if you join us."

"Thank you for the offer, but I have a good feeling about this group. We will make it," Jack said.

"I wish you luck then," Bludaze said. "Please spare some time to visit us. I will let our leader know of your return and about you forming your guild."

"All right, once I am free, I will pay him a visit," Jack promised. Jeanny came back at the time and told them about what she had learned. They then went together to the counter where they could make the registration.

Not far away, a player came to another who was seemingly hiding behind a pillar.

"What do you learn?" This hiding person was Earmouth. He had recognized Jack from a distance and sent two of his people closer to eavesdrop on Jack's group. One was still following them, while the other came back to report. Earmouth did not dare to go near them himself as he was afraid that Jack will notice him.

"He said he will be forming a guild."

"A guild?!" Earmouth was startled. But then again, what else is their purpose coming to this place if not that? He had to let Scarface and Red Death know of this. That guy was already a problem alone. If his guild could prosper, it would cause them more headaches in the future.

On the Guilds Association counter, the three supposed leaders, Jack, John, and Jeanny were listening to the staff's explanation, while the rest were standing at the back. Unbeknownst to them, their position had instead created a fence that prevented Earmouth's spy to approach.

The spy was grumbling in his mind. Didn't they know they do not need these many persons to register? One needed at least thirty members to form a guild but it was not necessary to have all of them presented here. They simply needed those thirty to be on standby to receive an invitation message and simply click accept.

Jack and the rest actually knew about this, but everyone still chose to come as they were all rather looking forward to forming this guild.

"So, the last thing I need now was a twenty gold fee and the name of your guild," the staff at the counter told Jack, Jeanny, and John.

"Twenty? Wasn't it ten the last time?" Jack protested.

"Twenty is the new fee," the staff informed nonchalantly.

"Guess there is also inflation in this world," John commented.

"That's right, you should not treat the price in the shops as fixed. Things might get more expensive now that more of you outworlders appeared and increased the acquisition of coins from the wilderness," Peniel explained.

"I don't like this. It reminded me of the headache from trying to follow our real world's finance," Jack complained.

"It is what it is," John said. "Now go ahead and pay."

"The hell, why is it me? Aren't we supposed to share this between the three of us?"

"You are the wealthiest here. Don't lie, Peniel told me how many gold coins you have."

"You did?" Jack asked Peniel.

"I didn't," Peniel replied.

Jack rolled his eyes at John and grumbled, "you lying son of a b*tch."

"But I still know you are the wealthiest," John said.

"Come on, it was just gold coins. Here, I will give ten gold coins," Jeanny took the initiative to stop the discourse.

Jack held her hands. "It's okay," Jack said, then took out twenty gold coins and gave them to the counter staff.

Jeanny tried to insist, "I'm fine really. As you said, this is three of us together. It won't be right if you fork out all of the registration fees. Here, take my coins."

Jack waved him away. "Don't worry about it. This amount is nothing to me."

John, on the other hand, was just wearing a smug smile without any bad feeling at all.

"Now, all that left is the guild name. What will it be?" The staff asked.

The three of them were silent for a long time. That's right, they haven't talked about a name. They looked at each other and had wry smiles. They had been so passionate about this that they forgot to think up a name.

"It's just a name, Just make one up," John said.

"Me?" Jack asked.

"I have no idea. I leave the naming to you," Jeanny said.

"Yeah, you are the one that paid the registration fee, so you have the right to decide the name," John added.

More like you didn't want the bother to think one up, Jack gave John a side-eye.

Jack gave the matter a brief thought, he then asked the staff, "How do I input the name?"

"Just type it here," the staff replied as something like a keyboard panel appeared on the desk's surface.

Jack then went ahead and typed the name. After he was done, the staff looked at it for a bit, pressed something, and then said, "all right. Now your guild, Number One Legends, is formally registered."

"Wait, wait, wait!" Both John and Jeanny yelled out, then asked the counter staff, "what's the guild's name again?"

"Number One Legends," Jack was the one who answered them.

"What kind of name is that?" Jeanny uttered.

"Yeah, no class at all!" John added, then to the staff he asked, "can we change the name?"

Jack was speechless, what was that about them saying he had the right to decide the guild's name?

"You can change the name, since I have not input it into the main system. But still, I will need to charge you 3 gold coins for the change. Do you confirm to change?"

"3 gold coins, why so expensive just for a simple change?" John complained, he then turned to Jack.

"Hey, if you want to change, you pay for it. I'm not spending more coins," Jack said before the guy asked.

"I will pay," Jeanny said and handed the coins.

"All right. Please re-input the name again." The keyboard panel appeared again.

"I'll do it," John took initiative now. He did some typing then uttered, "done!"

Before the staff press anything, Jeanny asked first. "What was written there?"

The staff read the words out, "he typed, Extreme Undying Reaching After Heaven."

"That's even worse!" Jeanny called out.

"Yeah, it's too long," Jack commented. "You should shorten it. People will have a problem calling our guild's name if it's too long."

"That's not the problem!" Jeanny uttered, then to the staff she said, "please cancel that. You've not yet pressed enter, right? I don't need to pay another 3 gold coins, do I?"

The staff sighed, "you don't need to... Okay, I've erased it. Please, put the correct one this time."

As Jeanny was about to type. John said, "perhaps you should tell us first the name you want to put in?"

Jeanny looked at them and said, "Everlasting Rose."

"What the hell, no!"

"For Heaven's sake, stop!"

Both Jack and John reacted almost the same despite uttering different objection words. Jack added, "sister, that is too feminine. I can guarantee you if you use that name, we are going to lose almost half of our members immediately. The Man there is surely not gonna stay inside a guild with such a name."

"Then what do you suggest?" Jeanny asked, she was glum.

Jack thought for a bit before saying, "try to think of the first thing that comes into your mind."

"The hell? Are you going to try that stupid trick by combining three words that came into each of our minds again?" John asked.

"It worked the last time, didn't it?" Jack countered.

"You people are entertaining," Peniel commented with a chuckle as she perched on top of Jack's head.

"Hey, if you not gonna help, please don't ridicule," Jack told her.

"What's the matter, why take so long?" Bowler came by and asked.

"Nothing. Please wait over there. We are discussing something," John told him.

Bowler gave him an irritated look but he still went away.

"Why chased him away? Perhaps he can give a good idea for a name," Jack said.

"I seriously doubt that," John said. "And too many opinions and ideas will just end up muddle things up. No, we three have to decide by ourselves."

"Ahem," they heard the staff made a sound and said, "can you people hurry up, please? I still have other things to do...?"

John thought for a bit before finally saying, "all right, let's try using your stupid trick. Each of us picks one word from the name we have given, then we combined them and see. I go first, Heaven."

"Um, legends?" Jack said.

"Everlasting then," Jeanny uttered. "If I said rose, you guys will say it's too feminine again."

After hearing them, John said, "Everlasting Heavenly Legends. Hm... I guess it's acceptable."

"It's cool! Go for it!" Jack exclaimed.

Chapter 393: Guild Headquarter

"I don't know, sounds too arrogant," Jeanny said.

"Then we have to make our guild the best there is, so we can live up to its arrogant name," John said.

"Are you trying to put pressure on us to have us aim for the top as to how you like it even before we begin?" Jeanny asked.

"Pressure is good. It helps us grow. I concur with this name," Jack expressed his support to the name again.

Jeanny finally relented, "okay, fine."

"Let me do the honor," John typed in the name.

The staff read out the name, "Everlasting Heavenly Legends. Is this confirmed already? No one going to ask for a change anymore, right?"

When he saw no objection from the three, he said. "All right then. As of this moment, Everlasting Heavenly Legends is established. You will need thirty members to join within a day's time to formalize the guild. Also, who will be the main leader among the three of you?"

"Main leader? Can't we three be leaders?" Jack asked.

"I can make the other two co-leaders, which is also the limit for a beginning guild, but I still need one as the main. Please decide."

"Then make Jeanny the main leader," Jack told the staff without hesitation.

"Me? Are you sure?" Jeanny was surprised.

"Yeah. You will be the main face of our guild, right? You will be the one out there to lead. John and I are supports with his planning and my fighting skill."

"I see, all right. I accept," Jeanny said.

"Okay, I will formalize it," the staff said. "There will be perks and powers available to leader and co-leaders upon the management of the guild, but you will have to learn of them by yourself."

"Don't worry, I will guide them," Peniel chimed in.

The staff didn't comment, whether these people did well or not managing their guild was not his concern. At that moment Jack, John, and Jeanny heard a notification voice that their guild had been established, and that they could check and managed them via the guild interface inside their status window.

The three went and checked it without delay. There was a new page labeled as Guild.

Guild name: Everlasting Heavenly Legends

Guild Level: 1 (Reputation: 0/100,000)

Guild Members: 3/500 (Note: 30 members required before the time limit expired. Time Limit: 23 hours 59 minutes)

Gold Coin: 0

Members:

- Main Leader: Jeanny (Knight, level 29)
- Co-Leader: Storm Wind (Warrior, level 28)
- Co-Leader: Saint John (Mage, level 29)

There were some tabs below the guild page, Invite, Quest, and some that were still blank. They immediately went to work and sent out invites to each of their respective friends. Flame and the others soon received their invites and accepted accordingly.

When Jack saw how John was relaxing he said, "I know you have two friends who joined, but it's not like you don't know any of the rest. Help to send the invites as well!"

"Out of the people here, only you two, Tip, and Trap, who were in my friend list," John replied.

They could only invite people who were on their friend list to join the guild. "Why didn't you add them to your friend list?" Jack asked.

"I have, they rejected," John answered.

"You really need to work on that attitude of yours," Jack commented.

For the man's underlings, Jack promoted The Man to an Officer. There were five ranks below the rank of leader and Co-leaders, which were Councilor, Officer, Veteran, Associate, and Trainee. Every new recruit got the status of Trainee. Peniel informed him the lowest rank who could initiate an invite on behalf of the guild was the rank of Officer. But an invite by an Officer still needed to be confirmed by the leaders, which Jack confirmed after The Man sent the invites. This way, he did not have to put all of The Man's underlings into his Friend list.

In their current guild level, they could only elect a limit of four councilors and ten officers. Peniel informed that these numbers would increase once their guild level increased. Guild level increased by gaining sufficient reputation by performing guild quests, which could be picked up from the Hall of quests within this Guilds Association.

Peniel also advised there might be special guild quests that were received via special circumstances, such a quest depended on fortunate encounters. So the hall of quests was not the only source of guild quests. If a guild's reputation was high enough, a native might even approach them to issue a guild quest. Or if someone with high enough Influence skill was within the guild, such a circumstance could also occur. Hearing that, Jack thought that he should develop more relationships with the nobles to increase his Influence skill.

With all the invites completed, the guild now had a total of fifty-four members and was now an official guild in this world. They all then went to the hall of quests to pick up some quests to start building up their guild's reputation. Only one person was needed to apply for a quest, but everyone went over to check on the quests. Applied quest would appear inside the Quest tab of each member's Guild page. Any members could then perform or complete the quests by fulfilling the tasks instructed by the quests.

There were a large number of quests in the Hall of Quests. Many of the quests required menial tasks such as cleaning monsters in an area, or mining for materials and submitting them, or gathering specific monster's parts. A total of ten such quests could be picked up at a time, but the reputation points given were trivial.

There were some that gave out decent reputation points but such quest fell under exclusive quest, which had a more difficult task with a time limit, and one guild could only accept one such quest at a time. Also, failure to fulfill the task within the time limit would instead reduce the guild's reputation

points. They could not yet pick up such a quest yet because the requirement of applying for the quest was to have at least the same amount of reputation points as the penalty. So, a beginner guild could not abuse the fact that they still had no reputation points to lose by trying their luck on such exclusive guild quests.

As the others were studying the available guild quests, Jack said to John and Jeanny, "let's go purchase land to build our Guild Base. I heard there will be additional functions once we have a base. Ain't that right, Peniel?"

"That is right, but rather than waste your time to get a guild base, I have a better proposition," Peniel answered. "But first, I have to ask, do you really have the confidence to raid that bandit outpost?"

What Peniel referred to was the bandit outpost that they had encountered after Jack's duel with Red Death. Jack had mentioned to her once during the expedition that he planned to take on the outpost once they returned. Peniel had pointed out at the time that he must be kidding, but Jack said that he had a method that might work. He did not elaborate on what that method was though.

"Bandit outpost? What that got to do with our guild base?" Jack asked.

"Bandit outpost?" John was intrigued, he gestured for everyone to move with him to a quiet corner before asking Peniel to continue.

"Because the first guild that managed to raid a bandit outpost in a region, would have the option to reconstruct it into a guild headquarter."

"Guild Headquarter? Will it give better benefits than a guild base?" John asked.

"Oh, mister. Much more than you can expect," Peniel replied. "A guild headquarter could be said the pinnacle which every guild could strive for. Only by having a guild headquarter can a guild truly start to pursue its fullest potential. Another thing was, one region could only support one guild headquarter, if another guild wishes to build one, they had to either raid a bandit outpost in another region or attack the current guild headquarter. So, while no guild was still aware of this yet, you could use this chance to seize the region closest to this capital. But, that of course, if you can really take on that outpost. Do you really have the confidence?"

"In theory, should be possible," Jack replied. "But I need to do some preparation first."

"How long?" John asked.

"Around two days maybe, something I need to check and make sure first," Jack answered.

"Anything we can do to help?" Jeanny asked.

"Yeah, describe your plan to me," John said.

"It's not something that any of you can help with. If it works, there is no need for a strategy," Jack replied.

"Well, if you say so. I will leave that to you then," John said.

"There is really nothing we can help with?" Jeanny asked, her tone showed her worry.

"Don't worry about that outpost, leave that to me!" Jack said confidently. "You guys worked with these people on the guild quests. I will leave these guild quests to you all. Three days from now if you people want to follow me to take on that bandit outpost, you are welcomed. I will let you know then of the time."

Chapter 394: Inflation

"Are you leaving now?" John asked.

"Yeah, I need to go outside of town to find out about these things I said that need checking. it's better if I do this as soon as possible," Jack replied.

"Can you leave Peniel with me? There is much I want to ask about this guild business," John said.

"Well, I don't mind if it's only a day or two," Jack said.

"I'm not something that can be left behind, mister," Peniel said as he flicked Jack's nose. "I'm soul-link to you. I can't leave your side too far. If you moved too far away, I will simply get pulled away in whatever direction you are moving. If there is an obstacle, I will simply phase out before getting teleported directly to your side after a certain amount of time."

"Oh, sorry then. You heard her," Jack said to John. "How about this, let's meet again later tonight at Ellie's restaurant. I will book two adjacent VIP rooms, you can stay in one of the rooms with Peniel discussing whatever you need to discuss. I will be in the other room with Silverwing." He had received Silverwing's message again not long after Bluedaze left. He had agreed to meet later to have a chat.

"That's fine also. See you later then," John said.

Earmouth's spy was dismayed as he watched the trio from a distance. He had been pretending to watch the list of quests as he eavesdropped on their conversation, but then they suddenly moved to a secluded corner. If he followed, they were sure to get suspicious. The last thing he had heard was something about a bandit outpost and guild base. He stayed there and silently watched. After some time had passed, one of the three, Storm Wind, their guild's number one nemesis, split away and went to the exit. The other two came back and talked with their other members as they chose on the guild quests to take on.

Seeing there was nothing he could learn more, he returned to Earmouth and reported everything he had heard.

"Everlasting Heavenly Legends? Such an absurd and pompous name," Earmouth commented. He reviewed all that his spy had reported. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary of a budding guild, but that bandit outpost thing mentioned by that small flying creature sounded important. Where did they find that creature anyway? Was that a pet? But why would the discussion of a guild base turn to bandit outpost?

After compiling everything he had learned, he wrote a message and sent them to Scarface. Out of a hunch, he also sent a message to one of their people who was in charge of gathering information from the library. He asked them to pay attention in case they found any information pertaining to the bandit outpost.

Before Jack left the capital, he went to restock on all the things he had lost during his expedition. Recovery potions, magic stones, lockpicks, disarm tools, and some magic scrolls. What he found out was the inflation had happened everywhere. The basic healing potion that was only 60 copper was now 1 silver and 20 copper coins. Lockpicks were now 30 copper coins each.

The most ridiculous increase was magic scrolls, the Arcane Turbulence was now 2 gold coins, while the Fireball was 5 gold coins. He still did not find any Chain Lightning scroll again, but he would expect the price of that scroll to go up to 10 gold coins if compared with the others. The Town Return scroll on the other hand did not increase as much, at 20 silver coins, only double from the original.

He suspected these magic scrolls were adjusted by the system so as to not getting abused in their usage. Their cheap early prices were to help players get by as they were getting used to this world. A pity, if he had known, he would have stocked up more before the price increased. Peniel said he had no idea about such inflation, this was all random according to her so she had no way of knowing such events.

Peniel also advised him to not get too dependent on those scrolls. Their effectiveness would decrease the more outworlders leveled up. After all, the scrolls mostly contained standard spells at the lowest level. The highest level of the spell in a scroll Jack had seen was at level 3, while if players had learned the spells, they could level them up to level 20. So the scrolls were only good for low-level players.

But following the inflation, new things popped up in the store, such as the Healing Potion which they had bought from the army supply station. He also glanced at the equipment store and saw that many level 25 weapons and armors were on display as well, still only common grade though.

After finished restocking, he went to the Hunters Association to cash in all his trophy loots he had collected during the expedition and submit his completed hunting quests. Even with all those hefty trophy loots, he still lost 3 gold coins after deducting the coins he spent for restockings, all due to the price inflation.

He also received 381 hunter points for it. Although these points were more than he usually received in one hunting trip due to all the quests were from high difficulty quests, but he had also only taken one hunting trip in the past three weeks, meaning his hunter points were more likely behind others already. Out of curiosity, he checked on the exclusive exchange item list. He was thinking to take that Camouflage Tent if it was still available. Turned out all the items in that exclusive list had been taken already by others.

At this rate, others would more likely get to the Gold rank Hunter before him. He had gone ahead of others in level but fell behind in hunter points. Couldn't help it, Jack thought. You gained something, you likely lose something as well. Everyone had the same amount of time, he could only spend them at one thing at a time. The important thing was to spend the time efficiently.

Hence he didn't lament too much about his hunting points falling behind, he picked up another ten hunting quests. He didn't plan another efficient hunting route this time, however. The ones he picked were monsters that were around the area where the Bandit Outpost was located. He had asked Peniel what monster in Silver hall that were in that region.

After finished picking up the hunting quests, he went over to the Adventurers Association next door. He didn't take any job from there, but any quest not associated with other faction quests could still be

reported. So he went and reported the completed chain quest, Duchess' Cure, and the investigate the strange disease quest in Theseval.

He didn't receive any coins nor experience for those as those rewards had already been granted when those quests were completed, but he received adventurers points for them. The chain quest gave an especially abundance of points for being multiple quest lines and also for being of high grade, although it was not an actual SSS grade as Peniel mentioned, it was not a low grade as well. He received 6238 adventurer points from those two quests. He checked on his badge after receiving those points.

VIP Silver Adventurer Badge (adventurer points: 7,854, available points: 6,774)

He needed 10,000 points to become a Gold-rank Adventurer. Looking at his current points, he might still have the chance to become a Gold-rank first before others. He also checked on the Silver Hall's exclusive exchange list. All the remaining exclusive items had also been taken by others. The competition was truly tough, he thought.

After finishing with those two neutral factions, he finally headed out of the city. He summoned his steed and went directly to the area where the Bandit Outpost was at. The density of monsters in the vicinity of the capital was not as crowded as the faraway regions he had seen during the expedition, also their levels were lower, hence his steed had no problem avoiding them during his travel.

He arrived in the area where the outpost was located before long, but he didn't go near it. He went around searching for the thing he was looking for while killing the monsters that were on his hunting quest list.

He spent the entire afternoon roaming around the place until sunset before he returned to the capital. He did not complete all his hunting quests on this trip. The quests were only secondary, he had another objective on that trip.

During the time he spent in the wilderness, he also received a message from William of Wellington, congratulating him on establishing his guild.

'Word travels fast,' he thought.

He arrived in Ellie's Restaurant a bit later than his appointment time with Silverwing. He had contacted Ellie this morning about his return and requested the VIP rooms. He went immediately upstairs. Before that though, he went to the next room where John and Jeanny were at. He left Peniel with them before he met with Silverwing. Bluedaze and Sinreaper were also in the room with him.

Silverwing Started their conversation by congratulating him for have formed a guild. He hoped that their two guilds could become allies and would benefit each other in the future.

After he expressed courtesy, he went into the main topic. He was very interested in the outside world. Even until now, no guild had managed to send their teams to a different city by normal means. They had found out about the caravan function and had some of their people worked on their Hagglng skills to be accepted into the Trade Association.

However, only the member of the association could use the caravan function and the towns available to them were small or medium-sized ones which they were not allowed to use the zone portal unless they were part of Themisphere kingdom. To get to the large-sized city where they could use the zone portal

to teleport, they needed to reach a certain rank within the Trade Association, and the points required were large and required a long amount of time and effort to accrue.

Chapter 395: Upgrading Ellie's Restaurant

Jack told him about their experience, as Silverwing and his retinues listened with fascination. He didn't tell them about the experience gathering trick by utilizing NPCs though, but even if he did, there was nothing they could do. It was not like there was a way for them to gain command of an army even if they wanted to.

They did express interest in how he managed to join the kingdom faction though, which allowed him to go on that expedition. He simply said that he had done a quest for a duke which impressed him enough that he had received an invite to join the kingdom faction. Hearing that, Silverwing secretly sent messages to his questing teams to search for all quests pertaining to nobles and for them to perform those quests with merit.

Jack also mentioned meeting another country's force which turned out to be a nation of orcs. He did not mention the other five countries though, as he had not seen those other races himself. He had only heard them from Peniel, so he kept that to himself.

He also mentioned the existence of a player organization called World Maker which worked together with an NPC force called Cult of Phobos. He asked them to be wary of this organization and to give him the information if they ever met such a guild. Silverwing promised to do so.

Jack didn't spend too long a time chatting with Silverwing, he excused himself once he thought was appropriate. Before he left, Silverwing asked another question, "what is your level now?"

"Twenty-eight," Jack replied honestly.

The three gasped. They were at level 25 and they had just gotten to that level not long ago, and they knew for a fact that most of the other players were still at level 24.

What if I tell them the rest of the surviving expedition members were level 29? He thought. Though it would be entertaining to see their reactions, Jack decided against it. He left the room.

After he left the room, he did not immediately go to the room next door that housed John and Jeanny. Instead, he went to another VIP room not far away. The reason was because he had gotten a message from Ellie about a guest.

He went into the room and uttered, "Heya! How are you doing, just Dylan?"

Dylan who heard him said, "can you please drop that? It's very childish, you know perfectly what I meant when I asked you to just call my name by Dylan." And then to Ellie, he said, "what is he doing here anyway?"

"Hey, hey, is that how you talk about your employer? And aren't you still a kid? What's wrong with being childish with you?" Jack said and took a seat beside Ellie. There were three drinks on the table and three plates of peanuts as snacks for the three of them.

"You are the only kid here! And what employer? Aren't you just a middleman?" Dylan replied with a scoff. Jack had told Ellie to keep his ownership of this restaurant a secret.

"All right, all right. Let's stop ridiculing each other. So, you brought the rosemary we asked for?" Jack asked.

"He did," Ellie answered.

"How many?"

"Enough to make around thirty dishes."

"So few?"

"Few my ass!" Dylan spat out after hearing Jack's comment. "Do you know how difficult it is to find that ingredient? I've roamed through two towns and only managed to find one at a corner shop. It only has a limited stock. I'm charging the maximum price here for that ingredient!"

"Price is no problem. How soon can you get another batch?" Jack asked.

"Maybe another week. The shop owner did say that he will try to procure a larger amount after I promised to buy them all again. It will probably be faster if I don't have to use a caravan and can teleport directly there using Zone portal, but the promise of that duke doesn't come through. No invitation for me to join the Kingdom faction is yet to appear."

"No need to complain. He only said that he will try his best, he did not exactly give you his promise."

"Why are you defending him? Are you his good friend?"

"As a matter of fact, I am!" Jack replied with a grin, remembering when the Duke clapped his shoulder and expressed his appreciation.

"Stop boasting!" Dylan said, then to Ellie he said, "for this second rosemary batch, I want front payment."

"No problem," Jack said.

"Why are you the one answering? I ain't talking to you," Dylan replied curtly.

"No problem," Ellie answered.

Dylan looked back and forth between Jack and Ellie, trying to figure out their relationship.

Ellie added, "since you have proven to be such a good procurer, I have several other ingredients that I needed. Here is the list. If you can get them, I don't mind paying for the maximum price as well." She then turned to Jack and asked, "what do you think?"

"I think that is a good arrangement," Jack replied.

Dylan looked back and forth again between the two of them. He then decided to not think too much about it. Matters of the employer were not his business. All he needed was to procure the requested supplies. Kept the business strictly professional. He glanced at the list given by Ellie. There were a lot of

ingredients inside, considering the restaurant's booming business, they must have afforded lots of unconventional recipes that needed many rare ingredients.

He had been eating the peanuts while conversing, he now found out that his plate was empty. Out of the three, only Jack did not touch his plate. Dylan pointed at Jack's plate, "do you mind?"

"Go nuts," Jack said.

Dylan chuckled, "heh, that's a good one." Then he took the peanuts on Jack's plate and continued munching while reading Ellie's list.

When his eyes arrived at one of the ingredients in the list, he couldn't help but blurt out, "small poison gland?" What's a restaurant needed this ingredient for? To poison a customer?

Ellie simply shrugged and said, "it's something a friend of mine asked for." By friend, of course, she meant Jack, who had sent him the request beforehand. He needed that ingredient to give to Pointy Tip to create the Poison Salve. The large poison gland that he gave Tip could only produce twenty doses. He would need to source the ingredient if he needed a stable supply.

Dylan decided not to pry. As he thought before, kept it professional. He stored the list as Ellie handed the gold coins for him. After receiving the front payment, he stood up and headed for the door.

"Leaving already? No chat with your old pal?" Jack asked.

"What old pal, I just met you twice including now," Dylan then looked at Ellie and said, "I will let you know once I got the ingredients."

After he went out the door, Ellie said to Jack, "you really enjoy teasing that boy, don't you?"

"Despite his all-serious-business manner, he is a fun kid," Jack replied. "How long do you need to cook all that thirty dishes of Well-Done Steak?"

"What's the hurry? If I don't have to cook for other customers' orders, I can cook them all within one day. Do you want to introduce this dish to the public immediately?"

"Oh, they are not for selling. I want all those Thirty dishes for myself, you can just deduct the cost from my share of profits," Jack replied. The Well-Done Steak gave a boost of 20% for exp received within six hours. He needed it as he had to generate lots of exp to satisfy the gluttonous Lightning God Blessing. Otherwise, he would not be able to level up at all.

"All right, but I can only cook during my off-time if it is not for the customer. Might need several days for all thirty dishes."

"Don't worry, you won't be cooking for customers tomorrow."

"Why is that?" Ellie was puzzled by Jack's statement.

Jack gave him a wide grin before saying, "we are going to upgrade the restaurant."

After informing Ellie of his intention, he let her went to inform the employees about the coming upgrade. Considering the previous upgrade, it should take at least one day for the process. They would

start the upgrade process once the restaurant closed, which was in half an hour time more. He decided to go to the room which John and Jeanny were at, as he waited for the restaurant to close.

When he entered, he saw that the two were still discussing heatedly with Peniel. Since the guild's success would be tied to Jack's success as well, Peniel didn't have reservations to keep information from the two. The two didn't waste the chance as they asked everything they could think of.

Seeing the three were so focused, Jack didn't disturb them and just sat at the corner and watched them. He soon lost interest as he was always not that into such technical stuff. He would leave much of the guild business to the two.

A waiter soon came and informed them that the restaurant was closing. Jack was grinning as the two reluctantly stopped their questionings. He told them there would be more opportunities later, it's not like Peniel was going anywhere.

Once they left, Jack went to the cashier and took away his profits. Three weeks had passed since he last took his profits, hence it had accumulated. Even after deducting Dylan's payment, he still received 59 gold coins. He had a total of 398 gold coins in his bag!

He then activated the restaurant's upgrade interface. Time to upgrade the restaurant!

Chapter 396: Becoming Viscount

Once he paid the 150 gold coins fee, the upgrade system was activated. A notification was heard inside the restaurant that renovation would start in five minutes and would take two days to complete.

'Two days? So, higher upgrade requires a longer time to complete,' Jack pondered.

Once the five minutes was up, the entire restaurant was covered by the same opaque cloth that appeared the last time he upgraded Amy's Bakery. Now, all he needed to do was wait. He gave some gold coins to Ellie for her to hire extra workers or for any other things that might be needed once the restaurant was done renovating, just in case if he was not available.

He then took a rest in Amy's Bakery. The girl bombarded her with questions once he showed up. He had been absent for three weeks after all. Entertaining the girl, he told her about his adventure during the expedition. He omitted the part about the scary encounter with the God of Fear though, lest she would just worry about him.

He told the girl and her mother, much to their joy, that he would upgrade the bakery tomorrow morning. He didn't do it immediately tonight as he wanted to spend a good night's rest in his room first.

He also took the profit that had been saved up in the bakery since he went on the expedition. The total amount was 41 gold coins.

The next morning, he was admiring the two buildings side by side being covered by opaque cloth. His wallet had taken a deep dip, but he didn't mind. He believed the eventual return was worth these investments.

Before he went out to do his survey around the bandit outpost again, he took the time going to the noble district. He visited the Magic Association shop and saw that the inflation had also affected this

store. The Disruptive Bomb was now 3 gold coins each. He still had a number of the bombs in his storage so he did not buy any extra. He might need the coins for something else later. But he bought one Reset Potion which now cost 5 gold coins.

He went to commander Quintus' tower afterward. An officer was manning the commander's desk. He reported his two kingdom faction's quests, Expedition to Temple of Divine Squall and Escorting Prince Alonzo. When he gave his Themisphere nobility faction badge for the officer to check, the officer frowned at him and asked, "where are the prince and the duke?"

Uh-oh. "They are safe and are on their way back as we speak," Jack answered. He could roughly predict what's going to happen next.

After the officer checked the quest report within the badge, Jack received some coins and experiences for them, as for the merit points, he received a standard reward of 150 merit points for the Expedition quest and 100 merit points for the Escorting quest. As for the variables.

Obtain the All-curse Expulsion Potion: 500 merit points

Assist in repelling invading force during the expedition: 200 merit points

Complete the objective of the expedition in less than one month: 300 merit points

Leaving the expedition before its return to the capital: deduct 100 merit points

Save the prince during precarious situation: 600 merit points

Keep the prince safe during the latter half of the war with invading force: 100 points

Using the prince as bait during the war with invading force: deduct 100 points

Not by the prince's side most of the time: deduct 100 merit points

Leaving the prince before his return to the capital: deduct 300 merit points

A multitude of curse words was flashing in Jack's mind. But after a deep breath and a calm consideration, he did acknowledge that he was not the ideal bodyguard model. He should act like Bailey at least to be an acceptable standard of a bodyguard. So, it was correct to say that he did not perform well for the Escorting Prince Alonzo quest. His only solace was that he had managed to save the prince from certain death. Otherwise, this quest would have been totally minus points for him.

The officer returned his badge, Jack checked and saw that his total merit points were 1870 points. He was 130 points left from becoming Viscount. Just a little bit more, he lamented. He had no time for doing a faction quest now, he still had many things he needed to take care of. But out of curiosity, he asked the officer if there were any nobility faction quests available.

The officer informed him there were three.

'Typical f*ckery,' Jack cursed in his mind. When he was looking for one, there was none. Now that he had no time to do the quest, there were even three of them available. The officer showed him the quests. He just browsed through them absent-mindedly as he did not intend to take the quest. They would just tantalize him.

But as he pulled his gaze away, he suddenly turned it back again. One of the quests captured his attention.

Deliver a parcel to Knight-Captain Matias

'Isn't that the captain of...' Jack grinned. Perhaps he could become a Viscount while not disrupting his current task after all. He proceeded to request for that quest. He was given a medium-sized package. When he tried to put it into his inventory, he was unable to. Perhaps this was like one of those trade items that Dylan mentioned could not be inserted into their storage bag.

He took a rope and tied the parcel to his back. He then went out and hailed a carriage to take him to the city gate, before summoning his steed and went off into the wilderness.

He went to the area near the bandit outpost like yesterday and roamed around like yesterday, killing some monsters in the process. During his roaming, he found the Knight Captain Matias who were leading patrolling troops safeguarding the region around the capital. Such patrolling troops were the reason that not many high-level monsters were present in the vicinity of the city.

After delivering the parcel, Jack continued his roaming until late afternoon before returning to the capital after sunset. He went back to Commander Quintus' tower at once to report the quest. He received 50 merit points as a standard reward, with a small sum of coins and experience. For completing the quest within the same day as when he received the quest, he was awarded additional 100 merit points. There was no minus point this time, luckily.

The total points he received were 150 merit points. A small sum, but considering it was a simple delivery quest, such a number made sense. Of course, it was only simple because he had actually seen that knight captain when he was roaming the area a day before. For anyone else, they might need to waste several days to find out about the captain's location. Not to mention due to the parcel could not be stored inside the storage bag, there would be a risk of it getting damaged. The longer one holding onto it, the bigger such risk happening. Jack surmised that minus points would be awarded if the parcel was damaged or if he took too many days to deliver the parcel.

Despite the small amount, the merit points awarded were just enough to elevate him into Viscount rank. He didn't get any perk for becoming a Viscount. However, he was now allowed to exchange his merit points. Perhaps this could be considered a perk as well.

He asked for the exchange list. The officer showed the list but informed him that this was the list available to Viscount rank. As his rank increased, there would be more items added to the list. Jack thanked him as he started to review the exchange list.

Standard Training Ground = 20 merit / 2 hours

Use bronze mining cave = 20 merit / 3 hours

Use training cave (level 1-20) = 30 merit / 5 hours

Use training cave (level 20-30) = 50 merit / 5 hours

It was a short list. So this was what they meant by the merit points were not to be exchanged for items. They were to be exchanged for the right to use kingdom-owned facilities. He had experienced the training ground. His points were better used in Commander Quintus' training ground in this regard.

During his kingdom faction's initiation quest, he had gone into a mining quest with the cadets. Bailey had told him that he needed permission if he wanted to mine inside those caves. He guessed that permission was by using his merit points.

As for the training caves, he had also gone to one with Lindsey when he was staying at commander Quintus' residences. So he more or less was already familiar with the facilities provided in this exchange list.

"When you said you have a good place for me to gain exp, did you mean this level 20-30 training cave?" Jack asked Peniel who was floating by his side.

"Nope," Peniel replied. "I suggest you don't use your merit points yet. You will need them later."

"Oh? I can use them for other things? Or do you mean when I become the next rank, Earl?"

"Later," Peniel simply replied.

Jack didn't push further. He gave his gratitude and left. He headed for his next destination. Time to ask Gruff for some compensation.

Chapter 397: Monster Books

"What do you mean he is out?" Jack asked.

"Which part of out don't you understand? Out is out!" The man behind the receptionist counter uttered.

"Out my ass! You were still asking me what my business looking for him. Only when I mentioned my name that you said that he is out. He asked you to say that when it is me coming to look for him, didn't he?"

"Kid, don't make me throw you out," the man behind the counter warned. Despite being a receptionist, the man was a level 40 elite human.

Jack was in the League of Champions building, looking for Gruff. The receptionist that he was talking to was cordial until he mentioned his name. Looking at the situation, he had no doubt that Gruff fellow was avoiding him. 'Irresponsible old geezer,' Jack cursed.

Since he could not find that old f*cker, he did not push the issue. He asked instead, "where can I submit a completed faction quest."

The receptionist turned back to a warm and friendly personality with the biggest smile possible as he answered, "you can submit a completed quest at the counter where you get your badge, honored member."

'A*shole! It was clear that this receptionist had been instructed by Gruff!' Jack complained in his mind when he saw the change in the receptionist's treatment again.

Jack went and reported the quest that was given by Gruff. He received a little exp and coins and got 10 challenge points. He checked his League of Champions Badge, it had 68 challenge points in them. The 58 points he had gotten out of performing the various tasks depicted on the stele that was shown by Gruff the last time he was here. Three weeks during the expedition had allowed him to net these points.

With those points in hand, he went to the colosseum-like circular courtyard with the panels of roman numerals on its circular wall. Some natives were using those panels, same as he last visited. He observed them for a bit before going to the panel marked with a capital letter I, which was the lowest roman numeral symbolizing number 1.

He stood in front of that panel and have his badge touched the large protruding number, imitating what the other natives did. He soon heard a notification asking him if he would like to take on the stage 1 challenge. A holographic interface appeared in front of the protruding number. He clicked the accept button on that holographic interface.

As soon as the accept button was pressed, he felt himself getting sucked into the panel. He experienced similar things as when he went into a dungeon and soon came out into an empty space. The setup was awfully similar to the space where he had fought with Eldingar inside the dungeon of Temple of Divine Squall.

Not long after, a level 10 Silver Wolf of basic grade materialized in front of him.

Huh?

The Silver Wolf lunged at him without any ceremony. Storm Breaker came out into Jack's hand as he used Flame Strike, killing the wolf with a single slash.

"Congratulations, you have passed stage 1."

He soon found himself back again in front of panel number 1. It was as if he never left.

'Well, that was awfully easy,' Jack thought.

He then went to the next panel with two capital letters I, symbolizing the roman numeral of 2. He did the same process and was sent to the same empty space again. The difference was, now there were two level 11 Silver Wolves.

I see, so not only did the monster's level increase at higher stages, but their quantity was also added. He completed the second stage in an instant as well. He proceeded to the third stage without pause. And so he continued on in the same manner until he reached stage 11, where he fought ten level 18 Grey Sabrecats, five elite grades and five basic ones.

The addition of level and quantity was not always fixed, the type of monster also changed after several stages, with the elite grade started to appear from stage 7. He imagined that the challenge would just get more difficult as he went to higher stages. One thing he found out when fighting in that space, he could not drink potions or use any tools. Apparently, one needed to rely on their own strength to pass these challenge tests.

He wondered how high he could reach with his current strength. Even for high-level natives like Gruff, he was stuck at stage 79. Sadly, he could not find out at the moment, he had run out of challenge points. He only had 2 points left.

He accumulated 66 glory points out of beating those eleven stages without failing. He went to the counter where he had been given the badge and asked if he could exchange those glory points. The staff on the counter showed him the list.

Similar to Adventurers and Hunters Association, the list contained numerous items, weapons, armors, materials, and so on. There was no exclusive item list, but several ones were marked with the sign, Limit: 1. He deduced that it meant he could only exchange one time for those items. And almost all of these items marked by the limit sign were monster books.

"Hey, where are the Warrior skills I was promised?" Jack complained.

"You are at the lowest rank, you think they will just give access to their special skills for any new recruit?" Peniel said.

"But I remembered that Gruff said I can at least get basic or advanced skill at the lower rank."

"The lower rank he meant might not be the starter rank you have now. To him, the second rank is still considered low. Or he might just simply lie to you back then, like how he lied about that quest he gave you."

"That lying old geezer!" Jack cursed. "What stage do I have to beat to get to the next rank?"

"Can you show him?" Peniel said to the counter staff instead. The staff clicked on something and a display was shown.

Principales = Beginning rank

Pilus = Beat stage 30

Centurion = Beat stage 50

Primus = Beat stage 60

Angusticlavian = Beat stage 70

Praefectrus = Beat stage 80

Laticlavian = Beat stage 90

Legatus = Beat stage 100

"Stage 30," Jack mumbled and made some calculations. "I will need at least 399 challenge points for that. That also considers if I beat all those challenges without failing once."

"Don't worry, you will accumulate them in time," Peniel encouraged. "During the expedition, mostly it was the soldiers who did the attacking and killing the monsters, that's why you didn't get as many points that last three weeks. You need to be the one doing the killing in order to get the points. The place

where I will take you to accumulate exp, you will do all the actions yourself, so you should be able to accumulate challenge points faster. Now, use your points to exchange for those monster books."

"Oh? Are they good?" Jack asked.

"They will be in the long run," Peniel answered.

"But if I do that, when I rank up, I might not have enough points to exchange for new skills," Jack expressed his worry.

"These books do not lose to skills, just grab them already!" Peniel insisted.

"Fine. Which ones should I get?" Jack asked, deciding not to argue further. There were twelve of those books, marks with the names of Undead, Humanoid, Reptile, Draconic, Beast, Avian, Insect, Elemental, Darkness, Demon, Magical, and Outlaw. Each cost 20 glory points. So he could only get three books with his current available points.

"Take the Humanoid, Reptile, and Beast first. You encountered them more for now."

Jack processed the exchange. After he received them, he asked Peniel, "so, are you going to tell me now what these books do exactly?"

"It recorded all the monsters that you have killed in the wilderness. Try open one."

Jack opened the Beast book and saw the first page had an illustration of the Silver Wolf. There were texts below, illustrating the beast's strengths and weaknesses. The illustration suddenly moved, startling Jack. The wolf in the picture moved around as if it was attacking and avoiding an attack.

You can read about any monsters of the type which you had killed before. When you kill a new monster of this book's type, it will appear on the next page. You can study the movement and attack patterns of the monster or read about its details in this book. You also receive a boost of 10% attack and defense when you are fighting a monster that has been recorded in the monster books that you owned."

"Ho, they are indeed good stuff," Jack said.

"They are. Not all factions had them. League of Champions can be said as the one that can utilize these monster books to their fullest potential."

"Oh? How so?"

"This faction had a special chamber that allowed you to fight the copy of any monster that was already recorded in this book, with a fee of course."

Chapter 398: Order Of Magi's Test

"Oh? What's good for me to fight a monster that I have already defeated before?" Jack asked.

"If it is a common monster, of course, there is no point. But what if it is a rare monster that is difficult to find? And you happen to need a specific material that is only dropped by that exact rare monster? It will be a hassle to go around searching for that monster. But by using the monster chamber function in this

guild, you can fight that monster unlimited times providing that you are willing to pay. Hence, getting said rare materials will not be as difficult as gaining it via the normal means."

"I see, that was indeed good."

"Yes, go out there and record as many monsters as possible. And try to get all the rest of those monster books too."

"You said it like it is an easy task. I might need a long time to collect sufficient challenge points," Jack uttered.

"The next time you see Gruff, ask him to give you another quest that awarded more challenge points," Penile suggested.

"The next time I see him, I'm gonna give him a punch in the face first before anything," Jack remarked.

Since he was done with that place, he left and decided to rest. Amy's bakery was not available for that night, so he went and rent a room in the inn. It was his first time sleeping in an inn. He thought it was not too shabby, not as good as his room in Amy's Bakery but acceptable. Of course, there was a more expensive one available that provided a more spacious and luxurious room, but he saw no point in wasting the coins just for one night's sleep even if he had plenty of coins.

The next morning before he went out again, he went to upgrade his equipment. He would be stuck in his current level for quite some time due to the Lightning God Blessing, so he decided to get into his top shape.

As usual, he rented the blacksmith workshop with the rare tools. Before that, he purchased a large number of Iron ores and Steel ores. The inflation also affected these ores but not as much, Iron ores now cost 40 copper while steel ore increased to 3 silver. Hence he purchased them in bulk. There were more stocks available now in the shops, probably because lots of players who did mining decided to sell their overstock ores to these shops.

He worked in the blacksmith workshop and planned to upgrade all his equipment to level 38, since that was the maximum level he could equip in his current level of 28.

As he continued to work, the probability dipped further down, causing him more failures with each upgrade. At level 34, if he did not use any buff from the workshop's rare tool or his Runestone of Probability, his success rate to upgrade the equipment was 0%, which meant no chance in hell he could upgrade any further.

He was thankful now that his Runestone of Probability had increased to a rare grade. The workshop rare tool added a 30% success rate, while his rare grade Runestone of Probability added another 25% on average. Adding a total of 55%, he still failed one every two times with that kind of probability. And as the level increased more, the probability was lower.

When he was at level 37 trying to upgrade to level 38, he only had an average of 35% success chance even with the two buffs. The material consumption also increased greatly as the equipment level increased. At level 35 above, he would need 4 iron ores, 2 steel ores, and 1 copper ore for one attempt. Combined with the multiple failures, his material consumption was significant.

He ran out of the material halfway through his work and had to go out searching around the capital to buy more ores. His 21 copper ores in his storage bag were also insufficient. Luckily he already had the Transformation Prism which could fuse the ores into better grades, as copper ores were not available to buy. He bought Iron ores and Steel ores in bulk and then used the Transformation Prism to fuse several Copper ores.

Two good things happened though during the process. His Blacksmith grade and Runecraft grade increased, they were now Advanced Apprentice and Intermediate Apprentice respectively. The increase in his Blacksmith grade naturally increased his success chance, while the increase in his runecrafting allowed better efficiency when he used his willpower on the runestone. Normally even after concentrating all his will into the runestone, the maximum added was roughly only 5%, with his runecrafting in Intermediate Apprentice, it now provided an extra 8 to 9% when he concentrated fully.

There were two of his armors however that had a maximum of level 35, so he couldn't upgrade them any further. These two were the earliest rare armors he had acquired, Blood Guard Scale Armor and Shadow Bear Tasset. He would need to look for a replacement for these armors later. The rest and his magic staff were upgraded to level 38. He couldn't upgrade his Storm Breaker as he did not have a spare rare sword for consumption.

He had consumed 374 iron ores, 138 steel ores, and 39 copper ores just for the upgrading process. If he added the amount he had used for creating the extra 18 copper ores, the number of spent iron ores and steel ores was even greater.

He was a bit pessimistic about the future blacksmithing process for higher-level equipment, the number of ores he needed would be astronomical. Luckily, he got a steady income of coins and also the Transformation Prism for support. At least his situation would be much better compared to the other players.

He reequipped all the upgraded armors. Both his physical and magical defense had increased by around 50% after the upgrade. He would be able to tank more damages. He then admired his magic staff.

Rapid Dazing Staff, level: 38/55 (super rare magic weapon)

Magical damage: 267

Range: 15 meters

Attack speed 1

Energy: 150

Intelligence +12

Standard attack has an 8% chance to cause Confused status effect for 10 seconds (effect does not stack)

Rapid Attack: Each standard attack shot out three projectiles (this ability can be turned on or off)

This staff now had damage even surpassing his Storm Breaker. But considering this staff was a super rare grade, it did make sense. Its other abilities had also undergone increases after passing the level 30 threshold.

He had spent almost the entire morning working for that upgrades. It was almost noon when he came out of the workshop. He had roughly check out the things he needed to know in the last two days. But he still decided to go back out just to make sure that everything was as he had recorded. If something veered from what he had observed, tomorrow's operation might be a failure.

He again spent the entire afternoon roaming around the area not far from the Bandit Outpost and only came back once the sun was set. After these three days of roaming, he had also completed all ten of his hunting quests. He submitted the completed quests and received some coins, exp, and 194 hunter points.

He sent a message to John and Jeanny, informing them that he was good to go for raiding the Bandit Outpost tomorrow. He informed them if they wanted to join, they could meet him at the city gate at noon.

After sending the message, he just left one more thing to do in the capital. He went to the dilapidated hut he had visited before. He looked at the hut with amazement.

'Still as run down as the last time I was here. Such a pretentious bunch to use this kind of façade,' he thought.

He was about to open the door to the hut before he remembered something. He transformed into Unrivaled Arcaner then went inside. The same spacious, empty, and clean space was displayed inside. Janus was still there sitting behind his desk.

Jack walked over to him, with Peniel flying beside.

Janus lifted his head and acknowledged him, "ah, mister Storm Wind, good to see you again. I see that your fairy friend is no longer in hiding as well. It's good to meet you face to face, miss," he nodded at Peniel, who gave a symbolic curtsy in the air.

Janus turned back to Jack, "so, I imagine you have trained sufficiently to pass the test I gave you?"

"That I have. Prepared to be impressed, mister!" Jack declared, still personifying that bombastic character of his disguise. He pointed his magic staff high.

Runic line starting to form rapidly. He had practiced till he could form Janus' five-runes spell formation in around four seconds. Using multiple rune formations in two steps, three runes simultaneously in a bit over two seconds, and the remaining two runes simultaneously in almost two seconds. Considering he needed almost fifteen minutes to form this spell formation when he first received it, this had been a large improvement. But such a speed was still far from the requirement to pass Janus' test.

To rectify this, before he started casting, Jack used his Dragon's Eye active ability. It slowed down his surrounding by 500%, or in other words, his thought process was increased to five times the normal speed. The spell formation which under normal circumstances needed four seconds, now formed five times faster. The five runes were completed before one second.

Jack looked at Janus with pride after he successfully did it. Janus returned his stare with a solemn expression.

"That was cheating," Janus said.

Chapter 399: Mirror Factions

'F*ck!' Jack cursed in his mind. Was this guy able to detect him using another ability to supplement his casting speed?

Janus tapped his fingers on his desk repeatedly, while giving a contemplating expression. He then said, "well, I never did say you have to cast it normally, so you can say it was my own fault. Okay, I'll let it slide this time."

"You will?"

"Considering we are old acquaintances, just consider it as me doing you a favor."

'Old acquaintance? We just met twice, pal.' Jack uttered in his mind, but he was still grateful by this native's leniency.

Janus stood up and gestured to him. "Come," he said. "Let's process you to join our Order formally."

Jack followed after him, a rectangular opening suddenly opened up on the wall. Jack could only see the void inside. Janus glanced at him and said, "don't change back into a Warrior when you are inside."

His figure then stepped and disappeared into the void.

"Mystical," Jack commented before following inside.

He was expecting the same experience as when he entered a dungeon, but there was no interval in between he entering the opening to coming out the other side, he was already at a different place the moment he completed his step. He felt like he was in a city. Many crowds walking around strange-looking buildings. There was no ceiling above but there was also no sky, it was just infinite whiteness.

Jack looked around in awe as he absorbed the view. It was like he was indoor but also outdoor at the same time. All the whiteness made him felt as if it was daytime again, while it was already night in the outside world.

"Was this whole place a separate dimension?" He asked Peniel.

"It is a constructed dimension," it was Janus who answered. "Please do not loiter, follow me."

Jack followed the man while continued observing the surroundings. From their garbs, he guessed all the people walking around were magic users. There were even some people flying around in brooms, reminding him of that popular movie about school for wizards and witches.

"Is that broom riding a skill? can I do that as well?" Jack asked. Although in his opinion, riding on top of a broom was totally uncool, it would still be very convenient to be able to fly around, much more convenient than riding a mount.

"Not a skill, but you need to change to a certain class first in order to fly like that," it was again Janus who answered.

"Which elite class?" Jack asked.

"Grand Wizard if you are a man, Master Witch if you are a woman," Janus replied.

"Huh?" Jack tried to remember something, he then turned to Peniel. "Did you miss those two classes when you explained to me about the elite classes? I don't remember those two classes he mentioned."

"That's because they were not elite classes. They are special classes," Peniel explained.

"Special class? Wait, are you saying elite class is not the end? There is another class again after?"

"Yes. However, not everyone will have a chance to get a special class. An elite class is the best standard class one can have. As long as one has enough capability, one can apply for elite class at the corresponding academy in any large city. So given time, everyone can be an elite class. But a special class is different, you can only encounter one by luck. In other words, if you are unlucky, you might not become a special class even if you are capable enough."

"Ah, I see. So, in other words, it is a hidden class," Jack uttered.

"What hidden class? I said special class! Why go and change the term as you like?" Peniel said.

"Well, we outworlders usually called it hidden class," Jack explained.

"Well, you are not in your world. So, you call it by our name here. Special class!"

"Hidden, special, it's just a name."

"I said Special!"

"Okay, okay. Special then. Why so riled up?" Jack conceded.

Peniel then added, "also, you need to be an elite class first before you can have the chance to be a special class."

"Oh? Then that Master Wizard and Master Witch is a branch of an elite class?"

"Yes, from the Archmage class," Janus took the chance to answer. "Are you interested to choose that elite class?"

"I am still considering," Jack replied.

"You should, it is a good class."

"Is it?"

"Every class is good," Peniel said.

"Sure," Janus replied, but his tone didn't signal his agreement. Jack noticed the fairy did not show her willful manner as usual with this guy. Considering this guy's bias, Jack surmised Janus was an archmage or a special class that branched from an archmage.

"Is there a level limit to become a special class?" Jack asked. "Or I will have the chance to get a special class once I become an elite class?"

"You need to be level 50 to become one," Peniel answered.

'Wow, level 50. That was still a long way to go,' Jack thought. Then to Peniel, he asked, "you know everything, so you should know how to get this special class, right?"

Peniel rolled her eyes at him. "I know all about the class, but I don't know how to get it. As I said, it is a fortunate encounter. It is totally random. If you are unlucky, you won't get the chance your entire life. It doesn't have anything to do with knowing or not knowing."

Luck, Consider that high luck stat of his, he should have no problem in this department then. He threw the special class matter out of his mind, it was still too long to consider. After a long walk, Janus finally stopped in a courtyard with a very large obelisk of black color. He was standing motionless in front of this obelisk. Jack was still wondering what he was doing standing still like that when the man turned around and asked him to stand beside him.

Jack went over. He was about to ask what he should do when a voice entered his mind, "stay still! Unrivaled Arcaner, male, age 23, mage, level 27. You are eligible to become a member of the Order of Magi. Do you wish to become one?"

He was unsure at first to answer using his thought or his mouth. In the end, he did both, "I do."

A blue light coalesced in front of him before solidified into a small blue flat object. Another badge, Jack thought as he accepted the object.

Order of Magi Badge: Starter (challenge points: 0, Knowledge points: 0)

"Challenge points?" Why did it sound familiar?

"You can receive challenge points by performing the tasks written on this obelisk," Janus informed.

Hearing his words, Jack looked at the obelisk. It had a clean black surface the last he saw, but now, glowing words were floating on its surface.

Increase a level = 1 challenge point

Level up skills from Mage class and its branches 5 times = 1 challenge point

Obtain 1 star for skills from Mage class and its branches = 1 challenge point

Defeat 100 Elite monsters/NPCs of the same level or above = 1 challenge point

Defeat 10 Special Elite monsters/NPCs of the same level or above = 1 challenge point

Defeat 1 Rare Elite monsters/NPCs of the same level or above = 1 challenge point

Defeat 1 Mythical monsters/NPCs of the same level or above = 10 challenge points

Defeat 1 Eternal monsters/NPCs of the same level or above = 100 challenge points

Execute skills from Mage class and its branches against hostile monster/NPC 500 times = 1 challenge point

Deliver a total of 10,000 points of damage to hostile monster/NPC in a single combat = 1 challenge point

"This..." He was speechless for a while before continuing, "ain't this the same as the League of Champions? Only change the Warrior into a Mage." The last task was different, the League required one to receive damage, while this one required one to dish out damage. But it was still like a mirror from the other faction's tasks.

"You know the League of Champions?" Janus asked.

"Storm Wind is a member of the League of Champions," Jack told him.

"Ah, I see. Such a coincidence. You know, the founder of the League of Champions and Order of Magi were actually brothers. However, they took different paths. One became a mighty warrior while the other became a talented mage. When they decided to set up these two factions, they talked with each other and implemented the same system. You can consider the two as sibling factions. The difference was that one faction focused more on the physical classes while the other was magical."

"Interesting history. Now, I suppose once I got the challenge points, I used it to fight inside a separate arena to gain glory... oh, I mean, knowledge point?"

"A rather hasty fellow, aren't you? Yes, that pretty much covers the process."

Chapter 400: Departing For The Bandit Outpost

"Where should I go to do those challenges?" Jack asked.

"Right here, see all these smaller obelisks around?" Janus replied.

Now that he mentioned it, Jack realized there were lots of obelisks. Weird, before, this place was an empty field with only this large black obelisk. When did these other ones pop up?

As if sensing his question, Janus said, "you can only see those obelisks once you become a member of the Order."

Like the colosseum courtyard in the League of Champions, these obelisks also sported numbers. Their numbers were high up on top floating above each obelisk. Jack could see number 1 till 100.

"Want to give it a try?" Janus asked.

"Try? I do not have any challenge point yet," Jack replied.

"Here, I will give you some. Considered it an entrance gift."

Jack checked his badge and found it to have 10 challenge points. 'That was generous,' Jack thought. That shitty Gruff had to cheat him into performing a quest before he was awarded the same amount of challenge points.

"Come," Janus guided him to the obelisk marked with number 1 on its top.

The process of activating the challenge was the same as in the League of Champions, the feeling when getting sucked into that separate dimension where the challenge took place was also the same. As he came out in that space, a level 10 basic Goblin appeared.

'Oh, different monster, but same difficulty. Let's finish this by one hit as well,' Jack thought as he summoned his Storm Breaker. However, his hand was empty.

'Eh?' He tried again. "Hey, why can't I summon my weapon?" He asked.

He looked around and realized he was alone with the Goblin. He remembered now that when he entered the challenge of League of Champions, Peniel was also unavailable inside.

The Goblin was already coming at him while he was still confused. He ran away from the Goblin to have some time to think. They are not asking him to fight using hands and feet, right? Oh, right! They are magic users. He then tried to summon his magic staff. This time it worked.

The Goblin had already arrived at him and jumped as it made its attack. Jack gave the small creature a kick. The poor critter tumbled back a distance away. Jack then shot a Mana Bullet. 1213 damage appeared as the spell disintegrated the Goblin.

"Super Rare staff truly is badass!" Jack exclaimed. It was worth all the time and materials spent to upgrade its level. He whistled and twirled his staff in style before storing it back in his bag.

He soon reappeared outside.

"That was slow," he heard Janus commented from behind him, ruining his current good mood. "I would have expected you to finish this first stage with one hit."

"I did finish it in one hit. I just didn't expect that I can only use magic equipment here," Jack tried to defend himself.

"Not just magic equipment actually, you can only use magic spells as well," Janus said, and then added, "Ain't it the same with League of Champions?"

"League of Champions?" Jack was puzzled at first before he said, "do you mean that I can only use Physical skill and equipment in League of Champions' challenges?"

"Yeah. You haven't taken a challenge there yet?"

He had completed eleven stages actually, but because the monsters were too easy, he had never bothered to use his Mage spell. He simply cut the monsters up with his martial arts and Warrior skills. And here he thought the restriction was only for using tools, those challenges appeared much harder now.

"Want to continue?" Janus asked.

He still had 9 challenge points left, so he decided to just use them all. He completed four stages in total, collecting 10 knowledge points.

In between the challenges, he asked Janus, "By the way, why do you keep accompanying me? What if someone else comes to apply to join this Order and found that no one is in that waiting room?"

He simply shrugged and answer, "Don't worry about it. Another me is on standby there already."

Another you? Jack was confused but didn't pry further. It's not like he didn't enjoy such a VIP treatment anyway. This was completely different from the bureaucratic treatment he received in the League of Champions.

He then asked to take a look at the exchange list. He knew his pitiful 10 points won't be sufficient to exchange for proper goods, but he was still interested in the list, just to get an idea of how many knowledge points he should aim for.

The list was roughly the same as the ones in League of Champions, only that the items here were much more catered towards magic user's needs. Jack expected to see limited items like the Monster Books from the League of Champions' list, but instead, he found items marked with monthly, and they were all recipes.

Blacksmith Recipe: Blood-Drenched Axe (Monthly, days left: 3),

Alchemist Recipe: Mind Panacea (Monthly, days left: 3)

Cooking Recipe: Verremorian Barbeque (Monthly, days left: 3)

Scrollmaking Recipe: Eye of Truth scroll (Monthly, days left: 3)

"Monthly?" He turned to Janus.

"It means those items can only be exchangeable within this month, which left only three more days," Janus explained. "Next month they will be replaced by different items. So if you missed this chance, you will have to wait until they appeared again some other month, or if ever."

Jack looked at the list, all of these monthly recipes required 30 knowledge points to exchange for each. He only had 10 points on him. With only three days left, he had not much luck with these recipes.

He closed the list. No new spell was available in this list, just like in the League of Champions. He asked Janus what challenge stage he needed to beat in order to get to the next rank, to which Janus replied by saying he had to beat stage 30 for that. Hearing that, he surmised then that the rank arrangement of this faction was also the same as for League of Champions. So the number of challenge points he needed to advance was roughly the same.

After learning about the basic operation of this faction, Jack expressed his intention to leave. Janus told him that he only needed to say, "Exit point reveals yourself" in order to leave.

He felt corny to have to say that. He would prefer open sesame or in this case, exit sesame, or something like that. Since there was no choice, he just had to oblige.

"Exit point reveals yourself!" He yelled in an exaggerated manner while lifting his hand as if making an oration. When doing something, put all your heart into it, he said to himself. Janus and Peniel watched him with amusement.

A rectangular opening abruptly appeared in front of him. It looked exactly like the same one that had taken him here, the opening showed the same void as before.

Before stepping in, Jack turned back to Janus and said, "thank you for your time, I will be taking my leave now." To which Janus replied with a nod.

He and Peniel went into the opening and find themselves in the large space of beige color inside the Order's hut. The opening shut behind him. He was just about to head to the door when he noticed that the desk in the middle of the space was not empty. Janus was sitting there smiling at him.

"Finish with your affair?" He asked.

"I... didn't you...," Jack was lost for words. "Did you teleport here?" He finally managed to ask.

"What do you mean? I have always been here."

Jack turned to Peniel, who simply shrugged. He decided to just not think about this magic business, he said to this Janus, "thank you for your time, I will be taking my leave now." And then realized, didn't he just said that to the other one before?

This Janus also replied with the same nod. Jack ran out the door.

"Damn, this magic business is creepy!" He said after he was outside from the hut and closed the door.

"I can still hear you," Janus' voice was heard from behind the door.

On the next day, since he told John and Jeanny that he would depart at noon, his morning was free. He spent 10 merit points to use Commander Quintus' Training Ground. His Ice Ring increased to the first star after the training. Its first star gave it an increase in radius of effect by half a meter, which meant an extra one meter in circumference, allowing him to hit more surrounding enemies.

When the sun was high in the sky, he stood at the city gate waiting. John and Jeanny had expressed interest to join the raid. He saw the two of them coming not long after, with all the others in the guild trailing behind.

"Why do you all come?" Jack asked.

Bowler said, "Are you serious, bro? They said you will be going to fight a bandit outpost for our guild, which sounds dangerous. Do you think we will just stay behind?"

"Well, I don't mind you all come, but you won't be doing any fighting," Jack told them.