

World 51

Chapter 51: Fox's Demise

Hearing the admonition, Fox finally decided to join the attack on Bowler. She turned her back from Flame's hiding place, that's when Flame came out. When Fox was aware that her tracking target was moving towards her, Flame had already arrived by her side. Her casting was interrupted by Flame's stab on her side abdomen. When Fox turned her staff to point at Flame, Flame moved in a circular motion preventing Fox from targeting her, all the while continued to stab her dagger onto Fox's body.

"You bitch!!" Fox screamed in frustration due to the pain from the stabs and in being unable to aim at Flame.

Scarface turned and threw a ranged attack at Flame. He hit her and disrupted her rhythm, allowing Fox to finally aimed at her and cast Mana Bullet. The assault pushed Flame back. But as Fox was delighted to finally hit Flame and was about to continue her assault, she was struck in the face by another Mana Bullet and received critical damage. Bowler which was free from Scarface interference managed to aim an accurate shot on her.

"Bigarm, come here! Red and Stone alone are enough there." Scarface commanded as he cast Energy Bolts. The five bolts rushed towards Flame. Flame waited just before the bolts hit and she executed Ranger skill: Roll. Two of the bolts hit her during her rolling, the other three missed as they could not do sharp turns. During Roll skill, Flame's defense was increased by 100%, hence the damages were not significant.

Scarface caught a light approaching from the corner of his eye and jumped sideways as a ball of light passed where he was standing. It was the Bowler's standard range attack. He turned and saw Bowler cast his Energy Bolts which had just come off cooldown. Four Bolts came rushing, two came over at him while the other two spread out and went towards Fox and Bigarm who were running back. Scarface used his Magic Shield to defend against the incoming Bolts.

Meanwhile, Flame who was freed from Scarface's interference, had her roll ended near Fox. She resumed her assault as the enraged Fox threw her spells to retaliate on Bowler. Fox's stab brought her attention back, but she couldn't do anything to her. Flame's movements were too rapid for her.

"Use your Magic Shield, you dumb wench!" Scarface's shout snapped Fox's rationality back. She was too blinded by fury that she didn't pay attention to her HP bar. Now she had just realized that her HP bar was in a critical state already. She hastily summoned her Magic Shield to defend from Flame's attacks.

"Too late," Flame told her. She was confused, then she heard Scarface's shout.

"Look out!"

Fox felt two consecutive searing pain in her back. They were from Bowler's one Energy Bolt followed by an additional standard attack. When Flame sent her stabs to Fox, she had positioned herself opposite from Bowler, hence exposing Fox's back to him, allowing pincer attacks from both of them. As Fox staggered due to the hits on her back, she felt cold steel on her neck. Flame had made herself onto her in an instant.

"N-No!" She was unwilling as Flame's dagger cut through her throat. Her vision started to blur as she fell to the ground.

Bigarm who was running back halted his steps when he saw Fox fell.

"Damn it!" Scarface cursed, then told Bigarm, "you deal with her! I need to keep that Magician occupied until our two people get to him."

Jack on the other side was having an intense battle with Red Death. He continued using the suicide attack method since he knew he could not beat her in technique. He forcefully attacked her whenever she made her strike.

Red was frustrated, this was like newbie players hacking at each other without bothering to evade, a simple brawl where winning or losing was largely affected by the players' stats. With her nimble movements, she could still avoid most of those suicide attacks, but on the third exchange, she was hit again. Jack's speed was too fast for her to completely overcome. She had lost half of her life just from two hits, while the HP bar above her opponent had only lost one fifth even after her multiple stabs.

'Crap! How high is his total HP?' She cursed in her mind.

By this time, Stonecleave had arrived. She jumped back to broke away from Jack as Stonecleave took over, and took out a potion to drink. The potion was crafted by the alchemist in their guild, which gave a better restorative effect compared to the common medicines they scavenged from deserted stores.

Jack didn't chase after Red, he received Stonecleave's attack with a swing of his own. Every clash of their weapon pushed Stonecleave back one step. Unlike Red Death, Stone's martial style mostly focused on heavy attacks based on strength. Thus, when he met with Jack's overpowering strength stat, he was completely dominated. Stone's HP was higher than Red because of his Fighter's class, but Jack could hit him more easily compared to Red. So Stone was losing his life at the same rapid rate.

Watching his comrade's situation, Red didn't dare to tarry longer. She joined the attack to reduce the pressure on Stonecleave. Jack, upon seeing Red approaching, sent a Swing that covered both his assailants. Stonecleave blocked using Parry, while Red expertly dodged by using Roll.

She rolled forward passing Jack and came up behind him, before sending a Swift Strike to Jack's back. Jack managed to turn in time to Parry Red's attack, but left his back open for Stonecleave's attack. Red had managed to expertly utilize her roll to position Jack in the middle of them for a pincer attack between her and Stonecleave.

Jack was having trouble defending from both sides, he tried to break away, but Red continued to anticipate his movements and blocked his retreat path. His high HP was whittled down slowly by his two assailants without being able to return an attack. Jack decided to let go of his attempt to trade blows with them and instead crossed his hands as protection then rammed his body forward while ignoring all the attacks landed on his body. He completely utilized his high HP advantage to withstand the damages.

Stonecleave which was the target of the ram was caught off guard by such a crude method. His footing was not stable enough and was sent flying away when Jack's body collided with him. Red, on the other hand, could only keep on stabbing Jack's back all the while.

Completely ignoring the backstabs, Jack squatted down. His body then sprang up and twisted. The sword in his hand made a fast 360-degree sweep, but Red noticed it and ducked in time to dodge it. As Red was about to get back up to continue her attack, she realized that Jack's twisting motion in the air had yet to stop.

In that instant, Jack's leg using momentum from the twist came sweeping towards her. She blocked it using her hand but was also thrown several meters away. The kick didn't produce any damage as it was not calculated as a valid attack but it still caused pain and forced Red to stop their attack rhythm.

Free from their encirclement, Jack immediately moved towards Stonecleave. The woman called Red Death was too difficult to deal with unless he fought her one-on-one or revealed his Overlimit or Magician skill. Stonecleave who had got back to his feet and was just about to drink his potion, stored it back when he saw Jack barreling towards him.

Unwilling to get rammed again, he jumped sideways. But Jack anticipated it and using his fast speed to get to him and then delivered his three circling slashes. The first slash was dodged, second was parried, while the last one grazed him, but the system still considered the graze as a valid hit, so Stonecleave still lost life. His HP was less than half now.

As Jack continued his assaults, he noticed the 2 black dots were enclosing on Bowler. He immediately warned Bowler through the Party chat.

"Bowler, jump down now! They are about to come behind you."

Bowler followed the instruction without hesitation. Before Bowler landed on the ground, Jack sent another follow-up instruction.

"Scatter! We regroup a hundred meters west of here. Use your map to observe others' movements in case you cannot make it there."

Chapter 52: Retreat

Flame who was nimbly evading Bigarm's attacks immediately broke away from the confrontation after receiving the order. Bowler also bolted once he landed on the ground. Previously Jack had asked him to use up all his remaining free attribute points to fill up the Dexterity stats. He was the slowest among them, so this fleeing strategy would be harder for him.

Luckily, there was no opponent pinning him down at the moment so he was the one with the most head start when the order to retreat was given. The two rangers who went up to the terrace didn't see when Bowler jumped down, they were still looking around up in the terrace for him. Scarface wanted to chase but since he didn't invest any point in Dexterity, he soon lost sight of Bowler.

Scarface yelled at the two rangers in irritation, "get down here, you two! He has already jumped down!"

Red chased after Jack as he removed himself from Stonecleave. In the group, only she could barely match speed with Jack hence they soon found themselves some distance from the rest of the group.

Seeing the opportunity, Jack said in team chat, "Bowler, look at your map and come to my place. I got an enemy expert in our tail. If we manage to get rid of her, it would be a great blow to our opponents. Flame, you are too far away, continue onward to the rendezvous point."

After giving the instruction, Jack stopped his running and turned back to face his pursuer. He looked at his radar and found out the rest of the enemies didn't scatter to chase them, instead they gathered and stayed where they were. Red Death who was chasing after him stopped several meters away from him. She wore a conflicted look. She then glared at Jack and said, "don't you think this is over. We will settle this another time."

After saying her piece, she turned back and left.

Jack was confused at her retreat. From his radar, he could see Red Death reconvened with her group. He continued observing them on his radar to see what kind of move they were planning, but instead, they started to move away in the direction back to the safe zone. Bowler arrived at this time and asked, "where is the expert?"

Red Death who had regrouped with the rest of her team, asked Scarface in dissatisfaction, "why are we retreating?"

"Can't you see the size of our team? We lost almost half from when we originally set out," Scarface replied.

"We can still take them on. Are you going to just let those who had lost their lives die in vain?"

"Wrong and wrong. We will settle this debt once we find a better opportunity. And about taking them on, if we continue now, we risk losing the whole group."

Red Death gave a disdainful expression, "I don't believe it. They managed to take out almost half of our group because they were targeting our weakest members. The rest of us are not that weak, if they come at us, we can still win over the three of them."

Scarface gave a sigh, "that might be true if we are holding the initiative, but as you had experienced, we kept on being ambushed by them. As if they know our every move. It is possible that they have equipment or item that can track us. And also, there might not be only the three of them."

"What do you mean?"

"It is possible that there is still another Magician hiding someplace else. The same Magician who sneak attacked us before we arrived at the shopping mall."

"Isn't that the Magician up on the second floor of the shopping mall?" Bigarm asked in bewilderment.

"I originally thought so," Scarface replied. "But after seeing the damage done by that Magician on the second floor. His damage was lower than the one before. Also, his Energy Bolts only shot out four bolts, while the previous one had five bolts in one spell. They couldn't be the same Magician."

"Who was it?" Bigarm asked again, "as far as we know, their team only had three people."

"It could be an expert from White Scarfs, sent here to give them a hand in secret."

"That White Scarfs, so they really intend on making enemy with us!"

Scarface added, "if we continue pursuing them and got caught again in an ambush by the four of them. We might be the ones that got wiped out. I must admit, I have underestimated them. I would have brought more people if I have known so, I didn't because I don't want to attract the attention of White Scarfs. Now that it had come down to this, we can only cut our losses and make a better preparation next time."

Red Death was silent after hearing this, she no longer vehemently protesting. She just swore in her heart that she would get her revenge someday.

Jack and Bowler met up with Flame at the place Jack had specified. Jack had picked the area because it was devoid of monsters' presence.

"They retreated?" Flame asked. "Why? They still outnumber us by twice."

"I'm not sure," Jack said. "Maybe they decided it's not worth it to keep on losing people in order to chase us."

"Well, I know the reason, it's because we are AWESOME!" Bowler exclaimed with ardor.

"Don't get too excited," Jack told him. "I know their kind of guild. They won't let go of this matter easily. They will strike again once they got the opportunity or after they assembled more members."

"Oh? Does that mean they will come back again soon with more people?" Bowler was back to his worried look.

"For today, I don't think so," Jack replied. "But you may never know. Let's not let our guard down."

"We are not going back yet?"

"Why? There are still several hours before the sunset. Let's continue hunting monsters for experience."

"You are not worried that they really will be back with more people?"

"Don't worry, if they come with more people, we will just run away," Flame interjected. "After all, our leader here will know if they got near us. Won't you, leader?"

"Oh...," Jack scratched his head. "Yes, my hunch will let me know if they come again," he said.

They continued to hunt monsters for the remainder of the days. Although Jack was vigilant and continued to monitor his radar, Death Associates people didn't show themselves anymore. Flame finally reached level 11 before the day ended. They received several iron ores and copper coins from the monster drops and split them evenly. Bowler and Flame wanted Jack to get a bigger portion as it was clear he killed monsters more efficiently compared to them, but he insisted on even distribution.

They returned to the safe zone as the Sun was setting on the horizon. They avoided areas with other players when going back, and sneaked through if the crowd was unavoidable, as Jack couldn't know if the blue dots he saw on his radar were from Death Associate or other people.

He had asked Peniel if their enemy dots would remain in black color after the fight was over, she informed him that the color would change back to blue. She mentioned that there would be a function where he could list players as enemies, but that would be in the future she said.

One such function was when one guild declared another guild as an enemy, then all the members in that guild would be seen as black dots in Map. She also mentioned that the current guilds they saw in this tutorial period were only people grouped up together based on their allegiance in what Jack called real-life or past VR games. They were not proper guilds recognized by this world's system.

They only relaxed after they arrived in the vicinity of the City Hall building, where White Scarfs members were hanging around. When they entered the building, Silverwing was seen talking with another member in the main hall. When Silverwing spotted them, he immediately disengaged from the conversation with the other member and approached them.

"I heard you have been busy today?" He said with a smile after coming near.

"Were that your eyes and ears telling you as well?" Jack replied.

Silverwing laughed at the comment, "don't worry, I didn't have anyone tailing you guys. I, however, did have people monitoring Death Associates people, and they heard a piece of rather interesting news. Something about a team led by Scarface going on a mission, but came back several people short. I originally wanted to send out people to check on you guys, but then again, I think if my allies are someone who are so easily taken out, then there is no benefit in continuing the alliance, since we don't need weaklings for allies."

Jack nodded, "I am glad we didn't disappoint you then."

"Yes, you didn't. Now that you have made it clear to us of your capability, how about we formalize our cooperation?"

"Oh? How do we formalize?"

"Game style of course," Silverwing made a gesture, Jack then heard a notification.

"Silverwing had sent you a Friend request. Do you accept?"

Chapter 53: Gatherings

Of course, since Jack didn't join White Scarfs, Silverwing would need another method of communication when they wanted to contact him.

Jack agreed to the request, and now had a total of three friends on his Friend list.

They went to rest afterward. Silverwing didn't invite them for another chat as he had many things to do. The noon tomorrow was the deadline given by the system, they need to organize everyone to make sure all would be present tomorrow morning. Since there was no proper guild system in place yet, they had to do everything manually.

The next morning, everyone gathered on the field. No one went out of the safe zone to hunt monsters anymore. Since the deadline was at noon, they didn't want to miss the time just because they came late

from hunting. The numbers of people on the field were staggering. It was probably five times the number compared to when Jack first arrived. When he came out of the City Hall building, he could see carpets of people everywhere he saw.

Members of White Scarfs were lined up neatly in front of the City Hall. There were probably three hundred people just from White Scarfs alone. It was impressive under the circumstances that they could still find so many of their members. Other guilds also had their members in formations. It was pretty obvious the difference between guild members and independent people, as the latter were in a much more chaotic arrangement.

Silverwing invited Jack to stand next to him in front of the City Hall. He was flanked by the same five people who accompanied him when Jack saw him the first time. There was another one who Jack didn't recognize among them. The person glanced at Jack disdainfully, clearly not understanding why their co-leader put so much importance on this outsider.

Silverwing caught the tension, he introduced to Jack, "this is Grimclaw. He is one of the strongest members in White Scarfs."

"Nice to meet you," Jack tried to be civil despite Grimclaw's show of open hostility.

Grimclaw just snorted as a reply.

Silverwing shook his head helplessly. He said to Jack, "please don't mind him. He is not a bad person once you get to know him."

Jack nodded.

Silverwing then told him, "I'm not sure if you were a regular in past VR games, but some of those you see gathered here in this field are from several well-known guilds and organizations. Many small ones that don't worth mentioning, but some are actually larger guilds compared to my White Scarfs guild. One of which is your enemy Death Associates. They are actually a very large guild, it's just that their base operation is not within this city, so their current numbers are not as impressive as they should be. But I'm not sure if in the future the situation will stay that way."

"Why do you say that?" Jack asked.

"Well, how do you know what happened here is just limited to this city?" Silverwing answered with another question. "My guts told me that what happened here also happened at other places. And I bet they also had the same tutorial period as here. The sky announcement mentioned a gateway to the Main World. If other places had the same thing, then we will most likely meet in this so-called Main World."

Jack contemplated Silverwing's words. There was much logic in his thought. What he said could be a real possibility.

"That friend of yours is rather smart, unlike you." Jack heard Peniel's voice.

'Do you confirm what he just said?' Jack asked her telepathically.

"You will find out soon," she replied.

"@#\$, " Jack was helpless with this guide of hers.

Silverwing made some gestures towards several groups visible, "some of the guilds you should take note of are Saint Edge, Corporate United, they are some of the largest and wealthiest guilds known. Wicked Witches, they mainly accept female. Warriors of Solidarity, contrary to Wicked Witches, this guild mainly had male members, and they are very brutal and savage. And Black Cloak, they are a well-known assassin group, they could be considered the smallest size in term of number of members but they are also the hardest to deal with, because they only accept the best. Their members are mostly ex-military and martial art practitioner in real life. If possible, please try not to provoke them. Actually, try not to provoke any of them. One Death Associates is already enough to make your life difficult."

"I'll try to keep that in mind," Jack replied. He was actually not foreign to those guilds mentioned by Silverwing, as they were also quite well known in the past VR games he played.

"There are still other notable guilds," Silverwing said. "But I don't see any of their representatives here, so let's not talk about them. There are, however, several individuals that are also famous in their own right. Independent or under close-knit communities. They avoid guilds as they valued their freedom. They dislike being chained by guild rules and also thought themselves skillful enough not to require guilds' resources. One of the famous ones is the one there in full armor gear."

Jack looked over where Silverwing had pointed and seen a tall man in complete leather armor, with a helmet and brown cloak which were the remaining two armor pieces that Jack was still missing. To be able to complete those sets was quite impressive. He either had killed innumerable monsters or rob many people in order to complete the set, both of which required real skills.

"His name is Warpath," Silverwing continued. "He was famous for his mercenary works. He sold his skills in past VR games to help guilds in completing their quests, with payment in real-life money or in-game equipment or items. He had been a member of some workshops in the past, but never really stay long in one place. Many people tried to curry favor with him in hope that he can help them with their quests in the future."

"Just like what you are doing with me?" Jack smiled.

"Just like what I am doing with you." Silverwing didn't deny.

Grimclaw who listened, gave a disdainful snort, "What is a nobody like you good for? Any of our White Scarfs members is a better player than you. If you didn't end up dragging us down, we would be thankful already."

Bluedaze who was standing next to Grimclaw, said to him, "stop it! He is our guest. You are being rather impolite."

"What? Don't you feel dissatisfied our guild put importance on someone who we have never heard of? I don't have a problem if he is someone famous with real skill, but look at him, he just looks like a country bumpkin. Why are we having a fall-out with a big guild like Death Associates just for the like of him? There are many brothers and sisters in the guild who agree with me."

Grimclaw didn't bother to lower his voice, thus everyone heard it clearly. Bowler, who never backed down from an oral fight, immediately fired back, "and you think yourself so impressive? What strongest

member, you completely lack the aura of it. You are just a whiny little wimp! If you go one round with my big brother here, you won't even last half a minute!"

Hearing that, Grimclaw's face became red from anger and embarrassment. No one had dared to talk to him that way, not when he was around his fellow guild members. He immediately lost his temper.

"What did you say, you punk! You wanna have a go? Let's have a go! Do you think I'm afraid? I'll hack you with this rare sword of mine!"

Bluedaze and dashrunner were holding him, preventing him from lunging at Bowler. Everyone looked over due to the commotion.

"Enough!" Silverwing reprimanded him. "You are making a scene! You realize that makes us look bad?"

Grimclaw was dissatisfied, but he didn't retort. There was a reason Silverwing was their leader, he still held him in high respect. Bowler didn't say anything to add fuel, but his face was showing a smug look at Grimclaw. Jack pushed him aside to prevent him from escalating the tension further.

"Well, with that unpleasantry out of the way, let's us continue with our discussion," Silverwing said.

"Where were we? Ah yes, that's Warpath there. There are another two that you should make note of, one is that woman there called Trinity Dawn. She specialized in magic-user class in almost every game, and almost always got ranked amongst the top players. But like Warpath, she prefers freedom, so she didn't join any organization. The second one is that Ranger in black suit, called Blackjack. You should be careful of him."

Chapter 54: Tutorial Rankings

"Why is that?" Jack asked.

"Because he was close to Red Death from Death Associates. They were said to be fellow pupils of the same martial art teacher in real life. But unlike Red, he didn't like getting tied down in a guild. Nevertheless, due to his relationship with Red, Death Associates often looked for him if they have matters they need help with which couldn't involve their guild members. If your issue with Death Associates keeps on going, sooner or later you will have to deal with him as well."

"I see," Jack looked over to the said person. The Ranger coincidentally also looked at him. Realizing their eyes had met, Blackjack made a motion with his finger slicing his neck. Indicating that he would kill Jack if he got the chance. Jack guessed that he must have heard from Red Death about what had happened yesterday.

Well, one way or another, he couldn't avoid trouble, Jack thought in his mind. He might be of few words, but he was not the type to just lower his head if someone tried to bully him or his friends. If they really wanted a fight, Jack wouldn't mind giving them their own medicine.

Compared to previous days, this morning there were fewer people seen coming from afar. Most that were migrating due to the notification from the sky had made their way over, the remaining either couldn't make it or had died during their journey.

Soon the sun reached its zenith, marking the arrival of noon. The light beam that was continuously pouring down from the sky intensified and thickened. The radiance spread over and caused the transparent light dome that covered the entire City Park to solidified into a thick light wall.

There were a few people seen outside the light dome still making their way in. When they reached the light dome which was previously completely traversable, they now instead met with a solid light wall that barred them from passing through.

They were banging from outside. They shouted to ask the people inside to let them in, but even their voices couldn't get through the light wall. The folks inside looked at those trapped outside. Even if they wanted to help, they had no idea what to do. The light wall had most probably trapped them inside as well. A sound was heard from the sky the same way as it was five days ago.

"The time is up! Those that failed to arrive on time had failed the tutorial phase. Penalty will be applied."

As soon as the notification ended, those people outside burst into particles of dust. Those that were watching were taken aback. Some even screamed from the spectacles.

"That was cruel," Bowler commented from the side.

There was another booming voice from above, it was a different tone compared to the previous notification voice that sounded computerized. This time it sounded like it came from a real human's vocal cords.

"Congratulations on all that had passed this tutorial phase!"

A smaller light beam penetrated down from the highest part of the light dome and landed near the abstract sculpture at the center of the park. The light coalesced into a human shape and revealed an old man with long white beard wearing a typical pointed magician head and white trimmed robe. He was holding a long golden cane with a bird-shaped head. His eyes were white without pupil, streams of light blue mist could be seen swirling from those eyes. His domineering aura completely captivated the crowd surrounding him, not a sound was heard from them.

When he spoke again, the voice was enhanced as if it was being spoken through a loudspeaker. Yet it was not too loud for those standing close to the old man, and it was the same clarity for those who stood the furthest.

"Those of you that stand here had proven yourself to be worthy adventurers, and thus you were granted with passage to the Main World."

As he finished his sentence, a rumbling was heard accompanied by a small earthquake. The water at the pond parted and from inside arose a colossal black door. Its black frames were decorated with extensive carvings that showed depictions of humans, monsters, landscapes, and cities.

When Jack focused his attention on the carvings, it somehow appeared as if moving. It changed from one second to the next, as if an illusion that was constantly changing. Its double door leaves were closed and sometimes a crack of blue electricity could be seen coming through the gaps between the door leaves. It stood floating on the surface of the pond water with empty air holding it erect.

The old man continued his talk, "the passage will be opened and you will come onto a land governed by a kingdom called Themisphere. You will be placed onto its capital Thereath. You will learn the rules of the Kingdom and the Main World yourselves when you arrive there. As you have experienced in this tutorial period, there will be monsters roaming the wilderness. The only safe places are cities and towns governed by the kingdoms and countries of the Main World. But many opportunities can only be found in the wilderness. If you want to become stronger, then you will need to wander out into those wildernesses. Survive and receive all the glory. Stay cooped up in safe zones or perish and be a nobody. It's your decision!"

He paused and looked around at the crowd, giving them a moment to digest the information before continuing, "but before you head onto the Main World, those with the highest achievement during this tutorial period will be granted rewards. One hundred adventurers with the highest level will be called out. They will be given a chance to choose from a pool of rewards. The first rank will have the first pick on the reward, second rank has the second pick, and so on."

The crowd started murmuring at the sound of rewards. The silent field gradually increased in noise as everybody started discussing about the rewards and making conjectures regarding possible winners.

"I said it must be Warpath, he was the most well-known players out of those gathered here," said one person.

"I agree," said the others.

"Don't underestimate guild's powerhouses! They are usually the ones that gain level the fastest because of their guild's support. I said Grimclaw will score the first place."

"Don't be absurd, Red Death is a better player."

"No, it isn't."

"I said Blackjack has a real shot here."

"I still say Warpath."

"Selena from Wicked Witch is a hot contender."

"Don't forget Kill Order from Black Cloak."

"Warpath is number one!"

The old man with the golden cane just stood there in silence, allowing the crowd to continue with their commotions.

"What do you think, brother Storm Wind?" Silverwing joined in the discussion.

Before Jack could reply, Bowler the loudmouth took the liberty to answer, "What is there to think? Of course my brother here will be the first rank!"

A burst of laughter could be heard from the side. Grimclaw was having a hysterical laugh. "Are you joking me there? That nobody? I doubt he would even get into the ranking at all!"

"Do you there to bet?" Bowler taunted.

Grimclaw was incensed. These country bumpkins really didn't know how big the world was. Nevertheless, he didn't let his rage get to him. Even though he didn't think too much of those guys, there was no guarantee this Storm Wind wouldn't get into among the hundred rankers. So he tweaked his condition, "why not? If he can get a higher rank than me. I'll accept defeat!"

Bowler was aware that Grimclaw had changed his words, but he didn't mind. "All right, if my Brother Storm Wind gets a higher rank than you, you will give him that rare sword of yours that you're so proud of."

Grimclaw seemed hesitant. This was a rare-grade weapon that he had found due to luck.

"Afraid now?" Bowler continued taunting, "you can just take back what you say if so, we don't mind."

Grimclaw felt his rage coming up again. He saw Bluedaze and Dashrunner shaking their heads to him. They must be trying to say not to antagonize their guests? This caused him to get angrier, why was everyone so nice to this group of nobodies?

"All right!" He cried. "But if he loses, I'll need an item of equal value to my rare weapon. If you don't have, then compensate me with three uncommon equipment or ten normal equipment with additional 3 silver coins!"

"Deal!" Bowler said without hesitation.

Chapter 55: First Rank!

"Heh, still trying to put on a tough face. Just prepare those equipment of yours to be given to me," Grimclaw replied with a snort.

Dashrunner was peeved, he came up to Grimclaw. "Don't you see us shaking our heads to you?" He whispered.

"I know you guys are polite, but arrogant people like them who are like frogs in a well, need to be taught a lesson once in a while."

Dashrunner was speechless. He didn't say anything more. He just shook his head and walked away.

Jack was also whispering to Bowler, "bro, why are you using me as a bet? I'm not gonna help you pay the equipment if we end up losing."

Bowler gave him a mischievous grin, "don't worry. I'm doing you a favor by getting you a rare sword. You sure will win."

"How can you be so sure?"

"I had some chat with the other White Scarfs members before. That Grimclaw guy is still level 12."

Jack was stupefied, so this guy had already known the outcome before proposing the bet, that was diabolical. Jack glanced at Grimclaw who still wore a confident expression. He used his God-eye monocle and scanned him, he really was just level 12. He couldn't help but feel pity for the guy for falling into

Bowler's trap. But then he looked at the sword hanging at Grimclaw's side. He would be able to upgrade his Storm Breaker to rare grade if he let it consume that sword. The thought excited him.

He clapped Bowler's shoulder, "good job!" He whispered.

As the two sly men were grinning like fools, the old man with the golden cane made a move. His eyes shined brightly as he lifted his cane high. Golden fire swirled around the cane and then turned into a fire dragon as it spiraled outwards, creating a spectacular spectacle. The crowd's noises instantly died down. The dragon then flew high and broke into multiple fiery orbs. If someone made a count on the orbs, they would find them to be exactly one hundred.

"It's time!" His voice boomed out. His left hand stretched and a giant blue sphere materialized.

"Those that were chosen by the orbs will come forward and select the rewards from this sphere. Please be clear that you can only select one and what you have chosen cannot be changed. Therefore, make your choice carefully!"

He then tapped his cane onto the ground, and one of the orbs floating high up starting to make a descend.

The crowd was full of anticipation. Many of the past well-known players observed the falling orb with confident looks, every each expecting the orb to come his or her way. Warpath who stood around his adoring fans held his head up high. He thought to himself why bothered with all the theatrical, he should just walk up to the old man and demanded his fair reward.

But contrary to many people's expectations, the orb slowly floated towards the group of White Scarfs. Warpath who saw that had a confused look. Had the old man gone senile and made a mistake?

Grimclaw who saw the orb coming, felt elation filling him up. He was the best amongst the White Scarfs members. The first prize was as good as his. He lifted his left fist up in a victory pose, and was about to go forward to receive the orb when he realized it drifted past him.

He turned to where the orb was floating to and saw it stopped in front of Jack. Jack tried not to look at Grimclaw to avoid embarrassing him further. Bowler, however, didn't give a shit and grinned widely from ear to ear.

As the orb dissolved into a thin blanket of light enveloping Jack, almost every well-known player from past VR games in attendance held the same thought in their minds. Who the hell was that guy?

The old man's enhanced voice echoed through the crowd, "First rank, Storm Wind! Fighter class. Level 13!"

The crowd gasped when they heard of the level. Disbelief in their faces.

"He is level 13, no wonder his attributes are so high," Red Death who was among the crowd said.

"No," Scarface said. "Even though he is level 13. His attributes are still too high. He still has other secrets."

"Please step forward!" The old man's voice urged.

Jack didn't dilly-dally anymore. He went in the direction of the old man. The crowd parted as he advanced, giving him a clear path, until one group stood their ground and blocked his way. It was the people from Weary Wolf.

The leader called Boulder was at the front. He said, "you have ruined our business, and you have killed my Flowing Fox, now you think we're gonna let you go claim rewards just like that? I don't care about the White Scarfs anymore, they are over there, they won't make it in time to save you. Get him, brothers!"

Jack took out his sword as the Weary Wolf people moved to surround him. This move of theirs was completely unexpected. They already cut off his path of retreat before he was aware of it. As the first person who was holding an axe about to reach him, a blinding light slammed down from above, covering the entire body of the assaulting person. His body was instantly disintegrated. With his body completely gone, his axe dropped to the ground.

"You dare make a ruckus with me around?!" A thundering voice was heard. Everyone looked up and saw the old man floating above Weary Wolf gang.

"If you dare interrupt this ceremony again, I will wipe out every last one of you!" He gave the warning as he glared towards the people from Weary Wolf gang. Terrified by the display of power, Boulder and every each of his subordinates backed away in fear and opened a path for Jack. They hung their head low and didn't have the courage to utter a single noise. Jack sheathed his sword and continued forward.

He went past the group of Death Associates, who obediently stood to the side. They were swallowing their saliva and wiping their sweat. They originally had the same idea of blocking Jack as well, before Scarface told them to stand down. Scarface glanced at Boulder and uttered, "idiot."

Jack didn't receive any more resistance as he arrived in front of the giant blue sphere. The old man floated down and landed beside him.

"Storm Wind greets Elder," Jack bowed down respectfully. "May I know Elder's name?"

The old man looked at Jack, studying him.

One of the people who were standing close to them criticized in a whisper, "why the heck does he act so respectful? The old man is just an NPC. He probably doesn't even have a name."

"You are a fine young man," the old man finally spoke and then glared at the people who just made the whisper and said, "and I do have a name!"

The person who he glared at was having the scare of his life. He thought for a moment that he was about to get disintegrated just because of a random comment which he did not even speak out loud. However, the old man didn't act so imperious. He looked back at Jack and said, "you can call me Honuren."

Jack glanced at the person who had been reprimanded. He thought in his mind, the guy still treated this like a normal game. Probably a lot of others here also had the same thinking. He was not going to make the same mistake. He made another bow and said respectfully, "greetings, elder Honuren. Thank you for awarding me this recognition."

"You've earned it, young man," Honuren replied with a smile.

"Now put your hand on its surface," the old man said as he gestured towards the floating giant blue sphere.

Jack did as told, and his vision was soon filled up with images of rows and rows of items.

Chapter 56: Ranking Rewards

The crowd outside couldn't see what was seen by Jack's eyes. All they saw was the blue sphere flickered with lights. But in Jack's mind, it was flooded with images. It was jumbled up at first, Jack couldn't make heads or tails on what he saw. But they soon arranged themselves in a neat fashion.

The items were arranged in rows. Jack could shift through them with a thought. If he counted them, he would find the number of the items to be exactly one hundred. He chose to focus on one of the items, one that looked like a sword.

Sword of Havoc

"What the...," Jack focused more on the sword. There was only an image of the sword and the name, no description of the grade nor the damage value.

The heck, he thought in his mind. He turned to Honuren who was beside him.

"There is no description on the items?" He asked.

"No, there isn't," Honuren replied matter of factly.

"But... then how do we know the value of the item we picked?"

"You don't."

"But..."

"The reward is a gift. If you get a rare item, then you are blessed by Gods. If you get a normal item, it's still better than those that cannot make it to rank one hundred. Just take it as a trial of luck," Jack wasn't sure if Honuren's words were meant to console him or just asking him to stop being wishy-washy and just get on with the reward choosing.

Jack let out a sigh, he helplessly continued browsing the wares.

Swift Hand Amulet

Bag of Coins

Skill Book

Jack shifted through the items one by one and read the names. This was pointless. In the end, he thought he might just make the decision based on how fancy the item's name sounded or how cool the item looked. He saw a cool-looking magic staff and thought to himself if he should just choose that staff. He was still using the basic staff he got when he started the Magician class. It was certainly lacking compared to his Fighter sword.

"Wow, there is also a Harness of Soul," he suddenly heard Peniel's voice.

'Wait, you can identify these items?' He asked telepathically.

"Of course, who do you think I am?" She replied with an arrogant tone. "I told you I hold in my mind every knowledge there is to know about the world, right? That certainly includes magic items."

'Wow, perfect! Then you can help me make a decision. What's this Harness of Soul you mentioned?"

"It allows you to record your soul. If you die in the wilderness, you can come back to life with the condition same as when you make the recording. Every recording requires coins, and there is also a limit in which you can only revive three times. After that, the Harness of Soul will disintegrate. But I guess it is useless for you since you have that Immortal Soul thing."

'Okay, let's browse through other stuff then,' Jack said and shifted to the next item and had Peniel described to him the item's description.

"Stack of Fire Shell. It contains six pieces of Fire Shell, a consumable item that can be thrown and deal 200 points of fire damage."

'A grenade then. Next.'

"Sheet of purple silk. An uncommon material that is used for Blacksmith job."

"Swift shoes. Uncommon equipment that increases movement speed."

"Warning Tent. An uncommon tent, this is the one that I told you which has an alarm function when monsters get near. Maybe you should select this one."

'Let's continue browsing,' Jack said.

Time passed as Jack was checking the rewards selection. The crowd gathered started to murmur and getting impatient.

"Why the heck does he take so long?" One of the people grumbled.

When around five minutes had passed, Honuren told Jack, "you have one minute left. If you don't pick an item once the time is up, one item will be selected randomly for you."

"What? There is a time limit?" Jack was dumbfounded. He was only halfway through.

'Change of plan!' he told Peniel. 'No need to describe to me every item. You will recognize the item's worth from its image, right? I will shift through the rest and you pick for me the one you consider the most valuable.'

"Hehe, you are going to let me do the decision?" Peniel teased.

'Stop joking, we are running out of time!'

Jack then swapped one item after another. Stopping just long enough for Peniel to look at the image.

"Thirty seconds," Honuren informed.

Crap, Jack cursed in his mind. 'Peniel, not yet?' Jack asked anxiously.

"Don't rush me," she retorted.

Jack was speechless, thirty seconds left and she said don't rush her.

When another ten seconds passed, Jack considered to just pick the Warning Tent that Peniel had described previously. However, he heard Peniel's excited voice.

"What the..! This thing is also here? That one! That one! Choose that one!"

Her excited voice was a bit hysterical. Jack looked at the item she indicated. It was a simple cube-shaped box. It looked like it was made from stone with some strange carvings on all its six sides.

'What is that? It doesn't look that impressive. There are still some items left to check,' Jack protested.

"Stop arguing and just pick it! The time is almost up!" Peniel shouted in exasperation.

Hearing the urgent tone of her voice. Jack decided to trust her. He extended his hand. "This one," he said to Honuren.

Honuren looked at him intently. "I must say, you having a High Fairy guiding your selection could be considered cheating..., but I will let you off this once."

He gave Jack a meaningful smile and then waved his hand. The box disappeared from the selection shelves inside the Sphere.

"It's inside your storage bag already," Honuren told him. "Well done, young man. I wish you all the luck. Next!"

Another orb descended as Jack thanked Honuren and walked back towards the group of White Scarfs. He made a quick look at his storage bag and found the box there. This was better, this way, no one would know what's the treasure each of the one hundred rankers got.

He spoke with Peniel as he walked, 'I was scared for a moment there. I thought he was going to disqualify me. He could see you even when you are hiding in your separate dimension.'

"Of course he can," Peniel replied. "He is a Demigod. You have done well to treat him with respect. He could disintegrate you with a simple thought if you draw his ire."

'A Demigod?' Jack was astonished. He didn't expect the old man to have such an incredible background.

"Yes, he was one of the Demigods under the God of Pride."

That was cool, Jack thought. Just in Tutorial phase and he had already met with one Goddess and one Demigod. He suddenly remembered another thing. 'Wait, he said you are a High Fairy? Does that mean you are not just any normal Fairy?' He asked.

"Of course I am not just any normal Fairy," Peniel replied with annoyance. "You think the Goddess will just pick any normal Fairy?"

As he walked and conversed with Peniel, he was bumped by someone. He turned and looked at Warpath who was glaring at him.

"Lucky punk," Warpath said to him in hostility and continued walking towards Honuren. He was the second person who got picked by the orb.

"What's his problem?" Jack said as he watched the guy's back.

Chapter 57: Transformation Box

When Jack arrived back at White Scarfs group, Silverwing congratulated him, "I know I've made the right decision when befriendng you. Please allow me to express my congratulation."

"You are too kind, Sir Silverwing. I was just lucky," Jack replied in humility.

"Please, call me brother. All my other closest friends called me that.

Bluedaze and the others came to congratulate him as well, except for Grimclaw, who was sulking in the corner.

Bowler nudged Jack, and then passed him a crimson-colored longsword. "Courtesy of our friend, Grimclaw," he said with a grin.

Jack took a glance at Grimclaw. He was folding his arms with a dark face. He seemed to be fighting the urge to look over at Jack. Jack felt slight reluctance as the guy's guild was supposedly an ally, but he looked at Silverwing and his retainers, they didn't show a face that minded at all. Well, a bet was a bet, he thought to himself and received the sword. He inspected the sword.

Retaliating Sword, level 10/30 (Rare One-handed Sword)

Physical damage: 55

Attack speed: 2

Durability: 30

Endurance +2

When user receives damage, next attack on the enemy dealing the damage will be increased to 150%

As Peniel had mentioned, rare equipment provided another extra ability compared to Uncommon. He also noticed that the maximum level this rare sword could be upgraded was higher compared to its Normal and Uncommon counterparts. But he was not going to worry about upgrading this sword, he was going to feed it to Storm Breaker. Once he did, he could then choose another ability for his sword.

He stored the sword inside his storage bag, he couldn't do the feeding process in front of all the people here. At this time, Warpath had come back from choosing his reward. The third rank was a man called Kill Order from Black Cloak guild, he was level 12 same as Warpath, but his experience bar progress was less than Warpath, hence his rank came after Warpath.

"Take a look at the box," He heard Peniel's voice in his mind.

'What? Now? In front of all these people?' Jack asked.

Peniel sighed, "Dumbass, you are really hopeless. You can check the statistic of the items inside your storage bag without needing to take them out. Did you never try it before?"

'I didn't,' Jack answered sheepishly.

"Then go ahead," Peniel urged.

He did as told. He sent his thought into his storage bag and searched for the box. After he found it, he focused on it to inspect it. A loading bar appeared. Huh? This is new, he thought.

"That's because it's higher than rare grade," Peniel's voice came.

'You can join me in viewing inside my storage bag?'

"Of course, we are linked," she answered simply. "Normally if your Inspect skill is low, you can only learn limited information on the objects or players you scanned. But for most items that had come to your possession, there was no such limitation, the only difference between high level and low level Inspect skill is the time they need to inspect it. The rarer the goods, the longer the time needed to Inspect them."

'I see... And wow, this one takes really long. It had almost been a minute and it is still only 10%? Is it because this item is very rare or my Inspect skill is terribly low?'

"Both," again, Peniel answered simply.

While waiting for the progress bar to fill up, he looked at the ranking reward ceremony. Red Death came out as the fourth. After her, finally it's Grimclaw's time to shine. However, he didn't show any joy when he went up for the reward. His face wore the same gloomy expression, people around might think that he was trying to act cool or something. Only the people around Jack and Silverwing knew the truth.

When Grimclaw finished selecting his reward, Selena from Wicked Witch was summoned as the sixth rank. At the moment Selena came to the blue sphere, the loading bar inside his storage bag was completed. He immediately returned his attention back to the box.

Transformation Box (Unique Artifact)

Consumes 4 Common equipment of same type to create 1 random Uncommon equipment of same type.

Consumes 8 Uncommon equipment of same type to create 1 random Rare equipment of same type.

Consumes 16 Rare equipment of same type to create 1 random Super Rare equipment of same type.

"What do you think?" Peniel asked.

'This... Its ability sounds great.'

"Of course it is great! Why do you sound like you aren't convinced? Do you know how difficult it is to get a rare item at this stage? I bet in this entire crowd, you wouldn't find four or five equipment with rare grade. That rare sword you got from Grimclaw, he was really lucky to have gotten it in the first place. He should have just killed himself to lose it in a stupid bet, that moron. With this box, you have a sure way to get a Super Rare item, which is a grade higher!"

'Okay, okay,' Jack replied helplessly. 'I never said I don't like this box.'

'But it really takes a lot of items to upgrade. Let me count. Four... eight... If I want a Super Rare item, I would need 512 Common items of the same type! Bloody hell, by the time I collected that much quantity, I would have gotten the Super Rare from a simple loot drop already.'

"You wish!" Peniel countered. "You will need to complete a high-ranking quest or kill a high-ranking boss if you want to have any chance of scoring items above Rare grade. Anything below that you can still rely on luck by killing minions."

'Talking about luck. I've been wondering. My luck stat had been boosted due to Goddess' Blessing, but why Grimclaw managed to get a rare weapon while I have difficulties even for scoring an Uncommon?'

"Well, if you talk about luck. There is really never a real way of knowing, ain't it? Maybe you are just a very unlucky person. You getting the Blessing is just counterbalancing your bad luck into normal luck. And Grimclaw probably in basic form is already a much luckier person compared to you."

'... that was a really irresponsible way to explain it. If he is really lucky, then he wouldn't have lost the bet now, would he?'

"That's because you guys are cheating. Can we get back to the Box, please? If you are worried about the huge number of items needed, you could always buy the items from shops. There will be plenty of shops selling items and equipment in the Main World. You just need to have enough coins for it."

'Oh? I can buy? Why didn't you say that earlier? Now I'm really looking forward to getting my Super Rare items.' Jack was grinning thinking about it.

Peniel wanted to tell him that the coins in his pocket were just barely enough to buy three Common equipment, but she didn't want to burst his bubble, so she kept quiet.

'by the way, this Box is classified as Artifact. Does it have any special meaning?' Jack asked.

"It's just a way to tell you that this is one of a kind item. There is only one in the world. If you get it, no one will be possible to get the same item."

One of a kind, Jack was impressed. He was glad that he had followed Peniel's words and picked this Box. Otherwise, he would have had a big loss.

At this time, the people who came up to the Blue Sphere were level 11. The top players with level 12 stopped at rank 9. The reward selection got faster as the rank went down, because there were fewer rewards to choose from.

However, there was no way to say that the lower rank will get rubbish compared to the upper rank. Because, unlike Jack, they didn't have a Fairy guide who could tell them which one of the rewards was more valuable than the others. It's all came down to luck and intuition for them.

Jack was really glad now that he had saved the Goddess and given a guide.

Chapter 58: Gate To The Main World

It took around five hours for the entire one hundred rankers to go up and claim their rewards. The Sun was about to set in the West. Silverwing and Scarface were amongst the one hundred. When the last one-hundredth ranker left the Giant blue sphere, it dissolves into thin air. Honuren floated towards the colossal black doors that were still shut tight.

"Congratulations to you that have received your rewards," he said out loud. "Now that it is over, we should get to the main event. You will be entering a new world that is completely different from your old ones. Try to learn the rule as best as you can, it might be the difference between life and death. As my time here is limited, I will allow three questions before you go through this gate. Please make your questions count. Afterward, you will have to find the answers yourself from the locals. Only the first, second, and third rank of the highest level have the privilege to ask these questions."

The crowd blared into a murmur.

"No fair! There is so much I want to ask!"

"Can I go back home?"

"Where are my kids?"

"How do I check the stock market?"

As the cacophony increased in volume. Honuren's body flared with blue light, he lifted his cane high and a lightning snake came thundering down from the sky. It hit the pond water where Honuren was floating above and created a crackling sound. The water churned with electricity. Luckily no one was having the thought of swimming in the pond at this time. Otherwise, they would have been cooked alive. All the noises died down due to the display of power.

"I said three people!" His voice boomed out. "The others, keep your mouth shut!"

He then pointed towards Jack who was the first ranker. "Ask your question," he said.

Jack was perplexed. He had many questions, but being asked suddenly and could only choose one, made him unsure of what to ask. He was contemplating while Honuren waited patiently. The others, however, were not. But learning from previous experience, they did not dare to call out to rush Jack. After all, Honuren might see it as another affront to his authority again. So they kept quiet in displeasure, especially Warpath, he was forcing himself to keep his mouth shut.

After contemplating for a long minute, Jack finally realized the multitude of eyes staring at him. He was sweating from it. He had known that the Goddess didn't know anything about the real world or how they can get back to it, so he figured this Demigod would have no idea about it as well.

So he asked the next question he thought was most important, "Master Honuren, my question is, if we die in the wilderness in the Main World. Will we die for real? I mean, do we stay dead forever?"

Some of the others who heard it was facepalming. Why do you waste one important chance for such a useless question? They had seen and known from the past few days that when they die in this supposedly game world, none of the dead came back to life like past VR games. They were gone and no longer exist. So they really were dead.

However, Honuren reply took them all aback, "no, if you died in the wilderness, you will come back to life in the nearest safe zone. But you will lose all your equipment and levels, starting back to square one again from level 1, no matter what level you were before you died."

The crowd was shocked. The answer was completely different from what they expected. Warpath who was just about to ridicule Jack for making a stupid question, instead blurted out, "What about the people who were killed before this? During this Tutorial period?"

Honuren turned to him and answered, "they will revive too, of course. They will come back to life again in the capital Thereath once you start to cross through this gate. But they will also lose all their possessions and levels, starting from level 1... Ok, third question!"

Warpath was dumbfounded, "w—wait! That wasn't my question!"

Honuren turned back at him with irritation, "are you trying to trick me? You were given one chance to ask, and you have asked one question. So your chance is done!"

Warpath was unwilling, but there was nothing he could do. He gritted his teeth and glared at Jack. This was all because of him asking that question which had caused him to blurt out unintentionally. Jack who saw the glare, felt wronged and thought, 'brother, how is this my fault?'

Honuren ignored Warpath's discontent and turned to the third rank, Kill Order, who seemed to maintain his cool throughout the proceeding. He gave his question promptly, "Can we kill people in the safe zone? Will they also revive back to level 1?"

"That was two questions," Honuren said. "But I will let it slide. By killing people in the safe zone, I will assume you mean people like you here, not the native of the Main World. The answer is yes, you can, but there will be a penalty. What this penalty is you will have to find out for yourselves. As for the people who die in safe zone, they will come back to life without losing any possessions, and will only lose 1 level."

So the questions ended, with all three questions revolved around players dying. Jack didn't realize that his first question would steer the other two towards similar questions. There were others that were hoping they could find out the answers to questions revolving around how to return to the real world, but now the chance was lost. Those with this thought glared at Jack.

Bowler whispered to Jack, "is it just my feeling, or is it that many people seemed to be angry at you?"

"I have no idea," Jack replied.

Honuren floated down towards the front of the colossal black doors. He tapped his cane on the door. Ring of light circled outwards from the point of contact. Rumbling sounds were heard as the door started to vibrate. The vibration was transmitted to the pond water below which created small waves that spread outwards.

The door leaves started to move slowly. A golden light was emitted from the gap which continually widened. As the door leaves fully opened, a golden sheet of light rolled out from inside along the surface of the water. The golden carpet created a pathway that stretched along the pond into the opening of the door. Nothing was seen from the opening except golden emptiness, as if a layer of golden sheet is covering the opening of the door, preventing anyone from seeing the other side of the door.

Honuren landed on the golden pathway. The way he stood on it made it look like a solid floor. Someone tried to do the same and use one of his legs to step onto the golden pathway made of light. He half expected his feet to go through and dip into the water below. But the golden light was solid.

"You may now enter the Main World through this gateway," Honuren enhanced voice sounded out again. "There is no requirement for whom to enter first, but I expect everyone to proceed in an orderly fashion. This is not a contest. The first to cross will not have any advantage over the last one. So proceed calmly. Anyone that tries to make trouble will face my wrath. I will not repeat again."

He then stood beside the door and gestured for those nearest to start making their way inside the door.

No one made a move. Everyone just stood there looking at each other. They have come here expecting to go to this world that was called Main World, but now that it is time to do so, they paused. It was human nature to fear the unknown. At here, although the world had changed beyond recognition, the landscape was still the city they were familiar with. But beyond that black door, no one knew.

After what felt like a long time, finally someone made a move. The Third rank Kill Order went up to the front of the door. He looked back and said, "Black Cloak, with me!"

A bunch of people came up following his call. He then turned around and stepped through the golden opening.

Chapter 59: The Main World

Jack saw as Kill Order disappeared into the golden opening, followed by the rest of the members of Black Cloak. After the last of Black Cloak members disappeared into the door, there was a slight pause, before Scarface led Death Associates to the door. Scarface went inside first, then his other members followed. Red Death glanced back at Jack for a while, throwing a hostile look, before returning his gaze to the door and stepped through.

"I think she is in love with you," Bowler commented.

Jack ignored him.

After two famous guilds took the lead. More and more from the crowd trickled into the door. Although with everyone moving, it seemed like a big mess, no one was pushing on others or cutting the line. Everyone was obedient to keep everything orderly and not making any trouble, as Honuren was keeping watch beside the door. Everyone was terrified of the old man.

"Shall we go as well?" Silverwing asked.

"After you," Jack said.

Silverwing nodded. He walked forward to the very front of the group with Bluedaze and the others. Jack followed behind. Silverwing turned to face his guild, and said in a loud voice, "White Scarfs! Line up in formation. Walk orderly. Watch your brothers and sisters beside you. Do not get separated. Let's go! We are heading to a new world."

The guild followed his order aptly. Jack was impressed by the members' discipline. It was like watching soldiers in practice in an army camp. Silverwing then led the way as they moved with the crowd towards the door.

As more people joined in the exodus, the area around the door become cramped. Some people couldn't help but get pushed aside by the crowd, but they do not dare to raise their voices to protest. They just helplessly went to the back of the line or tried to find an opening where they could squeeze themselves in.

After quite some while moving with a sea of people, Jack and his friends finally came to the front of the door. The door was massive when being seen from up close. It was so wide that it could fit twenty people from side to side, and that were how many people went in at a time. The top of the door was as high as a three-story building. Jack lifted his hand and touch the golden layer with his finger. It went in as if there was nothing there, he felt nothing, and he couldn't see the tip of his finger.

"Could you please move?" The person behind him asked with a polite sentence, yet carried an irritated tone.

"Sorry," Jack said and stepped inside.

As his entire body sank in, he could see nothing but golden light. He was suddenly weightless. He didn't feel his feet touching the ground, as if he was floating. Then the scenery started to shift, in a rapid manner. The golden light was twisting into a circular well, elongated into a tunnel. He was sucked in by this golden tunnel and flew through it at a very fast speed.

He didn't feel any wind thought, but the view made him felt like he was moving in a high-speed train, albeit without the train. After an indeterminate amount of time. Everything became motionless abruptly. The golden light around him started to disperse. He found himself in an open field with other people who had crossed through the door scattered around him.

The sky above was clear and blue. Forest and mountains were seen far away. He could see a stream not far from there. It looked like scenery from the countryside. There was nothing out of ordinary in this so-called new world. He then noticed some noises behind.

He turned and saw structures. There were wide ranges of settlements with a wall surrounding them. The wall was so long he couldn't see its both ends from left to right. Deeper inside the settlements, he could see numerous tall buildings. Not those kinds of modern skyscrapers, but stone building like medieval structures. However, they were unlike any medieval buildings he saw in the history book as none of them could reach the height these buildings shown.

Further ahead, there was a large castle, larger than any building he ever saw. Sitting majestically in the middle of all those other buildings. He knew then he was looking at a metropolitan that was somehow using a medieval setting. The noises he had heard were the sound of the city behind the wall.

Not far from where they were was the gate wall. There were several armored guards stationed under the gate. Several people who had come first had made their way towards the gate. He saw Bowler and Flame were there near him, and Silverwing and his friends were making headcount on all the members who had made the cross.

"Let's head over there," Jack told them.

"You go first, I'll go once I make sure everyone had made it across," Silverwing said.

Jack nodded then led Bowler and Flame towards the gate. As he approached, he noticed that everybody was crowding in front of the gate, but no one went through the gate. The guards were barring the way. Some people had some talk with the guards, but it didn't seem like they were being let through.

When Jack came close enough, he asked the person in front, "do the guards not allowing us into the city?"

The person looked at Jack, he seemed surprised as he remembered Jack as the first rank in the level competition. He then told Jack, "I'm not sure as well. I think I heard them say that we should wait first. Until everyone was present and then they will make an announcement."

While they were talking, they suddenly heard people shouting in front. Jack turned and saw the gang of Weary Wolf trying to push their way through the gate. Jack sighed, these people really like to act like a bunch of street gangsters. He saw one of them was shouting at the guard and shoving him with his hands. Jack used his God-eye monocle to inspect the guards.

Holy shit! Jack screamed in his mind. Level 50? Each of the guards was a level 50 Foot Soldier (Basic Human). Did those Weary Wolf people had brain damage that they didn't even bother to try inspecting the guards' level? They should be wary once they found out that they couldn't see the guards' level.

"Who dares to make trouble here?!" A loud voice was heard from behind the guards. They parted and allowed another armored soldier walked out. His armors looked similar but a bit different from the other guards, more stylish. Jack scanned him using his God-eye Monocle: Level 52 Guard Captain (Elite Human).

As the Captain appeared, Boulder of the Weary Wolf gang said in an equally loud voice. "We want to go in, you can't prevent us from going in!"

The Captain glared at him and said, "you can go in when we say you can! For now, stay here first until everyone is present. Then we will tell you the regulations before allowing you in."

"What regulations?" Boulder spat, "if you have something to say, then say it now. Don't waste our time. We are going in!"

Boulder and his gang started to try forcing their way in, some even took out their weapons.

Those fools never learn. They are dead for sure, Jack said in his mind.

Seeing the hostility of this group of newcomers, the Captain no longer held back. He pulled out his large broadsword, then send a circular swing forward. The swing was so fast it created a small windstorm that threw all the Weary Wolf members several distances back. They crashed hard and suffered damages that put all their HP bars in critical.

"You were lucky I hold back," the Captain said. "If you stir up any trouble again, I will end you right here!"

All Weary Wolf people went pale, they immediately moved back, didn't dare to go near the guards anymore. The rest of the crowd also became quiet. They obediently wait in front of the gate. Silverwing and their people came over not long after.

"What's the situation," he asked.

"Guards said wait. Another thing, under any circumstances absolutely don't mess with the guards," Jack informed.

Chapter 60: Entering The Capital

They waited for almost half an hour more before everyone finished the crossings. The sun at this place however, was still high in the sky. This world time was different from their real-world or more precisely, Tutorial World, which was already evening when they left. The old man, Honuren didn't appear before them anymore.

During the wait, they heard occasional roars in the distance that they had never heard before. The guards assured them not to worry. That the monsters most of the time won't wander near to cities.

As everyone had gathered, the Guard Captain stepped out. He spoke in a deep voice befitting his station.

"Outworlders, the Gods had informed us of your arrival and assured us that you are allies to our cause. Hence our King had granted each one of you the permit to enter our Capital Thereath. However, please be aware that our capital and the way of our world have regulations that need to be abided by. Any transgression will result in a penalty. I expect you all to keep the order and do not create any trouble to the native inhabitant nor to each other."

He proceeded to inform them of the basic rules. Sufficient to say, no fight was allowed within the city. Weapons however were still allowed to be carried. The Capital was divided into three zones. The first and innermost zone was the zone for nobility, it is where the King's castle was located together with the residential for nobles. They were prohibited to enter this zone unless they received permission from nobles or kingdom officials.

The second layer zone was the business district and residential for merchants and soldiers, while the third zone was slum and industrial district. These two zones were free for them to visit. For accommodation, they could use inns in the business district, providing they have the coins to spare. Or use the shelters in the slum district.

"... there are still other rules, but you can learn about them yourselves as you explore the capital. As long as you avoid making problems, then you will get no trouble from us. There will be occasional patrols on the street, so if anyone had anything to report or further questions to ask, you can ask one of these patrols. Now, on behalf of King Themos, I welcome you to Capital Thereath!"

His guards parted way to both sides of the gate, allowing these newcomers to enter the city.

"Enter orderly, please don't rush," the Captain added.

The crowd started to trickle in. The scene was like a huge wave of war refugees who had immigrated from other places trying to find shelter in this city. As Jack came to the other side of the gate, he could see rows of residential houses made of lumber, clay, and bricks. The main street they were on was very wide, it was almost twenty meters from side to side. Aside from people on foot, some people on horseback and carts pulled by horse were seen traveling the street. The city inhabitants who were nearby were looking at them in curiosity.

'Outworlders they called us,' Jack thought in his mind.

"That's what you are," Peniel's voice replied. "The denizens from out of this world."

'So, where should we go first?' He asked.

"Business district, go find a place called Adventurers Association."

'Oh? What's good there?'

"That's the most common place where you can pick up quests. Your priority right now should be increasing your level to 15."

'Why's that?'

"Because level 15 is the threshold before you can apply for Advanced class. Once you get an advanced class, you will receive more skills. Furthermore, every level in Advanced class provides you with more increase in attribute stats."

'I see. All right. Which way?'

"How would I know? Go ask a local!"

'I thought you said you know everything?'

"Not everything. But every standard knowledge. How would I know if they change the layout of the city or decided to build new buildings? Now stop talking nonsense and go find out the way!"

'All right, all right,' Jack told her in his mind as he looked around for someone to ask. He instead saw Silverwing organizing his men. He came near him and found out that he was arranging his men to be grouped in several parties to spread around the town and gather information. He must say, the fellow knew how to lead.

When he noticed Jack, he asked, "would you like to come with us? Once my people find out more about this world, we will know better what to do. I can share with you the information that we have."

"That is very kind of you," Jack was grateful for the offer. "But I think I would like to explore the city myself. If there is anything you need, just contact me via Friend chat."

"All right, I'll do that," he replied with a smile and got back to organizing his people.

"What about you two?" Jack asked Bowler and Flame. "You want to go explore by yourselves or follow me?"

Bowler was a bit hesitant. Flame was more direct, "I want to see the city for myself. I'll send you guys a message if there is anything," she said.

"All right," Jack told her, and then turned to Bowler, "what about you?"

"Uh, I guess I will take a stroll myself also," he said.

"Okay," Jack nodded. "But be careful, those Death Associates guys still held a grudge. Although this city is a safe zone and they might get into trouble with the guards, it is not guaranteed that they won't make a move. If they attack you, run to where the guards are, and contact me. Also, try to stay inside the city first until you learn more about the outside. You heard Honuren, it is different getting killed outside compared to within the city."

Bowler and Flame nodded. They had long considered Jack as the leader of their gang, so they valued his words.

"Okay, keep in contact," Jack said as he waved goodbye to them.

He then approached one of the closest local, a young girl who was walking with her dog. He asked, "Excuse me, miss. Do you know the way to a place called Adventurer Associations?"

The girl's eyes were studying Jack in earnest, she looked like she had much interest in knowing about these newcomers. However, she didn't reply Jack with words. Instead, she pointed with his finger in a direction.

Jack nodded and thanked her before going towards the direction indicated.

As he walked through the street, he could see the bustling activities of the city. It looked and felt completely real, unlike any past VR games he played. The details and activities of the natives here, which in past VR games were called NPC, were very real and complex. It was more like he was in a different world than in a game. Perhaps that was indeed the case.

After passing several blocks, he came upon a street that was more lively. There were many shops lining up the street and also several street vendors showcasing their wares on the side of the street. He looked at the merchandise as he walked past, there were various kinds of products. There were food, ingredients, clothes, materials, potions, and weapons. He decided to take a detour and visit one of the bigger shops that sold weapons. The owner was a plump woman, she smiled at him delightfully as he came into the shop.

"Is there anything specific you are looking for, sire?" She asked.

"I'm just browsing around," Jack answered.

"Oh, be my guest. Make yourself at home." She said politely.

Jack nodded and looked at the weapons hanging on the stand. There were short swords, longswords, broadswords, axes, maces, spears, and several other weapons he didn't know the name of. He tried to scan one of them using his God-eye monocle.

Steel mace, level 10/20 (common one-handed mace)

Physical damage: 40

Attack speed: 1

Durability: 30

Price: 2 silver 20 copper

He scanned another one

Iron spear, level 5/15 (common one-handed spear)

Physical damage: 32

Attack speed: 1

Durability: 30

Price: 1 silver 60 copper

It was also a normal weapon. But damn, they were expensive. He thought his savings of 4 silver and 89 copper were already a large sum, but he could only buy two or three of these weapons.