

World 581

Chapter 581: Bearer Of The Book Of Creation

"What do you plan with that item?" Caleb asked in an alert. He was a High Elder, which was a rank below Archaic. He could be killed instantly by this blade, so it made sense for him to be worried.

"Hehe, a precaution," Jack answered simply, while inside he thought, 'didn't Horatio mention the highest grade inside here is super rare?'

He also wondered why a vampire-owned treasury possessed such a taboo weapon for their race. The fact was, aside from being a treasury, this room also served as a warehouse for high-grade unusable items. Caleb didn't destroy the knife because there might be a time that this knife was put to good use against his vampire opponent. Yet, it was too dangerous to be stored elsewhere, so it was put here.

After storing his two rewards, Jack came out. Horatio was surprised to see Jack come out so soon. Caleb went and whispered to him about what Jack had taken.

"Why do you have that thing inside this warehouse?" Horatio asked Caleb with a frown. Caleb could only lower his head.

"You have peculiar choices," Horatio then remarked to Jack.

"I choose things that I think might come in handy," Jack replied.

"As long as you didn't use one of them on my subject," Horatio said, indicating the vampire-slaying knife.

"I won't dare."

"That concludes our business. Here, you can take this to Prince Alonzo," Horatio said and handed Jack a sealed letter. "It has my seal of approval. From now on, my side of the Maxius family will be an official supporter of Prince Alonzo. I will send a formal delegation to the prince to detail our cooperation."

"Thank you, Your Highness," Jack said and accepted the letter with a bow. He received two notifications that his chain faction quest had been updated and his quest, Search for Aubelard Maxius, had been completed. He received generous exp and coins. Luckily, he had set his Archer class to 0%. Otherwise, its level would have increased again.

"As I said, just call me Horatio. Aside from that, since you have saved us time by directly bringing the Book of the Damned here, I will bestow you the title of Sangrod Honored Guest."

Jack received notification about the title. He opened his status window to have a look.

Sangrod Honored Guest (Title)

Receive treatment of at least Baron nobility rank within Sangrod Empire.

Increased the effect of Diplomacy, Haggling, and Influence within Sangrod Empire.

This was a good title to use inside Sangrod's cities, Jack thought.

"I have other matters to attend to. Caleb will be seeing you out. But before that, I have another favor to ask," Horatio said.

Jack gave him an inquisitive look. Was this vampire going to give him another quest? He didn't have the time at this moment.

"Can we please keep the existence of this book just between the three of us?" Horatio said. His eyes were looking at Jack intently when he spoke, as if studying Jack's every gesture.

"Don't worry, my lips are sealed," Jack said.

Horatio nodded. The vampire prince then left with the Book of the Damned in his hand.

Jack thought Horatio must be very eager to study the book. The fact that he asked to keep the book a secret meant he didn't plan to hand it over to his father, the patriarch of the Maxius family. Jack cared not about the political turmoil within this country. His matter with them was finished after the task was done.

From the city hall, Jack went to the Mage Academy to use the Magic Furnace. Evanor was inside the academy and was alone again. Jack used the Magic Furnace and imprinted the Spatha of Light. Once it was imprinted, Jack received his Whirlwind Falchion back. Jack stored it and planned to use it as a backup when his Magic Weapon was on cooldown.

After finishing with the imprinting, Jack returned to the Zone Portal and teleported back to Heavenly Citadel. He had sent messages to Jeanny and John prior to meeting inside the Guild Hall, but he also told them to set it so only the three of them were allowed inside.

"Expert! I presume you bring gifts again this time?" John said.

"Why we don't allow others to come in?" Jeanny asked.

Instead of answering, Jack took out the Book of Creation and placed it before them. Both Jeanny and John had some slight basic in mana sensing after spending more time inside the Time Chamber, so they could sense the imposing aura from the book and knew that it was no normal item.

After they used Inspect, the two gasped.

"Isn't this one of the seven divine treasures that Master was pursuing?" Jeanny asked.

Jack nodded.

"Damn! You really do bear amazing gifts every time you return. Well, what are we waiting for? I'm going to link with it!" John declared.

When his hand almost touch the book, Jack swatted it away. "Not you, Jeanny should be the one fusing with this divine treasure."

"Why?" John asked, feigning a hurt expression.

"I already give you the God-eye monocle the last time. This time should be Jeanny that receives the gift," Jack said.

"I will give you the God-eye monocle. What say you?" John said to Jeanny.

"Buzz off!" Jack uttered to John. "I'm just saying that because I don't want to express my real thought. Okay, since you want to hear it. Let me say it then. I think Jeanny is the better candidate because she has a higher survivability rate than you."

"I disagree," John said. "She is always on the front line. I am at the back. If anyone has a better survivability rate, it will be me."

"She can take care of herself all right even in the front line. If our enemies specifically target you, they can get to you better than her. She is always with a party of close friends who are willing to cover for her. While your friends can be counted with just one hand. If you are in peril, I doubt anyone will sacrifice their lives to save you."

"Ugh, that hurts," John said.

"It does? Now that's surprising. It will be the first time you are hurt by words."

"What I meant was that it is hurtfully low! I might not have many friends but I have enough minions, a minion like you for example!"

"Minion my ass! Since when do I..."

"You two don't need to argue anymore," Peniel cut the two's bickering. "Jeanny has already started the fusing process."

The two turned and saw Jeanny sitting crosslegged with the Book of Creation on her lap. Some tendrils of light were seen entering her body.

"Hey, That's cheating!" John said.

Jack ignored him and went over to Jeanny. "You will experience pain through the process. Endure with it, it will pass after a few hours."

"A few hours?" Jeanny asked.

Jack turned to Peniel.

"Two hours," the fairy answered.

Jack shrugged, "I was in pain when I did it, so I didn't exactly record the time I spent fusing with the treasure."

He then put different types of healing potions and Heal scrolls. "You will need this. Let's form a party, Peniel will also heal you when needed."

Jeanny thought Jack was being excessive, but then several sparkling lights came out of the book. One of these lights shot a ray of light at her. The ray stung like a mother*cka! Jeanny felt being badly burned at the spot where the light hit. Then another ray shot out, and another.

From their perspective, Jack and John felt like seeing Jeanny getting skewered by endless laser beams as damage numbers appeared. Jeanny tried her best to endure the pain. At one point, she finally screamed in pain, but she continued to stay still and endure regardless.

"Hm... I change my mind. You made the right call letting Jeanny fuses with the treasure," John said.

Jack gave him a side-eye.

Jeanny started drinking the healing potions. Her level was much higher than when Jack was fusing with Lightning God Sphere and she was also an elite class, so her HP was enough to tank through this torment. Peniel cast Healing Field on her to help save the potion usage.

After a while and after making sure that Jeanny should have no problem dealing with the fusing. Jack stepped a few distances away before sitting crosslegged himself and started meditating.

John who saw, decided to follow suit and meditate as well beside Jack. He was not a fan of Domon's physical training session, but he kinds of enjoy the mana-sensing meditation.

After two hours passed, the book on Jeanny's lap burst into tiny light particles before entering her body. Jeanny gasped with cold sweat after the pain dissipated. She looked at the two men who were meditating silently. Only Peniel accompanied her the whole time.

"You okay?" Peniel asked.

Jeanny nodded. she was still catching her breath. She swayed as she stood up. After straightening herself, she looked into her status window to check the statistic.

"Duplication?" She asked after reading the description.

Jack felt from his mana sense that Jeanny had ended her fusing. He ended his meditation. John's mana sense ability was still not as good so he was not aware. Jack nudged him to bring him out of meditation.

"Are you done?" Jack asked as he came over to Jeanny.

Chapter 582: Testing The Duplication Skill

Jeanny nodded and said, "It said here that this Book of Creation allowed me to duplicate anything."

"Yes, Peniel informed me about it. You still have to pay mana cores to duplicate an item though," Jack said. "Hey, do you need to accumulate exp for that divine treasure's ability?"

"Both Book of Creation and Chalice of Space did not provide combat capabilities, so they didn't have levels and hence no need to collect exp," Peniel explained.

"Ah, I see. So you didn't need to halt your leveling progress," Jack said.

"Let's give this skill a try," Jeanny said.

"Don't waste it on trivial items. Mana cores don't come easy," Peniel advised.

"I have the perfect item for a test," Jeanny said. A tome appeared on her hand.

"What is that?" Jack asked.

"It's a technique book for a Mega Spell, Absolute Zero Lotus. It's a large-scale offensive ice element spell," Jeanny informed. "We got it from a dungeon boss' drops. I originally wanted to give it to Trinity Dawn when she returns. This Book of Creation's ability came at a right time."

"Wow, a mega spell. We finally get one," Jack remarked.

"That is a perfect choice to use the ability on," Peniel agreed. "A mega spell takes too long a time to cast, but the casting time can be shortened if multiple magic classes cast it at the same time. That is a five-runes mega spell, you should make four copies so five casters can synch-cast the spell."

"Five copies, we should leave at least one copy in our leader-section warehouse," John advised. "And we should do the same for all other technique books. In that way, we can have a library of spells and skills available to copy. Members can pay corresponding mana cores needed for a copy if they wish to learn the spell. Of course, we didn't say that we will copy the book. We simply said that we have extra stock."

"I see. This way, we can strengthen our member's overall battle prowess with a large selection of skills and spells," Jack said.

"I will issue a guild notification to have anyone who acquired new technique books not to immediately use them," Jeanny said. "They will be awarded contribution points and the technique books will still be returned to them after a set amount of time."

"We will need a lot of mana cores in that case once the books started trickling in," Jack mentioned.

"I will increase contribution points set for mana cores as well," Jeanny said after hearing it.

After setting the notification, Jeanny proceeded with the attempt to copy the mega spell technique book.

"Uh... It said I need 800 mana cores. I don't have that much..." Jeanny informed.

"That many...? We can forget about making five copies in the near future," Jack said.

"We can copy one first and let Trinity Dawn learn the spell. We will make another copy once we have enough mana core. I have 420 mana cores. But I need to leave some for use, I can spare 400. How many do the two of you have?"

"I have a bit more than 300 mana cores," Jeanny said.

"I have less than 200," John informed.

"Why do you have so few?" Jack complained to John.

"I don't go out grinding much," John said.

"How do you keep your level then?"

"I wait until others level up and then order them to power-level me. That way I can spend more time organizing other things."

"Organizing my ass! You are just lazy," Jack criticized.

"You two can argue later, now give me the mana cores," Jeanny requested.

Jack fished out his 400 mana cores and gave them to Jeanny. She and John then adjusted theirs. They barely managed to hit the required 800 mana cores.

"We have to task more members in gathering these mana cores," Jeanny said.

"Don't worry, higher-level monsters will give more mana cores," Peniel informed. "The drops of mana cores scale better compare to drop of coins. You won't see too far the difference of coins dropped by low-level monsters and high-level ones, but you will see a decent increase in terms of mana cores."

"Good to know," Jeanny commented. At the same time, she activated the interface to do the duplication process. The mana cores and technique book floated from her hands. The mana cores then swirled around the technique books before they coalesced and formed a shape made out of light. This shape was the same as the technique book floating beside it. The light dissipated and showed a second identical technique book. The two books then fell into Jeanny's hands.

"Sweet!" Jack said.

"Try this one," John had taken off his God-eye monocle and gave it to Jeanny.

Although they didn't have any more mana cores, Jeanny was curious about the cost to duplicate this monocle. But when he tried to activate the interface to copy it, she heard a notification that it was an invalid item.

"You can't copy alien entity," Peniel informed.

John took back his God-eye monocle in disappointment.

It was Jack's turn now, he handed a Magic Crystal to Jeanny and said, "Do me a favor. When you have enough mana cores, please copy ten of this crystal. I need them to upgrade my Lightning God Blessing."

"That thing can be upgraded? Isn't it already too overpowered even now?" John said.

"Master had two of these things inside of him, for now. We don't know if he will ever get the Ice God Sphere," Jack replied. "If he upgrades them first, I will be left even far behind. I need to increase my power further to at least put up a fight."

Jeanny accepted the crystal and checked its duplication cost. It required 200 mana cores. She stored it for later duplication.

"Speaking of increasing your power, how are you doing with your third class?" John asked.

"I will be taking the Beastmaster test today," Jack answered.

"Good heaven! You have just gotten that third class a bit over half a month ago. Ain't that cheating to level up so fast?"

"I fought and killed a level 60 rare elite and completed an SS-difficulty quest. What do you think?"

John froze hearing that. He decided not to ask further.

"Well, good luck with your Beastmaster test. We are very close to becoming a level 3 guild, I think we will achieve that within this week," Jeanny said.

"I need to say. After I'm done with my test, I will be heading out to prioritize leveling up and increasing my bloodline power. It might take a really long time," Jack informed.

"Of course, why am I not surprised?" John uttered.

Jack ignored him. He gave Jeanny a letter, "Please help me to deliver this to Commander Quintus. You should be able to meet him freely considering your faction military status. It is for Prince Alonzo. This is my quest but I will report it later after I'm done leveling up. I'm afraid they will force me to continue my chain faction quest if I do it myself. After the last quest, I'm sure I'm not strong enough yet. Tell the commander I will return to continue the quest as soon as possible."

"All right," Jeanny said, accepting the letter.

"For you, take this," Jack gave John the Blood Count Insignia.

"Something for me as well?" John said with glee.

"Not for you, for the guild," Jack said.

John checked the thing and exclaimed, "Another unique insignia? Wow, our army will be undefeatable!"

"I hope so. I get this from a vampire boss. Judging from the name, I suspect it is a vampire unit. So it might see its fullest potential at night or something like that. Anyway, use it as you deem fit."

"We have a lot of things to build and armies to train once we reach level 3. We will be short on funds. Are you going to donate coins again this time?"

"You are truly unscrupulous. Go get your own coins to donate!" Jack chided. "I won't donate this time. I have just enough to do something with the coins which might give me more coins in return in the future."

What Jack meant was the third and final upgrade to Ellie's restaurant. His purse currently contained 554 gold coins, so he decided to do that upgrade first.

He left the two and used the teleportation chamber to teleport to Thereath. He had sent a notice to Ellie that he wanted to do the final upgrade. Ellie was ecstatic about it, their business was going strong and many customers had to queue in wait because the number of tables was not enough to cater to all of them. Jack was amazed, this couple was truly good in this restaurant business.

Despite her eagerness, Ellie said to wait until tonight after the restaurant was closed before proceeding with the upgrade. This would give her enough time to make a notice to her customers. This upgrade should take even more days than the last time.

Jack agreed with her, so he headed instead to the Beastmaster class test venue.

Chapter 583: Running In A Pack

Similar to the elite classes branched from Warrior and Mage, the place for Beastmaster test was a building complex shared with the other four elite classes branched out of Archer class. The central building linking the four test venues was run by a league faction called Hunter's Lodge.

"Let me guess, this Hunter's Lodge is the most prominent league faction for Archer class and its subsequent branches?" Jack asked.

"Yes. Their prestige was similar to the League of Champions and the Order of Magi. Do you want to join this faction?" Peniel asked back.

"How do I collect its points? Can I do it passively like in the other two factions?" Jack asked.

"I don't think so. Their points should largely be gained by completing quests they post, which should revolve around hunting exotic and rare beasts for their parts."

"Then no. Exciting as it sounds, I don't have the time for it. Maybe when World Maker is defeated and I can afford to enjoy this world at my pace, then I will give it a try."

He asked the guard outside of the main building which one of the sub-building that housed the test for Beastmaster class. After getting the direction, Jack went into the said building without delay.

Despite entering a building, Jack felt as if he had gone outdoor instead. The interior was filled with greeneries. The path through this greenhouse was not straight. There was a stone path winding around the greeneries.

As Jack followed the path, he asked Peniel, "You can't accompany into the trial dimension, can you?"

"No."

"You have any idea what's inside?" Jack asked. He had asked other guild members who had become beastmasters. Strangely, none of them remembered what the trial was about.

"The trial is not about combat. It is more like embracing your animal instinct," Peniel answered.

"Huh? What the hell does that suppose to mean?"

"I'm not sure. I know the basic guideline but I am not privy to the details within the trial itself. You will have to find out by yourself inside. One thing is for sure, you can't rely on your equipment, same as the other elite trials. Well, whatever it is. I know you will ace it."

"Heh, you got that right."

They came to the end of the path. A woman in fancy colorful garb sat there beside a small pond.

"Are you here for the beastmaster test?" The woman asked.

"I am," Jack answered.

The woman extended her hand, "give me your hand please."

Jack offered his. The woman grabbed his hand and Jack felt their mana interlinked.

"Level 30 Archer, you are qualified," the woman said. She then scooped the water from the pond with a large spoon. "Drink this, please."

Despite being puzzled, Jack accepted the large spoon and drank the water. He returned the spoon after. "So, where should I go to take the test?" He asked.

"Just wait. You will be soon," the woman replied with a smile.

"I will be..." Jack's words trailed off as extreme drowsiness suddenly took over him. He fell to the ground with a thud.

Jack felt as if he had a very long and satisfying slumber. A voice calling for him forced him to wake up. He opened his eyes reluctantly. His vision took a while to adjust. When he could finally see clearly again, he found that he was no longer in the greenhouse. He was now truly outdoor. More precisely, on a rocky hill with a night sky over it, there was a full moon above.

'It's night already? How long did I sleep? And how did I get all the way out here?' Jack thought in bewilderment.

He looked around and was shocked to find there was a pack of wolves by his side.

"Hey, Peniel! What the hell is going on?" That was what he intended to say, but instead, the voice that came out of him was a series of barks.

"What the...!" He finally looked down and realized that he was standing on four limbs. And he had paws instead of hands and feet.

"The f*ck...! I am a wolf?!" He yelped, but of course, the voice that came out was still incoherent barkings.

Suddenly, a very large dark wolf stood in front of Jack, it made a loud bark. Jack was sure he didn't understand wolf language, but somehow he knew he was being scolded. Jack decided to shut up and observe first.

Seeing that Jack had calmed down, the large black wolf walked around. The other wolves stared at it with deference. Jack knew then the black wolf was the alpha of the pack.

It circled the pack one time before it started howling. The other wolves howl as well. Jack had no idea how to howl so he just looked around awkwardly. After howling, the alpha black wolf started to run. The other wolves followed suit. When running, some bumped into Jack as they passed by. Jack figured he should follow as well so he moved his four legs to run.

'F*ck! this is so weird, running with all four!' Jack complained as he forced his four limbs to run.

Jack was now at the back of the pack because he had trouble running. He paid attention to how the other wolves ran, the way their legs moved. He then tried to copy them. He was sloppy but was slowly getting the hang of it as he continued to run.

He was now some distance away from the pack. Luckily, even though he was in wolf form at the moment, his basic attribute stats still affect his speed and strength. Thus, even his sloppy way of running was still fast enough to not get left too far behind.

Jack tried his best to stay at the tail of the pack, making sure not to lose them. His thought had cleared up and he remembered now that he was asking to take the Beastmaster test before he lost consciousness. This should be that test. He didn't know what was the requirement to pass this test, but he figured not losing the pack should be one of them.

The pack ran down the stony mountain and went into the forest. The dense leaves covered the moonlight so it was dark all over beneath the trees. Yet, Jack's wolf eyes could still see in the dark, or was it his Dragon Eye skill? But all his skills were inaccessible in this test, so he surmised his Dragon Eye should be off as well. Meaning this should be the inherent wolf's sight. His vision was also slightly more cloudy compared to his Dragon Eye's night vision.

His other senses were enhanced though. He could hear very clearly all the sounds of the night. He could separate sounds that came from the movements of each separate wolf running ahead of him. One thing of his enhanced senses that he didn't appreciate was his increased sense of smell. The wolves at the front didn't smell so bad, but there were other foul stench in the forest. Probably droppings from other animals. Jack made sure to stay away from those stench-generating spots.

As they ran around the trees and bushes following the lead alpha. The pack suddenly stopped. Jack was too absorbed by his running that he put in the break too late and bumped into one of the wolves in front. The two tumbled. The wolf Jack crashed onto made a growling sound as it looked at Jack menacingly. But it was soon hushed by the black alpha who gave both that wolf and Jack a warning stare.

All of the wolves were lying low as they gazed in one direction. Jack crept over the foliage and peeked at what they were looking at.

A few distances ahead was a large bear-like beast. It had thick dark furs with a feline head crowned by bull's horns. Its limbs were thick which ended with paws that had menacing claws. It had a large lizard-like tail. It seemed to be scratching on tree bark, like a cat sharpening its claws. Jack tried to use Inspect but found that the skill was not available.

As Jack watched the beast in silence, he saw the rest of the pack was slowly creeping forward, toward the beast.

'Hey, don't tell me they want to take on that beast?' Jack thought. Didn't Peniel say this was not a combat test? Well, she also did say that she was not privy to the details of the test.

From the pack's behavior, Jack was pretty certain that they intended to take on the beast. He figured that this should be part of the test. He would need to help the pack to win if he was to pass the test. With that speculation, he crept forward slowly as well, readying himself to spring into action at a moment's notice.

They stopped after creeping rather close. Every wolf was still as they waited for the lead alpha's sign, including Jack.

The bear-like beast finished playing scratch. It turned and left the tree. When its back was towards the pack, the lead alpha sprang forward. The other wolves followed the lead. Jack was a bit late compared to the others but he hurriedly ran forward as well.

All the wolves bared their fangs as they ran, Jack experienced a sense of aggression and excitement welling inside him.. His fangs were also bared imitating the others.

Chapter 584: Becoming A Beastmaster

Their hiding position was not so far from the beast, so their speedy runs brought them to the beast's tail in an instant.

The wolves had forgone silent sneaking after initiating the ambush, hence the beast heard them approaching. Its thick tail swung just as the frontmost wolves were about to arrive. The lead alpha was amongst the frontmost, it had high enough reflex to dodge the tail swing. Its two other mates were not that lucky, they were hit by the powerful tail and were sent flying as if weightless.

The beast swiveled around and face the incoming pack, which then spread out. Jack followed the closest wolf and went to the beast's left. He had no idea how this pack fought so he decided to not be reckless.

The alpha wolf attempted a bite at the beast's face, which prompted the beast to slap one of its powerful fore-limbs at it. The alpha wolf again exhibited nimble moves. It jumped away just as the beast's claws slammed into the ground.

The other wolves took advantage when the beast was focusing on the lead alpha to bite and scratch at the beast's flanks and rear.

'So they are using a coordinated feint tactic,' Jack thought. He was just about to join in the rear attack when the beast tail's swung again. Several wolves were again knocked flying.

Due to the tail, the wolves could only attack its two sides while the lead alpha distracted the beast from the front. The wolves' damage was minuscule compared to the beast's HP pool. Jack could not see its total HP number since he couldn't use inspect, but the HP bar above the beast went down very slowly.

'This is going to be a protracted battle,' Jack thought as he sneaked to one of the beast's hind legs and bit at it. He noticed his damage was higher than the other wolves. He might not have the advantage of his equipment, but his stats still provided an advantage.

Another ability also gave him an advantage, he sensed at this moment a mana buildup within the beast's body.

"Get away! Get away!" Jack shouted. But of course, it came out as a series of barkings instead. Yet somehow, the other wolves understood his warning. They moved away just as the beast's body pumped down and released a stream of hot air.

Jack did not doubt that the wolves would receive damage if this hot air hit. Luckily, this hot air just lasted for an instant. It disappeared soon and the wolves returned to offense. Jack caught the glance of the lead black wolf at him. He strangely felt gratitude in that glance.

They returned to the coordinated feign tactic to wear the beast down. This wolf pack was very good at coordinated attacks. Jack tried his best to not disrupt their rhythm.

The beast executed the hot air blast every once in a while, but Jack's mana sense allowed him to detect it and issue a warning before the hot air hit. Hence, the beast's HP continued to fall at a steady rate without the wolf suffering many casualties.

Some wolves did get smack every while due to negligence or pure bad luck, they received high damage that took out almost half their lives with that one hit, but Jack noticed they possessed some kind of regenerative ability, similar to his body recovery skills, albeit very slow. As long as they didn't get careless and received successive hits, they would survive.

When the beast HP went below half, Jack saw signs of exhaustion on the wolves, especially the lead alpha. Its movements were slower now.

The beast noticed this as well. It increased its struggle and used its bull horn to ram at the alpha. The black wolf managed to avoid the horns but it was still slammed by the beast's body. It reeled backward but surprisingly refused to back down. It made a forceful bite on the beast snout and planted all its feet on the ground, holding the beast down.

Seeing their leader's valiant effort, the pack doubled their offense. Jack was also inspired and decided to go all out. He nimbly jumped on top of the beast's body, clawed his way to the front, and bit down at the beast's neck.

The pain caused the beast to jolt with all its strength. It trashed around and broke free from the lead alpha's bite. Its left foreleg then slapped at the lead black wolf. The black wolf tumbled from the hit and landed a distance away.

Jack was still clinging onto the beast's neck. He noticed as long as his bite was still on the neck, the beast suffered damages each second. But with the lead alpha's distraction gone, the beast swirled and wreaked havoc on the pack. Many were smacked flying. Two wolves died after being hit repeatedly. One wolf received critical damage for being bitten by the beast's massive jaws, causing instant death.

Jack saw from on top of the beast that the lead alpha was having trouble standing. It seemed it had exhausted most of its stamina trying to distract the beast.

Jack made a decision. He let go of his bite. Although he inflicted continuous damage over time. By the time the beast's HP was depleted, the pack would also have been decimated. Even if he could pass the trial by killing the beast in this way, he couldn't let it be at the cost of the whole pack. He jumped down in front of the beast and bared his fangs.

The beast noticed Jack as the one that had been clinging to his neck this whole time. It accepted Jack's challenge and slammed its powerful leg from above him.

Jack nimbly dodged the slam, but he immediately sensed another blow coming. He jumped backward just as the beast's other leg swiped by. He might not move as naturally as a wolf did, but he could still utilize his mana sense to predict an attack before it arrives, allowing him a high dodge rate.

In time, he might get used to this wolf body and incorporate his Eight Diagram Illusory Steps, but now was not the time to experiment. He made simple jumps, relying on his high Dexterity stat and ability to sense incoming attacks, to dodge the beast's assaults. The remaining pack reorganized themselves and soon resumed their offensive rhythm.

When the black alpha beast had rested enough, he came back to join the fight. But instead of taking the lead of distracting the beast, it instead let Jack continue taking the role. It joined the rest of the pack in delivering damage.

During the beast's last moment, it made a furious roar. Jack sensed that it was going to make a final struggle, but its HP was very low already. Jack made a gamble and copied the alpha wolf's move. He jumped forward and bit hard on the beast's snout. Then used all his strength to hold the beast down.

Seeing Jack's move, the rest of the pack also joined in his gamble. They forgo cautiousness and went all assault. Some copied Jack's previous move and jumped onto the back of the beast, biting at different parts of its body. The lead alpha came to Jack's side with its maw wide open. It then clamped hard onto the beast's head. Jack heard a cracking sound from the beast's skull.

The beast's HP fell to zero and Jack felt all the resistances in his jaw's grip disappear.

The beast disintegrated, leaving behind only Jack and the wolf pack. Jack was panting. The pack all turned to him as with the lead alpha wolf. Jack watched them in bewilderment. The lead alpha made a bow to Jack, followed by the rest of the pack. Jack then heard a notification, informing him that he had passed the trial and became a Beastmaster.

His vision soon faded.

When his vision returned, he found himself back in the greenhouse. The woman who had given him the pond water was smiling at him. Peniel was sitting beside her.

"Congratulations on passing the trial," the woman said. "I must say I am impressed. Not many of the members of your pack die in the trial. Not many achieved that."

"Maybe the others focused on killing the beast," Jack said.

"Then they will have failed the trial," the woman replied. "The trial is not about killing the beast, it is about keeping your pack alive. The condition for passing the trial is to keep at least half of your pack alive."

Jack was astounded. He secretly exhaled a relief to not have continued clinging on the beast's neck and left the pack to die. He would have failed the test otherwise. Then he suddenly came to a realization. "Hey! I remember what happened inside the trial," he exclaimed.

"Those that managed to pass it with flying colors do. Consider it as a secret reward," the woman said. She then asked, "Do you already have a tamed beast? You can hunt one in the wilderness, but if you joined our Hunter's Lodge, you can buy a young beast as long as you accumulate enough points."

"I already do, thank you for your information," Jack said.

The woman nodded.

Jack said his farewell and left with Peniel.. On his way out, he opened his status window to check his new elite class.

Chapter 585: Jagara Region

Same with the other elite classes, he also received several inherent skills after becoming a Beastmaster.

Jump 300%.

Defense +10%.

Enhanced Senses.

Pet received attribute boosts when close to tamer.

"Oh? I can also make a superhuman jump now?" Jack said after reading the descriptions. He was outside the building now. He gave it a try by making a vertical jump. With his current attributes, He could jump more than one meter normally. This time, his body shot up to a height of almost five meters.

He whistled all the way as he landed back down. The passerby looked at him with weird faces.

"Hehe, this jumping ability allows me more tactical options. I should also have an easier time traversing difficult terrains with this ability."

As for the 10% increase of defense, he figured this was something to compensate an originally ranged player who switched roles to a melee one. Of course, on him, this only meant that he became even tougher to kill.

The increased senses made him feel as if he was still the wolf from the trial. He could hear and smell very well. He didn't feel any improvement on his vision though, probably because his Dragon Eye's passive effect was already better than the beastmaster's vision enhancement.

The fourth skill supported the Beastmaster class' melee intention. If both the tamer and pet fought within melee range against the same opponent, the pet would become even more lethal with the tamer beside it.

He then checked the two skills he received after becoming a Beastmaster. The exclusive skill received for passing the trial on the first try was Call Wolf Pack. This skill made him reminiscent of his experience just now on being a wolf.

At the first level, this skill summons five wolves of elite grade. Its duration was ten minutes with a three hours cooldown.

The standard Beastmaster skill he got is Master Tamer. This skill allowed the taming of a medium-sized beast.

Jack had 45 free Beastmaster skill points which he had saved. He could level up these two skills to the max, which was what he did. He used 38 skill points on those two skills, leaving 7 free skill points for later use.

At level 20, the Call Wolf Pack skill lasted twenty minutes and summoned ten wolves.

As for Master Tamer, its max level increased damage and defense of his pet by another 50%. Combined with Archer's Tame Pet skill which at max level increased the pet's HP and Stamina by an additional 50%, his summoned pet would practically be one and a half times its original power. Jack asked Peniel what about the pet's attributes? Peniel mentioned the attributes would increase when the star proficiency of the skills was upgraded.

With this, he was ready to hatch that Theras Beast Egg, but Peniel told him to go buy Pet food first. This food was necessary to help the pet's growth. Some shops in the business district sold them, but Peniel

advised him to go to the Magic Associations shop in the noble district. The best pet food should be sold there.

Jack followed her advice and headed over. Inside the shop, Jack asked the attendance for the best pet food in the shop. The attendance took him to one section which displayed several different types of pet food. The attendance pointed to one of them, indicating it was the best one they had available.

Jack checked the price. Of course, this best one was also the most expensive one as well. But it posed no problem for Jack since it only cost 90 silver.

"Buy a hundred and twenty of them," Peniel said.

"What? a hundred and twenty?" Jack uttered. He then made a quick count, "Hey, that's 108 gold coins! Why do we need so many?"

"The ideal frequency you feed your pet should be two times a day to ensure maximum growth," Peniel explained.

"Then it's too many, with a hundred and twenty food I can feed him for two months. Flame's pet wolf took less than two weeks to mature."

"You can't put the two in the same league. That wolf is a small-sized beast. Your Theras Beast is medium-sized. The Therras Beast needed at least twice the time that wolf used to mature, and it likely requires longer time. I estimate two months for safety, you don't want to be in a situation where you run out of pet food and you have to return to town to purchase more, do you?"

He certainly didn't want that. He currently had 554 gold coins. If he spent 108 gold coins, he won't have enough for the restaurant's third upgrade which needed 500 gold coins. But then again, he still got two weeks' worth of restaurant profit and one week's worth of bakery's profit. He estimated it should be enough to cover the lack of coins. With great reluctance, he parted with 108 gold coins.

"Okay, now ask for a throwing knife," Peniel said.

"Huh? What for? I am already short on coins," Jack uttered. "And aren't throwing knives used by Hidden Weapon Specialist?"

"They are, but a Beastmaster can also use them for an optional ranged attack. For an archer who became a Beastmaster, don't you think they will be very frustrated if they have spent lots of their skill points on ranged skills such as Precise Shot? They can still activate such a skill using Throwing Knife."

"Hm... I don't think I will use such a weapon much, but okay, let's see the price first. I only need one throwing knife, correct?"

"Yes. Same as Ranger's Throw Weapon skill, the knife will return after being thrown. So you only need to buy one."

With that confirmation, Jack asked the attendant to take him to the section where the throwing knife was sold. There were also multiple throwing knives being displayed. They had different grades and levels. The highest one was level 35, Jack checked the prices of the ones with that level. The common-grade one was cheap, costing only one gold coin. The rare grade cost twenty-five gold coins.

Jack decided to just buy the uncommon grade which cost ten gold coins. It possessed physical damage of 120. It was incredibly low if compared to his other weapons, but this throwing weapon was just auxiliary, so he didn't give it much thought.

Now his purse only contained 436 gold coins, he hoped his saved profits were enough to cover at least 64 gold coins.

Leaving the Magic Associations shop, Jack went to the Hunters Association to pick up hunting quests. Peniel asked him to pick some quests targeting the draconic monsters at his destination. He took three such quests, they were classified as S-rank quests. The remaining seven were A-rank quests for monsters he might encounter on his way.

From the Hunters Association, he moved next door to the Adventurers Association. He reported his two neutral quests, Search for Aubelard Maxius and Thesylvania's Missing Children. The two quests netted him 12,000 adventurer points.

The sun was setting by then, so he decided to just spend his time with Amy while waiting for the restaurant to close. He went to collect the profits from the restaurant first before doing the same at Amy's Bakery. To his relief, the total profit was 81 gold coins.

Amy's Bakery closed earlier than the restaurant, so he spent the time chatting with the little girl and her mother. After Ellie closed the restaurant, he came over to the bakery with Bill. Jack then went to the restaurant and activated the upgrade feature. 500 gold coins disappeared from his bag, leaving only a paltry 17 gold coins. He felt as if he had returned to becoming a poor player again.

Jack, Ellie, Bill, Amy, and Samantha watched as the restaurant was getting covered by the translucent fabric. Amy asked Jack when he was going to do the third upgrade to the bakery. Jack told her he will do that as soon as he had another 500 gold coins. Jack told her not to worry, he would save the coins and put her bakery as a priority.

The next morning, Jack said goodbye to Amy and Samantha and left. The night before, Jack had asked Peniel which country was the place he could farm the draconic essence. Peniel told him that it was not any country. It was a no man's land like the Fulgur region where the Temple of Divine Squall was located.

Peniel informed this place was called Jagara Region. It was a mountainous region located in between Themisphere Kingdom, Sangrod Empire, and Hydrurond Dominion.

Jack teleported to the closest town from that region and then rode Pandora towards it. He spent an entire week of riding before Peniel informed him that he had arrived at the edge of the region.

He saw a series of mountain ranges. Many tall ones further away, but Peniel told him not to wander too deep in this region. This Jagara Region was home to draconic monsters. The deeper one went, the stronger the monsters were. There was even a high possibility of a true dragon residing within the depth of this region.

The draconic monsters he was targeting were located in the three mountains by the edge. Each housing a certain type of draconic beast.. Jack headed towards the closest mountain.

Chapter 586: Traversing The First Mountain

On the night before Jack left Thereath, the night after he became a Beastmaster, he had hatched the Therras Beast Egg. Peniel had explained that the tame skill was most effective when the targeted beast was in its infant form.

Taming an adult beast was the hardest. An Archer needed to use bait and cage to trap and capture a live beast that was certain to be hostile. The beast was then given pet food and the Tame Pet skill was used at regular intervals. During this time, the beast might become agitated enough to break out from the cage. Thus multiple cages and baits needed to be prepared. The process was repeated until the beast succumb.

Capturing a beast at its young age was easier, as they had the least ability to resist. The taming process was the same but took less time. This was what Fierce Flame did with her Savage Wind Wolf.

The Archer's Tame Pet skill, aside from increasing the pet's HP and Stamina, also increase the success probability in taming the pet. Thus, reducing the time wasted.

Jack's Tame Pet was already at level 20. He could also use the Runestone of Probability, further increasing the success rate. However, Jack's Therras Beast was still in its egg form. It had no resistance whatsoever. So, when he used his Tame Pet skill on the egg, he succeeded on the first try.

Cracks appeared on the egg after he received the success notification. An interface appeared asking him to name his pet. Lazy to think up a name, he simply named the pet, Therras. Peniel rolled her eyes when Jack inputted the name.

The egg soon broke and a tiny and cute version of the Therass Beast appeared. Jack used Inspect on it, it was a level 1 special elite Therras Beast.

"Only Special elite? The one I fought before was a Rare Elite. Did I get the short end of the stick?" Jack asked with disappointment.

"It was a baby, what do you expect?" Peniel replied. "If you diligently feed it the best pet food, not only it is sure to be a rare elite, there might even be a chance for it to become a mythical grade when it matures."

This baby Therass Beast looked around in confusion after coming out of its eggshell. Its sight settled on Jack before it crawled to beside Jack and rubbed itself on Jack's leg.

"Are you a kitten?" Jack asked. He couldn't picture this cute little thing turning into that fearsome beast that almost pummeled him to the death inside the Valley of Tempus.

Jack took out a piece of pet food. The baby Therras Beast saw the food and became agitated. It attempted to snatch it from Jack's hand. Jack pulled the food up out of its reach. The baby Therras Beast stood up with its hind legs, his two forelegs swaying in the air attempting to get the food. It even tried to jump to grab the food.

"You really are like a kitten," Jack said with a laugh.

"You are the worst beast tamer," Peniel said.

Jack didn't tease the baby beast too long, he let go of the pet food and the baby beast immediately gobbled the thing up. After finishing its meal, Jack saw the beast level which was level 1, increase to level 2.

"Small-sized pet is considered mature after reaching level 15. A medium-sized one is considered mature after level 30. That's why it takes a longer time and why you need more pet food. You can only summon it for combat after it matures."

"Can I still feed it pet food after it matures?" Jack asked.

"You can. The food will boost its exp points to level up. Other than pet food, it will only receive exp if you summon it during combat. It won't receive any exp if it is not around when the enemies are killed."

Jack nodded. The place where they were going, summoning a level 30 beast to fight might be a bit risky. His pet could end up getting killed. He might need to continue relying on pet food even after his beast matured. Luckily, he had followed Peniel's advice to buy lots of pet food.

During his way to the Jagara Region, Jack had been feeding his pet regularly, allowing it a steady growth.

After entering the first mountain at the edge of the Jagara Region, Jack noticed the place was unusually quiet. The mountain was very large, it was also rocky and had little vegetation. Some hazardous-looking fumes regularly pumped out of the holes in the ground. Jack avoided the fumes, which Peniel said was the right call. One would be afflicted with poison status if one inhaled the fumes.

After a while, he finally saw a red dot on his radar. He went directly to the dot.

He crept to a place where he had a clear view of the red dot. From his hiding place, Jack saw what looked like a very large snake. The rear half of its body was submerged inside the ground. Its body was covered by glistening yellow-brownish scales. Large frills extended from its skull. Its mouth was currently open as it sucked in the fume that shot out from the ground.

Jack used his Inspect.

Poisonous wyrm (Special Elite monster, Draconic), level 42

HP: 210,000

'Only one?' Jack asked in his mind as he observed his radar. There seemed to be no other hostiles in the area.

'Draconic monsters although strong, tend to be alone. Even their younglings avoided being in a group,' Peniel explained.

'Good,' Jack commented.. 'What are their characteristic combat style?'

'Aside from its strength, its main weapon was its poisonous spit and bite. Its venom is very strong. Although its movement speed is not that impressive, the speed by which it shot its half upper body can be shocking. You better be careful once you get into its range. It can burrow like the Grim Sand Drake, but not too deep. A strong hit should be able to force it to come out.'

Jack continued to watch the solitary creature. The fumes at the other holes came out at a random interval, but the one this wyrmling was feeding on was spouting non-stop. Which meant the wyrmling would continue being distracted and stay still.

Jack decided to act. He first drank a new potion that had been available in the shops, Preventive Antidote. It gave the user immunity from poison status in the next three minutes. Utilizing his Silent Step skill, he crept undetected to the wyrmling's rear.

Seeing the wyrmling still didn't notice, he approached. His Storm Breaker and magic staff which had turned into Spatha of Light were ready on his two hands.

When he was close enough, Jack activated Adrenaline Rush and then executed Flame Strike. The wyrmling was slammed to the ground. Jack scored a sneak attack bonus and a critical bonus, scoring almost 9,000 damages in that single hit.

Jack didn't let go of the opportunity when the wyrmling was helpless. He sent twenty-four burst slashes at the downed monster, but halfway, the wyrmling dove inside the ground, disappearing from view. The remaining slashes hit the ground and created gashes.

Jack heard rumbles as the ground below him trembled. He jumped in time before the wyrmling burst out from underneath him. His superhuman jump allowed him to cross a good distance, but the wyrmling noticed his body in the air and made a snap at him. The snapping speed was indeed as Peniel described, shocking. Luckily, Jack had readied a Magic Shield. The wyrmling's open mouth slammed onto the shield. The impact sent Jack crashing onto the ground.

Before Jack could rise, the wyrmling spat a thick green liquid, hitting Jack's lower body. Jack received around 700 damages. Since he had taken the Preventive Antidote, he didn't receive Poison status, but he heard notification that his pant armor had received deteriorating status. Its durability would decrease over time and its current defense value was halved.

The wyrmling made another spit, Jack hurriedly rolled away. He would lose his armors if he let this overgrown snake keep showering him with its saliva.

Jack shot Mana Beam at the wyrmling, its body was nimble enough to duck out of the way, but Jack swung the beam to where the wyrmling was dodging, still hitting it in the end.

Jack shot Mana Bullet and Energy Bolts as he used Charge to get close to the wyrmling. Its body again disappeared into the ground, evading the assault. With his radar and mana sense, Jack knew the position of the wyrmling in the ground. He shot Wind Slash which penetrated deep into the ground, striking the wyrmling. The wyrmling was forced to come out after getting damaged, Jack was already waiting above. His swords danced around the wyrmling's body.

When the wyrmling burrowed again, Jack used Sword of Light to force it out. He then repeated the process.

After some while, the wyrmling finally fell. Jack received exp points, some coins, mana cores, and one whisp of Draconic Essence. The Draconic Essence automatically went into his body after the wyrmling died.

"Uh, only one? I have to kill one thousand draconic monsters just to level up a single level of this bloodline?" Jack asked, depressed.

"Didn't I say dragon bloodline is the hardest to level up?" Peniel retorted.

Jack sighed.. He walked over to the next red dot on his radar.

Chapter 587: Two Months Of Grinding

Jack spent a total of two months wandering around the three mountains at the periphery of the Jagara Region. Each of the mountains housed different types of monsters. The second mountain Jack explored had lush forest covering it. The monster that inhabited this mountain was Forest Wyrmling.

It was different than the Poisonous Wyrmling he fought in the first mountain. The Forest Wyrmling was much smaller than its cousin. It also had wings, which allowed it to glide from one tree to another. It possessed a camouflage ability to hide amongst the tree barks. The camouflage was useless though against Jack due to his radar and mana sense ability.

The Forest Wyrmling was more agile. Luckily, this monster did not possess a true flying ability. It could only glide, meaning it needed to climb to higher ground before it attempted to glide. Once it was down on the ground, Jack had an easier time dealing with them.

But since it was fast, Jack could not completely prevent it from running to higher ground by itself. It's a good thing Jack had Call Wolf Pack skill. His general strategy against this Forest Wyrmling was tricking it into ambushing him. The wyrmling would try to sneak on him from above by doing a diving assault. Once Jack evaded the sneak attack, he summoned the wolf pack to surround the wyrmling while he dished out damage.

The third mountain housed a different draconic monster altogether, Hard-shelled Drakeling. It was like a tiny version of the Grim Sand Drake with a turtle shell for its back. Jack was clueless when fighting this drakeling for the first time. Because after suffering sufficient damage, it would retreat into its shell like a turtle.

In this condition, it received a tremendous boost to its defense. Jack's attack hardly made a scratch. To complicate matters, the drakeling gained regenerative ability during this time. Not only did Jack fail to deliver damage, but its HP bar was slowly refilling instead.

Jack ended up using Storm Breaker's Overlimit to break through that tough defense. After killing one drakeling, Jack thought it was a waste of time to spend too much time on this monster, so he returned to the second mountain to hunt the Forest Wyrmling.

He still needed to complete his hunting quest on the Hard-shelled Drakeling, though. Luckily, the quest only needed him to kill five. So he went back and forth every six hours when his Overlimit went off cooldown until his hunting quota was filled.

With this experience, he noticed that he needed a skill that had high penetration ability like Overlimit, with a much lesser cooldown time. Something that destroyed the opponent's defense or ignored defense altogether.

His Therras Beast took a total of six weeks to mature. He continued to feed it pet food to stimulate its growth. When his stock of pet food ran out, the beast reached level 35.

Its grade became rare elite once it matured at level 30. He was slightly disappointed that it didn't turn out to be a mythical grade as Peniel said it might. But he was still happy to have a rare elite pet.

Combined with Jack's max-out Tame Pet skill which boosted the pet's HP, Therras' HP was tremendous. It had 480,000 HP at level 35. Even though attribute-wise, it was still weaker than the wyrmling, it was not easy for the Therras Beast to get killed. So Jack summoned it out to combat to let it receive exp points as well. He couldn't keep on relying on pet food to help his pet grow.

Therras was slightly useless against the Forest Wyrmling. But against the Poisonous Wyrmling, it surprisingly proved effective. The Therrast Beast could do a powerful stomp that created a localized earthquake. This earthquake easily forced the Poisonous Wyrmling out of its burrowing. After discovering this advantage, the first mountain had become Jack's primary grinding spot.

Therras had five active abilities. One was their inherent skill which they possessed once matured. The rest they received once their tamer's skill increased. Peniel explained that for small-sized pets, every five levels of tame pet skill granted the pet another skill. Culminating at five skills after the Tame Pet skill reached level 20.

As for Medium-sized pets. Tame Pet skill only granted a new skill every ten levels. So a level 20 Tame Pet skill only gave the pet a total of three skills. But Beastmaster's Master Tamer skill also gave the pet another skill every ten levels. Hence, with both Tame Pet and Master Tamer skills fully leveled up, a medium-sized pet would also possess five active skills.

Since Jack already maxed out those two skills, his Therras Beast had a full arsenal of skills once it matured. One of these skills was the Overbearing Stomp, which had proven its effectiveness against Poisonous Wyrmlings. This stomp did not only create tremor, but also a shockwave that damaged and lifted everyone around the beast into the air.

Its second skill was called Tyrannical Charge. It was a meteorite-like charge that left a blazing trail. This move was very fast and dealt massive damage to a single opponent.

The third skill was Oppressive Wave. It was executed by slashing using the Therras Beast's massive horns. The slash created a powerful energy wave that dealt damage and strong pushback on everything in its path.

These three skills were ones Jack had already witnessed when he was facing the Therras Beast inside the Valley of Tempus.

The other two skills were new to him. He was glad the Therras Beast in the valley didn't exhibit these skills. Otherwise, he wouldn't have managed to get into the cave where he took the Test of Courage.

The fourth skill was Autocratic Roar. This roar dealt damage to a large area around the beast. The damage was small, yet it was the roar's other effect that made it troublesome for opponents. The roar had a decent chance to cause multiple negative statuses: paralyze, dizzy, disoriented, confused, and fear.

The fifth and final skill was Imperious Pressure. It created a force field surrounding the beast that applied extreme gravity on all enemies within. The best thing was, this field didn't affect allies. Making it an ultimate ability in a group fight.

With these arsenals, even when Therras' level was still low, it could hold its ground against the wyrmlings. There was even a time when Jack decided to let Therras fight a wyrmling on its own. Although it had difficulty killing the higher-level monster, the wyrmling also failed to prevail against Therras. With this, Jack had a rough idea about his pet's survivability. He then joined the fight and finished off the wyrmling.

The levels of the draconic monsters in these three mountain ranges revolved around levels 40 to 45. Most of the monsters were special elite, but there was also an occasion where he saw a rare elite version. He avoided one until his Blade Dancer class reached level 40 and he met one that was also level 40.

He thought it was time he gauged his possibility against a rare elite of the same level. The level 40 rare elite he fought against was a Forest Wyrmling. This rare elite Wyrmling was not only stronger and faster, but it also possessed a skill that its special elite counterpart did not. It could shoot a bullet of high air pressure that detonated upon impact. It's a good thing it could not do it too often, though.

Jack and the Forest Wyrmling fought for almost an hour without a clear winner. Getting tired of it, Jack summoned the Therras Beast and had it join the fight. He also activated Overlimit. Only then did he win.

Although it took an effort and help from his pet, Jack was gleeful that he could already win against a rare elite of the same level even without relying on his Lightning God Barrage.

By the end of the two months, Jack had reached level 41 for his Blade Dancer class, level 40 for Archmage, and level 36 for Beastmaster. He had set the exp proportion at 35:35:30 respectively. These draconic monsters although were sparse and tough to kill, they still gave a large amount of exp.

With the large exp gain and his nonstop grinding effort, Jack managed to not fall too far from the general players. From his guildmates' reports, he knew that the average players were now around level 42 to 44, with some top experts having already reached level 45.

With three classes, he thought it was natural for him to get left behind. Due to this, he was amazed again at Master who had managed to keep his level close to the general players even when he had five classes. He wondered then if he could truly win the next time they met. As soon as the thought surfaced, he banished this pessimistic thought. There was little use continuing to compare himself with the man he was trying to beat. The important thing was doing his best without wasting any time.

Jack planned to continue his exp grinding. His target was to reach level 50 and then went to try that elite class inside Valley of Tempus.. At this time, he received a message from John, asking him to return.

Chapter 588: The Situation During The Two Months

Although Jack was out here in the Jagara Region, he had been receiving regular updates from his guildmates. Most often from Bowler. The chatterbox had filled him up on most of the things going on in Thereath and the guild during his absence.

The guild had upgraded to level 3 one week after his departure, the other big guilds did the same two to three weeks later. Their member limit was increased to two thousand members. The reputation required to get to guild level 4 was one million points. More buildings were available for construction after the level-up. Everyone had been working diligently to gather the required resources.

The special units that came from Unique Insignia, the Eagle Rider Hunter and Blood Count, required special equipment that can be crafted from Blacksmith Workshop, which also required special material and a Basic Master level Blacksmith.

The material problem was solved after Dylan scoured the market in all three available countries: Themisphere, Sangrod, and Verremor. He found a seller who could provide a steady supply in one of the cities in Sangrod. Though the material problem was solved, they were still helpless on the Basic Master Blacksmith requirement. Their best blacksmith player was still in intermediate expert, it would still be a long time before that player could become a basic master blacksmith.

Luckily, this issue was solved around three weeks ago when Kirsu unexpectedly received a breakthrough. She was crafting a super rare equipment recipe acquired by Fierce Flame from a dungeon. The experience was enough to push him into the Basic Master rank. Since then, John focused their resources to produce those two special units.

Those units still took a long time to train though. At the moment, they had only ten for both units. The Blood Count was indeed of the vampire race. They were a kind of a rogue class unit that had an advantage in speed. They were especially deadly at night, as they could meld into the shadow and be invisible until they struck.

The Eagle Rider Hunters were basically archers riding atop a large eagle. Their flying steed gave them high mobility to rain down arrows on any terrains. They even had a skill that alighted their arrows on fire, increasing their damage output.

As for standard units other than Squire and Bandit Archer, they could now also train Knight, Cavalry, Mage, and Healer.

For defensive structures other than the wall and its gate. There were also the Ice Towers from the blueprint Jeanny obtained. These ice towers were built at some interval along the wall. They had also crafted several traps. John placed these traps at several strategic places around their territory. The traps didn't activate when guild members step on them, so there was no worry for him to place them as he like. But there was a restriction where he couldn't place two traps too close to one another, so he could not simply fill up the whole plot of land with traps.

Clashes had happened with other guilds, especially the coalition, but nothing big. Only small skirmishes when both sides happened to meet at the same places and compete for the same resources. Nothing that required Jack to return and lend a hand. It appeared as if the coalition had given up on defeating Heavenly Citadel.

Some guilds had members who recently managed to cross over to neighboring countries as well. When their top members reached level 45. They sent out expeditions to try to sneak past the high-level regions between countries. Casualties happened, but they all wore Amulet of Rebirth. While some

members perished, one or two managed to sneak over and establish links. They then start letting their members teleport between the two countries.

Everlasting Heavenly Legends had also gotten a lot of benefit from Florence's work. After her Missing Outworlders Coordination Center started operating in Thereath, many players flocked to the center. They gained many followers who were willing to join their noble work and opened up centers in the other main cities of Themisphere. All the ones opened in this country were of course under Everlasting Heavenly Legends' umbrella, boosting the guild's prestige.

Perhaps this was also the reason why the coalition stopped making trouble. They didn't want to draw the public's ire. Another probable reason was that now that more and more of this world was exposed, everyone didn't need to keep fighting over the small plots around the capital. Everyone focused more on exploring now. Hence the lukewarm peace during these two months. At least that was what Jack's thought before he received the message from John. Was there trouble with the coalition again? John didn't elaborate in his message.

Other benefits they gained from Florence's Missing Outworlders Coordination Center were as John had intended. More players wished to join their guild. But they were now much more selective on letting who joined. They also did active invites when they found potential players from Florence's pool of data. Two of which they had recruited in this way were a Warlock named Olddemon and a Gunner named Sturdy Serpent.

Olldemon was an old veteran gamer who had retired from gaming to have a stable profession and spend more time with his family. He didn't think that his past expertise would come in handy in this world. Florence had reunited him with his wife and daughter who were currently living in Thereath as civilians. Jeanny had come to him and offered him an invitation. He accepted seeing that he owed the guild a debt in helping him reunite with his family.

Sturdy Serpent was not a gamer. He was an army special operative. He was helped by the center in reuniting with her mother who was now also residing in Thereath. He couldn't find the army or government where he used to serve, so he had been at a loss. With Jeanny's offer came knocking, he was eager to be back in some sort of an organization again.

The government itself had been in shambles after the world changed. When the ex-politicians finally found their colleagues, they tried to band together and re-establish their organization, but their effort bore very little success. They were too late, it had been half a year since the world changed. And they were too weak. They were not used to gaming concepts so they did very little effort in leveling up. Without power, no one was willing to follow them despite them claiming to be the legitimate ruler to all the players.

The gaming guilds who were more adaptive to this game world had much better success in gaining public influence. When these gaming guilds heard this so-called past government tried imposing their rules, they simply scoffed at them.

After some weeks spent with the two new expert members. Jeanny and John agreed to promote the two into core members. Jeanny asked if Jack wanted to offer his opinion before that, Jack said that he trusted the two's judgment. John pointed out that Jack was just lazy to come back and meet the two, which Jack didn't deny.

Their core members were also joined by the addition of three of Domon's past students. One happened due to a coincidence where Domon met the person during his casual walk in Thereath. Learning that his past master was a part of a guild, the guy offered himself to join.

Learning about this, John got an idea and asked Domon to list out all his past students who he deemed as experts. Domon replied to him that all his students were experts, he wouldn't have accepted them as students otherwise. John sighed and rephrased his words by asking him to list out all his past students who he deemed worthy of trust.

Domon searched his memory and wrote down several names. John then gave the list to Florence. Asking her to notify him or Jeanny if any of the names in the list showed up. Two such persons were found. Jeanny approached them with Domon in tow and the two joined without hesitation. The three were also added to their core members as Domon trusted them.

Jeanny and John also promoted some of the few outstanding veteran-grade members into core members. At least, the ones they thought could be trusted.

All these new core members were informed of the nature of this world and about the enemy that they would be facing in the future. None of them were cowards, so they eagerly look forward to fighting together with everyone in the guild.

No news was heard about the war in Liguritutum Realm. That country was located furthest from Themisphere. Apart from Jack, Wilted Tree, and the World Maker people, no one seemed to have reached that far away. So everyone was still oblivious of the war raging in that country.

Jeanny had given Horatio's letter to Commander Quintus soon after Jack left. The commander asked about Jack, Jeanny informed him truthfully about Jack's intention to become stronger before continuing the quest. The commander understood, he said he would give the letter to Prince Alonzo.. The commander also asked Jeanny to convey to Jack that Jack should come to him to get his merit points once he returned.

Chapter 589: Improvement After Two Months

Jack was preparing to leave as he tallied his gains. He first checked his Container of Souls. He had left the container alone and planned to only use the souls when he was about to leave this region. The draconic monsters he killed might not be many, but the souls they provided were above average compared to normal monsters. His container at the moment possessed 682,000 souls.

He could level up his elite skills six times but he decided to max out most of his basic and advanced skills. He maxed out Swift Stab, Roll, Throw Weapon, Adrenaline Rush, Flash Step, Shooting Dash, Barrier, and Magic Bind. After he was done, his container only had 5,000 souls left.

Many of his skills and spells also increased in proficiencies. Flame Strike and Magic Shield, the two of his most used skills, had upgraded to 6 stars. Parry, Swing, Natural Body Recovery, Magic Bullet, Energy Bolts, Heightened State, were now 5 stars. Adrenaline Rush, Sword of Light, Flash Steps, Barrier, Arcane Turbulence, Ice Ring, Life Burning Art, Dragon Eye, were 3 stars. Shooting Dash and Myriad Ensnaring Chains were 2 stars.

Eight skills received their first stars. Devouring Cross at first star now drained 23% of damage into HP instead of 20%. If all ten stars were upgraded, it would convert 50% of damage into HP. Blitz Slash increased its range by another one meter.

Ranger's Roll allowed the ranger to roll to a maximum of three meters distance. Its first star added half a meter to that distance. With all ten stars, Jack would be able to cover eight meters of distance. He imagined himself rolling eight meters away, he thought it will be very unnatural. He would be like a ball rolling and rolling. Jack laughed when he imagined it.

Tame Pet and Call Wolf Pack's every star had the same effect. They both increased the pet or wolves' attributes by 5%. Mana Beam's range got increased by two meters. Magic Weapon received a boost on damage by 4% for each star.

The best one according to Jack was Call Familiar spell. When it received its first star, all of Peniel's spells received a boost. Fast Heal and Group Fast Heal now recovered 55% HP, the group spell even increased its AOE radius by one meter. Healing Field now Healed 320 HP/second. Invulnerability now lasted 3.5 seconds. The length when Second Life spell was in effect was now three and half minutes.

For his non-battle skills, the ones increased were his Cooking and Inspect skills, both were now Basic Expert grade. He also did a lot of equipment repairing during these two months but it was not enough to increase his Blacksmith skill.

He had 45 free attribute points from all the leveling up. He dumped them all into his Endurance.

His Human Age had increased to six months. In the fifth month, he received an active skill that corresponded with his Blade Dancer class, Slash of Determination, rank 1. It dealt 100% damage that ignores all defense, with 100% Bleed chance and 20% added critical chance. With this skill, he fared better against the Hard-shelled Drakeling. But this skill had a two minutes cooldown, which was still too long to make the Hard-shelled drakeling a meaningful farming monster.

In his sixth month, his Limitless Potential passive skill increased to rank 4. It now increased his HP by 800 points, Stamina and MP by 120, and all his attributes except for luck are increased by 4.

He had one new skill for each of his three classes after the level-ups.

Penta Slash, level 1/20 (Active skill, melee, requires dual-wield swords)

Delivers successive five slashes to one target, dealing 100% damage on the first slash, consecutive slashes had an incremental increase of 50% damage each slash.

Cooldown: 3 minutes.

Stamina: 100

Magic Wall, level 1/20 (Active Skill, requires magic weapon)

Create a 10-meter wide wall of light in front of the caster, withstand damage to 300% from caster's maximum HP, reduce all damage by 30%.

Duration: 5 seconds

Cooldown: 5 minutes

Mana: 80

Beast Form: Wolf, level 1/20 (Active skill)

Transform into a beast, gain an additional 100% HP during transformation, recover 5 HP every 10 seconds during beast form.

Duration: 5 minutes.

Cooldown: 6 hours.

Stamina: 120

The Penta Slash was his currently highest damaging single target attack. Even at level 1, if all five slashes hit, the cumulative damage would be 1000%. As for the Magic Wall, he had the experiences already using them via the magic scrolls.

The most exciting new skill for him was the Beast Form. When he transformed, he became a large werewolf that amplifies his damage, defense, and attributes. His weapons disappeared and he fought using claws, but the damage value of his weapons was still calculated into his damage.

Peniel mentioned the Wolf form was the basic version for every beastmaster after receiving the skill. Other forms could be gained by either quests or items. She did mention that she knew of a place where Jack could get a powerful shapeshifting form. However, Peniel said Jack was not strong enough yet. The place was also very far away.

After all the level-ups, he had 12 free Blade Dancer skill points, 15 for Archmage, and 25 for Beastmaster. Jack didn't have many elite skills yet for beastmaster and he felt it a waste to spend the free skill points on advanced skills. So he spent 19 points to max out the Beast Form. Leaving another 6 points for later use. The Beast Form at level 20 lasted 10 minutes long. Every ten levels increased granted the beast an active skill when Jack was in the form.

When Jack was in werewolf form, he could use three beast skills. Savage Claws, Ravenous Bite, and Beast Rage. The first two were offensive skills that amplified damage, while the last increased all his prowess for thirty seconds. The best thing was that he found out he could still use both Blade Dancer's skills and Archmage's spells while in this form.

For the 12 free Blade Dancer skill points, he spent 7 to max out Devouring Cross, this skill now dealt 700% damage. The remaining 5 points he used on Wind Slash. It now shot two wind energies that dealt 350% damage each to all those in their paths.

The 15 free Archmage spell points were spent on Magic Weapon. At level 16, the Magic Weapon now lasted seventeen and a half minutes.

The last upgrade was his bloodline. It was his main purpose in coming to this region, after all. But even after these two months, he only collected around 1,500 Draconic Essences. With the Draconic monster being so tough, there was a limit to how many he could slay within a day. To make matter worse, most of the monsters only dropped one draconic essence. The level 40 rare elite and a few level 45 special elites dropped two essences, but that happened very rarely.

His Gold Dragon Bloodline was now level 2 and it increased his attributes, HP, Stamina, and MP by 12% instead of 10%. He didn't receive more active skills though. Peniel mentioned he would only get one every three levels. So the new skill would appear when his bloodline reached level 4.

It was a pity, he would prefer to continue farming here to gain more draconic essences, but he supposed he needed to go back to see what was going on. John didn't say much in his message but he sounded urgent.

Jack used the Guild Return Scroll and appeared inside Heavenly Citadel's teleportation chamber. As he went towards the Guild Hall where John was waiting for him, he walked past a balcony that overlook the outside. He was amazed by the change. Several new buildings had been erected, even the wall had been adjusted outward to allow more land to hold the additional buildings. Talk about a convenient gaming system.

Down there, he saw several of the new units, Knights, Cavalries, Mages, and Healers patrolling around. He even saw some of the Eagle Rider Hunters flying above. The Blood Counts were nowhere to be seen. They were perhaps hidden and only came out if there were intruders, or if a command was given to them.

Players were also abounding. The last time he checked the guild page, which was a few hours ago, their members were 1,552 members. Several walked past him without recognizing him. Jack couldn't be inspected, and he seldom hang around the headquarters, so it was not strange that new members didn't know him.

Jack admired the changes a while longer before he resumed his walk towards the Guild Hall.

When he arrived at the entrance to the Guild Hall, a player who stood with his friends near the entrance shouted, "Halt!"

"Huh?" Jack was confused.

The player pointed at the entrance, "You must be a newcomer. That door is to the Guild Hall. Only leaders, councilors, and officers rank are allowed entry. Newcomers should learn the rules before wandering around aimlessly."

When Jack was about to reply, one of the player's friends pulled him away. His other friend bowed to Jack and said, "I'm sorry, sir. Please forgive him! That trainee is trying to show off and doesn't recognize you. Please don't be angry with him. We will beat him as punishment, please have mercy and spare his life!"

The guy then walked backward while continuing to bow. His other friends were dragging away the first player who was having an extremely puzzled expression.

"Hey! It's ok. I don't mind!" Jack yelled, but those players continued dragging the first player away. Some even started punching the guy.

Jack scratched his head. He truly needed to talk to John about those nasty rumors about him.. He wondered if the fellow was still spreading them.

Chapter 590: Heirs To Saint Edge And Wicked Witches

Jack went inside the hall and found John was sitting behind a table by the side of the hall. He was reading some papers that spread out on the table. Jack came to him.

"Hey, are you still saying bad things about me? Some of our members are terrified of me," Jack said to him.

"Isn't that a good thing?" John replied without looking at Jack, he was still reading the papers on the table.

"Good thing my ass, how am I supposed to make friends if guild members are avoiding me?"

"Then don't. A leader should act aloof. Away from the reach of the common members. That will make them respect you more."

"They will?"

"Sure, don't you trust me?"

"Is that a trick question?"

"Mm..." the guy mumbled. Jack could see that he was distracted. Jack then asked, "What's the matter? Why do you call me back?"

John finally looked up at Jack. Jack saw some tiredness in the guy's eyes. He wondered what could probably bother this person who usually wore the devil-may-care attitude.

"We have two problems," John said. "Saint Edge and Wicked Witches."

"Oh? Are they attacking? Just point me in their direction. I will whoop them no problem," Jack said.

"This is not something that can be settled by whooping asses. You got an update from Bowler about some big guilds to have managed in crossing countries, right?"

Jack nodded.

"Wicked Witches and Saint Edge had both reconnected with their true leaders. Wicked Witches' leader came into this world at Aurebor Dynasty, the elven country. Some of their members had crossed over to this country and established teleportation links. The same goes for Saint Edge, they came from..."

"The Sangrod Empire. Specifically Vacharest, the capital of that country. Their guild headquarters was there," Jack cut in John's words.

"So you know."

"William of Wellington told me."

"Yes, it is so. The true leaders of both guilds had just teleported to Thereath yesterday," John informed.

"So what? Their true leaders are also just players. What's so troublesome about them? If they want to make trouble, I will gladly meet them in combat."

"Can you please stop trying to solve everything with violence?" John said with exasperation. "What is troublesome is not the leaders. Yes, they are rather capable players. They also bring several lieutenants who are both famous players and long-time key members of their guild, but that's not the problem. The issue is with the intentions they bring."

"What intentions?"

"They requested their heirs to come with them and rule their guilds together with them."

Jack was baffled hearing it. "What does that got to with us?"

"Jeanny was the daughter to the main leader of Wicked Witches," John said.

Jack took in a deep breath. Jeanny did tell him about her family having a share in the workshop behind Wicked Witches, but she never mentioned anything about her mother being the main leader.

"Jeanny was currently on her way to meet her mother for a talk. She did say she was going to reject the request but I'm not sure. She didn't look so well when she left, and I don't peg her for a disobedient child. The talk might not go as smooth as she hopes it will be."

"Where are they meeting?"

"In a VIP room of Ellie's Restaurant."

'Good, it should be easy for me to find out which room they are in then,' Jack thought.

"What about the Saint Edge, you said Saint Edge has the same intention? Does that mean their heir is one of our members as well?"

"Yes."

"Who?" Jack asked.

"Me," John answered.

Jack blinked a few times before blurting, "You? You never said anything about it!"

"I never said anything about this to anyone," John replied. "It was not important anyway. I just can't stand the old man's way of doing things, so I came out to do my own things."

"Hey... This is bad. If the two of you go with your parents, doesn't that mean I am alone to take care of this guild? I can't do that!" Jack said with panic.

"Don't worry, I won't leave. Didn't I say already that I don't see eye to eye with my old man? Jeanny, on the other hand, I'm not so sure. You better hurry and go accompany her to the meeting. She might need support more than she let on."

"Why don't you go then?"

"I can't. I'm scheduled to meet with Saint Edge's true leader soon."

"Your father? Why did you and Jeanny arrange to meet them at the same time?" Jack asked.

"We didn't arrange it. They sent out invitations at the same time. I find it strange as well, perhaps those two guilds have talked to each other before."

"Where are you meeting your dad?"

"Here. They invite me to the city as well, but I decline. I say meet me here at my place if they want."

"Hehe. That's so like you. What are you reading?"

"Report on Saint Edge and Wicked Witches' power. Saint Edge is the more dangerous of the two, they seem to be the overlord amongst the players in Sangrod's capital. Their headquarters are also level 3 already."

"You think we will come into confrontation with them?"

"Different forces always come to confrontations at times. It will be wise to prepare for them."

"All right. I will head over to Thereath to accompany Jeanny," Jack said.

"You do that," John said as his attention returned to the papers on the table.

Jack gave him one last glance before leaving. The guy didn't look that good. Would he truly be okay?

When Jack stepped outside the Guild Hall, a voice called him. "Hey, Jack boy!"

Jack looked over and found an Orc in light armor and a human in a robe carrying a long staff.

"Uncle Balo! Brother Jason!" Jack called out. The two were Domon's past students who had joined. During their time at Domon's school of martial arts, Jack often roamed around the place despite not practicing much, so he was familiar with them. Familiar enough to recognize the person even when said person wore an Orc's face.

"How many times have I told you not to call me uncle?" The orc who was called Balo said.

"Dude, you are more than twice my age. What am I going to call you if not uncle?" Jack replied. Balo was amongst the first generation of Domon's students. He was also Domon's assistant when the school was at its height.

"You should just call me very big brother Balo!"

The man called Jason, who was beside Balo, laughed. He said to Jack, "I heard you are a big shot here."

"Nothing much, I'm just one of the leaders," Jack replied. At the same time, he used inspect on them. Balo was a level 43 Battle Monk, while Jason was a level 36 Healer.

"Crap! Why are you only level 36?" Jack blurted out after seeing Jason's level.

"Hahaha, that's a funny story. Did you also see that his class is a healer?" Balo uttered, then he turned to Jason. "Tell him why you chose the magician class."

Jason gave Balo an exasperated expression. He then said to Jack, "I have no idea about this class-choosing when all this shit started. When the black chest first appeared, I picked the staff because it is a weapon most similar to a cane, a weapon I most accustomed to."

"Yeah, he was a magician who least often cast a spell during a fight," Balo said with a ridiculing tone.

"So, why are you still an advanced class? Have you not taken the elite class' trial?" Jack asked.

Balo laughed again, which made Jason give him a stare. "This guy can't pass the trial because it doesn't involve physical tasks," Balo said.

Peniel joined in at this time, "go ahead and take the Inquisitor class trial then. That class focus on making a healer a melee class. Their weapon of choice is mace. It should be right your alley to use a long mace."

Balo and Jason turned to Peniel who was sitting on Jack's shoulder. "You must be the fabled Peniel! Great to finally meet you," the two said.

"She is on my shoulder the whole time, you two still dare to say finally?" Jack chided.

"Inquisitor class? All right, I will head there and take the trial immediately!" Jason announced.

"Then let's go together. I'm heading to Thereath myself," Jack said.

The two asked him what's he doing in Thereath. Jack told them about the meeting between Jeanny and Wicked Witches people. Balo expressed his desire to accompany Jack, but Jack reminded him of his race, the guy couldn't enter Thereath. Jason offered himself instead. He would take the test after the meeting.

Jack agreed. Before they left, they saw a commotion as several Squire units were escorting a group of players. Jack looked over and saw John come out of the Guild Hall and meet this group. The lead was a pale yet charismatic middle-aged man. After spending time in Sangrod, Jack could recognize a vampire when he saw one. Jack used Inspect on the lead.

Saint Jonathan (Paladin, level: 45)

HP: 4,000

Guild: Saint Edge