

## World 771

### Chapter 771: The Conclusion between the Two Princes

Rhemos saw his army down there getting ambushed by the larger force. The large force was led by a man shrouded in lightning. Rhemos recognized the man at once. It was Garland Thunderhand. It was Therribus' private army.

The fire started burning the tents as Garland's lightning torched everything. Thick black smokes rose to the sky as Rhemos' unprepared troops were getting slaughtered.

Seeing the scene, Rhemos' heart sank. He was the one that usually used underhanded tricks to beat his opponents. He never expected himself to be one to fall by such a trick. Especially not from Therribus who always used brute force.

He looked around the soldiers that had surrounded them. They had come nearer so he could see them more clearly. These soldiers bore his banner.

"Wilson?" Rhemos recognized the Knight Lieutenant who led these soldiers. He was the leader of the scouts he had sent to surround this place.

"You betray me?" Rhemos asked.

"I'm sorry... Prince Therribus holds my family captive," Wilson answered.

"I also offered him a nice reward if he joins me," Therribus added.

"So, instead of surrounding this place for me, you are surrounding this place for my brother," Rhemos said and made a mocking laugh at himself. Then he asked Therribus, "How do you know he will be the one I sent out to surround this place? You couldn't have bribed all my scouts' leaders, could you?"

"It's timing. He is the next to set out for scouting when the Outworlder went into your tent."

"All to lure me out here?"

"It is a way to make sure you won't escape. If I attack your camp as I originally intended, you could have escaped under the chaos. Now, you won't."

"You want my life so bad?" Rhemos asked.

"I want none of it. But if it is to save Themisphere, I won't hesitate," Therribus answered. "As I said, we are running out of time. Drastic situations call for drastic measures."

Rhemos looked around a second time.

"Surrender and pledge your vow to me," Therribus said. "You will be my right-hand man. We will rule this country together."

"I have been your shadow for too long that I've promised myself that I would rather die than be that again," Rhemos said.

Therribus closed his eyes hearing that. There was rare sadness in his expression.

Rhemos turned around and whispered something to Rayne. The cloaked aide revealed a complicated expression after Rhemos was done.

Rhemos turned around and faced Therribus with a steely face. He uttered, "If you think you have had me. You are gravely mistaken. I am not the weak brother who only uses trickery. I have learned how to fight as well. Your group of soldiers won't hinder me and Rayne here. Rayne! On my mark, we do as what I say just now!"

"Stop it, you won't be able to flee," Therribus said. After his words, more soldiers appeared. It was not only Wilson's company now, Therribus soldiers also appeared. Claudius, the level 66 rare elite Lord Commander was also there.

"I give you one last chance, do you yield?!" Therribus uttered.

"Never!" Rhemos yelled.

Therribus sighed. He then said, "Rayne, is it? As you have heard, I am doing this for our country, for the natives of this world, to spare them from the scourge of outworlders. I hate to spill the blood of our own kind but I will do it if I must, even if the blood is my kin. But I value talents. You are a strong combatant. I offer you a place in my force if you are willing to leave my brother. I would hate to spill two talented person's life tonight."

"Haha, save your breath. Rayne will never betray me," Rhemos said. "All is not lost, Rayne. Now let us—  
urgh!"

Rhemos' words were cut short when he felt cold steel penetrating his back. He looked back and found out it was Rayne, his trusted aide.

"Ra... Rayne...?" Rhemos stammered. He received large damage from the ambush and backstab. He also received Poison and Bleed status.

"I'm sorry, my lord...", Rayne said before pulling away.

Therribus sighed another time and gave his order. "Finish him."

All the soldiers with bows released their arrows, magic wielders unleashed their spells. The storms of attacks rained down Rhemos' body. It was not long before his HP was depleted.

Therribus looked at his brother's lifeless body. A glint of heavy sadness was in his eyes but it was soon replaced by a determined look.

"Take his body. Treat him with respect. He deserves a proper burial," Therribus said to Claudius, who then instructed his men to do so.

"What about him?" Claudius asked. Indicating Rayne, who was kneeling beside Rhemos' body.

"I keep my word. Take him under your wing," Therribus said. "He has done many shady things under Rhemos. His connection will be useful."

"Yes, Your Highness," Claudius saluted and went to carry out Therribus' commands.

Therribus stayed on the hill and looked at Rhemos' camp being routed below. A figure crept up to him.

"That's close enough," One of Therribus' guards warned the figure.

"Let him through," Therribus said. Earmouth then came to his side.

"Congratulations on the success of this operation, Your Highness," Earmouth said.

"This is just the start. There are many things to do from here," Therribus said. "Tell your leader as long as he did his part, I will honor our agreement."

"Certainly, Your Highness," Earmouth said.

"Have your people confirmed Alonzo's location?" Therribus asked.

"Yes, Your Highness. His force is confirmed to be in Theneward as your spy's report. My guildmates had confirmed seeing him in person as well. Shall we move on to him next?"

"Yes. We can't prolong this any longer. With the old man on his deathbed, he won't be able to do anything. This is the perfect time to act. Your Guild Headquarters is located near that city, isn't it? Inform your people to prepare. My force will be marching there soon!"

"Yes, Your Highness," Earmouth said with a deep bow.

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Not far from there, Jack had arrived with Red Death. He had unsummoned Pandora when he saw the chaotic movements of white dots on his radar. Those chaotic movements indicated heavy fighting among large numbers of individuals.

Jack asked Red Death to move cautiously, but the girl didn't listen. She just ran forward until the sight of the camp on fire was visible. She stopped and looked at the scene in bafflement. At that time, she heard a notification.

"No...," She uttered weakly and knelt to the ground.

"Cleo, what's wrong?" Jack asked worriedly.

"The quest had failed... Rhemos has died...," Red Death replied.

Jack placed an arm on her shoulder. Although he didn't like that Rhemos fellow, it seemed that Red Death had developed some kind of relationship with the native prince. Probably something similar to him and Alonzo. He could see the sadness in her eyes.

"Hm?" Jack's eyes notice something in the distance. His Dragon Eye and archer class' Keen Eye allowed him to see faraway objects. But it was still too far away, so he activated Gold Dragon Sight which not only slow down perception but also give him the ability to zoom in on distant objects.

"It is Therribus!" Jack informed.

"Where?" Red Death asked.

Jack pointed to the small hill next to the burning camp. Red Death couldn't see so far but she believed Jack's words.

"That... Earmouth is also there," Jack said.

"What...? Impossible. Our guild's quest is to help Rhemos, not Therribus."

"I'm just telling you what I see. One other thing... They are putting Rhemos' body on a stretcher. And this cloaked man who used to stand behind Rhemos, he is now standing with them."

"Rayne? It couldn't be... You must have seen wrong!" Red Death protested.

"Lady, again, I'm just telling you what I see. I would have told you to go see for yourself if you don't believe me, but then I would end up having to rescue you again, this time from those powerful natives."

"No one asks for your rescue!" Red Death turned away.

"I know you are upset, but we can't let emotion control us at this time," Jack advised. "The fact that Therribus had taken action against Rhemos meant that he is willing to go all out now. This country won't be in peace anymore. He will be going for his last competitor soon, Prince Alonzo."

With that thought, he immediately sent a message to Jeanny, who should still be accompanying Prince Alonzo on his trip. The prince would need to understand the situation fast. Rhemos had been decimated because he was caught off-guard. Prince Alonzo who had a weaker force couldn't afford such a blunder.

While waiting for Jeanny's reply, Jack asked Red Death, "What will you be doing now?"

Red Death gazed at the distant hill where Jack said he had seen Therribus. She answered, "I'm going to rip that f\*cking prince's heart out of his chest!"

## **Chapter 772: Discussion of the Coming Conflict**

"I think you look sexy when you are mad, but can we leave the heart-ripping to later when he is not surrounded by, like, a million soldiers?" Jack said.

Red Death didn't respond. She just stared at the flames that were still raging at Rhemos' camp. There were occasional lightning strikes there. Jack could venture who was there wreaking havoc. It would not be wise to head over there at this time.

Red Death was silent for a long time. After seeing her feature calming down a bit, Jack asked again, "Seriously, what will you be doing now? You are no longer a member of Death Associates, you can't return there. You won't be able to fight the first prince by yourself."

"I won't be joining your guild if that's what you are asking?" Red Death said.

'Oh...,' Jack uttered in his mind. He was honestly disappointed hearing that.

"However, I know your guild will support the third prince in fighting Therribus. I will join your fight for the time being. Once it's over, I will go my own way."

"If that's what you want, that's okay," Jack said. "Just stick close to me for the time being. Your guild is hunting you. And from the look of it, Death Associates has now changed allegiance to the first prince's side. We will certainly clash with them during the conflict, are you okay with that?"

Red Death didn't reply.

Jack didn't force an answer from her. He took out his Town Return Scroll. "Let's head back to Thereath. There is nothing we can do here. I will need to look for Duke Alfredo to work out our next plan."

Red Death stayed silent, but she also took out her Town Return Scroll. Seeing that, Jack activated his.

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Jack appeared inside Thereath's Zone Portal. When he saw he was alone, he was worried that Red Death had tricked him to return here while she rushed to where Therribus was in a bid for his life. When she appeared beside him soon, he heaved a relieved sigh.

The two of them then headed to the noble district. It was late at night, but Jack couldn't care less. He had exchanged messages with Jeanny. Commander Quintus and Duchess Isabelle were with them. They were now discussing how to deal with this sudden turn of events. Jeanny said that Prince Alonzo requested Jack to inform Duke Alfredo and Royal Advisor Mason about this. This was what he was doing now.

When he received Jeanny's message, he received a notification that his kingdom chain faction quest had been updated. It was now part four of the chain quest, 'Help Prince Alonzo to survive the civil war.' It was an SS-difficulty quest.

'Civil War,' He thought about the words after hearing the notification. So, Themisphere was now on the brink of a civil war. The outworlders here would now experience what Liguritutum's outworlders were experiencing.

Luckily, Duke Alfredo's estate was not blocked by a barrier like so many times when Jack came to visit. He went past the vast courtyard directly to the mansion. Jack banged on the main door. After a while, Winston appeared. The butler appeared composed but Jack could see the irritation in his eyes for being disturbed so late in the night.

"Mister Storm Wind," The butler greeted. "May I ask what manner of an urgent matter forces you to grace us with your presence so late in the night?"

"An urgent matter that involves the fate of the kingdom. Is Duke Alfredo in?" Jack asked.

"He is, but he is asleep. I am afraid I will have to ask you to come again in the morning," Winston said.

"I'm afraid I won't do such a thing. Take me to the duke, please?" Jack said, politely.

Winston eyed Jack uncertainly.

"Take me to the duke or I will force my way in," Jack threatened.

Winston sighed. "Follow me," He said.

Jack and Red Death followed Winston to the second floor where Duke's quarter was. In the meantime, he sent a message to John informing him about the situation. If what Wilted said about country war would be involving guild's forces, they would need to prepare their forces for the coming conflict.

"War? Yes! I am bored to death with this peace. I have been thinking about tricking the coalition into attacking us again if this continues," Jack received John's reply.

'Lunatic,' Jack thought, but he didn't think the guy was joking. John had been proposing they go for the offensive against other guild headquarters. Jack didn't feel like invading others, he told John that he won't join if they proceed. He was too busy with his own stuff anyway. While Jeanny was too polite to invade others. The anger he felt for his mother had cooled down, so even when John proposed that they attacked Wicked Witches' headquarters, she wasn't truly on board. In the end, the proposal for an invasion was scrapped.

Jack decided to not send John further messages after the guy's psychotic reply. John would know how to prepare from that small piece of information.

When they arrived at the Duke's bedroom, Winston knocked on the door, lightly.

'Shit, man... Do you not eat today?' Jack said in his mind.

When there was no response inside, Winston said, "I think the duke is fast asleep. We should return tomo..."

Jack didn't wait for Winston to finish his sentence. He moved forward and banged the door. "Duke Alfredo! Forgive me! But there is an urgent matter!" Jack shouted.

Winston was speechless by Jack's rudeness, but he could do nothing to stop Jack. He could only grumble, "In times like this, I wish I am still possessed by that abominable cardinal, so I can teach you some manners."

They heard some sounds from inside. Duke Alfredo was clearly awake now. After some time, the door opened. The duke was in his pajamas staring at them with a questioning expression.

"My Lord, please forgive me. Mister Storm Wind insists," Winston said apologetically.

"My Lord, forgive me as well, but you won't blame me for disturbing your sleep after you listen to what I have to say," Jack said. He then narrated what he had seen in Rhemos camp.

After listening to the story, the Duke took Jack and Red Death with him and rushed to the palace. On the way, Jack noticed that the duke was at higher levels than before. He was now level 70. He was now at the same power level as Garland. When Jack asked him about it, the duke explained that it was all thanks to Jack winning the World Tournament. The duke was one of the individuals who Prince Alonzo appointed to receive the Council of Virtus' blessing and training. That's how he had managed to improve within this short period.

They arrived at the palace soon. Because it was the duke who brought them, they were not turned away by the guards despite the late night. A servant brought them to the Royal Advisor's quarter. They were told by the guards to wait outside while the guards knocked on the door.

Not long after, Mason's voice was heard from behind the door, "What is it?"

Duke Alfredo announced himself before saying, "I apologize for intruding so late, Royal Advisor, but we need to discuss something urgent with you. Can we go in for a discussion?" Duke Alfredo was not comfortable saying anything here where the guards could listen.

There was a pause before Mason replied, "Wait a minute."

After a while, Royal Advisor Mason opened the door to his room. Duke Alfredo and Jack thought they would be invited in, but instead, Mason said, "Follow me."

Mason opened his door only slightly to allow him out, as the door was closing, Jack's Dragon Eye caught someone inside Mason's room. He only managed to see a silhouette before the door closed, but he was certain it was a woman.

'Does the royal advisor have a relationship with someone?' Jack wondered but didn't think too much about it. It was the royal advisor's private life. He has no right to be nosy about it.

Mason took them to an empty meeting room nearby. After closing the door, Duke Alfredo informed him about the matter.

"Prince Rhemos is dead...?" Mason said. A shock on his face.

"I saw it with my own eyes," Jack confirmed.

Hearing that, Mason asked them to wait and went out of the room. Not long after, he returned. "You are right... Rhemos' name had become grey in the soul registry...", Then to Jack, he said, "I'm sorry. It's not that I don't believe you. But for such a sensitive matter, I have to make sure."

"I understand," Jack said. He took no offense.

"In this case, things will be moving fast now," Mason continued. "With the king in his current state, I've been afraid Therribus will take action sooner or later, I just never expect it to be this soon. I will send people to collect more information. You said Prince Alonzo is in Theneward?"

"Yes," Jack nodded.

Mason called in a servant and relayed some instructions to him, the servant then hurriedly headed off somewhere else.

They continued their discussions. Mason started to ask Jack to send messages to Jeanny who was at Prince Alonzo's side. With the outworlders' messaging system, they ended up having a long-range discussion between the two sides.

In between the hours, the servant came in and brought new information. Jack was amazed by the speed at which this country's intelligence network was gathering information. Mason then gave new instructions to the servant. The discussion continued until the morning after. It was close to midday now. By then, much new information had arrived.

"It seemed Prince Therribus was adamant in settling this in a short time," Mason said. "From the last report, various troops from the army and nobles who supported him were heading towards Theneward. The report mentioned the force when gathered will be around a hundred thousand strong."

## **Chapter 773: War Summon Quests**

"A hundred thousand?" Jack was amazed. When they went on the expedition to Temple of the Divine Squall with three thousand soldiers, the army already seemed like a lot.

Duke Alfredo misinterpreted Jack's reaction, thinking that the outworlder thought the number was few. "He was not yet king, so he can only summon a fraction of the country's army. The ones that come to his summon are mostly those under the commanders and nobles who support him."

'A hundred thousand is just a fraction?' Jack thought. He was even more amazed now.

"Therribus must have expected the news of Rhemos' death to be known soon, so it is unlikely he can ambush Alonzo as he did to Rhemos," Mason said. "That's why he is assembling this army. He is planning for a direct battle to deal with Alonzo."

"How many troops does Prince Alonzo bring with him?" Jack asked.

"Including the outworlders that joined, their numbers are around ten thousand," Mason answered.

"That's too few if compared to Therribus' army," Jack said dejectedly.

"Alonzo is only going for royal visits, taking that many troops are already impressive. No one is expecting a war will break," Mason said. "It will still take Therribus several days before their army arrived at Theneward. We will do as we have discussed, we will gather the available army here before marching there to provide support."

In the discussion they had, they reviewed the number of troops they could gather. It was thirty thousand. Jack complained about how come the capital could muster only so few soldiers compared to Therribus? Mason answered that many officials in the army were loyal to Therribus, or at least didn't want to offend him. That's why they couldn't muster too many numbers.

Even combined with the troops at Alonzo's side, their total number was only forty thousand. Not even half of Therribus' army. Considering the situation, Mason said he would issue a public summon for the war effort. The royal advisor explained this summon would allow outworlders to join. The summon would be broadcasted from both the Guilds Association and Adventurers Association in the form of a quest. Guilds Association targeted the guilds while Adventurers Association was for the independent players.

Guilds would be able to summon their headquarters troop to join the battle when it happened. But Peniel explained that the summon troops would only last for one day and it would have a one-week cooldown. So, guilds couldn't just summon their troops anytime they wanted. They would require good timing to allow the guild troops to be effective.

Jack asked a non-related question, what if a guild took advantage of this feature not to help the war effort but instead to summon their troops in monster-infested areas to help them level up? Peniel answered that any guild who utilized the troops for anything other than the war effort would receive a penalty. Additionally, guilds couldn't just summon their troops anywhere. They could only activate their Guild Army Summoning Crystal near the main banner of the army they supported.

Royal Advisor Mason and Duke Alfredo estimated if the outworlders and their guilds joined, it should cover most of their disadvantage in number. Still, this summons only bulked up the number, since most outworlders were only as good as the regular soldiers at this stage. Not to mention, Outworlders' HP



was low. They would die like flies if they didn't have decent enough expertise. Therribus' army that had more elite soldiers would still be at an advantage.

They concluded that this was the best they could do at this time.

"The force in Theneward will protect Prince Alonzo while waiting for our reinforcement, right?" Jack asked.

At this time, a messenger arrived and whispered something to Royal Advisor Mason. Mason's expression turned to a scowl after hearing it.

"Something's wrong?" Duke Alfredo asked.

"The city of Theneward had just informed that they didn't wish to get dragged into this civil war. They won't close their door when Prince Therribus' army arrived," Mason answered.

"How can they do that? Isn't that the same as sacrificing Prince Alonzo?" Duke Alfredo complained.

"They are quite adamant about it. I don't think there is anything we can do to change their minds," Mason said. "In that case, the only choice Prince Alonzo has is to go here."

There was a large table in this meeting room. It could generate a 3D projection map just like the platform inside the Guild Hall, but the map here showed the entire country. Mason had zoomed in to the area around Theneward. He was now pointing at a structure that looked like a fort.

"Tell Prince Alonzo to head to Fort Garadhor," Mason said. "It was an old fort, but it has fortification to defend against a siege. It should buy them enough time until our reinforcement arrives. Ask them to buy enough supplies before heading out. The fort has been mostly deserted so no supply is stocked there."

Jack immediately sent the instruction to Jeanny, who relayed it to Prince Alonzo and his retinues.

"Hopefully, they can hold out until we arrive," Duke Alfredo said with concern.

"They have Duchess Isabelle. She should be able to keep everyone safe inside the fort," Jack said. "She is a Mythical grade. She has also fully recovered. If Therribus wants to force his way into the fort, he will have to sacrifice lots of his men."

"I'm afraid it won't be that easy," Mason said. "In the reports I have received, General Arther Pendrake has taken up arms to join Therribus. He is one of the three Themysphere's Lord Marshalls, a war hero who guarded one of our borders and had seen many conflicts. He was also a level 80 Mythical-grade, same as the duchess."

"What's a war hero like that do joining Therribus?" Jack asked.

Mason simply shook his head in silence.

"Still. He is a melee type, while Isabelle is a magic user," Duke Alfredo said. "As long as she cast her spell from within the fort, Arther won't be able to get to her. But that also meant that she needs to concentrate on Arther to prevent him from breaching the fort, she won't be able to help with the other fortifications."

"After all is said, we still need to get there fast!" Jack said. "How soon can we leave?"

"The request for summons has been issued. The call should have reached every outworlder by now," Mason said. Jack also heard the notification an hour before. "As for the native army, tomorrow will be the soonest when we can gather everything."

"How long will the journey take?" Jack asked again.

"With the speed of the army, I will say around twelve to fourteen days," Mason answered.

'That long...?' Jack thought. He could just teleport and arrive there today, but what could he do alone?

"Then we leave tomorrow," Jack said.

"By then, we might not have many outworlders joining yet," Alfredo said.

"Don't need to worry about the outworlders, they can teleport to Theneward and join us from there. Speaking of which, can the army teleport themselves directly to Theneward using Zone Portal?"

"I'm afraid that is not possible," Mason said. "You outworlders are special that you can use the teleportation features without any cost. For us, natives, every time we use them, we need mana cores. The number to transport an army will be astronomical. There is no way we can afford it. The army will have to travel by normal means."

Jack nodded an understanding. That's why in the past, the army didn't just teleport to Theseval during the expedition to the Temple of the Divine Squall.

"If everything is decided, the two of you take some rest. I believe you will be joining the army tomorrow?" Mason asked.

"Yes," Duke Alfredo answered.

"Aye," Jack confirmed.

Mason nodded. "I will deal with the preparation of the army. You two just make sure to have enough rest before departing."

The royal advisor then left. Jack heard him calling for his aides as he headed somewhere.

"I will send words for my personal troops as well and then I will rest for tomorrow's departure," Duke Alfredo said. "You should take a rest as well."

Jack nodded. He was indeed tired. He had not slept since yesterday.

Jack and Red Death left the palace. Jack decided to go to Amy's bakery for a short shut-eye before preparing for tomorrow. Jack offered Red Death to stay there as well, but she refused. She said she would look for her own accommodation. She would meet him tomorrow morning before departing with the army. Jack sent her a friend request so they could communicate. She finally accepted it this time.

When Jack entered Amy's Bakery, Amy was delighted to see him come during the day. Jack had a short chat with her. When Amy saw how tired Jack was, she understood and told him to go rest. Jack slept until the sun was about to set. He was still tired but he decided to wake up as he needed to make some preparations. He could rest again later.

## Chapter 774: Debate on Whose Sides to Support

When he woke up, he received notification of a guild quest, War Summon: assist Prince Alonzo against Prince Therribus' army. This meant their guild had registered to join the war. Every member of the guild would then receive the quest notification. Rewards of this war summon quest would be based on war contribution points if they won. There would be individual rewards for players as well as rewards for the guild.

After checking the description, he decided to first go visit the Guilds Association and see how things were going. Guilds were better candidates for reinforcement, especially those that had gotten Guild Headquarters because these guilds would be able to summon their guild troops into battle.

When he arrived, there seemed to be a commotion. There stood two groups of players in the middle of the large hall, with lots of other players scattered around these two groups. The two leaders of the groups seemed to be talking heatedly. Both leaders were someone he knew, Bowler and Earmouth.

He looked at a projection that displayed guild quests. He saw the war summon quest to help Prince Alonzo. However, it was not the only one. There was another war summon quest. The other one was the summon to help Prince Therribus.

Seeing the two war summon quests, Jack foresaw the players would be torn into two sides. He looked again at the two groups in a quarrel. Perhaps they already had.

"Prince Therribus must have found out the war summon quest issued by Royal Advisor Mason," Peniel said. "So, he issued the same quest as well. He is the legitimate heir of the kingdom, so he has the authority to do so. Just like the civil war in Liguritutum, outworlders are assisting two sides of the conflict."

"Yeah. Therribus must be doing this to disrupt our recruiting process," Jack said. There was nothing he could do about it. This was the intended system, he couldn't prevent Therribus from recruiting players. All he could do was influence the players' decisions.

Jack came to where Bowler and Earmouth were addressing the crowds. The group with Bowler was the Everlasting heavenly Legends players while Earmouth was backed by Death Associate members. The two groups appeared to be ready to lunge at one another. The other guilds were just watching the two.

"Friends! There is no need to listen to this clown!" Jack heard Earmouth's loud voice after getting closer. "Prince Therribus has a larger force. Prince Alonzo is sure to be defeated. What's the point of joining the losing team? The side that wins the war will receive more rewards!"

"What's the point of winning if you can't stay in this country anymore?" Bowler shouted back. "Everyone here knows how Prince Therribus discriminated against players. If he becomes the king, the first act he does as a king will surely be chasing us, players, out of this kingdom."

"That is a baseless claim! Prince Therribus is not like that," Earmouth returned. "He does appear cold to us players but it doesn't mean he hates us. Take me and my guild, for example, we are very tight with Prince Therribus and I can attest that he is not as the rumor paints him to be."

"Horseshit!" They were startled by the voice of someone who was pushing through the crowd.

The players who were getting pushed were getting angry and were just about to scold the person. They stopped abruptly when they realized who that person was. Not only did they abort their scolding attempt, they even moved aside and let him pass. The players at the front looked back and saw the reason the people were moving aside, they immediately followed suit as well. Soon, a pathway was cleared, allowing Jack to walk through easily.

Jack was slightly surprised by a pathway that suddenly appeared. He looked at the players by his two sides, smiled, and thanked them. The people here were rather polite, he thought.

Earmouth saw Jack approaching. He felt panic for a beat, but then he realized this was inside the city. Jack wouldn't dare to act violently. However, he still equipped the Amulet of Rebirth, just in case. He instructed the others to do so as well.

Bowler, on the other hand, was grinning when he saw Jack approach.

"How dare you say you are close to the crown prince?!" Jack yelled again once he was near. "Your guild has always associated with the second prince. Now that he is gone, your guild jumps ship just like that. Not to mention it is the first prince who murders the second. You are now helping the guy who killed your previous benefactor. What kind of person are you?"

"Do—Don't you spout nonsense!" Earmouth stammered. "Who says the second prince is killed by the first? You are slandering! I can ask the guards to catch you for false accusation."

"I saw it with my own eyes. What? Are you saying I am lying?" Jack asked.

"Wha—What if I am...?" Earmouth tried to act defiant, but his fear was evident on his face.

"Then you deserve a slap!" Jack uttered. His open palm slammed onto Earmouth's face. The force was so great that Earmouth fell to the floor. The other Death Associates members were stunned. This guy truly acted with violence here. Was he not afraid of getting detained by the guards?

Jack was not worried. First, there were too many people blocking the guards' view. Second, he didn't use any mana manipulation on his slap, so Earmouth suffered no damage. The third, he was an Earl. The guards wouldn't bother him for a small violation.

The crowds around were also stunned. Those who had moved aside when Jack pushed through them were secretly celebrating that they had done so.

"Anyone still wants to say I am lying?" Jack asked the Death Associate members. They looked at Jack with anger and shame. They wanted to draw their weapons but were unsure if they should risk the consequences.

Jack then turned around and addressed the crowd. "Friends! What my bro here, Bowler has told you is indeed the truth. Prince Therribus' discrimination of players, or outworlders as they called us, is very real. He considers us trespassers in his country. None of us will have a good day in Themisphere once he is crowned the king. I've experienced his discrimination first hand. I'm sure many of you who have the misfortune of crossing his path know that I'm telling the truth. Prince Alonzo, on the other hand, is a very fair person. He is kind to both his friends, subjects, and also us, players. I implore you, we have to aid him, not for this country, not for good cause, but for our own future!"

Queen Magenta, who was amongst the crowd, shouted at this time, "You are saying all that, but that is all your own opinion. We, who never involve ourselves with both the first and third prince, how do we know you are telling the truth?"

Jack glared at her. Damn hag, he had known the coalition would stand with one another. Which was what he was worried about. Many of the guilds that possessed Guild Headquarters were part of the coalition. This would cut away a large portion of potential reinforcements for Prince Alonzo.

Luckily, he also brought helpers.

One of his helpers spoke out then. "I am one who has worked for the crown prince before, I believe my words carry weight." Everyone turned and saw it was Silverwing who spoke. "My guild, White Scarfs, has been doing many tasks for the first prince because our leader, Goldfeather, wished to develop good relations with the crown prince. I have been the one that met Prince Therribus most of the time. So, I can tell you, Storm Wind is telling the truth. If Prince Therribus becomes the king, we will all be in trouble. In this war, my guild, White Scarfs, will stand with Prince Alonzo!"

Jack didn't call Silverwing here to help him debate. He didn't even know he was going to do a debate here. He contacted Silverwing after he woke up not long ago because he remembered White Scarfs members represented Therribus during the selection tournament. He was worried that White Scarfs won't be joining the war summon, so he contacted Silverwing. Silverwing assured him they would help Prince Alonzo and he was heading to Guilds Association to handle the formal process.

"Hmph! Everyone knows you two are friends. How can we know you are not conspiring?" Manager Steelhand, who was also amongst the crowd, said.

"Then what if I add my words?" Another person said. Everyone turned and saw it was David, from Dogs of War. This was Jack's second helper. Jack didn't have him on his friend list, but Jeanny did. He was worried about Dogs of War for the same reason he was worried about White Scarfs, so he asked Jeanny to contact David. Jeanny assured him that David's guild would also support Prince Alonzo.

"Everyone knows I represented Prince Therribus during the tournament," David continued. "You have seen me during the tournament broadcast. So, you will know for sure I have contact with the crown prince. And I also assure you, mister Storm Wind's words are not lies. My guild is joining the war effort to help Prince Alonzo."

## **Chapter 775: Choosing Sides**

Hearing David, the tournament runner-up who represented Prince Therribus, said something like that, carried a weight that many could not ignore. The representatives of the average guilds started murmuring between themselves.

Seeing the unfavorable situation, Earmouth who was still massaging his pained cheek, uttered, "Everyone! Perhaps Prince Therribus was slightly unfriendly with players. However, the ones who serve him receive proper treatments. Look at our guild for example. When prince Therribus becomes king and he for sure will! The players who have supported him will be accepted into his court. While those who don't will face the consequences. Just from seeing the number of troops between the two princes, we can already know the winner for sure. Prince Therribus brings one hundred thousand troops of army,

while Prince Alonzo is cowering with only ten thousand. How do you expect he can win? The smart ones will choose the winning sides. I believe everyone here is a smart person, aren't you?"

"The palace is preparing a reinforcement army to go help the prince. The army will depart tomorrow," Jack said. "If everyone here is willing to join the reinforcement army, who is the winner and who is the loser is not yet determined!"

"Reinforcement army? And how many troops do they prepare?" Earmouth said with a snicker. "Let me guess, not more than thirty thousand?"

Jack frowned. How did Earmouth get the number of troops the palace could muster. Jack thought of the answer as soon as the question surfaced. The place was still full of the crown prince's supporters. It would be easy for Therribus to gain this information. The prince must have relayed this information to Earmouth to use as an argument tool.

"Thirty thousand? Haha. Might as well don't come at all!" Queen Magenta said with a laugh.

"That's right. My friends! If you join Prince Alonzo's side. You will surely get crushed badly," Manager Steelhand added. "Are Amulet of Rebirth cheap? I believe most everyone here had used that amulet from time to time. It is getting exponentially expensive with every use. Do you truly willing to squander it? Not to mention fighting on the losing side will net you no reward. Are you willing to take the risk of fighting for the side that is sure to lose? Risking your amulet of rebirth, your reward, and the wrath of the crown prince once he becomes king? Be smart, my friends! Make the right choice!"

Jack saw Scarface among the Death Associate players, the bald guy was strangely silent. Jack found it weird. Usually, it would be him who was the spokesperson for the guild.

"Smart? How about doing something right?!" Bowler yelled. "We are fighting for Prince Alonzo for our freedom, for the good of all players. You fight for Therribus only for your own gains. To secure your own well-being while the rest of the other players face the prince's discrimination. All for your selfish needs!"

"What's wrong with being selfish?" Earmouth countered. "We all fight for dominance in this new world. If you are smart, then join us! Be the winner!"

"Join you and let you backstab us later?" Another voice was heard, a female voice. Everyone turned around and saw Red Death approach. Jack had also messaged her and told her that he was coming to the Guilds Association to check things out. It appeared she decided to come as well after receiving the message.

"You!" Earmouth uttered.

"Yes, me! You backstabber c\*nt!" Red Death scolded. "Why do you betray Rhemos?! He had been good to our guild. Is this how you repay the favor? By selling him to his enemy?"

"That's right! Red Death has also seen the act where Prince Therribus ambushed Prince Rhemos. And guess who was there at Therribus' side? Him!" Jack was not about to let go of the chance. Red Death didn't exactly see what Jack claimed she saw, it was his Dragon Eye that did, but he thought a tiny lie should be okay. "He and his guild who has been supporting the second prince all this time, only to betray him when the opportunity arises. And look what they do to the person who is against it, they expelled her!"

Jack pointed to Red Death. Everyone used Inspect and was shocked to see that she no longer carried Death Associates' guild tag. Jack saw Scarface's complicated expression when he saw Red Death.

"Now, wait a minute. She was expelled because—" Earmouth tried to explain but he was cut short by another voice.

"You should be the one who should wait for a minute!" Prideful Josh came out from the crowd. "I have been trying to contact you people, but my messages have been ignored. I've joined the coalition because of the quest you three offered."

Josh pointed to Scarface, Manager Steelhand, and Queen magenta. "Even having to swear using that Shackle of Vows so I cannot say what this quest is. However, that quest has suddenly failed last night. Rendering all our efforts all this time a waste! What are you going to say about that?!"

"Yeah! I want to ask that as well!" Fat Gregory, Health Holder, as well as others from the coalition, came out.

"You are bound, but I am not," Red Death said. "Let me tell everyone here then. The quest is to support Prince Rhemos to ascend the throne."

"So, you throw away a quest that we have worked so hard on all this time? Then change allegiance to someone else without even asking our opinions?" Prideful Josh asked.

"There you have it, folks! These people betray their benefactor, even betray their own coalition!" Jack uttered. He guessed the coalition had officially disbanded by the looks of it. "Are you willing to follow these groups of snakes?"

The murmurs from the crowds were becoming stronger. Some even started throwing insults at the three founding members of the coalition. Manager Steelhand and Earmouth tried to say something but their voices were drowned by the crowds. Everyone was now clamoring that they would join Prince Alonzo's camp.

Earmouth, Manager Steelhand, Queen Magenta looked at each other. They figured this was the best they could do under the situation. They were just about to leave when Queen Magenta was stopped by Selena, who said, "The Wicked Witches are joining prince Alonzo's side."

"What? Who makes that decision? Wicked Witches will join Prince Therribus' side!" Queen Magenta uttered.

"It is leader Nova's order. You can take it up to her if you want, but the decision is final. I'm going to register the quest. I'm only telling you out of courtesy," Selena said then she walked away. Queen Magenta watched her back before storming out, fuming.

"So, what truly happens to the quest?" Prideful Josh asked Red Death after Earmouth, Manager Steelhand, and Queen Magenta left.

Red Death told him the story. Fat Gregory and the others listened as well. She informed them about how she received a message about an assassination attempt on Prince Rhemos and was on her way to warn the prince, but was instead stopped by her guildmates. She managed to arrive at Prince Rhemos' camp but she was too late.

"I'm sorry, I only found out about the ploy after notification about the quest failing," Scarface, who was still there, said. He was looking at Red Death with a complicated stare. "I also only found out about their attempt on you later as well," he added. "They are all planned by White and Yellow."

"You did send us messages to go help Prince Rhemos last night," Josh said, confirming Scarface's words. "But we don't have any force nearby."

"So, are you okay with White Death's decision in supporting Prince Therribus?" Red Death asked.

"He is the leader of the guild...," Scarface replied.

"He is not the leader of the guild!" Red Death uttered.

"... It might be so, but until madam Black returned. He is the next in power. I'm a guild member, I have to follow his decision."

"Then we will meet on the battlefield."

Scarface nodded, then said, "Blue is quite concerned about you after finding out you are expelled." He then turned to Jack, "He blames you for Red's situation. You should be careful."

"Aren't you suppose to give him that advice, instead?" Jack returned.

Scarface chuckled, before sighing. "I'm really not sure whose side I'm leaning on... This has become too complicated."

"You can always quit your guild and join us," Jack offered.

Scarface chuckled again. "Tempting. But no, I have too much investment in the guild... Well, I'll see you all on the battlefield then."

"Try to avoid me and you might live," Jack said.

This time, Scarface laughed, "I will try to do that."

After Scarface left, Proudful Josh asked Jack, "So, do you think we can win this war?"

"If this is a war between only players, I will have no doubt, but there are many powerful natives in Therribus' army."

Proudful Josh nodded. Jack was indeed powerful amongst players. He could charge in all by himself. With the others providing support, they should be able to win even if the opponent greatly outnumbered them. But against natives with high levels and also high HP, this was an entirely different setup.

"We can only do our best," Jack said. "Everyone go register your guild. We will depart with the army tomorrow morning."

"Can't we just teleport to Theneward?" Fat Gregory asked.

"You can do that, but don't engage the enemies before we arrived," Jack answered. "Still, I advise you to join the marching army. This way, we can get used to each other and learn to work together before we clash with the enemy."



## Chapter 776: Getting Ready to Depart for War

Jack left the guild leaders who were still hanging inside the Guilds Association. He had his own preparation to do. Red Death left to go somewhere else again. She said she would meet Jack tomorrow morning when the army gathered.

Before leaving Amy's bakery, Jack had collected his profits from the bakery and restaurant. He collected 235 gold coins. With the coins still in his pocket, he now had 425 gold coins. He went around the shops in the capital spending 150 coins to buy up all the available ores as well as lots of low-grade weapons and equipment, for fusing using his Transformation Prism. He also donated 100 gold coins to the guild again. Leaving him with 175 gold coins for emergency use.

He then went to the Leagues of Champions base. At the counter, he asked for Gruff. He just did it in passing. He was sure the dude was evading him again. But unexpectedly, the counter staff asked him to wait. Not long after, Gruff's large figure was seen coming out of the door that was reserved for the senior members of the faction.

"Now, look who has finally graced us with his presence? The mighty champion of the world tournament!" Gruff's voice resonated loudly in the hall, making everyone turn to look at him.

"Would you lower your voice, you oversized ape!" Jack chided.

"Haha. Never pegged you for being shy. What's wrong with a little recognition," Gruff said with a laugh.

"I'm surprised," Jack said. "I was expecting you to again tell the staff here to say that you are not around if I visit."

"I'm hurt! How can you think that I'm that kind of person?" Gruff protested.

"Actually, he has asked exactly that. Only this morning that he changed it to, call him when Storm Wind comes," the counter staff said after hearing them.

Gruff glared at the staff but the staff acted as if he didn't notice.

Jack just gave Gruff a raised eyebrow.

"Hehe, don't listen to him. Come! Let's go talk somewhere private," Gruff said.

Gruff took them to a courtyard with an open garden. Not many people there. They sat on a bench. "So, I heard there will be a civil war. I bet you are involving your ass in that."

"I do. I have to help Prince Alonzo. His situation doesn't look good. Will you help as well?" Jack asked.

"I can't. We league factions have to stay neutral. We might provide some indirect support but we can't be involved directly in a country's politics. Especially not help in a war. If we did, you will be worried because our faction's support is to Therribus, not Alonzo, even if I personally prefer Alonzo."

"I see, too bad... Hey! But you said you are part of the kingdom faction as well, right? Why can't you involve yourself by using your kingdom faction status?"

"Because my position in this league faction is more prominent than my kingdom faction status. People will see my act as the act of leagues of champions rather than other factions. Bailey is different, I have asked him to go in my stead, with another capable member who is a member of both factions but not too prominent in this faction. I have asked both of them to serve under you."

"Under me?" Jack asked.

"Yes. You haven't heard? The royal advisor is planning to have you lead a regiment," Gruff answered.

"He did?" Jack was surprised to hear it, but also very happy. If he could utilize this regiment, he might reap a large exp gain in this war.

Gruff nodded and showed his faction badge. "I can't help with the war, so I will help in another way. Here, take out your leagues of champions badge."

Jack did as he asked. A stream of light flowed from Gruff's badge to Jack's. After the stream stopped, Gruff gave Jack a piece of chest armor.

"Here is a super rare grade armor and I've transferred 3000 glory points to your badge. I hope this can help with the war effort," Gruff said.

Jack's mouth twitched hearing that. He took out his Storm Breaker. "You, a\*shole! That is the deal for our bet! You still dare say it's to help the war effort. I don't care if you are stronger, you are asking for a beating!"

"Hold your horses, I'm just joking! Haha."

"It's not funny," Jack said, still brandishing his Storm Breaker.

"Sit down, you are creating a scene. Here, this is the real help for the war effort," Gruff said and revealed a small token in his hand.

Jack used Inspect on the token.

\*

Twilight Champion (Unique Insignia, for guild purpose only)

Allow the training of Twilight Champions

\*

'Another unique insignia!' Jack exclaimed. With this, his guild would have three units of such a grade. The Eagle Rider Hunter was a ranged unit while the Blood Count was rogue-type. This Twilight Champion sounded like a melee unit. If it was so, then it would be perfect.

Gruff confirmed Jack thought, "The Twilight Champions are primarily close-contact warriors who have magic in their arsenal, so they should perform well in melee as well possessing a few long-range capabilities, similar to outworlder's Mage Knight class."

"Thank you," Jack expressed his gratitude.

Gruff Added, "As I said before, I can't help the war effort directly. Since your guild will be fighting for Alonzo's side, I figure I can help Alonzo by strengthening your guild. You can only get this insignia after you reach the Angusticlavian rank in this faction, which is my current rank. I used lots of glory points to exchange for that insignia. A few of my earnings from the tournament bet are used on that. Sigh... What can I say, I'm such a kind person, after all. Can't help to be stingy when helping a friend in need."

Jack gave him a side-eye. 'If you truly want to help, then you should have used a lot instead of just a few of your earnings!' But Jack didn't whine. Any help was fine. This gift was also a boon to their guild, not just for Prince Alonzo.

Jack thanked Gruff again. He said to the old warrior that if there was nothing else, he would leave first. He still got many preparations to do. Gruff asked if Jack wanted to do any of the challenges to increase his League of Champions' ranks.

Jack said he would leave the challenges here for next time. He wanted to increase the rank of his Order of Magi first.

"Oh? You are a member of that faction as well?" Gruff asked.

"Yeah. I'm also an Archmage aside from being a Blade Dancer," Jack answered.

"Okay. I wish you luck on the war then," Gruff said.

Jack thanked him again. But before he left the building, he went to exchange something from the exchange list first. He used 1600 glory points to get the Wings of Devastation, an exclusive Blade Dancer skill.

\*

Wings of Devastation, level 1/20 (Active skill, range, requires dual-wield swords)

Creates a wave of energy that struck a large area, deals 500% wind damage, 30% chance to cause Bleed, 20% chance to cause Dizzy.

Range: 50 meters

Cooldown: 3 hours

Stamina: 120

\*

'Fifty meters..., that's a long distance. Longer range than a Hidden Weapon Specialist's standard skills. Not to mention this is an area of effect skill. He will be able to hit lots of grouped enemies with this skill. It is a perfect skill to be used during a battlefield situation,' Jack thought.

Satisfied with his exchange, he left the place. Before he headed to the Order of Magi's hut, he made a trip back to guild headquarters first. He gave John, who was now back in Guild Hall, the Twilight Insignia token. John assured Jack that he would focus on training this unit right away.

Jack asked John how it went with the quest involving the Hero Token. John informed that one Hero Token had been secured. They only needed to level up to guild level 4 before using it. Jack told John to

let him be the one to use the token when it was time. Peniel had informed that the token's result was random. So, it was based on luck, and he was the God of Luck in the guild.

John told Jack to visit the jail while he was there. Jack was wondering why, but he went down anyway. Jack noticed half of the cells were occupied, but mostly by special elite grades and below. When the guilds met a hideout or outpost with a rare elite boss, they couldn't afford to capture the boss. Only Jack could solo such a boss and hold it down without killing it. Attempting to do so without Jack would result in a risk of heavy casualty. So, John and Jeanny didn't ask the members to do it.

All the bosses they captured were to be handed to the kingdom for reputations. There was a cooldown period of handing in captured boss, that's why the ones here were sitting in the jails, waiting to be handed in.

"You!" Jack heard a voice from the fifth occupied cell which he had yet to check.

Jack approached the cell to take a better look and found that it was Sinful Pleasure inside.

### **Chapter 777: Getting a Rune Diagram**

"You!" Jack also uttered the same greetings.

"Let me out of here!" Sinful yelled while rattling his jail's trellis.

Jack used Inspect on him and found that Sinful was level 21. Sinful had been striving to level back up after Jack last killed him. But because of his careful nature, he had not been too fierce on the attempt. World Maker had also abandoned him, so he had no one to help him level up.

One party finally found him after Jeanny posted a bounty on him to the guild members. They used a restraining rope to capture him alive before bringing him back to Heavenly Citadel. He was immediately tossed into jail.

"Let me go! How long are you people going to hold me here? You can't do this to me!" Sinful was still yelling from inside the jail.

Jack waited until Sinful was getting tired from all the yelling before he asked, "What did you say again about what you are going to do to Amy?"

"Who?" Sinful didn't understand who Jack meant.

"My native friend who you said you befriended to get my information," Jack reminded him.

"She... I'm just joking...", Sinful said.

"You know, you will truly miss our old world," Jack said with a grin. "There, you have the chance for a trial to, maybe or maybe not, lie your way out. You won't have that luxury here. You better get used to that room because that will be the only space you will spend the rest of your miserable life."

Jack turned around and leave. All the while, Sinful was shouting at him. Threatening at first before slowly changing to pleading. Jack walked at the same pace throughout.

After leaving the jail, Jack teleported back to Thereath and visited Commander Quintus' tower, he used 1000 merit points for the Training Boost. The boost only lasted three days, but anything to help grow their guild army before meeting Therribus' army on the field would be meaningful.

He then headed to the Order of Magi's hut.

He had many challenge points at the moment. He had been able to kill more higher-grade monsters in the last few months, which granted him challenge points. Every archmage level increase, spell level increase, and spell star upgrade also awarded challenge points. So, he had been collecting challenge points at a faster rate than before. He currently had 812 challenge points in his Order of Magi badge.

"Good evening, Mister Storm Wind," Janus greeted when Jack entered. "Very late evening, you do know this is almost midnight, don't you?"

"Aren't factions open all the time?" Jack asked.

"That is true. I am simply wondering why you come so late tonight, unlike your previous visits."

"Forced by the situation. I have limited time."

"Are you talking about the reinforcement army that will be departing tomorrow morning? I assume you will be with that army?"

"Words travel fast. Anyway, you assume correctly," Jack replied. "I wish to do the challenges."

"Go right ahead," Janus said. "You know the drill."

Jack nodded and went to the portal at the back of the room. Another Janus greeted him when he appeared in the challenge plaza with the obelisks. He went to the obelisk that had a number 43 floating above it. He didn't waste any time, he activated the obelisk and went inside the challenge space.

He continued clearing one stage after another. When he entered stage 50, a rare elite grade appeared, just like the challenge in the League of Champions.

Although he could only use magic staff and archmage skills, he was also much stronger compared to the time when he was taking the League of Champion's challenges. He cast Magic Weapon on his right-hand weapon, then equipped another magic staff on his left hand. He cast offensive spells on the enemies while using Formless Flowing Sword style to batter any enemy that came near. Perhaps he was the only mage in this faction who had no trouble allowing enemies to get into a melee contact during the challenge.

When he reached stage 55, the number of rare elite increased to two. By the time he reached stage 58, there were two rare elites of level 47, fourteen special elites of level 48, and fourteen elites of level 50.

These rare elites were not as tough as the boss version like the Ice Demon Fiend. Still, being unable to access his Blade Dancer and Beastmaster's skills did make the fight more challenging. However, Jack still had many arsenals of spells at his disposal. Primarily his Myriad Venomous Vipers. The spell quickly controlled and cleaned up the weak monsters in the first part of the battle. With Peniel supporting him, he could survive long enough to wear both rare elites down.

When he came out of stage 58, he had collected 808 knowledge points. With the previous saved-up points, he had 1,111 knowledge points inside his Order of Magi Badge, which was now at the Apprentice Rank after passing stage 50. His remaining challenge points were 4, he couldn't continue challenging the next stage.

Just two more and he could hit the next rank, Adept. Such a pity, Jack sighed. He thought in terms of ability, he should still be able to cope with more difficult opponents. Unfortunately, he didn't have the challenge points for it.

So, he went to exchange his knowledge points instead.

He scrolled up the list to where the exchangeable items for Apprentice rank were located. Several rare-grade weapons and equipment catering to magic users were on the list, as well as various ingredients and materials. Finally, he noticed a few technique books. Some were exclusive for certain classes while some could be used for all the mage's branch classes.

"Where is the second spell that you say I need to be able to fly?" Jack asked.

"That one," Peniel said as she pointed to the display.

"Glide," Jack read the description. The spell cost 1,000 knowledge points. "Hey, you are not asking me to first use Float to go up and then cast this spell to glide down, are you? That will be very ineffective. Not to mention, very inelegant."

"Just get that spell if you want to fly," Peniel said.

"Hey, there is also a spell that you mentioned before," Jack said. Pointing to another spell on the list, Dispel. It cost 1,200 knowledge points.

"Well, I can't get that one yet with my knowledge points. So, I guess it will be the Glide spell as planned," Jack said.

But before he could proceed with the transaction, Peniel stopped him, "Wait! Get that glide spell the next time. You need to get this first!"

Peniel was pointing to the top of the list, where the exchangeable items were marked with a time limit. These were items that were only available this month. One of them was a magic wand, another was a magic robe. The third one was an Alchemist recipe. Peniel was pointing at the fourth one.

"Rune diagram, protective framework?" Jack read the description. "Hey, is this rune diagram like the one that was protecting the duke's estate? Or the one that held Syndrillis captive?"

"Yes, those are rune diagrams, and they are really rare. I'm surprised it pops up here," Peniel said. "I was expecting that you need to rank up more to see these diagrams. Although this diagram is a low-tier one, it is still a rune diagram. You should get it while you can. Rune diagrams are very useful for guild use."

"It cost 1,000 glory points as well. I won't be able to buy the Glide spell then," Jack said.

"That's why I told you to get that Glide spell the next time," Peniel said.

Jack decided to just trust the fairy. She had helped him make lots of good decisions in the past. He used 1,000 knowledge points and exchanged them for the rune diagram.

\*

Rune Diagram: Protective Framework (Rare diagram, for guild purpose)

Application on guild's structure: Increases durability and adds defensive stat

Application on Scrollmaking Workshop: Allow the creation of magic scroll: Enhance Defensive Ability

\*

"Do I have to choose between using this rune diagram on guild structures or the scrollmaking workshop?" Jack asked after reading the description.

"No, you only need to register this diagram to your guild," Peniel explained. "Once it is registered, it can be used for both. You need members with at least basic expert scrollmaking skills, though. This member will be able to tap into the registered diagram and etch runes onto a guild structure or create the magic scroll. In the case of creating magic scrolls, its creation still needs materials as usual. While for etching runes onto guild structures, it only needs time and mana consumption from guild's mana cell."

"So, with enough time, we can just etch as many of this diagram to our structures?" Jack asked.

"Not really. After the diagram is etched into structures, they will require daily upkeep of mana," Peniel answered. "So, you better choose only the important structure for applying the diagram."

## **Chapter 778: Another Aid to the War Effort**

"Daily mana upkeep?" Jack said.

Their guild's mana cell was currently at level 3. It produced 30 mana every hour. The mana was used for various purposes. Mana was used for the construction and training of high-level units. Some advanced structures and units even had daily upkeep of mana. Members could donate mana cores to increase the mana, but because of Jeanny's divine treasure, mana core donation was no longer used to fill this mana cell. Hence, their need for guild mana was also urgent. Luckily, mana was considered a resource, so they also received mana from the two guild hostage tokens they possessed.

Finished with the exchange, Jack summoned the portal that took him back to the hut. When Jack was about to exit, Janus called him, "Mister Storm Wind, if I may have a minute of your time."

"Of course, you may. What can I help you with, Mister young Janus?" Jack replied with equal poise.

Janus smiled at Jack's amusing response. He then said, "I've heard of your exploits. I wonder if you are willing to accept a task from the Order of Magi?"

"Oh? You have? Perhaps my exploits are great to my fellow outworlders, but I don't understand how they impress a high-caliber faction member such as you," Jack replied. "And why didn't you send your request to my guild? Everlasting Heavenly Legends will surely do their best to complete all your tasks! Well... Maybe not at the moment because we are all busy with the civil war matters."

"Because I wish this task to remain a secret, and I want only the person I trust to be on the job."

"I am a person you trust? I'm touched! Still, you already know that I have a civil war coming, right? I can't handle anything else at the moment."

"That's okay. You can deal with it after the civil war. Our task has no time limit," Janus said.

"I see. All right, let me hear your request first," Jack said.

"We wish you to search for an artifact, the name is the Eye of Illios," Janus said. At the same time, Jack heard the notification of a quest request, search for the Eye of Illios.

"The Eye of Illios?" Peniel blurted after hearing the name.

"You know what that is?" Jack asked Peniel.

"It is a legendary artifact," Peniel answered. "However, this artifact was dangerous as it will burn anyone weak that dares to come near it."

"How does the artifact define weak? Is it giving anyone that comes near it a test to check the person's strength?" Jack asked.

"No, anyone below level 75 that touched the artifact will be burned to ash," Peniel answered.

Jack turned to Janus. "You mentioned this task has no time limit. Do you mean to ask me to look for it later when I'm level 75?"

"We prefer to not wait that long. If you can confirm its location and let us know, we can consider your task completed," Janus said. He then produced a glass cube. "Or if you happen to come near the artifact, you can activate this cube. It will contain the Eye of Illios and prevent it from harming you. But of course, telling us the confirmed location and bringing us the artifact will give you different rewards."

"Hm... That eye something is a legendary artifact, right? What makes you think I won't keep it for myself if I find it?"

"As I said. I trust you."

"Then you are a very trusting person. Although we have known each other for a long time, we are not truly close. I'm not even sure if I have met the real you, considering there are a lot of you. Are you sure you can trust me that much?"

"I'm good at judging a person. You are not someone selfish who will betray someone's trust. Furthermore, the Eye of Illios is useless to you at your current level. Believe me that if you bring the eye to us, you will get the benefit as well in the long run. Aside from that, if we find out that you keep the Eye of Illios for yourself, we will hunt you down to the end of the world."

Jack gulped. "Hm... Fine then. I accept." He accepted the glass cube and received another notification informing him the new quest had been registered on his quest page. "Do you have any clue about that artifact? Or should I search randomly?"

"Open your map," Janus said.



Jack did as instructed. Janus marked a coordinate on his map. It was somewhere within the Republic of Palgrost. A place he had not yet traveled to. Janus' mark was a simple dot in a sea of fog on his map.

"We trace the energy of the eye to that place, but we can't find any other clues there. Perhaps an outworlder's set of eyes will see something that we miss."

"Is that place a city or a town?" Jack asked.

Janus shook his head. "It is the wilderness. A simple field of barren land."

"All right, I will check it out when I have the time. I can't promise anything though," Jack said.

Janus simply nodded and smiled.

Jack checked the quest on his quest page.

\*

Search for the Eye of Illios

Difficulty: SS

Rewards: ???

Informed Janus of the confirmed location of the Eye of Illios or bring it back to Janus.

\*

'SS? For a quest that involves a legendary artifact, I thought it will be an SSS-grade quest,' Jack thought.

'Perhaps because you can still complete it if you just confirm its location, so the difficulty is not that high,' Peniel offered her opinion.

"Will knowledge points be included in the rewards?" Jack asked Janus.

"That among other things," Janus answered.

Good, Jack thought. It took a long time to accumulate challenge points. More so for Knowledge points. So, if he got another avenue to obtain the points, he welcomed it.

"If there is no other matter, I will take my leave," Jack said.

"There is one other matter. In appreciation of your willingness for taking our task, we would like to grant you a gift," Janus took out another thing. Jack recognized it as a runestone. "We know that our patron, Rhemos had been slain by his older brother, but we can't involve ourselves in a country struggle. So, we can only aid indirectly in this manner."

Jack received the runestone and inspected it.

\*

Runestone of Marching (super rare runestone)

Increase the marching speed of the army under command by approx. 50%

Elemental energy required for upgrade: 0/10,000

\*

"Wow, this will be handy for the war!" Jack uttered.

"We heard that you will be leading a regiment, so yes, we hope that this will help," Janus said.

"It will! Thank you very much!" Jack said.

Janus nodded. "Good luck in the civil war, and be safe," He said.

Jack thanked him another time and left. He was done with his preparation. He must say that he got more than he expected after making the trips to the two prominent factions. The time was toward morning already. Jack teleported to Heavenly Citadel. He entered the Time Chamber to do his routine training in mana manipulation and martial arts. After that, he slept inside there, getting full rest. Normally, this was prohibited since the Time Chamber had a limited occupancy at any one time. But since it was Jack who was doing it, no one dared to complain.

In the morning after waking up, Jack gave John the rune diagram.

The two discussed what they should use it on. Jack asked Peniel if they could use the diagram to strengthen their guild wall. Peniel said they could. However, since this was only a low-tier diagram, it would only strengthen a small section of the wall, not the entire boundary wall, like what Duke Alfredo's protective diagram did to his estate. If they wanted to strengthen the entire wall, they needed to etch lots of diagrams in a set interval. However, doing this would mean an astronomical consumption of mana upkeep. They won't be able to afford it.

After some discussion, they decided to use the diagram in three critical parts. The wall's gate, the guild hall's entrance, as well as the Guild Core itself. After that, they would have the scrollmakers focus on making as many of the Enhance Defensive Ability magic scrolls as possible. Peniel informed them that this scroll would enhance the effectiveness of all defensive skills and spells in a fifty-meter radius. Both Jack and John believed these scrolls would help a lot in the war.

Jack was getting ready to depart. John said that he would join the army later. His steed would be able to catch up to the slow-moving army. He could also teleport to the closest city before catching up. He said that he still need to prepare lots of things before joining the army. Jack left him to his tasks and teleported to Thereath. He went out of the city to meet the reinforcement army that had started to gather.

## **Chapter 779: The strength between the Two Armies**

The sea of soldiers was even more impressive compared to when they went for the expedition in the past. It was not strange considering the numbers were ten times that time. The soldiers stood orderly as they waited for orders.

A distance from there, Jack saw a similarly impressive sea, but much more rowdy and messy. Jack could hazard a guess that those who gathered there were outworlder troops.

"Where are you?" Jack asked Red Death.

"I'm here with the guild leaders. Your Star Bowler is also here, he is leading your guild," Red Death replied. "Things are a mess here, no one is sure of what to do here."

"Wait, I am going to the army base first," Jack said.

A very large temporary tent had been erected in the middle of the reinforcement army. Jack figured that should be where Duke Alfredo and the rest of the army commanders would be located.

The soldiers stopped him from approaching at first, but after showing his Earl status badge and the soldiers confirming his identity, they let him through.

When he entered the tent, he saw lots of people crowding around a war table. Several familiar faces were amongst them, Duke Alfredo, Captain Salem, Lieutenant Bailey, Lucia, Nicholas, and high priest Laurent. The duke saw Jack and gestured for him to approach.

Jack greeted the ones he knew. To Laurent, he asked, "Aren't you with the Church of Creation? I thought league factions are not allowed to involve themselves in this war?"

"They are not, that's why I quit the faction," Laurent said. "I can't just desert my best friends in their time of need."

"Isabelle and I are in your debt," Duke Alfredo responded to his remark. Laurent just waved him off.

"So, how's the situation?" Jack asked.

"Let me introduce you first, this is Lord Commander Armstrong. He is appointed by the Royal Advisor as the commanding general of this reinforcement army," the duke introduced. "And this is Lord Commander Ahab. He will be the second-in-command."

Armstrong was a large man garbed in full plate armor. He carried a large greatsword on his back. His armor was black and full of cut marks. There were also scars on his face. His hairs and beard were white. He wore an eyepatch on his left eye. His one remaining eye was blue and carried a steady gaze that projected steadfastness. With one look, Jack could see this was a man that had gone through many conflicts.

Ahab was a leaner man yet almost as tall as Armstrong. He wore a functioning robe with lavish etchings. The etchings glowed periodically. He held a long staff in one of his hands. His face was calm and composed, yet his eyes seemed impatient.

Jack used Inspect on them both.

\*

Armstrong (Rare Elite Human, Lord Commander), level 75

HP: 890,000

\*

Ahab (Rare Elite Human, Lord Commander), level 70

HP: 780,000

\*

From their attires, Jack could deduce that Armstrong was a melee type while Ahab was a magic type. Jack greeted both of them politely.

"You must be that outworlder the Royal Advisor had mentioned," Armstrong said.

"I don't see the wisdom in letting this outworlder commands a regiment of our troops," Ahab said to Armstrong, not responding to Jack's greeting. "It is one-tenth of our army. We are already low on manpower as of now. Giving such a large portion to an untested outsider will be a waste of resources."

Duke Alfredo hurriedly said, "I assured you, mister Storm Wind here is more than capable of leading an army. He had done so during a military expedition with me in the past."

'Um... with the help of my friends,' Jack thought. He didn't know squat about leading an army. He was rather nervous about this himself.

"Nevertheless, it is a request from the royal advisor," Armstrong said.

"But you are the commanding general, you have the final say about the arrangement of the army," Ahab argued.

"Hm...," Armstrong's one eye stared at Jack, who returned the gaze. Jack was indeed nervous, but the thought of the possible exp bonus from leading a regiment made him determined to get this commanding post.

"I promise you, Sir Lord Commander Armstrong. I will not disappoint!" Jack uttered.

"... I see the determination in you. All right, I will follow Mason's request. You will be in command of a regiment of three thousand soldiers. Bailey and Miller will serve under you."

Jack looked to the man beside Bailey. Maybe that was the man Gruff mentioned yesterday? He used his Inspect.

\*

Miller (Special Elite Human, Knight Lieutenant), level 65

HP: 290,000

\*

'Great! With this high-level native at his command. His regiment should perform well,' Jack thought.

Jack inspected Bailey as well. As he thought, Bailey's level had also increased. Jack assumed she was another individual who Prince Alonzo had selected to receive the Council of Virtus' blessing and training. She had even received a better breakthrough compared to Duke Alfredo. She was now at level 55. Not only that, but her grade had also increased to Special Elite.

Ahab showed a disappointed expression for Armstrong's decision but otherwise didn't express any more objection.

"Now, let us bring you up to speed," Duke Alfredo said. On the map was a 3D projection of the Themisphere map. It was now zoomed in to the region around Theneward city. Particularly a structure that looked like a classic medieval fort. "This is fort Garadhor. Prince Alonzo and his troops are now settling inside this fort as we speak. They are hiring blacksmiths from the city to repair the fort's defenses. But with such limited time, it is questionable how many of these defenses can be brought back to life before Therribus' army attacks. From the intel we have gathered, they will have only five to six days top before Therribus' army arrives."

Jack knew about this as well. Aside from hiring native blacksmiths, Jeanny had also summoned their guild members with high blacksmith skills to help with the fortifications. Jeanny informed them that several catapults and ballistae were there and might be able to be repaired as long as they had enough time. Some Death Associates and Corporate United members had tried harassing the players en route there. But fortunately, Jeanny had put security details on them.

"They are also bringing supplies to the fort in preparation for a siege battle. However, many merchants are limiting their wares. It seemed that Therribus' influence was rather strong in Theneward. They would only be able to secure supplies for around three weeks' worth. If the siege goes longer than that, it will be a problem."

"We should arrive before their supplies run out, right?" Jack asked.

"We will, but the situation doesn't look too good even if we arrive," Armstrong said. "From the intel we have secured, Therribus army would be around 100,000 strong. They were further reinforced by around 10,000 outworlders."

Jack understood several guilds had still decided to support Therribus. Mainly because they were following the two top guilds, Death Associates and Corporate United. Of those guilds supporting Therribus, four possessed guild headquarters inside this country, Death Associates, Corporate United, Warriors of Solidarity, and Jackal Crew. Jackal Crew had invaded a guild headquarters owned by another guild and claimed the headquarters as their own. These four guilds had the potential of raising Therribus' army count when they summoned their troops.

"On Alonzo's side, they only had 10,000 soldiers, added by a few hundred outworlders that had chosen to join them there after the war summon quest," Armstrong continued. "They should be able to resist the siege as long as Therribus didn't go all out, which I suspect he won't. He will lose lots of soldiers as well if he did. But as in any siege battle, time is against the defenders. The fort doesn't have any natural supply. They can only last as long as their prepared supplies."

The quest posted by the reinforcement quest had requested the players to join the reinforcement army. Some had still opted to join Prince Alonzo to defend against the siege. But the army had advised against it. Mainly because players' capability was still the low-tier soldiers at this stage. All they did by joining the siege was suck up the supplies required by the natives. There was no teleportation device on the fort, so they couldn't teleport to the cities to get more supplies.

"On our side here, we are barely 30,000 strong. But the outworlders that had gathered outside have reached 30,000 as well," Armstrong said. "Although the outworlders have doubled our man count, their battle capabilities, won't match Therribus' army's average level. In other words, we are still grossly outnumbered by the enemy."

Jack was making a count of their produced soldiers on his guild page. At the moment, they had a total of more than 2,500 trained soldiers. He figured that the other guilds' number wouldn't be too far off. Out of the many guilds and independent players that had joined this army, seven guilds had guild headquarters, Everlasting Heavenly Legends, White Scarfs, Black Cloak, Crowd of Sins, Dogs of War, Gluttonous Despot, and Six Rings of Prosperity. This meant there was a potential of around 17,000 native troops for one day if all seven of these guilds summoned their troops at the same time.

Wicked Witches had joined them but their guild headquarters had changed to the Aurebor Dynasty. So, they couldn't summon their guild's trained troops in this war. Same case as Saint Edge who also had members joining this reinforcement army, their headquarters was inside Sangrod Empire.

Saint Edge's members initially wanted to join Therribus' army, considering Everlasting Heavenly Legends was still holding their Guild Hostage Token. But their leader, Saint Jonathan, had ordered the guild to help Alonzo's side instead. Jack didn't know if this was because John struck some kind of a deal with his father? Perhaps releasing their guild hostage token? But as he had said to John, that token belonged to John, he won't argue about what John was doing with it.

## **Chapter 780: Reinforcement Army Departs!**

After reviewing the strength of the two armies, Armstrong formalized the chain of command. The army was divided into four bodies. The central army, right-wing, left-wing, and reserve force. The central, left, and right consisted of 30,000 native troops. The reserve force was the 30,000 outworlders.

Armstrong commanded the central army, which consisted of 12,000 troops. Army supplies were carried within this central army. The right-wing was commanded by Ahab with 10,000 troops. While the remaining 8,000 troops of the left-wing were led by Duke Alfredo. Jack's regiment, which numbered 3,000 troops, was considered part of Duke Alfredo's left-wing army.

Hearing the arrangement, Jack offered his regiment to act as a vanguard troop.

Since they had used it before during the expedition, Duke Alfredo was not alien to the concept. He helped Jack to explain that the vanguard troop could help clear out obstacles that might slow their advances. Ahab was not fond of sending a small part of the army forward. What if they got ambushed by Prince Therribus' army? They would lose a portion of the army unnecessarily.

Jack assured Ahab that he would also send scouts ahead to check for any potential ambush. In this way, it would protect the main army from an ambush as well. With small-sized troops, he would be able to escape even if there was an ambush. He summoned his Runestone of Marching and showed it to the officers here. With this runestone, his troops would be able to move fast if enemies appeared.

Jack had fused with this runestone the night before inside the Time Chamber. This runestone was of the wind element. He had to suffer the agony of having his body shredded inside a tornado of sharp winds.

Seeing the runestone as well as Duke Alfredo's support, Lord Commander Armstrong agreed to the arrangement.

When it came to the outworlder army, it was a bit more complicated. Their thought at first was to divide the outworlders and integrated them into the army. However, no one was sure if the outworlders would

listen to commands. Everyone was worried that their unruly nature would instead disrupt the orderly formation of the army. Hence, this idea was scrapped. They were kept as a separate body that would be sent to battle if needed.

Considering this player army was formed by various guilds and also independent players, Jack thought that the decision was correct. It would be a headache to organize these ragtag groups.

"The outworlder force will follow at the back of the army. For their detailed arrangements, I will leave them to you," Armstrong said while looking at Jack.

"Eh? Me?" Jack pointed to himself.

"You are the only outworlder in this command center. Of course, the responsibility of organizing your kind is left to you," Ahab said.

'It seems that... the headache is mine,' Jack sighed within, but he thought their reasoning made sense, so he agreed to it.

"Any order for the outworlder reserve force, I will send them through you," Armstrong said to Jack.

"Understood. I will take care of them," Jack said.

"Good. We will depart an hour from now. You are all dismissed!" Armstrong uttered.

Jack first followed Duke Alfredo to the left-wing army and met the regiment he was entrusted to. These soldiers had been told that Jack would be their leader. They gave him an official salute when he arrived.

Jack felt weird seeing so many soldiers saluting him. He felt... empowered. He could send these people to their deaths with his command. This responsibility was both unnerving as it was stimulating.

He drove the nervous feeling away. With a firm voice, he addressed the troops, "Everyone! My name is Storm Wind. I am an outworlder, but believe me that I don't consider myself any different from you. We are here for one sole reason. To rescue Prince Alonzo! For that cause, I will willingly sacrifice myself, and I expect you to do the same! None of us will return home until Prince Alonzo was rescued. We march in the name of honor...!!!"

Jack lifted his sword high as he uttered his battle cry. Bailey and Miller that were behind followed suit. The soldiers before him all did the same. The surrounding army all turned to them. Wondering what was the ruckus? The actual fight was still a lot of days ahead.

Jack was glad these soldiers jumped on the bandwagon. Otherwise, it would be truly awkward if he was the only one uttering the battle cry. He guessed he watched too many of those war movies in the past. He was getting too excited by the idea of having so many soldiers under his command.

He then divided the regiment into three battalions, 1,000 soldiers each. He led the first battalion while Bailey and Miller led the other two. After settling the arrangement. He asked Bailey to keep the soldiers at the ready while he instructed Miller to follow him to where the outworlder reserve force was situated.

Jack sent a message to Bowler, asking him for his whereabouts. The area occupied by 30,000 people was no joke. He would spend a long time if he was to look for a particular person in this sea of people.

Bowler confirmed that most of the guild leaders were still there with him. Jack asked him to spread the word to have all the remaining guild leaders gather, as well as any influential players from the guildless players.

When Jack arrived, all the guild leaders were there. Even though the players were a mess, the player's messaging system allowed for fast communication. Red Death was also there, along with Blackjack.

"Eh? You are here as well? I thought you will be helping Death Associates?" Jack asked Blackjack.

"Hmph! I am helping them because of Red. Now that Red has left them, why should I still help them?" Blackjack replied.

"I'm not leaving them. It's just temporary until I find Black Death," Red Death said.

"Well, anyway, thanks for the help," Jack said to Blackjack.

"I ain't doing it for you as well," Blackjack said.

"I still would like to thank you anyway," Jack said, to which Blackjack just grunted for a reply.

Jack then turned to the guild leaders. Since there was no table nor rock he could stand on, he cast the Float spell and hovered himself higher, so that everyone could see him. Magic class players who had not yet gotten the Float spell were impressed by the spell, while some thought him a show-off.

"Friends! Spare me your attention for a minute please!" Jack uttered. "I think most everyone here knows who I am, right? I've been appointed the liaison between our player force and the native command center. In other words, yes, I am your commander! If anyone has a problem with that, say it now! Don't make me kill you in the middle of the battle because you don't follow my commands."

The players were taken aback. The heck kind of speech was this? This was basically a threat.

"And don't think I'm just spouting bullshit. I have a regiment of native army under my command. This here is Miller, my second-in-command," Jack pointed to Miller. Many players used Inspect on him. Many couldn't inspect him, so they knew Miller was very high level. They also could see that he was a legitimate army official.

"Tell them, Miller. Are you under my command?" Jack asked.

"Sir, yes, sir!" Miller uttered.

"Tell them how many soldiers are under my command," Jack asked again.

"Three thousand strong, sir!" Miller replied.

Jack then looked at the crowd again and said, "Are you people listening? Don't think that because I am one person, I can't keep an eye on you all. I can have my regiment take care of you in my stead."

Jack paused for a bit to let the information seep in. He then continued, "Now, I understand some of you joined this war because you understand that we can't have Prince Therribus become the king. Every player will be in trouble if so. But many of you also join for the rewards. Whatever your reasons, our objective is the same. Defeat Prince Therribus and rescue Prince Alonzo! For that, we need to act as one. We need a clear chain of command. We can't have everyone do their own things. We need to be of one



voice and one act. Does everyone understand this and accept me as the commander? Say so now if you have objection!"

It was silent for a while until one guild leader, who Jack didn't recognize, asked, "What if we don't accept? You will chase us away?"

"No. Both the natives and I will just ignore you then. You can do your own thing, but do you think you can achieve anything that way? The rewards you get in this war are based on your war contribution. The war contribution is mostly gained from accomplishing tasks that are given to you, which in this case, will come from me. Other than that, you can only kill enemy soldiers for war contribution points. How many points do you think you can kill without coordinating with the native army? So, I ask again, are you willing to submit to my command?"

"I... I submit," The guild leaders said.

"I have no problem following your orders," Silverwing expressed his willingness.

"All right," Kill Order said.

"Just for this war," Proudful Josh joined.

"Awaiting your order, chief!" David uttered. Jack gave him a side-eye. The dude was repeating the words he said before the bonus match against Mihos.

After everyone expressed their agreement. Jack formed a party with the guild leaders. He would send his command to these guild leaders who would then relay their orders to their members. In this way, everyone could get instructions fast. Jack told them that the army would depart soon. They were to march at the back of the army and not wander around without instruction. He then returned to his regiment just as an order to march resounded.

Everyone summoned their steeds. Jack summoned Pandora and took her to the front of his regiment. The reinforcement army then started their march.