

World 821

Chapter 821: Leveling up Gears

While everyone was marveling at the grade of their new guild hero, Jeanny went to the Hero Altar and inserted mana cores to use the level-up feature. Nilrem's level was increased by five levels.

*

Nilrem (Mythical Hero, Elf), level 55

HP: 940,000

*

Now they had two mythical beings protecting their guild, a guild hero and Penny, the lava dragonet. Although Nilrem was lower level than the guild pet, she provided bonus effects to all their guild soldiers for her status as a guild hero. Jeanny was now checking the bonus effects.

With Nilrem registered as their guild hero, every guild soldier of Everlasting Heavenly Legends received a boost of 20% boost to their intelligence and magical damage. Additionally, all soldiers would also receive stamina/mana recovery during battle. Which was a significant improvement for native soldiers, because natives had a high pool of stamina or mana but they only recover them when out of combat. To be able to do that during combat, similar to players, would allow them a longer period of fighting without a need for rest.

That was a boost given to all Everlasting Heavenly Legends whether or not Nilrem was fighting alongside them. In the case that she did, all the friendly soldiers within a thirty-meter radius from her would receive double the boost.

With Uruk enhancing their physical soldiers and Nilrem their magical ones, their guild force's overall capability had been augmented.

While the others were checking Nilrem's buff, Jack was already sitting on the floor working with his blacksmith tools. As before with Uruk, Jack had been able to strengthen the hero further by giving him better equipment. After seeing Nilrem's appearance, Jack knew her equipment was not much to write about. He was glad that he had made preparation.

Jack had fused beforehand a set of super rare armors from all four categories. He had cleaned out the guild warehouse's stock of mundane common-grade armors. He had also collected and bought lots of common-grade armors when he could. So, he had no problem preparing the sets.

After seeing Nilrem, Jack took out the Cloth Armor set and leveled them up. He had also cleaned out the guild warehouse's stock of ores. If it was his old self, he wouldn't be able to level up the equipment to the max that Nilrem could wear, which was level 65.

Even with his Basic Master grade Blacksmith, his chance of leveling up equipment had hit zero percent when he was leveling up equipment from level 59 to 60. But with help of his Master-grade blacksmith tools, which increased the success chance by 30%, and his super rare Runestone of Probability which increased another 40% success chance. He had a 70% success chance to level up equipment to level 60.

With his Intermediate Expert Runecrafting skill, he could further boost the Runestone's 40% success chance to around 49% or 52%, giving him an 82% success chance at his best effort.

When He hit the maximum equipment level he targeted, which was level 64 to level 65, his best success chance was 52%. This was still a very good chance. Hence, he didn't waste too many ores on his effort.

Jack also prepared a super rare grade magic staff and leveled it up to level 65 as well. After finishing his blacksmithing work, Jack brought the equipment to the Hero Altar and used the interface there to equip Nilrem.

Nilrem's appearance changed before everyone's eyes. Her aura was already impressive when she was still wearing junk equipment. Now that her equipment was upgraded, she was even more intimidating. She was now adorned with a long green dress that had glowing runes floating around its fabric. On her head was a silver tiara with various gemstones. The long staff he held appeared to be made of wood, with a black skeleton of a bird at its crown. The skeletal bird was holding a large gem that glowed a soft green light.

Nilrem seemed to study her gears after they appeared. She flashed Jack a brief glance before returning to her indifferent attitude. Jack thought that perhaps she was saying thank you with that glance? He couldn't be sure.

Jeanny used their guild interface to send Nilrem to the Training Hall for her to train her level until further notice. Upon receiving instruction, she just vanished from their sight with a blink of light.

"That's teleportation," Peniel informed while pointing somewhere. "A rather high-level one considering the distance she could teleport to."

Everyone looked at where she was pointing and saw Nilrem in the distance. She was currently floating down to the structure where the Training Hall was located.

"I kind of wish we can have another war coming just so we can see what she is capable of," Bowler said.

"Me too!" The Man uttered.

"We can always invade other guilds for that," John proposed.

"We don't have time to play war. We still need to restore the army we lost," Jeanny reminded.

"Yeah, don't waste our force on trivial things. We don't know when another conflict might appear. We need to keep our force in tip-top condition when that happens," Jack said.

"Invading others are trivial things, he said," Jet commented.

Jack ignored the remark, he turned to his grandfather. "Gramps, I have a job for you. Grace's companion had given me an idea."

"Oh?" Grace uttered after hearing Jack's words.

"It is possible to teach natives martial arts and mana ability," Jack said. "Aside from teaching our core members, I would like you to train our guild soldiers as well. Give them a basic drill or something like that. Our training hall is limited, so not every soldier can be stationed there to increase their levels. The

rest who are not on patrol should be given a martial art training program to increase their battle capability."

"Hey, you actually thought of something good for once," John complimented.

"What the hell do you mean for once?" Jack said.

"Hm... I will see what I can do," Domon said.

"I will lend a hand. I have experience training the mass when I taught the police force," Jet said.

"So, will you be leaving now?" Jeanny asked Jack.

"Yeah. I shouldn't put the matter on hold any longer. My level wasn't hindered by my divine skill anymore, so it's better if I get that special skill before I level up again. A special class will give me a better attribute increase, correct?" Jack asked Peniel.

"Yes," Peniel confirmed.

"Now, too bad there is no certain way to get a special class for my other two classes," Jack lamented.

"Are you going to stop your other classes' progression until you get their special classes?" Jeanny asked.

"No way. I don't even know where to look for them except for Archmage's one," Jack answered. "I will just leave it to fate. If I get one, then it's good. If not, I won't force it. I will continue to level up as usual. I'm already glad I got a clue on where to find one for the Archmage class."

"I wish you luck then," Jeanny said.

"I really can't come?" Grace asked.

"There is no monster to grind there after you passed level 30. The only advantage there is the time warp, you can get a better one here from our Time Chamber. That place is also too mysterious. There might be something down there that is dangerous. Only Pandora and I can escape as we wish, so it's better if I go by myself."

"All right," Grace said.

"Before you leave, can you donate more gold coins?" John asked Jack.

"Dude, you are truly shameless. I have just donated 200 gold coins after the war. Didn't the guild receive a large gold reward for winning the war? Also, didn't you brag about getting more war contribution points? Then you should get more coins than me. Donate your own bloody coins!"

"I have. The thing is, these units that we get from the unique-grade insignias required expensive upkeep. The coin reward from winning the war can help us fund the construction of new guild structures, but we won't be able to train more of these high-class units if we don't have a steady income of coins to pay for their upkeep."

"How are Dylan and his traders doing in that department?" Jack asked.

"They provided good income of coins. But from the way I see it, we can probably train around triple the number we have right now for those special units. Afterward, we might need to stop training more. Otherwise, we won't have enough coins to pay for the upkeep."

"I see... I will try to donate again when I can," Jack said.

Jack still had plenty of ores left after leveling up the equipment for Nilrem, so he offered to level up the equipment of those who gathered there. He himself had leveled up all his equipment the night before to level 60. His Sword Fiend's Gear set now gave him a total of 1896 physical defense and 1716 magical defense.

His Storm Breaker at level 60 possessed physical damage of 510.

As for his magic staff, he had gained a new unique-grade staff from Garland. Garland, being a special native, had dropped lots of valuable items when he died. A few rare and super rare equipment, some materials and ingredients which he donated to the guild, then four items that were obviously a league above the others.

One of these four was a Unique-grade magic staff called Mana Leech Staff. The second was a blueprint for the lightning tower, which he had given to John. The lightning tower was a similar defensive structure to the ice tower. While their current ice tower dealt high damage in a linear line and inflicted slow and freeze. The lightning tower could attack ten targets at the same time and inflict Paralyze.

The third was a technique book, containing the spell Perpetual Lightning Judgement, Garland's signature spell requiring seven runes to cast. When Jack checked this book after the end of the civil war, he was disappointed to find that the requirement for learning this spell was the Elementalist class and to be at least level 50. However, Jack detected some kind of connection with the book from his mana sense. So, he attempted to learn it despite not being an Elementalist.

The interface appeared asking if he wanted to learn the spell. Although he was confused by it, he was also happy about it. He immediately learned the spell without delay. Peniel also didn't understand the reason why Jack could learn the spell. The only way Jack might explain it was because he was a magic user who had the Lightning God Blessing. Maybe this allowed him to learn lightning-based spells despite not being the proper class. To test this theory, he would need to find another lightning spell technique book again.

The fourth one was something that he put back into his inventory for later use since Peniel informed him that he needed to go to a facility for that item. He didn't want to put his plan for the special class on hold again. He would deal with this item after.

For his new magic staff, he had leveled it up to level 60 the night before. This magic staff now had a higher damage output compared to his Storm Breaker which was still at a super rare grade.

*

Mana Leech Staff, level: 60/90 (unique magic weapon)

Magical damage: 550

Range: 60 meters

Attack speed: 1

Energy: 300

Intelligence +20

MP +200

Standard attacks convert 1% of inflicted damage into MP

Mana Steal Aura: All hostiles within a 5-meter radius lose 30 MP every second, and the lost MP is transferred to the staff's owner. Duration: 2 minutes. Cooldown: 1 hour

*

He couldn't level up everyone's gears to the max. Although he had lots of ores, they were still not enough. He leveled them up to around levels 50 and 55, with priority given to Jeanny, John, Domon, Leavemealone, Fierce Flame, Trinity Dawn, and The Man. Jet's and Grace's gears were already high level since Jack had improved them during their time in the Village of Peace.

After finishing his work, Jack left and headed to the Valley of Tempus.

Chapter 822: Back to the Valley of Tempus

Jack teleported to the city, Themetus, which was the closest city to the Valley of Tempus. He then rode Pandora from there to the Busculla Plateau.

The valley was one long gorge along the plateau, Jack didn't remember which spot when he first escaped the valley using Pandora. He was too glad at the time for being able to leave the valley. Hence, he didn't bother paying attention to where he was. Now, he simply picked a spot and went down. He would do it like before, traveling along the cliff wall until he found the opening that was guarded by the Therras Beast.

He did not worry about getting past the Therras Beast. The beast was a level 45 rare elite. He could easily take care of it. Heck, he could summon his own Therras Beast and let it trash that guardian beast.

Jack reached the bottom and started going following the cliff wall. He still rode Pandora, it was faster this way.

As he did, he noticed something on his radar. Lots of red dots.

"Heh? I thought these things here stop appearing when one passes level 30?" Jack said. "There are even so many."

He then found the answer. The red dots were not heading his way. They were heading somewhere else. Jack followed them. At the place they were heading, some blue dots appeared at the edge of his radar.

"Players?" Jack said in surprise.

After he thought about it, he figured that this shouldn't be surprising. Unlike before when he first came to this valley, now more players were able to brave the wilderness. One or two players falling into this

valley was not out of the question. If those players found no way to escape this place, their numbers might build up. These were probably the players that had been trapped here for some time.

He unsummoned Pandora and approached them on foot.

The valley had some kind of mysterious fog that hindered one's vision, but his Dragon Eye was still able to perceive further than normal players. So, when these players came into view, they weren't aware of him.

He saw about ten players who were fighting the shadow monsters. From his radar, he could see a couple more groups further away. Two of the players were level 47 while the rests were below level 30.

He studied these groups. "This feels a bit too coordinated," he said.

"If they have been here for some time, it is not strange for them to develop a system to fight against these shadows," Peniel offered her opinion.

"What about those level 47? Their levels are way ahead of the others."

"Those two might be the ones who have been here the longest. So, they get exp little by little despite fighting much weaker enemies."

"You know what? This looks like power-leveling to me."

"They probably just want these weaker players to hurriedly get past level 30, so they won't be bothered by the shadows again."

"Hm... Let's wait for them to finish."

Jack waited until they finished all the shadows. After they did, the groups laughed and high-fived one another.

'They don't look like people who are worried about getting trapped here with no way out,' Jack thought.

The shadows had an interval of three hours, so there were more than two hours before the next wave. Jack saw the players sitting on the ground and chatting among themselves.

'Yep, not like people who are trapped.'

Jack decided to approach them then. One of the sitting players noticed him and informed the others. One of the two level 47 players approached him. The guy was displaying a wide grin.

"Ahoy, friend! Did you fall into this valley? Have no worry! We of the Growth Aid Agency will be happy to help," the player uttered.

"Growth Aid Agency...?" Jack used Inspect on the guy. His name was Sonny, a level 47 Blade Dancer. As he had mentioned, he was registered as a member of a guild called Growth Aid Agency.

Seeing Jack's confused face, Sonny continued explaining, "There is no need to be confused. This place is indeed mysterious and scary, but with us as your guide, this place is a haven for fast leveling for those who have just died and reverted to level 1. Ah... But I see you still have all your equipment, you must have worn an Amulet of Rebirth when you fell. I guess you are only looking for a way out. Do not worry,

we also have that covered. All you need to do, is pay a little fee and sign this NDA." Sonny produced a stack of papers and a pen.

"N... NDA...?" Jack said. He didn't know what to make of this.

"NDA. Non Disclosure Agreement," Sonny explained. "I can't tell you the way to exit this place if you don't sign. You have to understand, we can't have you tell everyone about this place. This valley is under the management of the Growth Aid Agency. We can help you exit this valley and we can also help you to fast level back to level 30 if you happen to fall to level 1. By the way, brother, I can't inspect your level. What is your level?"

"Fifty," Jack answered.

"Hahaha, you are funny!" Sonny slapped Jack's shoulder.

"So, these people all pay you for your service?" Jack asked.

"Yes. They are unfortunate people who lost all their levels. But with our help, they can get back to level 30 in no time and get back to their elite classes. This place threw monsters of their levels every three hours for them to grind for exp points. Do you also know that the time in this valley is slower? One week we spent here is only one day outside the valley."

"What exactly are the services you provide?"

"Why, speedy level up, of course. We help them get down to this valley safely, then help them fight the monsters this valley threw at them. Our average speed of leveling up people in this place from level 1 to 30 is around fourteen weeks. In the outside world, it is only two days. You won't find such express speed anywhere else. After they reached level 30, we end our service by guiding them on how to leave this place."

'So, there is truly another way of leaving this place,' Jack thought. To Sonny, he said, "How do you learn of this place and its exit?"

"Our leader fell into this valley unintentionally when he started to brave the wilderness," Sonny answered. "He spent one year roaming inside this valley. That is fifty-two days in the outside world. Until finally, he found the way out."

"Damn! One year inside here? That's rough. So, how did he get out of here?"

"He went to... Hey, man! Are you trying to trick me? Pay the fee and sign the NDA and I will tell you all about it," Sonny uttered.

"What's the fee?"

"5 gold coins," Sonny answered.

'That's cheap,' Jack thought. But then he looked at the low-level players who were resting. For them, probably 5 gold coins were expensive. They might have saved their coins in the bank before dying or borrowed the coins from their friends for this service.

"How many customers do you get normally?" Jack asked.

"Well, we usually help fifty people level up in an average of two weeks, that's two days outside."

'Wow! That means they got an income of 250 gold coins in two days?! Damn! This Growth Aid Agency produced even more coins than my two foodservice businesses,' Jack thought in wonderment.

"Dude, I admire your guild's creativity in turning this into business practice. Your leader must be a business genius in our past world. Here, these five gold coins are a show of my admiration," Jack said and handed him 5 gold coins.

"Thank you," Sonny accepted the coins with a wide grin. "Now, all you need is just sign this NDA and I can help you level up."

"I told you already I'm level 50. I don't need to level up. That coins are just a show of my admiration. Although I don't need to know the way out of this valley, I'm curious about it. If I sign this NDA, will you let me know?"

"Sure. Sign it. This NDA prohibits you from telling others about the secrets of this valley. Once you sign it, then I can tell you the secret of exiting this valley without worry."

Jack took the stack of paper. "Um, my inspect tells me it's just common papers. I also don't feel any mana. How exactly do these papers prevent people from keeping this valley a secret?"

"It's common sense, right? People who sign an NDA are obligated to obey the rule stipulated in the papers," Sonny replied.

"Uh... Um, then how do you enforce the law if someone broke your NDA?"

"We will take these papers to the authority and demand justice."

"... Have you tried that?"

"Why? No one has broken the NDA yet."

"How do you know the authority will give a shit about these papers."

"It's common sense, right? They got the person's signature, that means something."

"... I take my admiration back," Jack said.

Chapter 823: Come Looking for Trouble

"Here, my signature," Jack signed the papers and handed them back to Sonny. "Tell me the way to exit this valley, please."

"Sure, follow me. We have a couple of hours before those shadow monsters are back," Sonny said and gestured for Jack to follow.

On the way, Jack asked, "How long has your service been going on exactly?"

"We started around one month ago, but only during these last two weeks that our business picks up. We have other members go around the cities to offer our services to those who had died and fallen to level 1."

"Hm... In that case, you should be ready," Jack said.

"Ready for what?" Sonny asked.

"For competition. I doubt that NDA does any shit. Someone will learn about what you are doing sooner or later. If powerful guilds learn of what your guild is doing, they will come and try to take a piece of the pie as well, or maybe even the whole pie."

"How can you say that? We come from a law-abiding civilization. Contracts and signatures mean something."

"Whatever strikes your fancy, man," Jack said, not interested to argue.

After walking for a while, they came to an opening on the cliff wall. It was more like a door. The opening was a rectangular shape with a size that allowed two people to pass through at the same time. When Jack went through the door, he came to a rather huge hall. The inside was rather lively.

"We separate the people who want to level up into two batches. While one batch is outside fighting, the other batch is resting inside the hub here," Sonny informed.

"Good system. Hey, is that..." Jack looked at one side of the hall. There were six giant panels with similar symbols on them. Under them was a door.

"Those are the symbols of advanced class academies," Peniel said.

"Hey, your familiar can talk," Sonny remarked. "Yes, people who had reached level 15 can just take their advanced class trials here. There is no need to go back up there."

"I see. This place is designed to keep throwing shadows for players to grind until level 30. It will be frustrating if they have to keep on leveling up without being able to change to an advanced class."

"Yeah, our leader was very happy after finding this hub. He had died and revert to level 1 multiple times. Only after entering this hub that the shadows stopped chasing him. He used this place to rest and worked his level back up then. Still, he only found it after one year of wandering. He said the further away we are from this hub, the more distorted the space. That's why he had marked this hub's location with the plateau up there. We always dropped down close to this place. We don't dare to wander too far away. Afraid of getting lost."

Jack remembered the time he spent wandering around this valley for the first time. He only spent one week before encountering the place that housed Pandora. He could consider himself very lucky if compared to this guy's leader.

Sonny took him to a stall that showcased various types of armor and weapons. "We also open a shop to sell level 15 and level 30 uncommon equipment there, to help them increase their odds of succeeding in the trials. The shadows here drop no loots, after all."

"Damn, man. Your guild truly turns everything into a business. You people must be real businessmen in our past world. I have a friend named Dylan who is sure to be eager to make acquaintance with you lot. By the way, what is the level 30 equipment for? Don't tell me you can do elite trials in here as well?"

"No, you have to go back to the cities for elite trials," Sonny chuckled. "The level 30 equipment is to help for exiting this valley. See those red and blue doors?"

They had been crossing over the hall from where they entered. At the further wall from the entrance were the two doors Sonny indicated. The two doors were very large, one was red, the other was blue.

"These two doors provided different tests. If you passed the test, you will find yourself back up there in the Busculla Plateau."

"What's the tests?" Jack asked.

"The red door has you solo a level 30 special elite boss," Sonny answered. "The blue door has a series of puzzles. Both are harmless regardless of the result. If you die fighting the special elite or fail to solve the puzzle within the time limit, you will just be sent back here without losing a level, but you will have to wait another day before you can try again."

"How do you help them pass these tests?"

"We let them know about the special elite's fighting pattern. For those who prefer puzzles, we give them pointers before they enter. Most are able to pass after that. Now, these are the summary of how to fight the boss or the puzzle, which one do you want to choose?"

Sonny had two thick books in his hands.

"Uh... As I said, I'm just curious. I have no intention of leaving this valley. I come here for another reason."

"Haha, you say it as if you come here intentionally," Sonny again slapped Jack's shoulder.

Jack didn't try to convince the guy, he continued, "It's impressive what you people do here. One more thing. You said something about helping these people come down here safely. How do you do that?"

We have magic class players for that. They have the Float spell. They cast it before they hit the ground. One person can carry two people with that method. But this method is only good for coming down. There is a magical layer that prevented us from floating back up or even climbing.

"As I said, you people are very creative. You have my admiration. All right, I wish you luck. I will go do my own things now," Jack said.

"Your own things...? Wait, you are not joking about coming to this valley intentionally?" Sonny asked.

Jack gave him an exasperated expression. 'Didn't I say that a few times already?'

Suddenly they heard a commotion from outside. Someone came running to them and asked, "Sonny! Where is leader Tim?"

"He is not here," Sonny answered. "He went back to the city for some matters."

"Shit! Then you have to come with me. You are the second in command."

"What's wrong?"

"There are a group of people suddenly appearing outside. They said they are from Corporate United. They demand that we hand over the operation in this valley to them."

"What?! How did they find out about our operation?"

'Duh, dude,' Jack uttered in his mind. But he was also grinning inside despite showing a flat expression outside.

Peniel sensed his excitement and asked, "Why are you so happy?"

"Because this happens earlier than I expected. Must be my luck stat at work to have them come when I'm here. I thought I still need to wait some while before this happens."

"What happens? You expected the Corporate United members to come looking for trouble?"

"I expect someone to come, sooner or later. Now that they come, these people who have developed the business here will see how vulnerable they are. I can then start negotiating with them."

"Negotiate about what?" Peniel asked.

"You'll see. Let's follow them first," Jack said. Sonny had gone with his friend outside. Jack followed after them.

Outside, the group of low-level players who had been relaxing while waiting for the next wave of shadow monsters, now stood on alert as they watched another group of well-armored players.

"Who is the person in charge here?!" The leader of these well-armored players bellowed. Jack actually knew the person. He was Manager Straightpole, the expert that Jack had killed when Jack invaded Corporate United's headquarters.

Jack stood behind the low-level players so the Corporate United members didn't see him. Jack used his Inspect on the Corporate United group. There were thirty of them. Most of them were level 48. Manager Straightpole was level 43. He was probably still trying to catch up on his level after getting killed by Jack.

On the ground before Manager Straightpole, was the other level 47 who was Sonny's partner when he power-leveled the low-level players. He was lying on the ground in pain, his HP was critical.

"Ben, are you okay!" Sonny hurriedly came and helped his friend up.

"Are you the person in charge?" Straightpole asked.

"What do you want?" Sonny asked back.

"You can have your people pack and leave. From now on, this place is under the management of Corporate United," Straightpole said.

"But... We are here first!" Sonny demanded.

"And we are here second. So what? Do you want to leave or do you want to die? I think that will be a good idea. You people can be our first customers once you die. We will help you level up back to level 30 in no time, you just need to pay 10 gold coins."

"Ten? But it was five gold coins before. What about us that have paid?" One of the low-level players there asked.

"That's your problem with the old management. Ask for a refund if you like. But if you want to continue the service, pay us ten gold coins. Otherwise, go fight the shadows by yourself. And look for the exit elsewhere, because you still have to pay if you want to use the exit here."

"This is harassment, I will report you!" Sonny yelled.

"Hehe, you are funny," Straightpole laughed mockingly. "Who are you going to report to? The kingdom? Like they give a shit about what happens in the wilderness. I can kill you now and there won't be any consequence."

Straightpole thrust his trident forward. Sonny was caught unaware by this sudden attack. The trident stabbed into Sonny's stomach. Straightpole then performed a roundhouse kick. Sonny and his friend were struck by the kick and fell to the ground.

'Aren't you going to help?' Peniel sent her thoughts to Jack who was still hiding behind the crowds.

'Wait. It will be more dramatic if we let these villains rough them up a bit longer. This way, I will have better leverage when negotiating later,' Jack replied.

'You are the villain here,' Peniel remarked.

Chapter 824: A Robbery

"You...! How can you be so uncivilized?" Sonny scolded. "You people are acting like gangsters!"

"Oh? You only realized it now? You are unbelievably dense, eh? Yeah, we are gangsters who claim this territory now. Do you want to leave or do you want to fight us?" Straightpole asked. He aimed his strident menacingly at Sonny who was still on the ground.

"This goes for all you Growth Aid Agency people. Pack up now or face the wrath of Corporate United!" Straightpole bellowed. "As for you who are looking for service. You are welcome to stay but please prepare ten gold coins for payment."

"This is a robbery! I don't have that many coins!" One of the low-level players uttered.

"I don't care," Straightpole said. "You can stay here forever then."

"We can take them, there are only thirty of them!" Another low-level player uttered. An arrow soon flew and struck his head, resulting in a critical hit. He was only level 10. The hit killed him immediately. He came back to life soon on the same spot, but he was back to level 1 now.

"Even if you are more, you are just ants to us. We can crush you easily," Straightpole uttered.

The only high-level players opposite the Corporate United group were just the Growth Aid Agency members, but they only numbered sixteen. Only twelve were decent fighters to power-level the low-level players. The other four were there for management purposes. Additionally, their equipment was not as good as the Corporate United people. It was evident from a single glance.

Sonny looked at his comrades. They were never fighters. Jack had been correct about them being businessmen in the past world. Legitimate ones. Their fight was mostly in court, or in the worst situation, paying someone to fight for them. They only learned how to fight personally after coming to this world. They won't stand a chance against these brutes.

"So, how will it be?" Straightpole asked. "I will count to ten. If you Growth Aid People have not yet scrambled by the count of ten. Then don't blame us for being mean. One...!"

"No need to count!" Jack slipped out from the crowd. He gave Straightpole a wide grin.

"Yo—you...!!" Straightpole stammered.

"Surprise?" Jack asked, still flashing his grin.

"You... What are you doing here?!" Straightpole uttered. A member of his group sent a message in the party chat, 'Sir Straightpole, who is that? We can't inspect him.'

Another member answered him, 'You stupid. You don't recognize him? Hurry and wear your Amulet of Rebirth!'

That member turned to the one who had just answered with a questioning expression.

Straightpole took a deep breath, his expression then turned calm again. "You!" He said to Jack. "The last time you used a cheap trick to render me unable to move. I have been looking for the chance to return this shame. Now, I finally get the chance! Come, face me one on one!"

"Looking for a chance for a one-on-one? Are you serious?" Jack could hardly believe his ears. After pondering, he said, "All right, if you want a one-on-one, I think I can give you some leniency. I won't use any weapons. How about that?"

"How dare you! I will kill you!" Straightpole rushed out. His trident thrust and created multiple images.

Jack's feet moved with Eight Diagram Illusory Steps. Although Straightpole's trident was fast, it failed to hit Jack. With little movement, Jack moved out of the way just before the trident hit. All the weapon managed to catch was his afterimages.

Straightpole was frustrated, he used Ki Strike. The energy blast covered a wide area in melee range, so Jack's footwork would be useless in this case.

Although Jack could have tanked this attack, he didn't give his opponent the satisfaction of hitting him. He used Shooting Dash to dodge the attack before dashing back to Straightpole's back. He then used his fist and struck Straightpole's open back.

Damage number of 200 appeared above Straightpole's head. Straightpole was alarmed. Did Jack have a Battle Monk class as well? He summoned his spirit weapon. Both he and his spirit weapon attacked Jack together, but none of their stabs landed. Both Jack's Eight Diagram Illusory Steps and inhuman speed allowed him to dodge all attacks. While doing so, he threw a fist now and then. Every fist landed on Straightpole's body. Out of four punches, three produced damage numbers.

Jack had incorporated mana manipulation in his punches. Although he could not yet have perfect control during a real fight, using mana manipulation on his fists compared to weapons was much easier.

The mana inside this valley was also denser compared to the outside world. Hence, he saw this fight as training to further his mana control.

The other Corporate United members were unsure. Should they help? Straightpole had expressed a desire for a one-on-one. Would they be scolded if they help? But Straightpole appeared to be in trouble. One of them was about to help but he was stopped by his friend. He turned and saw the one who stopped him was the one who had warned them to wear the Amulet of Rebirth.

Jack's punches had reduced Straightpole's HP to half. In his rage, Straightpole didn't seem to be aware. He continued to strike with his trident, determined to land a hit.

Jack took an opportunity and slid to Straightpole's side when Straightpole was doing a strong thrust. That side was completely open. Straightpole's spirit weapon was on the other side, blocked by Straightpole's own body.

Jack took a stance. He aimed his palm with its fingers facing forward, forming a make-shift sword. He then thrust forward. A trail of light followed his thrust. His four fingers stabbed into Straightpole's waist. Jack had thrust his fingers using the martial art One-word Thrust and strengthened by mana manipulation.

Straightpole felt as if he had been stabbed by a real sword. Damage number of 2000 floated above his head, devouring his remaining HP.

His body fell lifelessly to the ground. Only to be revived back on the spot. He was now level 1 and was wearing common equipment.

"Dude, you never learn, do you?" Jack said to him.

Straightpole was having a complicated expression. He was indeed regretting not equipping the Amulet of Rebirth.

Jack then turned to the rest of the Corporate United members. "You people want to fight as well?" He asked.

"No... We don't want any trouble. We will leave," the one who had held his friend from interfering, said. Jack used Inspect on him. He was named Associate Clearhead.

"Some of you look unhappy, though," Jack said after observing the others. "Come at me however you like. You can go at me together."

"Get him!" One of those with unhappy faces uttered. Twenty-two Corporate United members rushed at Jack at the same time.

"Wait, don't!" Clearhead called out.

Jack just watched his incoming opponents with a grin. His sword and staff appeared. Spell formation was formed rapidly. Fifteen large vipers burst out and bound more than half of the rushing players. Jack then used Whirlwind Slash, hitting everyone, bound or unbound.

He then activated Asura and Magic Weapon. With six swords, he went around slicing everyone, prioritizing the ones that were not caught by his Myriad Venomous Vipers. In a short time, all twenty-

two players died. Those that were wearing Amulet of Rebirth, returned to life in the same place. Jack then killed them again, causing them to waste the amulets.

Straightpole watched with a blank face. If Jack had used weapons, he would have died in a shorter time.

Only seven remaining members of Corporate United, who didn't attack Jack, remained at level 48. Jack looked at them. Clearhead gulped and again said, "We don't wish to fight."

"Okay," Jack nodded and stored his weapons.

Clearhead was cursing in his mind. He was also spamming the party chat, scolding those who didn't heed his warning. He had been amongst those that had seen Jack in action when they attacked Heavenly Citadel the first time. These twenty-two morons did not.

"You can go," Jack said.

Clearhead helped the others get up. They were heading to the hub with the valley's exit when Jack stopped them.

"Halt!" Jack stood in their way.

"Bu—but... You said you let us go?" Clearhead stammered. He was worried this demon only toyed with them, that he would still slay them, after all.

"I said you can go, but not through here. This place is managed by Everlasting Heavenly Legends' partner. If you want to use the exit here, you have to pay," Jack uttered.

Sonny looked at Jack. Partner? Everlasting Heavenly Legends? Wasn't that the number one guild in this country?

'Ugh, no wonder this demon is here. So, this place is already taken by a powerful group,' Clearhead thought with regret. Their informant told them that this place was only run by a third-rate guild. He swore he would go and look for this informant after he returned and beat the shit out of him.

"Fine, here is 5 gold coins," Clearhead said.

"What 5 gold coins? For you people, the fee is 10 gold coins, for each. So, that will be 300 gold coins. Those that cannot pay just stay here and wait for your friends to come back with coins," Jack said.

"That's... That's a robbery!" Clearhead uttered.

"It is," Jack said. The table had turned on them.

Chapter 825: Cooperation to develop Valley of Tempus Training Ground

In the end, Clearhead and the other six collected their coins and managed to pay 300 gold coins for all of them. Jack was surprised. These Corporate United members were rather wealthy.

Clearhead again cursed the others who had lost their lives. They had also lost their belongings when they died, forcing Clearhead and the others to fork out the coins. He told them that he expected them to return the coins with interest.

Straightpole followed the others with an empty gaze. His spirit had been utterly crushed. Jack felt bad when he saw it. He thought about going and giving the guy some encouraging words, but after further thought, he concluded it would just do more harm than good.

After the Corporate United people left, Jack turned to Sonny, who was eyeing him with suspicion.

"So, you are also from a powerful guild? Your intention of coming here is the same as theirs? You want to take over our operation?" Sonny asked.

"I honestly only find out about your operation today," Jack said. "But as you see, there is no way for you to keep this operation a secret. The words are out already. One of the sharks has come. There will be more."

"So, are you saying it is better to hand over this place to your guild then? After all the hard work we did here?"

"No, I think your guild has done a bang-up job managing this place. I doubt my guild can do it better. What I'm proposing is cooperation."

"Cooperation?"

Jack nodded. "We provide protection and trainers. No offense to you people, but we have better fighters. We can better power-level these trainees. We will also station people up there at the plateau, keeping unwanted intruders away. We can also protect the trainees that are being chaperoned here. All you need to do is continue the management inside the hub and also look for clients in cities."

"And how do you propose we share the profits?"

"Half-half," Jack said. "I think that is a fair offer. With our channels, we can open access to other countries for you. That way, we can easily increase our client counts by many folds. Even with fifty percent profits, I believe you will see more coins than you currently enjoy."

Sonny seemed to seriously consider the proposal.

Jack added, "The most important thing is, you don't have to worry about getting attacked like just now again."

That seemed to hammer in the point. If Growth Aid Agency insisted on keeping this operation to themselves, they risked losing it altogether. They had no choice but to partner up with a strong guild. What better choice than the number one guild in the country?

"I... I will talk with our leader," Sonny said.

Jack nodded. From Sonny's expression, Jack saw that he knew partnering up was the only solution. Jack sent him a friend request.

"You... You are Storm Wind? The so-called strongest player in this country?" Sonny said after seeing Jack's name from his Friend request.

"I am called that? Hehe, that's flattering," Jack said. "Message service is blocked down here. Come with me up there. I will connect you to my associates. Our two guilds can talk it out on the details of our cooperation."

"All right, let's use the exit. Which one do you prefer? Fighting or puzzle?" Sonny asked.

"Too time-consuming, I will carry you up there directly," Jack said.

"Carry me up? How do...," Sonny's words were interrupted when Jack blew a red whistle and a raging flame appeared beside them. A scary-looking fiery horse emerged from the flame.

Jack climbed Pandora and offered Sonny to climb behind him. Sonny was hesitant. The fire horse looked truly scary. But he steeled himself and dismissed the fear in his heart. He climbed behind Jack.

"Hold tight. Hold really tight," Jack advised.

Sonny didn't understand but he did as he was told. When Jack felt Sonny's firm hold on his waist. He gave Pandora the go signal.

Pandora rushed to the cliff wall with speed. Sonny, who saw that they were about to crash into the wall at high speed, was screaming his heart out. Not only he, but some among the crowds that were still there also screamed when they saw the scene.

But Pandora didn't crush into the wall, she jumped to the wall and started running vertically. The people who watched on the ground no longer utter any noise. They just looked at the incredible scene as Pandora ran through the straight wall as if it was flat ground. Sonny was still screaming though. His scream continued to echo as he and Jack slowly went out of sight.

Pandora jumped out from the valley and landed on the plateau above. Sonny was all white. Jack just left him be. It took him almost a full minute before he could speak again.

The two then came down from Pandora and Jack started to send messages to John and Jeanny. Sonny did the same with his leader.

The messaging went on for quite some time. Jack explained to his two fellow guild leaders about the situation. John was very happy because if this operation worked out, they would settle the coin upkeep problem needed to support building a large army of high-class units. John reprimanded Jack for not asking for a larger portion of the profit. Jack scolded him back and threatened the guy to not try to extort the other party for more than the fifty percent share Jack had promised.

After this long-ranged discussion, it was agreed that Jeanny and John would arrange a meeting with Tim, the leader of the Growth Aid Agency, tomorrow in Thereath. Sonny would be joining the meeting since he had first-hand experience of when Corporate United came invading. He thought that he needed to be there to convince his leader into accepting this cooperation.

In the meantime, Jeanny sent a group of players to secure the place as a show of goodwill. They already had several magic class players who also possessed Float spells. So, they could get into the valley safely. Jack gave her his current coordinates, so those players could go into the valley from this spot. Hence, they would arrive right next to the hub.

"What are you planning to do inside the valley anyway?" Sonny asked. After seeing how Pandora could exit the valley easily. He now believed Jack's story.

"I'm looking for a place inside the valley guarded by this beast," Jack said while summoning Therras.

"Holy balls...!" Sonny had a jump when Therras appeared. "You truly have multiple classes as the rumors say. I still can hardly believe it."

"Have you seen a beast like this during your time down there?"

"I told you already that we don't wander far from the hub, right? But now that you mention it, I remember my leader told me a story about how he saw a cave guarded by a fearsome beast. He tried entering the cave a few times because he thought that cave might be an exit, but he was always killed in his attempts. He then gave up and went to look for another way."

"He didn't tell you the way to that place?" Jack asked. After hearing Sonny's story about his leader wandering for one year inside the valley, Jack was not eager to go back down without a direction.

Pandora neighed loudly when they were talking.

"She said is that why you come back to the valley? She asked you why you want to go back there?" Peniel translated.

"Oh, right! Madam Pandora, you are from there, right? That means you know the way, don't you?" Jack asked.

Pandora huffed and neighed again.

"She said of course she knows, but she doesn't like the place."

"Great! Please take me there. Don't worry, I won't let you get imprisoned again."

Sonny felt weird seeing Jack talk to the flaming horse. But then again, everything about Jack was unusual. He said goodbye to Jack and used his Town Return Scroll. He wanted to discuss the matter with his leader before tomorrow's meeting.

After Sonny was gone, Jack climbed back to Pandora and returned to the valley. He saw the players have returned to grinding the shadows after arriving down there. He didn't pay them any more heed and resumed his journey. This time, he let Pandora lead the way.

Pandora didn't follow the cliff wall. She just rushed into the abyss, which concerned Jack. He worried they might get lost. He was not keen on spending one year down here. Pandora couldn't escape this valley if there was no cliff for her to climb.

Peniel sensed Jack's worry. She told him not to worry. A Nightmare was a steed that could pass through planes, so the space irregularity in this valley won't hinder her.

True to her words, Jack soon saw a cliff wall ahead of them. Not only that, he saw the familiar opening on the wall and the Therras Beast who was lazing on the ground near it.

Jack jumped down and unsummoned Pandora. He walked brazenly towards the Therras Beast. The beast noticed his approach and stood up.

Jack readied his weapons and walked toward the beast with confidence. But when he was near, he sensed the mana surrounding this Therras Beast was not one that was weak. He used his Inspect.

*

Therras Beast (Rare Elite monster, Beast), level 70

HP: 750.000

Chapter 826: Special Class Trial

"Sweet Mother of the Lord...!" Jack jumped back and readied himself for a battle. He was already very close to the Therras Beast.

However, the Therras Beast just stared at him without moving an inch.

He looked again to make sure. His distance from the beast was less than the first time when he met this beast. Was the beast looked down on him again? Last time it did some stretching before it came charging, but now it stood unmoving and just stared at Jack.

Jack moved sideways with his attention fully on the Therras Beast, towards the direction of the cave. He expected the Therras Beast to attack him at any moment, but it never did. It even lost attention after Jack circled to his back. Its head stopped looking at Jack and turned back to the front. It then lay back on the ground in its previous lazing position.

"Huh?" Jack watched the beast with confusion.

He glanced to his back. The cave was just a few meters away. With his eyes still on the Therras Beast, he slowly walked backward until he passed the opening into the cave.

"It truly didn't attack... What's wrong?" Jack asked. The Therras Beast won't be able to attack anymore once he went inside the cave. There was an invisible layer that prevented the beast from entering.

"Don't know...," Peniel replied.

"Why is its level increased so much? I thought only outworlders can level that fast?" Jack asked again.

"Don't know!" Peniel replied with a louder tone.

Jack observed the Therras Beast for a while before saying, "I don't know why it didn't attack but I think I can hazard a guess as to why its level increases."

"Why?"

"Wilted said this place is one of his partner's secret spots, right? However, as time passed, more and more players will stumble into this place, such as those Growth Aid Agency people. If high-level players come and this Therras Beast's level is constant at level 45, then everyone will have no trouble taking the trials inside. This special class here won't be that special anymore. Since this Therras Beast improved in level following players' progression, it will always keep the special class inside here out of reach, until maybe when players hit the level cap. Which means, whatever special class is inside here, it is meant for end game content."

"I seriously have no idea what you are talking about," Peniel said.

"Game terminology, don't worry about it. Just know that this proves the special skill inside here is something unusual. Hehe. I'm truly looking forward to it now."

Jack didn't pay attention to the Therras Beast outside any longer. He turned around and headed inside. Since he already knew that there were no monsters or traps inside, he ran at full speed without worry. Last time it took him an hour of walking to reach the large cave hall. With his running speed this time, he arrived in less than fifteen minutes.

The hole he had broken through into Pandora's containment room was still there.

He looked around. This large cave hall only had that single window opening and the hole into Pandora's room. He had no idea what to do here. Last time the Test of Courage just activated by itself after he went to sleep. He didn't feel sleepy this time. He also didn't wish the trial to be the same horror experience as the last time.

"Hey, the old man who enjoys scaring people! Are you around?" Jack yelled.

"You are still as impolite as before," A voice came up behind Jack.

Jack jumped because the voice appeared directly behind him. He turned back and saw Majus in his illusory form.

"And you still enjoy scaring people!" Jack returned. "Can't you appear in front of me instead of my back? And so close even. Don't you know about personal space? Well, never mind that. I'm here to take on that special class trial."

"Oh, you are an archmage and level 50 already?" Majus asked. But before Jack could answer, Majus had added, "You truly are! That is quite fast. Good, good."

"You seem awfully happy. I take it you don't get many test-takers here, do you?"

"You still dare to say that! You have taken the Nightmare. I can't give anyone the first test even if I want to! Now, only you have the chance for passing this test. If you fail, then no one can get the special class here and my duty will never be fulfilled. So, you have better not fail, you rude and impolite youngster!"

"Whoa, whoa... Why suddenly get so agitated?" Jack said. "You said you need the Nightmare to give someone that horror test?"

"Yeah. Do you know where that Nightmare has gone to? Can you capture it back for me? I will reward you," Majus said. Jack received a quest notification.

"Uh? Um, no... I have no idea where that Nightmare is now," Jack lied. He promptly rejected the quest request.

Majus eyed Jack suspiciously, which caused Jack to smile wryly.

"Hm... Then you have better not fail this trial, kid. I won't forgive you if you do," Majus warned.

"Then give me info and tips about the trial. Help me increase my odds of succeeding," Jack said.

"I can't. I'm duty-bound to be impartial and not provide aids to the candidates."

"Not even info of what the trial is about and what I need to do to pass it?"

"Nope."

"What about the consequences of failing? Are you not allowed to tell me that as well? Will I die if I fail or something like that?"

"I suppose I can tell you that. If you fail, you won't be able to retake the trial anymore. This is a one-time attempt. So do not f*ck this up! If you fail, there will be no more candidates because the Nightmare is missing and I will be a haunted ghost forever. I will make it my mission to haunt you forever if that happens! Even if you die, I will still haunt you!"

"Damn, old man. I'm more scared by your threat than going against that level 70 Terras Beast down there," Jack said. "Speaking of which, why does that Terras Beast down there not attack me?"

"Because you have passed the first trial, the test of courage. That gives you the privilege of entering this place freely."

"Ah...," Jack remarked with a nod.

"Are you done with your questioning? Are you ready to begin the trial or do you still have questions?"

"I have lots of questions about the trial but since you are not allowed to answer me then there is no point for me to ask. Just begin the Goddamn trial!"

"I half-wish you to succeed because I'm not keen on being a haunted ghost forever, but I also half-wish you to fail because of your foul mouth," Majus said. "Well, anyway. Here comes the trial!"

Jack waited for something to happen, but everything is quiet. Nothing seemed to change.

"Old man, this is a letdown. Have you lost your juice? Or do you need the Nightmare for this second trial as well?" Jack asked.

Majus didn't reply. He just stood still and stared at Jack.

"Hm...?" Now that Jack paid attention. The ghostly old man had actually stayed exactly the same after declaring the start of the trial.

"Hey, old man! What's wrong?" Jack snapped his fingers in front of Majus. No reaction.

'The heck? Is he messing with me?' Jack thought. He decided to throw caution to the wind and slap the man. His hand went passed the man as if air. 'Oh, right. He is just a ghost.'

"Peniel, what do you make of this?" Jack asked. His hands were flicking around Majus' ghostly face. The old ghost's eyes just stared blankly ahead. Jack chuckled from his own mischief. He had been expecting Peniel to scold him by now.

"Hey, Peniel. Why are you so qui...," Jack's words stopped when he saw Peniel who was completely still in the air beside him. She was wearing the same blank look as Majus.

Jack knew then that something was not right. He waved his hands in front of his fairy companion. No response. Both Peniel and Majus had seemingly turned into statues.

Jack moved away and looked at the two. It was like looking at a still picture.

"Shit...," He uttered. It looked like the trial had already started.

*

Jack wandered around the large cave hall. Nothing seemed to be out of the ordinary. He checked every nook and cranny in that place. Nothing. He got tired and just sat in a corner and looked at the two still beings at the center of the hall.

He stayed there for a long while until he decided that he won't find any solution here. He needed to get out of here. It's too depressing here inside this hall with nothing but the two statues of Peniel and Majus. He looked outside the window opening.

'Odd...,' He thought. There was light. Sunlight usually couldn't come into this valley. However, another strange thing. When he came back down to the valley, it was almost noon. He estimated he already spent a great deal of time since then. It should be close to the evening already, but the sunlight from outside seemed like it was still noon.

He then walked down. He came out into the valley again, expecting to see a still Terras Beast. Instead, he saw no beast. In front of him after he came out of the cave was a large expanse of land and a clear sky. Which made no sense, because he was supposed to be in a valley.

He looked back and saw that there was still the tall cliff behind him.

He decided to summon Pandora and ran up the cliff. Back to the plateau above before trying to think about anything.

Nothing came out.

Chapter 827: Changes in Time

In his panic, he tried to summon other things. Terras, Spirit Weapon, his wolf pack. Nothing appeared. He even tried to call his weapons out but no response. He tried to send his consciousness into his inventory but it was like he had no inventory at all.

'This is like the first trial,' Jack thought. The difference was he still wore his equipment this time. Other than that, it seemed that every other game feature had vanished. He could also sense no mana at all.

"Is this a dream again?" Jack asked. He pinched himself. It hurt.

"No... Can't be a dream," Jack muttered. Last time, he went into the trial after he fell asleep. He didn't remember going to sleep this time. The trial simply started in the middle of his conversation with Majus. If this was a trial at all, to begin with.

He looked up at the sky. The fog that usually covered this valley was no more. He could see the sky clearly. The sun was at its peak. It's noon, all right. Did he spend one complete day inside without realizing it?

He walked around nearby. He didn't dare to go far. Trying to see if there was any clue. He couldn't find any.

He looked at the large expanse of land ahead of him. There was nothing. Not even any tree or mountain. He felt the urge to cross that land. He resisted the urge. He then looked up again at the sun and frowned.

He sat down on the ground leaning on the cliff wall and waited. After what he estimated as three or four hours, he looked up again.

It was true, the sun was still at the same spot. It didn't move at all.

What did this mean? The sun didn't move. Peniel and Majus didn't move... Time had stopped. He was the only one unaffected by this phenomenon.

However, he also didn't think they were still in the normal game world. Otherwise, he would see a valley instead of this large expanse of land. He looked back at the cliff wall. There was no longer a fog that covered its height. The cliff was very tall. Its wall was completely flat, with no handhold for climbing. It would be impossible for him to scale this wall without Pandora.

He returned his attention to the vast expanse before him.

"Ah, screw it!" He uttered and started walking. Staying in one place won't solve anything.

He walked and walked. He didn't know how long since he started walking, but it was a long time. Since the sun remained at the same place, he had no reference to gauge time.

He rested when he was tired. Then he continued walking again. He tried to walk in a straight line, but he was not sure if he did. There was no reference, no landscape. The only notable landscape was the high cliff wall that he had left behind. He used that cliff wall as a reference at first. As long as the cliff was behind him, it meant that he didn't veer off course.

But the cliff was not visible anymore, which meant he had walked a very long distance. He estimated that he might have been walking for days under normal time. He felt hungry and thirsty, but his body seemed to still be able to function properly. This proved that players' game bodies needed no nutritional intake. They were just doing it out of habit.

When he rested and slept, he drew an arrow sign on the ground to make sure he resumed traveling in the same direction again after waking up. He assumed as long as he went in a straight line, he should find something.

He continued, for how long he couldn't tell. He thought it might have been days? He was unsure.

Then one thing caught his attention. A tree!

He ran towards it. It was a dead tree. There was no leave. Just a large trunk with many branches. Even so, it was the one distinct thing in this otherwise empty landscape. Jack scrutinized each of its parts but found nothing special. He even touched every inch of the trees, but nothing happened.

He then sat laying on that tree. Tired and beat up and confused. He stayed there for a long time. At one moment, he looked up at the sky and felt that something was different. The sun's position had changed.

Was it that the time didn't stop, it only slowed?

He decided to stay longer and watched the sun. After hours of waiting, there was no noticeable difference. Perhaps because the time moved so slow that he couldn't perceive the changes with just a few hours of observation? So, he decided to resume his journey rather than wasting time here.

He walked, and walked, and walked.

He had grown a beard. He only realized it when he was unintentionally touching his face.

"How long have I been walking?" He said with worry. The beard felt more than half an inch. There was one time during his college that he let his beard grow. It took more than a month for it to grow this long. Had he been walking for that long?

His mind wandered to his friends, the guild, prince Alonzo, and the other natives. What could have happened in this one month? He couldn't send messages. Did the time outside continue normally? Or was it also slowed? He hoped it was the latter. Otherwise, if he came out of this trial, everyone might be many levels ahead of him already.

He stopped. Why did he use 'if'? He would finish this trial for sure. No way he was trapped in this trial forever. There should be a way out! Even if it meant failing the trial. He should be sent back into the game world again after failing.

Without realizing it, Jack no longer cared about completing this trial. He just wanted to go back out to the game world.

He continued his walk. He saw more dead trees as he proceeded. That first tree he encountered didn't feel that much special now. Additionally, the landscape wasn't entirely flat anymore. Sometimes it went up, sometimes it's down, but still mostly flat.

Jack didn't trim his beard. He had nothing to use for a time reference, so this beard had become that.

He tried not to think too much about it as he walked, until his beard was half a foot long.

"Shit...", he muttered. Had he walked for a year?

He sat down. He had long stopped bothering to draw a line to indicate his direction while resting. It would be okay if he ended up returning to the cliff wall again. Then he at least had something to look at, not just this empty expanse of land.

He no longer worried about the outside world. He didn't care if his guild was attacked. He didn't care whether Prince Alonzo had been crowned king or not. He didn't care if World Maker successfully overthrew the Liguritutum's rightful ruler and was now invading others. All he cared about was getting out of this blasted empty world!

He looked up at the sky again. The sun had moved lower. He just sat there and watched the sun.

'Hey... It is moving,' Jack thought. He couldn't be sure though. If it moved, it did so very slowly.

Jack decided to just lay there on the ground and watched the sky.

After what might be hours of waiting, he was sure the sun was moving. Its position was now around late afternoon.

That's weird, the last time he waited for hours while watching the sun, it didn't move at all.

After some pondering, he thought maybe the time stopped around that cliff wall. As he proceeded further, whatever affecting the time might have become weaker. So, the time was closer to running at a normal speed here.

With that train of thought, he stood back up and continued his walk. Perhaps once he arrived at the spot where time flowed normally, he could get back to the normal game world.

Fueled by hope, he walked faster than he had walked for a long time. Even running at first.

After what he thought were more days of journey... or months? He noticed the sky was getting darker. It was what the sky looked like when it was dusk. The sun was very low on the horizon.

Jack continued. He couldn't afford to stop. There must be something happening once time flowed normally.

So, he walked, and walked, and walked.

The sky finally reached its nighttime. Jack continued to walk, until it was dawn and eventually morning again.

The land also became more irregular. There were low hills all around. The frequency of dead trees also increased. He now saw two or three trees at any one time.

Day came and went. Night came and went.

His beard was now three feet long. He made a calculation. Was it six years already? He thought in consternation. He couldn't be sure. He felt that his beard had stopped growing for quite some while. Does that mean it was even longer than six years then?

He sat down and rested at one of the dead trees at the top of one low hill. He watched the sky. He could easily see the movement of the sun. It was fast. He had felt it to be so for some time. Now that he stopped and paid attention. He was sure now.

The sun had passed moving at a normal speed. It was faster than normal now. In what felt like a couple of hours, the sun had moved from its highest position to the horizon.

Nothing happened when he reached the point where time was flowing normally. Now that he had passed that point, he continued to walk. Because he didn't know what else to do.

Chapter 828: Direction of Time

Jack didn't know how long he walked. Years? Decades? He had been walking in auto mode. Day and night were now alternating between one another at a more rapid pace.

He felt his body getting weaker. He looked at his hand. His hands seemed thinner than usual. His skin had wrinkles. It felt like he had seen them for the first time. Perhaps it didn't register to him all this time or he just ignored them. He touched his face, there were wrinkles as well. He was getting older.

He looked at the sky which looked to be in a fast-forward mode. Was my body affected by the increased time flow as well?

There were more hills and dead trees. The land seemed like a chaotic mess. A far cry from what it was near the cliff wall where he started. He could hardly remember that time anymore. It seemed like ages ago.

How was everyone doing?

He tried to remember his friends' names. Nothing came into mind. Did he forget them? Did they forget him?

His legs finally felt like they couldn't move anymore. He fell to the ground. He turned around and laid on his back, looking up at the sky that was exchanging rapidly. Sun, moon, repeat.

Was this the end?

He remembered when he talked with a woman, her name also eluded him, that players could still die a real death. Death by old age. He was old now.

He admitted that this was a completely unexpected way to die. Alone. On an alien land that he didn't even sure where.

He decided this was the end of his journey. He was done walking. There seemed to be no end to this journey. His body also didn't seem to agree with continuing the walk anymore.

Now all he could do was just contemplate all this. He was done thinking about how to clear this trial or find a way out. He was past that now. He didn't even feel regret to have decided to take the trial that caused all this. He didn't feel the unwillingness due to still having many things that he should have done and planned to do. He didn't feel the fear of dying a useless and lonely death. He might feel all that during his journey, but now that he was lying down here. Spent. Those seemed unimportant.

All he had now was just his curiosity. What's the deal with all this? What exactly was the point?

Jack closed his eyes.

All he could think about this place now was its distortion of time. Time appeared to completely stop where he left Peniel and Majus. As he went on his journey, time seemed to start flowing. As he moved forward, its speed picked up.

There were times when he had considered turning back. To where Peniel and Majus had been frozen in time. Though it won't solve anything, at least he won't die alone. He would have died accompanied by two statues.

Now that he thought about it, why didn't he?

He thought back to those times. He felt compelled to go forward. There was no return. No going back. All he had to do was move forward. Like time. Time was one direction. You could only go forward, not backward. You could only go to the future, not the past. You could remember the past, not the future. You could influence the future, but not the past. Time in its actuality, was irreversible. It went consistently in one direction, as if an arrow.

Disorders and complexities also escalated in relation to time. This was expressed by the landscapes he had passed through. It was neat and empty at the start of his journey. As he journeyed further, the landscapes got more uneven with various trees in a chaotic arrangement. As time passed, a building without maintenance would fall apart by itself. It would not happen the other way around, the building would not repair itself with time. So did the human body. Just as how age was breaking his body down now with the passage of time. This was irreversible.

It's the same with complexities. A story in its infancy was most simple. As time passed, more plots were added, more characters were included, and more rules were incorporated. The story would become more complex as time passed. So complex that it was easy for the author to make mistakes and inconsistencies. Hence, amendments and retcons were sometimes implemented, which in turn, enhanced the complexities even more. The same thing happened with society, knowledge, technology, etc. They became more complex as time passed. This was irreversible.

So, time, in reality, was irreversible. There was no do-over. There was no loading previous save file. There was no replaying new game plus.

Wait... But he was not in the reality. He was in a world that had its entire underlying laws rewritten based on a game system.

"Hm...?" He felt something. He sensed something. Something that he had not sensed for a very, very long time. Mana.

He opened his eyes. Tendrils of light filled his sight. It was... mana. He saw it visually. The tendrils of mana formed a river of light, flowing in one direction.

He didn't know how he knew it, but he was certain that this mana river represented the time that existed within this place.

He extended his frail hand up, trying to touch those tendrils of light. He felt too weak to do his out-of-body experience. After a struggle, his finger finally brushed one of these light tendrils.

His thought was connected to the river from that touch. His consciousness was pulled out of his body into the stream. His understanding was further reinforced after connecting with the mana that governed time.

He felt his consciousness join this river. He merged with it. Flowed with it. He perceived time in its most basic essence. Indefinite enlightenment washed over him. He felt somehow transcended.

In this transcended state, he sensed a certain power influencing this time stream. The stream seemed to be constructed of immeasurable parts that formed the whole, like gears on a machine. Each part was essential. One alteration might cause a ripple effect on the whole system.

He reached to one of these parts. Like a gear, he shifted it. Rotated it.

The whole system started to vibrate. They tried to adjust to the change. The mana river slowed until it eventually grounded to a halt. Then slowly, the river flowed backward.

Within the river, Jack saw an astonishing sight. He saw his frail body getting up. His body then walked, backward. The scene didn't look right. It looked as if a movie was being played in reverse. He watched his body walking backward.

It was like watching a replay of his journey. He was in a true auto mode this time, he couldn't influence any change to it. He was just a spectator.

Days passed, months passed, years passed, even decades, as he watched his body walking backward through the path he had walked before. The stream followed exactly where he had walked through. Or perhaps it's the other way around? Unconsciously, he had been walking following the stream all those years.

Eventually, he saw the cliff wall from where he had started his journey. He saw the stream entering the cave from where he had come out from.

He followed the stream as his body reentered the cave, all the way up to the hall where Peniel and Majus were still in their statue-like state. He watched himself walking around the room, on a backward track from what he did. It ended with him back in front of Majus. The time stream began from where he stood at that time.

He felt himself flowing with the stream and re-entered his body.

"!lairt eht semoc ereH. yawyna ,lleW" Jack heard Majus utter as he stood before the illusory mage.

Majus' eyes then blinked. He looked at Jack as if he had just seen Jack for the first time.

"You did it...," he said.

At the same time, Jack heard a notification, "Congratulations on passing the special class trial. Your Archmage class has been upgraded to a special class, Time Sage."

Jack was blank for quite some while. When he reentered his body, he felt as if he had just been awoken from a dream. As if all the decades of the journey he had taken were just an illusion. A long dream, but a dream, nevertheless. He felt that he had gone through all that, but at the same time, it was just a second ago when he started his trial. He couldn't exactly describe how he was feeling at that moment.

"What do you mean he did it?" Peniel, who was floating beside Jack, asked Majus. "What trial? How is it completed already?"

She turned to Jack who was still having a blank face. "Hey, did something happen?" She asked.

Instead of answering Peniel, Jack asked Majus, "This... The trial..."

Majus gave him a sign to calm down. "It's rather disorienting, I understand. To be honest, I didn't have much confidence in you passing, considering your low level. I'm just glad despite your low level, you actually have already learned the basics of how to manipulate mana. Well done, young man."

"But... Why... Why couldn't I... sense the mana right from the start?" Jack stammered. His mind was still trying to adjust.

"Because you need to understand time before you can sense it, before you can become its master," Majus answered.

"Its master?" Jack asked.

"You are now a Time Sage. A mage who holds dominion over the most enigmatic element, time," Majus said.

"Time Sage? One of the Council of Twenty-four?" Peniel uttered with wide eyes.

Chapter 829: Time Sage

"Council of Twenty-four? What's that?" Jack asked.

"It's... sorts of like a league faction. However, it's a faction that is unique, as it only has twenty-four members at most," Peniel answered. "I thought this faction is just a myth. There has never been any evidence of its existence."

"Oh, you bet it is real, miss!" Majus exclaimed. "My real self used to be one of its members. When my real self passed away, I was left behind to oversee his legacy. To make sure that someone worthy takes over his mantle."

"You used to be a Time Sage? A member of the Council of Twenty-four?" Peniel asked. Her eyes were wide again.

"You bet I am. Are you impressed now?" Majus expressed a proud face.

"I still don't understand what's so great about that faction," Jack said.

"I can't believe my successor is someone who is unaware of the greatest faction in existence. Fairy, enlighten this uneducated ruffian," Majus uttered.

Peniel gave Majus a look that said, "Why me?"

"The greatest faction? Isn't that title held by the divine factions?" Jack said.

"The divine faction is considered the greatest because they are backed by a God or a Goddesses," Peniel said.

"Duh," Jack uttered.

"The Council of Twenty-four, although doesn't possess such endorsement, it is not considered less than the divine faction," Peniel explained, ignoring Jack's sarcasm. "This is because the twenty-four members of the faction are beings that possessed power close to divinity. When the twenty-four of them combined their powers, they have the power to rival a divine being."

"Or even triumph over a divine being," Majus added.

Peniel shrugged, "So the myth said."

"It's not a myth. It's a fact!" Majus insisted.

Peniel rolled her eyes. "Anyway, the council only has twenty-four members because this council required mortals who possessed specific special classes. These special classes are only owned by one mortal at any one time. As long as the owners of these special classes are still alive, no one else will have the chance to get these classes."

"And my Time Sage is one of the powers of this council?" Jack asked.

"MY Time Sage which I bestowed upon you," Majus uttered.

"By bestowing then it has now become mine."

"No, it is still mine, which I granted to you."

"She said only one person can have this special class. If it is in me now, then it is mine already."

"No, no, I am still the one and only Time Sage."

Jack's mind was still feeling tired. He decided to not entertain this meaningless debate anymore. He asked Peniel instead. "The council has twenty-four members with specific special classes. I can't help but notice it's the exact same number as the existing elite classes."

Peniel nodded. "Exactly. The twenty-four members of the council possessed special classes that are the pinnacle of each elite class."

"You mean, this Time Sage is the best special class there is for Archmage?" Jack asked in astonishment.

"The tale says it to be so," Peniel said.

"I can tell you for a fact that it is so!" Majus uttered.

"Yeah! End-game content!" Jack exclaimed.

Peniel and Majus looked at one another. Peniel shrugged, while Majus said, "It takes time to heal from the Time Sage trial. It's not for the faint of heart."

"You don't say! That trial is crazy! I thought I'm truly gone old and about to die already," Jack said and sat on the ground. His body felt well, but his mind was still drowsy.

"Actually, if you fail to comprehend time and come back, you will truly die of old age in that time realm," Majus said.

"What?" Jack said with wide eyes. Doesn't that mean permanent death? Wilted said they will still die of old age in this game world. He felt a cold sweat rolling down his forehead as he thought about how he had brushed true death so close.

"What's the trial about anyway?" Peniel asked.

Jack recounted his experience when he was in the trial. Peniel listened with amazement.

"Wow, you truly came close to dying," Peniel said after Jack finished his tale.

"You don't say! I can feel myself at the end already at that time. Damn! I feel shiver now just thinking about it."

"I'm glad you make it. So, how do you feel now?" Peniel asked.

"I don't feel like a seventy-year-old geezer, if that's what you are asking," Jack replied.

"Well, now that my duty is done, I guess it's my time for me to depart already," Majus said. "I'm glad you made it, kid. Otherwise, I'm really in a pinch of finding another candidate since no one can take the first test anymore."

"I'm glad as well, you eccentric ghostly coot," Jack replied. He then thought of something and said, "Before you go, since you are a member of the twenty-four, can you tell me where I can get the council's special class for Blade Dancer?"

"Unfortunately, although we are one faction, we don't truly keep a tab on one another," Majus replied. "I'm sorry to say I don't know where that sword maniac left his legacy."

'Ah, too bad,' Jack thought. Never mind, if it's not his fate to get the council's blade dancer special class, then it's not his fate. He didn't bother about it too much.

"Thank you, old ghost, for giving me the chance for the trial. Even when I almost lose my life for it," Jack stood back up and said to Majus.

"The pleasure is mine. I hope that special class serves you well as it did me," Majus replied. He then turned to Peniel and gave a goodbye nod, "Miss."

Peniel did a curtsy in the air.

Majus gave the two a warm smile as his apparition slowly turned more transparent, then vanished altogether.

Jack sat back down. His mind was still a little bit hazy.

"You okay?" Peniel asked.

"I'm not sure... When I'm at the end of my time during the trial, everything is sort of inconsequential... Don't get me wrong, I will give everything to meet and talk with you, with Grace, Jeanny, John, and the others, even if it's just for a minute. But what I'm saying is, I feel at peace. All the struggles that everyone seemed so concerned about, Master and his plan to rule this world, it's all felt pointless."

"So what? Are you telling me you are going to leave everything behind and be a hermit?"

"Haha," Jack laughed. "No. I'm just saying that experience truly put things into perspective. That being said, I am still going to kick Master's butt and keep this world a free world where all players and all natives can live together freely."

"That's the Jack I know," Peniel slapped Jack's arm.

"All right, let's check this special class," Jack said and opened his status page.

He had to wait until the next level up before he could check the attribute increase provided by this class, but the same as the elite class, a special class also provided inherent abilities upon acquiring the class. He also gained one new spell. He first checked his new inherent abilities.

*

Intelligence, Dexterity, Reflex +20%.

All recovery speeds +30%.

All hostiles within a 50-meter radius are slowed by 5%.

All allies within a 50-meter radius are sped up by 5%.

All ranged attacks are increased to 300% of their original speed.

*

"Ho... As expected of a pinnacle special class. These passive abilities are killer," Jack remarked.

The percentage boost on the stats was significant, considering his base stats were already high due to the combined attributes from his three classes.

Jack chuckled. "Even my magic class enhanced my speed. No one is going to rival me in terms of speed now," he said while checking his Dexterity and Reflex stats. His Dexterity had now gone past a thousand points.

Jack asked Peniel what it meant by all recovery speeds. Did it mean HP, stamina, and MP? Peniel answered those and also the recovery speed from debuff. So, if Jack was hit by a movement restriction spell, it would last only 70% of its original duration.

The two abilities that slowed hostiles and sped up allies were as if there was an active AOE spell around Jack all the time. He didn't even need to do anything and his friends were already faster while his opponents were slower than they should be. The affected area was even very large despite this being a passive effect.

For the last inherent ability, Jack did an experiment. He cast Mana Bullet. The spell indeed traveled at triple the speed than usual. Jack then swung his sword and used his Sword of Light. The crescent light appeared to hit the wall he was targeting at the same time his swing ended.

"Cool! It also affects my physical skills, not just the magical ones," Jack uttered with delight.

Sword of Light's speed was godly when everyone was still at low levels. But as players' levels increased, so did their dexterity and reflex. Hence, some expert players at this stage had no problem dodging the speedy attack. Now with the increase of his projectile speed, many of his ranged attacks would be deadly again even against fast opponents.

Chapter 830: Acceleration

Jack then checked the new spell he had gained when he was informed about his class change. He only got one new spell. Peniel informed him that for special classes, one would get a new skill or spell every ten levels, as opposed to previous classes which granted standard skills every five levels.

Peniel also informed Jack that not every special class was equal. For example, his Time Sage was the best special class there was. He would be getting new spells all the way until level 90, and then another one at level 99. Which meant that this class would provide him with a total of six spells when he reached the level cap.

Other special classes, on the other hand, didn't give that many new skills or spells. Peniel told Jack there were four classifications of the special class. Normal special class, second-class, first-class, and pinnacle.

Normal special class only provided new skills up until level 70, totaling only three new skills. The second-class special class gave a total of four new skills up until level 80. While first-class special class gave a total of five skills until level 90. The attributes increase provided during level up also differed, with the normal special class provided the least. But even so, the normal special class still granted larger attributes increase compared to the elite classes.

The pinnacle special class was what Peniel thought a myth until now when Jack became a Time Sage. There were only twenty-four such classes, all part of the council of twenty-four.

"About this Council of Twenty-four, you said it is a league faction, right?" Jack asked.

"That's correct," Peniel replied.

"Then it should have a base somewhere, shouldn't it?" Jack said. "If I'm a member of this council after becoming a Time Sage, what benefit do I get for being a member? Where should I go to get this benefit?"

"Uh, um.... I have no idea," Peniel said.

"Do you truly know about this Council of Twenty-four?" Jack asked with a skeptical look.

"Hey! Although this council is inside my knowledge, I thought it is just a myth until now. Not much is known about this council. It is said that only when all twenty-four of its members are gathered, then will this council show itself."

"What a cryptic faction," Jack commented. He didn't bother about it too much. He took a look at his new spell.

*

Acceleration, level 1/20 (Active spell, range, requires magic weapons)

Increase the overall speed of 1 target by 500%.

Range: 50 meters

Duration: 10 seconds

Cooldown: 1 hour

Mana: 200

*

Jack decided to try it out. He cast the spell, which used a five-runes spell formation. He used multi-rune casting, but since he was still not familiar with these new runes, it took him more than two seconds to cast. He chose himself as the target.

When the spell took effect, Jack found it to be similar to when he used Dragon Eye's active skill, but with one distinct difference. When he used Dragon Eye, the things around him appeared to slow down. However, it was only his perception that had increased in speed. The rest of his body still moved at a normal speed. Thus, although he could see an attack coming at a slow pace, it didn't guarantee that he could dodge. Because his body also moved at the same slow pace, as if he was moving through thick mud.

At this moment after casting the Acceleration spell, he didn't feel that heaviness that he usually felt when using Dragon Eye. He looked at Peniel whose wings were clapping slowly. He then turned in another direction and cast Energy Bolts.

Since there were no hostiles, the eight bolts just flew forward in a straight line. The bolts had increased in speed due to his passive ability's buff, but it still appeared slightly slow in his perception.

Jack ran forward. Under the effect of Accelerate Target spell, Jack's running brought him past the eight bolts before they hit the opposite wall. He then used his sword to cut at all eight bolts with ease.

Moving at five times the normal speed, no one would be able to cope with his speed. Not even his grandfather who had an inhuman reaction and response.

The only drawback compared to Dragon Eye was that this Acceleration spell required casting time, but Jack thought it was worth it. Although the duration was only ten seconds, in his five times acceleration, it would be fifty seconds for him. He could do a lot of things in those fifty seconds. All he needed to do was practice forming the spell formation to reduce his casting time.

"I guess we are done here," Jack said. "Let's head back down."

Jack went to the hole in the wall. When Peniel thought Jack would summon Pandora to take them back up, Jack jumped through the window.

"Hey!" Peniel chased after him.

Jack let himself fall all the way down. When he almost hit the ground, he cast Float and landed safely.

He looked around. Peniel flew down to his side.

"Why come down here again?" She asked.

"As I thought, the Therras Beast is gone," Jack said.

Peniel looked around as well, the beast that used to guard the cave entrance was nowhere to be seen.

"The trial is no more, so there is no need for it to guard this place anymore," Jack said. "I wonder if he just vanished or it becomes a free monster that roams around this valley?"

Peniel shrugged. "Both are possible."

"Hopefully the former. If it becomes a roaming beast and encounters Sonny's group, it would be bad for business. Let's check on them," Jack said and summoned Pandora.

Jack asked Pandora to take him to the hub where they met Sonny. After a short run, the three arrived in its vicinity. Jack saw a group of rookies with a couple of trainers tackling a wave of shadow monsters. He heaved a sigh of relief.

"What's the matter?" Peniel asked.

"I'm worried since the trial is no more, the special feature in this valley will be gone as well," Jack said. "If it does, then our arrangement with Sonny's guild will become a waste. I'm glad it is not so. The trial and this valley are two separate systems, they didn't influence one another."

"So, what's the next plan?" Peniel asked.

"I want to go check out the quest Janus gave us, that one about Eye of Illios," Jack answered.

"Okay, so we are going to Palgrost now?"

"No, we will return to Thereath first."

Pandora took them up to the Buscula Plateau. Arriving up there, Jack used his Town Return Scroll.

It was almost evening then. Jack also felt tired. The residue of his mind going through the decades of the journey inside the time realm still haunt him. He decided to just go to Amy's Bakery and rest for the day.

Before that, he took his share of the profits from both the restaurant and bakery. It had piled up since he departed with the reinforcement army to save Prince Alonzo, almost a month ago. The earnings netted him 239 gold coins.

He was served a satisfying dinner by Samantha and had a long chat with her and Amy before retiring to his quarter.

*

The next morning, Jack went around the capital to resupply. He spent around 100 gold coins to buy all the available ores and common-grade equipment from various shops.

After finishing his shopping spree, he decided to deal with the one remaining item that he had gotten from slaying Garland. This last valuable item was a unique grade orb that emitted intense lightning energy. Peniel was rather excited when she first saw the orb.

*

Orb of Raijin (Unique-grade Weapon orb)

Increase weapon's base damage by 15%.

Convert weapon damage into the lightning element.

All skills or spells that deal lightning damage +20% to damage.

Each standard attack has a 5% chance to produce chain lightning that strikes up to 7 hostiles, dealing 50% lightning damage.

*

Peniel explained to Jack that this weapon orb was something that could be etched into a weapon. Any weapon. The etched weapon would receive the buffs described in the orb.

Jack had been thinking about which weapon to etch this weapon orb into. He dealt more attacks using his sword, but currently, his magic staff had higher damage points, so the orb will give more damage increase if it was used on his staff. Yet, his Storm Breaker could be said his permanent weapon, while his magic staff was not. The staff would be replaced if he got a better one.

Peniel informed Jack that he didn't need to worry about making the wrong choice. The weapon orb could be taken out from the etched weapon and applied later to another weapon, all he needed was just pay the cost.

Jack went to the blacksmith workshop where he used to rent its room for blacksmith works in the past. The shopkeeper still remembered him and greeted him cordially.

Jack informed the shopkeeper of his purpose. The etching process required a special forge so Jack couldn't do it by himself. Aside from the blacksmith workshops in the city, the other place that Peniel knew of that might provide the service was the facility at Blacksmith Circle. The guild's blacksmith workshop similarly didn't have the facility. Peniel informed that only after upgrading the guild's blacksmith workshop to level 5 then it could provide the service to etch weapon orb.