

World 841

Chapter 841: Greed's Offer

Jack put a hand on the portal. He felt like he was touching a solid wall.

"It's blocked... I can't pass through," Jack uttered.

"Shit!" He cursed and looked around, but this was the only portal in sight.

"Do you think there is another exit?" He asked Peniel.

"I don't know...", Peniel shook her head.

By then, the thirty-third wave was already approaching.

"F*ck!" He cursed again and went to meet this next wave. He fed his amulet a hundred mana cores and summoned Ice Demon Fiend.

As expected, there were nine rare elites inside this wave. Luckily, his Therras was still in its Sovereign mode. Jack had it fired its ultimate attack, Earth Core Bomb. While at the same time, he used his Supreme Dragon Transformation and fired his Soul Breath. The combination assault took out a large portion of HP from the incoming horde.

Jack activated Therras' supersonic mode while it was still in its sovereign mode. Its speed increased and it mowed down the special elites that were low in health. Jack also instructed Ice Demon Fiend to use its ultimate attack, the Ice Spears Rain, to strike the remaining special elites.

The rare elites again converged on Jack. When they all rushed to Jack, Jack waited until they almost crashed at him before he used Hundred Shadow Strikes. Jack vanished just as the combined attacks from the nine rare elites arrived. In exchange, twenty shadows struck all the nine rare elites.

After delivering the attacks, the twenty shadows fused back into Jack next to the nine rare elites. Jack took the chance when they were still disoriented to clash directly with them.

Too bad Jack's Asura state was no more, he could only do his best contending against these many rare elites with his Formless Flowing Sword style. His Ice Demon Fiend was behind him, supporting him with its slow aura and its ranged freeze balls.

Jack cast Acceleration on himself. The nine rare elites which were already slowed by Ice Demon Fiend's slow aura, appeared even slower after Jack's Acceleration spell took hold. It was similar to the slow-motion effect of Dragon Eye's active state, but he himself was still moving at normal speed.

His two dragon claws burst into a torrent of attacks. It was the burst attack of his sword art. Forty-eight rapid attacks struck the nine rare elites accurately on their multiple weak points. He never missed his daily training on his sword art. He felt like he was near the third phase of his sword art.

During the ten seconds Acceleration duration, which was fifty seconds in Jack's perspective, he continued to throw burst attacks one after another. He concentrated one wave of burst attacks on one opponent before moving to the next, to take advantage of the combo multipliers' damage boost.

Because Acceleration slowed down time, the break from one burst attack to the next didn't reset the combo multiplier. The combo continued to build up and enhance the damage. He felt great fatigue by the end of his spell's duration.

'Maybe I've pushed it too much,' Jack thought as his movement got dull.

The nine rare elites were also no longer in slow-motion effect. They hit Jack from all angles. Jack used his Wing Shield to defend, he crouched down and covered himself with his wings. At the same time, he instructed Ice Demon Fiend behind him to fire its Ice Beam.

The Ice Beam hit all nine rare elites and Jack. A thick ice wall was formed, encasing Jack and the nine rare elites inside.

Jack used Willpower and broke free from the ice prison. He then fired ranged spells at the encased rare elites. The ice wall couldn't hold the rare elites long. Cracks appeared in a short time and the ice wall was soon shattered.

Jack again dove in and clashed with the nine directly using his sword art. Peniel cast Healing Field to keep Jack alive.

After a long and tiring battle, Jack finally brought down all nine rare elites just as his dragon form ran out of duration. At that time, most of the other special elites were already defeated by Therras as well. Jack saw in the distance the thirty-third wave appearing.

He had no doubt there would be twelve rare elites inside. No way he was going to survive this next wave with all his most powerful skills and spells still on cooldown. Should he run? But where to?

Seeing no solution, he decided to help Therras and Ice Demon Fiend to finish up the remaining special elites before that next wave arrived. Perhaps if he died, he would be sent back out? He would lose half a level, though. Which was throwing away the exp points gained from entering this portal.

When the last of the special elite fell, Peniel exclaimed, "Look at the portal!"

Jack turned and looked. The previously red portal had now turned into a green color.

'Does that mean the portal is passable now?' Jack thought.

The thirty-third wave was already near. Jack had the Ice Demon Fiend go and block them while he ran to the portal. When he was close, he jumped with his feet first into the portal. Different from before, the portal no longer barred him entry. When he passed through the portal, Therras was automatically unsummoned.

Jack was at full speed when he dove into the portal feet first. When he came out of the tree where he entered, he fell on his back to the ground.

He was still panting while lying on the ground when he heard a voice, "I was tempted to have you go one more wave inside there."

Jack turned to the voice and saw Greed standing beside the tree with the portal he had just come out from.

"Didn't you say you are only coming back tomorrow?" Jack asked.

Greed shrugged. "I break my words. So what? What are you going to do about it?"

"Uh... nothing," Jack replied.

"I thought so," Greed said. "So, do you like it in there?"

"I will love it if I'm allowed to exit on my choice."

"But then, you won't be pushing your full potential. You have to keep pushing yourself more than what you are capable of. That's how you can keep on improving. That's how you can get more, and more, and more, by keep on pushing."

"That's... a very greedy method, indeed," Jack remarked.

"Greed is good," Greed said.

"Hey, I heard that line before in a movie... I can't remember which one...," Jack muttered.

"All right, tell you what. You enter one of these portals daily, and I will let you live."

"Huh? Are you not planning to let me live before?"

Greed shrugged. "I was still considering it. Now, after seeing you entering this portal and how entertaining it is to see you struggle, I think I am going to keep you around."

"Until how long?"

"Why? Does it matter?"

'Duh!' Jack uttered in his mind. Outside, he said, "I still have many things to do in the outside world."

"Those can wait," Greed said nonchalantly. "I might even give you that Eye of Illios you covet so much if you entertain me enough."

Seeing that he had no choice anyway, Jack said weakly, "All right..."

"Hey! Don't look so dispirited. It displeases me!"

"All right!" Jack said with fervor.

"But each day must be a new portal than the one you have taken before," Greed added.

"They are not the same? What's inside the other portals?" Jack asked.

Greed shrugged. "You will find out when you enter. All right, get some rest and give me good entertainment tomorrow."

Greed then vanished again.

Jack looked around. Although Greed had gone, Jack was sure he was still being watched, as had been proven.

Jack spent the rest of the days practicing mana manipulation and his sword art, with an emphasis on his sword art. The battle just now had given him a good feeling that he was about to reach the third phase of the Formless Flowing Sword style. Yet, after practicing till night, he felt that there was still something missing. He just couldn't cross that final hurdle. He had tried using Dragon Eye's active ability while executing his burst attacks, as he did the last time when he mastered the second phase, but he couldn't find the flaws that needed improving.

He went to sleep with a mind full of thoughts about his sword art.

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The next morning, when he woke up. Greed was already waiting.

"Ready for your next portal?" Greed asked.

"Not really," Jack answered.

"You still have to take one. If you want to live, that is."

Jack sighed. "Let's go."

They went into the small forest. During Jack's walk inside the forest yesterday, he counted around twenty-two trees with the portal. He came to the one he had entered yesterday and found it to be red.

"You can't pick the same one as yesterday," Greed said.

Jack nodded and walked to the next closest one. Since he didn't know what was inside each of the portals, there was no point in choosing. He turned to look at Greed who was grinning before turning back and entering the portal.

As he appeared on the other side, he was surprised to find himself underwater.

"What the f*ck..." He uttered and ended up swallowing a mouthful of water.

He looked back. There was no portal. He looked around. He was on a seabed. There was no portal as far as his eyes could see. There was no exit.

Chapter 842: Terrors from the Deep

Jack looked around the place again. The seabed was sand seabed with various marine sediments, coral reefs, and ocean plants. Multiple small fishes were swimming around him.

He saw a large mound ahead of where he had appeared. There was a big hole in that mound, a cave. He wondered if he should go there? The other directions were pretty much bland. The seabed just went on to infinity, similar to the barren plains of the first portal.

He looked up. He then swam up. First, he would like to look at what's above the water. The water surface was not far.

His head soon came out of the water. He looked around. It was water as far as his eyes could see. No land. The sky was also normal.

As before during an underwater situation, Peniel had fled into her hidden dimension to avoid getting wet. Now that there was dry air, she appeared in the air.

"Do you know what we are supposed to be doing here?" Jack asked.

"Beats me," Peniel answered. "I don't see anything worth mentioning."

"Hm... I guess we have to enter the cave I saw down there," Jack muttered. He could change into the dragon form and flew around to take a look, but he doubted he would find anything worthwhile. He might even lose the way back here if he did that.

"Hey, what's that?" Peniel asked while pointing. At the same time, Jack saw a red dot in the direction Peniel was pointing at.

Jack looked over in that direction. He became tense after seeing what caught Peniel's attention. What he saw was what had often created the terrifying scenes in those horror movies featuring sea, a large fin on the surface of the water. And this fin was heading at him.

Jack immediately dove back into the water to take a better look. He was not disappointed. It was indeed a large great white shark swimming at a fast speed at him.

Jack used Inspect on the shark.

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Great White (Special Elite monster, Aquatic), level 51

HP: 280.000

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The shark dove into the depth before coming up with an open mouth full of teeth.

Jack took out his magic staff and erected a Magic Shield before the shark crashed into him. The momentum of the shark's attack threw both Jack and the shark high into the air.

Jack then brandished his Storm Breaker and cast Magic Weapon. "You might be a terror in real life but you are just a special elite here!" Jack uttered and used Penta Slash on the shark while in the air.

When he fell back into the water, the shark was swimming in a circle around him, ready to attack again. Jack waited for it to attack. In his experience during past water combats, it was easier to let the monsters come at him rather than chase after them. Unless he changed into his dragon form, his movement was not as fluid as on land.

Before long, the shark had come again from Jack's back. Jack immediately whirled around and cast Magic Shield again. While the shark bit his shield, he used Flame Strike in an uppercut motion. The knockback force sent the shark to burst through the water surface for the second time and flew even higher in the air.

Jack then cast Magic Wall and placed it on the surface of the water, creating a make-shift raft. The shark fell on the translucent magic wall, to which Jack climbed up. The situation had now been reversed. Jack

could move freely while the shark was floundering on top of the magic wall. Without further ado, Jack delivered non-stop attacks on the helpless shark.

The shark's HP was zeroed before the magic wall's duration was over.

When Jack fell back into the water, he saw three new red dots on his radar. He turned in the direction of those red dots and saw three familiar fins in the distance. Was this like the portal before? Would he be getting waves after waves of sharks that were increasingly stronger and more in number?

But if it was so, then there was one major concern. The waves in yesterday's portal were seemingly endless. If it was the same here, then he needed to locate the exit point before the wave became untenable.

After a brief thought, Jack decided to ignore these incoming sharks and swam right into the cave he had seen below.

He looked back just as he was about to enter the cave. The three new great white sharks were close already. All three opened their large mouths ready to bite. Jack cast Tracing Beams, which knocked the three sharks back. He then swam into the cave.

He looked back again after swimming a little into the cave. It would be easier for him to fight inside this cave, the sharks could only attack him from one direction. He waited for those sharks to enter, but they didn't.

Jack swam back to the cave's mouth and peeked out. The three sharks were swimming in a circle around the cave entrance but showed no intention of entering.

Looking at the situation, Jack was now sure he was meant to enter this cave. All those shark attacks were simply to drive one into this cave.

Since it was this way, Jack proceeded to swim deeper into the cave.

He came into a branching pathway soon. He looked at the two options and then checked his radar. In the direction of the two pathways, one had many red dots while the other was empty.

"Hm...," After considering for a bit, he decided to choose the safe passage. Under normal circumstances, he might have chosen the dangerous option since that would give him exp points. But he was in uncharted territory, better to play it safe this time. He was sure that Greed fellow had something prepared for him by the end of this cave, considering that God's 'push beyond the limit' ideal.

Jack continued to swim and encountered branching pathways again and again. Every time it was the same where one pathway had hostiles while the other was empty.

Another difference was that the cave's tunnel was wider the deeper he went. Soon, he came out into a giant vertical tunnel. He looked up and down. Which way should he go?

Jack decided to swim up first. After some swimming, he came to the ceiling of the tunnel. There was nothing there. This meant the correct direction was going down. He then swam back down, just as a red dot appeared on his radar.

This red dot didn't appear from his radar's edge like normal but was immediately positioned close to the center. It was as if this hostile appeared out of thin air, or out of thin water in this case. Jack looked up. He could still see the tunnel's ceiling. There was nothing there. Which meant this red dot was below. He swam down. It was only one dot and it was of normal red color, meaning it was at a level he could still cope with. Nothing to worry about.

As he dove deeper, he could see the hostile swimming up from the deep. This water tunnel was pretty dark, if not for his Dragon Eye, the beast might have been able to sneak close to him before his mana sense picked up the danger. It was another shark. A shark three times the ones he saw outside.

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Megalodon (Rare Elite monster, Aquatic), level 51

HP: 570.000

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'Of course, another terror from the deep,' Jack commented in his mind.

Jack had no problem going one on one against a rare elite, but this was underwater, so he decided to be prudent. He started by casting Magic Field, boosting all his magic spells. He then initiated combat by firing his offensive spells, some of which triggered double-cast due to Magic Field's effect.

The Megalodon barreled through the attacks. It seemingly had a higher defense compared to the Great White.

When it was close, Jack used Magic Bind. A ring of light held the shark in place. This advanced spell could only last a moment before Megalodon shattered it with brute strength, but the pause was enough for Jack to complete casting Myriad Venomous Vipers.

The spell triggered another double-cast. Two bubbles appeared near the Megalodon. It tried to swim away. It was fast, but its speed had been halted by the Magic Bind. Now that it had to accelerate again, it wasn't enough to escape the vipers' zone. Thirty green vipers appeared and wrapped the Megalodon's gigantic body.

While it was incapacitated, Jack approached. He cast Phantom Blade before started dishing out punishments.

Being unable to move, the Megalodon could only take the beatings without the ability to fight back. Jack activated Asura and Adrenaline Rush to speed up his attacks. The thirty vipers also continuously bit the Megalodon and infected it with Poison.

By the time the forty seconds duration of Myriad Venomous Vipers ended, the Megalodon's HP was already close to critical. Jack used the burst attack of his Formless Flowing Sword style before the Megalodon went free. With three pairs of arms, the combo multipliers were tremendous.

When the Megalodon started to swim away, Jack sent Wind Slash. The five wind energies cut through the Megalodon and finally claimed its life.

With this obstacle vanquished, Jack swam down again. As he did, another red dot appeared again close to him, which meant it was inside this vertical tunnel as well.

The difference was that the red dot this time was bigger and had a darker red color.

'Oh, shit...,' Jack uttered in his mind.

Chapter 843: The Eight-Armed Terror

Jack stopped swimming after seeing that big dark red dot. It was right next to him on the radar, meaning it was inside this vertical tunnel. Since he was just from up there and there was nothing there, this new hostile should be further down in this tunnel. This new monster should still be far down there despite the dot being right next to him. Because his radar was two-dimensional, it didn't show the distance in correspondence to the above and below directions. The red dot just show up recently, he figured the distance of this hostile down there should be the distance of him to the edge of his radar, which was three hundred meters.

Jack looked down. It was dark. The water obscured his Dragon Eye and Keen Sight skill from looking into the distance.

'Are you going to go down?' Peniel asked from inside her hidden dimension.

'I don't see any choice,' Jack said. 'I guess this is that eccentric God's idea of pushing one's limit. But I am going to wait one hour first. I might need the Asura again.'

After one hour passed, Jack was ready to go down. But before he did, he said to Peniel in his mind, 'Hey! I will need you out for this. I need your boost to my HP recovery and also to be ready with your heal at any moment.'

'Uh... Do I have to?'

'Damn it, do you want me to die?'

'Urgh, fine...!' Peniel reappeared beside Jack. 'All this water, so uncomfortable,' she complained. She clung to Jack's shoulder. Her flying was slowed underwater, it would be difficult to keep up with Jack if anything happened.

'All right, let's go. Be ready for anything,' Jack said and resumed swimming down.

While on his way, he cast Barrier as well as activated Life Burning Art. His life went down due to the activation of Life Burning Art but it slowly recovered again as he swam. He swam close to the wall of the tunnel.

As he proceeded deeper, the water was getting even murkier. He felt pressure with his mana sense even though the hostile monster was not yet visible. He knew then from this mana sense that the hostile was most likely a mythical grade.

'The darkness in this water is unnatural,' Jack said. 'It's as if it was full of ink.'

Just as he thought about that, he sensed an incoming danger. Luckily, he had positioned himself near the tunnel's wall. Most of his movement skills required footing to execute. He immediately planted his feet on the wall and used Shooting Dash.

His body zipped away as a huge tentacle came by and crashed the wall where he used to be. He looked back at that tentacle. No, it's not a tentacle, it's an octopus' arm. It had two rows of large suckers in the entire length of the arm.

He then sensed another attack coming. He used his second dash to dodge this attack as well. And then another.

When he was out of his third dash, there was still another attack. He used Charge on the wall to continue the dodge. After the fourth attack, he was relieved to find the attacks had stopped. He was ready to use either Blitz Slash or Roll to dodge. He was not even sure if Roll would be working on a vertical wall.

After dodging those four attacks, he had come closer to the monster. He saw it now. It was a gigantic octopus.

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Kraken (Mythical monster, Aquatic), level 51

HP: 1.180.000

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'A monster from the myth that is mythical-grade, how fitting,' Jack thought.

The previous four attacks came from half of its eight arms that were facing Jack's side. These four arms were retracted now and seemed to be preparing for another round of attacks. But before that happened, the water under the Kraken turned pitch black and it was spreading.

'It released black ink?' Jack thought in consternation. So, the murky water was a residue of its ink, not the water's natural state. With the new injection of the Kraken's ink, the water soon became pitch black as the ink covered the water around Jack.

At the same time, Jack received notification that he had been afflicted by a status ailment, Fatigue, which increased the consumption of his stamina and mana.

This ink had such an effect? This meant it would be very difficult for a melee player to deal with this monster. Not only was it impossible to see the monster with all this ink, anyone who came near would get this negative status effect. This Fatigue status meant that a prolonged battle against Kraken would be disadvantageous because it was impossible to defeat a mythical-grade monster in a short period. Most likely the attacker would run out of stamina and mana first.

Before Jack could think of any solution, he sensed the attack coming again. He couldn't afford to hold back, so he used his beast form. His transformed body immediately shot away as he flapped his wings. He zoomed in and out avoiding the Kraken's arms assault, depending entirely on his mana sense.

He summoned his Spirit Weapon but instructed it to move away and attacked from range. He also summoned Ice Demon Fiend. He didn't summon Therras because he was not sure how well it would perform underwater. It was fine if the Ice Demon Fiend or Spirit weapon were killed. They would still be fine the next time he summoned them, but not Therras.

He cast Acceleration on himself to increase his speed and make it easier for dodging the Kraken's arms as they kept on trying to grab him. He continued to slip through the arms with his increased speed and arrived before the Kraken's main body.

Jack then activated Overlimit, Adrenaline Rush, Phantom Blade, and executed Hundred Shadow Strikes.

Each shadow generated around 2,500 damages, with several of them scoring critical hits. The total resulting damage was around 80,000. Despite using ultimate attack with so many buffs, it was not even enough to take out ten percent of this Kraken's HP. Jack couldn't afford but be amazed by its mythical-grade defense.

The Kraken didn't just stay still and let Jack do a second attack. It lifted its large body and revealed a huge circular mouth with uncountable sharp teeth.

'Oh, shit!' Jack was just about to use Asura and battle it out with the Kraken at close range. But once he felt the mana accumulating in that mouth, he hurriedly used his dragon form's Wind Jet and shot himself away. However, before he was far enough, he felt a strong pulling force. The Kraken's mouth was sucking water with incredible force. Jack felt his body losing control and was pulled by this force. He immediately activated Gold Dragon Armor to stabilize his body. He then flapped his dragon wings frantically as he tried urging his body to fly away. However, his dragon flight was not strong enough to resist the pull. He was slowly getting dragged back.

Seeing its master's predicament, the Ice Demon Fiend came forward to locate the Kraken's mouth through the dark water. The Kraken's arms had stopped attacking when it started using its sucking ability, so the Ice Demon Fiend was unobstructed. The Ice Demon Fiend then fired its Ice Beam right at the Kraken's mouth.

The Kraken's mouth was frozen and its sucking force interrupted. Finding himself able to advance again, Jack immediately broke away with speed. The ice covering the Kraken's mouth lasted only an instant. It was soon broken. The Kraken stared at the Ice Demon Fiend with rage. Its arms snapped out. The Ice Demon Fiend was unable to dodge the arms at such a close distance.

Two of the Kraken's arms caught the Ice Demon Fiend. One grabbed the fiend's upper body, the other one held its bottom part. The suckers on the arm glued the Ice Demon Fiend's body. Once the arm grabbed its prey, the sucker would prevent the prey from escaping. With the two arms firmly holding the fiend's body, the Kraken pulled his arms in two opposite directions.

Jack watched with dismay as damage numbers upon damage numbers continuously popped up above the gripped Ice Demon Fiend. Until eventually, when the fiend's HP reached zero, its body was forcefully ripped into two.

Jack didn't just stay still as he watched the Ice Demon Fiend's demise. Its sacrifice brought a few precious seconds where the Kraken was distracted. He also had to maximize all his damage while his

Overlimit was still active. He sent his Spirit Weapon forward, executing its Finishing mode. At the same time, he used Lightning God Barrage.

As the spirit weapon's finishing mode and twenty lightning balls converged on the Kraken, Jack fired his Soul Breath. The tree combination attacks produced an astounding explosion.

As the water settled, Jack saw that the Kraken had two missing arms. It appeared to have sacrificed its two arms to block the explosive assaults. Jack used Inspect and found that the Kraken's HP was still above 800,000.

Jack's heart sank. He had practically used most of his trump cards but it was still far from enough to take down this mythical Kraken.

Chapter 844: Portals

When Jack's combined assaults struck the Kraken, the resulting explosion pushed the water aside. The ink produced by the Kraken was heavier than water. After the explosion pushed everything aside, the water returned soon but the ink stayed aside. As a result, the water around the Kraken became clear. As it did, something caught Jack's attention.

'That's... Is that what I think it is...?' Jack said while pointing.

Peniel looked in the direction Jack was pointing. 'Hey, I think it is, and it's green!'

What Jack pointed to was something that looked like a small green oval plate from a distance, but both Peniel and Jack knew better what it was. It was the exit portal.

'So that's what this place is about. We are never meant to defeat this mythical-grade monster. It's too far-fetched, even for that crazy God's idea of pushing past my limit. Our task is to sneak past this mythical monster and safely reached the exit!'

Knowing the objective, Jack's spirit was fired up again. Luckily, his Supreme Dragon form's duration was not out yet. Too bad he had used his acceleration spell. Otherwise, it would be easy to fly past the Kraken. But the Kraken had also lost two arms. With only six arms, it should have a harder time catching Jack.

When Jack thought in that way, he saw the arms that had been blown apart by his ultimate attacks, slowly grew back again.

'F*ck! It can regenerate its lost limbs!' Seeing that, Jack had no time to delay. He immediately shot forward.

He again flew close to the wall. His Shooting Dash was off cooldown. The Kraken's arms came as expected and Jack used Shooting Dash as planned. His three consecutive dashes afforded him to dodge all the Kraken's arm attacks while successfully passing the monster's position. Now all he needed to do was rush to the green portal.

The Kraken's arms were fast, but its main body was slow. So once Jack had gone past the Kraken, it was easier. The Kraken continued to snap its arms at Jack, preventing Jack from reaching the portal. Jack activated Dragon Eye. Although his body can't move as fast as when he used Accelerate, he could see

the arms in slow motion. Hence, he could control his movement more precisely, dodging the arms at a hairbreadth.

He just hoped the Kraken won't be using the mouth-sucking move again. Considering that was a big move, Jack assumed the monster couldn't do it often.

Just as he dodged the last arm's grab and was about to reach the portal, something suddenly protruded out from the tip of the last arm. It was a long hook, and this unexpected hook covered the distance and stabbed into Jack's leg. Jack received damage as well as felt great pain from the stab. He was also afflicted with poison status.

The arm that hooked him dragged him away from the portal and threw him further.

While he was still unbalanced, he was captured by another arm. With the suckers holding him in place, it was impossible to escape.

'Damn it! Don't you think you can hold me!' Jack uttered in his mind and used Willpower.

The race skill broke Jack free of all movement restrictions. The arm was forcefully knockback from Jack's body. Peniel also cast Fast Heal on Jack, recovering his HP and all the negative effects.

Jack immediately flew towards the portal again. While he did, he used another of his race skill, Ambition. This skill increased his movement speed by fifty percent as well as lowered all the damages received.

While giving another try to reach the portal, he activated his last skill that sort of manipulated the time, Gold Dragon Sight. The arms assaults again appeared slow-motion in Jack's perspective. This time, Jack paid attention to the possibility of the hidden hooks at the tip of the Kraken's arms.

However, this time, the Kraken was also more prepared for Jack's attempt to enter the portal. It had moved itself close enough and was now placing one of its arms directly before the portal, preventing entrance.

'F*cking cephalopod!' Jack cursed.

The other arms came at Jack again. Jack was done playing games with this octopus, he decided to use brute force. He continued relying on his Gold Dragon Sight to get close to the blocked portal. He also used Strength of the Wild to increase his speed even more. Once he arrived, he used Flame Strike.

'Move aside!' He yelled as his sword collided with the arm that was blocking the portal.

With his already high strength stat and all the additional buffs, the heavy arm was knocked aside, albeit slightly, but it was enough for him to slip through.

The act of him hitting the arm, however, had allowed a pause for the Kraken's other arm to come to him. But Jack was ready for it. Before the arm touched his body, he activated Lightning God Suit. This suit not only protected him from damage and dealt lightning damage to all enemies that came near, but it also gave him complete immunity from all movement restrictions.

The arm touched Jack's back but the suckers failed to glue Jack's body onto the arm. Jack pushed forward and entered the portal.

He came out headfirst from the portal this time and fell to the ground.

"Lightning God Blessing. I've sensed it within you but seeing it still impressed me," Jack heard Greed's voice. Jack turned himself while still lying on the ground all wet. He looked at Greed who was standing beside the portal he had just come out from.

"Are you entertained?" Jack asked.

"Can't say I ain't," Greed replied with a grin. "I also notice you can do mana sense. Otherwise, you won't see shit around that Kraken's water. You are getting more and more interesting, outworlder."

Jack deactivated his Lightning God Suit and stood up.

"So, what now?" He asked.

Greed shrugged. "We wait till tomorrow, for you to attempt another portal."

Jack sighed. He was not looking forward to it.

"All right, see you tomorrow."

"Wait!" Jack called out before Greed disappeared.

"Oh? Is there something you need?" Greed asked.

"Can I enter that portal?" Jack pointed at the portal that he had entered yesterday. "But without you blocking the exit!" He hurriedly added.

The portal he had entered just now didn't provide many exp points. The ones he got were only from killing one Great White and one Megalodon. It was not much. The portal from yesterday was more bountiful in terms of exp points. Since he can't grind monsters here, he wanted to use that portal instead to increase his levels.

"Sure," Greed answered.

"You truly won't block the exit, right? I can choose to go out at any time?" Jack tried to make sure.

"When you say it like that, it tempts me to do the opposite," Greed replied with a wicked grin. "But no, I won't block the exit. You are free to enter and exit that portal as you like. I have had my share of entertainment for today. See you tomorrow."

Greed then vanished.

Jack sighed again after Greed was gone. He didn't see any good prospects for his current situation. He was practically a prisoner here, but that didn't mean he would just give up and do nothing. He would continue to do as before, work hard to become stronger, and improve his levels. With that determination, he entered the portal to face the unending waves of Greed's hordes.

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In the following days, Jack continued to enter one portal after another. Each portal contained different challenges. Some even didn't require any fighting at all.

One for example was a place filled with puzzles similar to the ones he encountered at the Temple of the Divine Squall where he had gotten his Lightning God Blessing.

He had to solve one puzzle before he could proceed to the next room. And that room would contain another puzzle. After probably around ten puzzle-solving rooms, he finally found a room with the green exit portal.

Another was some sort of a horror setup that required him to survive by sneaking past an unkillable entity that could kill him with just one touch. Greed didn't give him any warning about it. He had to find out after he tried fighting the entity and ended up getting killed. He revived back at the starting point and was advised he had two attempts left. Apparently, the setup gave the participant three attempt chances.

He cursed Greed profusely for letting him waste one precious attempt. He had played this kind of horror game before so he was not alien to it. The layout was inside a huge gothic mansion with various rooms and locked doors. An ominous sound would be heard when the entity was near. He had to hide somewhere whenever that happened. When it was safe, he had to look around the places to find the keys to unlock the locked doors.

His radar didn't detect this entity, probably because it wasn't categorized as any normal unit. However, his mana sense helped a lot as it allowed him to sense if the entity was still around or had left while he was in hiding.

Luckily, his stats and skills were still usable here. He had Peniel cast Second Life on him, which saved him one attempt. Then during the time when he was unlocking the last door, the entity found him. He continued unlocking while Peniel cast invulnerability, allowing him time to open the door, and ran into the exit portal without dying.

Then there was a portal where he was faced with a murder mystery case, in which he had to find enough clues to pick the correct murderer among six suspects. Picking the wrong suspect would have him die a wilderness death.

Suffice to say, there was no dull moment for Jack. Every day was a new experience while he was in Greed's lair. And the host seemed sufficiently satisfied with Jack's performance.

Chapter 845: A Reward

Outside of Greed's Sanctum, Grace was staring at the thirty stones that formed the rune diagram which open the portal Jack had entered. She was studying them as she tried to remember what Jack had done.

Her mana sense, although had improved tremendously, was still not as good as Jack's. She was having trouble sensing the links between the power nodes within the diagram and where they should be moved.

She had made several tries all this time but without success. Luckily this diagram, as she found out the first time she failed, was not the type that caused a backlash upon failing.

She didn't give up despite the consistent failures. She still couldn't contact Jack. So, wherever Jack was, he was still inside where that portal had brought him. He might need help.

Furthermore, despite still not yielding results, she felt that she was one step closer with each attempt. Her mana sense was also improving with this practice.

So, she persevered. Jack needed her help. She repeated her attempt again, sensing the mana within the diagram as she tried to move the node points.

*

Aside from entering a new portal every different day, Jack entered the first portal that provided him with unending monster waves. From all the portals that he had entered, this was the one providing the most exp points. Most of the others didn't even provide any exp point at all.

Luckily, Greed kept his words. That God didn't block the exit while Jack was inside. Jack fight conservatively at first as he was afraid Greed was going to pull a nasty prank on him. But as he fought, the portal remained green. After fighting the wave with six rare elites, Jack still didn't use all his big guns. He went to the portal and tried to exit. He walked through without a problem.

Afterward, he entered again. The waves restarted to the first wave which consisted of only basic enemies.

From then, he fought without reservation until finishing the thirty-third wave with the nine rare elites. He then exited and repeated the process.

In his later entry into the portal, he even tried fighting the thirty-fourth waves with the twelve rare elites. The number of exp points these rare elites provided was massive. Half of the time, Jack failed to kill all twelve rare elites even after exhausting all his arsenals. If there were still more than five rare elites alive, he then ran to the exit to flee. Using only standard attacks and weak skills against that many rare elites were too risky.

In one day, he could grind that portal for four rounds. Fewer if Greed's compulsory portal took longer time to solve, like the one with the murder mystery case. He ended up taking more than half a day to complete that portal. As a result, he only had enough time to enter the endless waves portal for one round that day.

Jack thought that the usage of this endless wave portal was much more beneficial for leveling up compared to Training Cave. The reason was that the enemies scaled up following Jack's level and the enemies came to him en-masse, unlike the normal grinding method where he had to run around searching for spawned enemies. Additionally, there was no shortage of high-grade enemies in the later waves.

As a result, Each of his classes leveled up at a steady rate of around three days per level. By now, he had been inside Greed Sanctum for more than a week. His levels were now at levels 53, 53, and 52 for Blade Dancer, Time Sage, and Beastmaster respectively.

Due to this, Jack figured none of the other players had such an express leveling speed as he did. At this stage, players usually required around one or two weeks to gain one level.

The stats increase of his Blade Dance and Beastmaster were as usual, but when his Time Sage first increased a level, he was pleasantly surprised by the numbers.

*

HP +180

MP +250

Strength +5

Dexterity +6

Intelligence +25

Endurance +8

Reflex +8

Wisdom +25

3 free attribute points

3 free skill points

*

Most of the stats increased more than double compared to the increase of his Archmage's stats. However, he was disappointed that the free attribute and free skill points acquired for leveling up were the same.

Peniel confirmed to him that all special classes didn't provide more free points. Skill points would become scarcer as people level up and acquired more skills. They would have to be wise in choosing which skills to invest in.

Of course, Jack didn't have this problem due to his Container of Souls. All he needed to do was just diligently grind monsters or join wars where he could do mass killings, the souls would provide him with abundant skill points eventually. Too bad the endless waves here didn't give him any of those souls.

"Here!" Jack saw Greed throw something at him. He deftly caught the thing with his hands.

They were currently inside Greed's main hut. Starting from the second day, after Jack finished the mandatory portal, Greed had always asked Jack to join him in his hut. Of course, him being a God, Jack wasn't insane enough to say no. Jack followed him like a good puppy.

At first, Jack was not sure what Greed wanted with him inside there. He just sat quietly. Greed then started asking him questions about the outworlder world. Being himself, Jack immediately went chatty. He talked about his town, and his friends. Most of all, he talked about the cool games and movies that he enjoyed so much.

Jack was rather relieved. So, Greed just wanted to talk. He had no problem if it was only talking. Only after they talked for some time that Greed let him go to enter the endless wave portal to collect exp points.

Today almost had no difference, they came into the hut again after Jack completed the new portal with flying colors. The only difference was Greed had given him something.

Jack looked at the thing Greed had thrown at him. It was a roll of parchment. Jack opened the parchment. What was on it was a series of writings and drawings. He heard Peniel gasp beside him. Curious, he used his Inspect.

*

First-rate Training Ground Blueprint (Unique consumable)

Upgrade a guild headquarters' training ground into a First-rate Training Ground

Restriction: Guild level 4

*

"First-rate Training Ground?" Jack asked Peniel.

"You know commander Quintus' training ground gives three times the proficiency to combat skills and Village of Peace gives five times, right?"

Jack nodded.

"This First-rate Training Ground is not as good as the Village of Peace's effect but is better than commander Quintus' one."

"Four times?" Jack said with wide eyes.

"Yep," Peniel confirmed.

"Wow."

The Training Ground in their headquarters was still the basic one, providing only two times proficiency gain when members execute their skills inside. The Training Ground had a level that could be increased, but the level only increased the size of the Training Ground, which affected the number of members that could use the room at one time, not increasing the proficiency gain. Their training ground was currently at level 4, allowing a maximum of five hundred members to train inside.

Peniel continued her explanation, "There was also a blueprint that allow one as good as Commander Quintus' facility, called Superior Training Ground. You are fortunate to already get one better than that."

"This is a unique grade. Is there one with a Legendary grade?" Jack asked.

"Yes. The legendary grade gave the same effect as the Village of Peace, minus the effect to auxiliary skills," Peniel answered. "It's called Transcendent Training Ground. But you can forget about searching for it. It was one in a million chance."

"Don't be so pessimistic. I bet you also never think I will get this First-rate Training Ground, do you?" Jack said.

"I see you like it?" Greed asked. "That's a reward for entertaining me for so long."

"I thought you are going to reward me with the Eye of the Illios?" Jack asked back.

"Oh, if you don't want that, then give it back," Greed made a show to take the parchment.

"I NEVER say I don't want it!" Jack shielded the parchment away.

Greed laughed and sat back.

"Do you mind me asking you something, Mister Greed?" Jack asked.

During their first few chats, Jack had addressed Greed by God Greed, to which Greed asked him to drop the title. He then used Your Sacredness, which earned a displeased raised eyebrow. He then changed it to Your Excellency, to which Greed responded by saying, "Meh!"

They finally settled with Mister.

"What do you want to ask, lowly Storm Wind?" Greed asked. Lowly was the title Greed gave Jack. Jack didn't mind. He didn't dare to mind.

"You are not like the other one God that I met."

"Oh? Which one? Wait, are you talking about Serenity? Of course, I'm not like her. Do you got a screw lost in your brain or something?"

"No, not her," Jack said with exasperation. "I meant Fear."

"You met Fear?" Greed sat upright. "And you survived? Judging from your level, you are not one who had died before. He was not someone who usually let those who met him leave in one piece, outworlders or natives. Well, except for the people in his cult... And that one outworlder."

"Hm? An outworlder? Who?" Jack asked with interest.

Greed was quiet for a while. He then answered while laying back on his chair, "No one important."

"Hm... Then another question. Why do you live here by yourself? I thought a God like you will have at least some sort of a palace or a mountain. Heck, maybe a whole other world complete with a cult serving you."

"Not interested to share," Greed simply replied. "Till tomorrow." He then disappeared.

"Hm... weird," Jack commented.

"Amazing," Peniel said.

"Hm? I find it weird. Why do you find it amazing?"

"I'm saying that I'm amazed by you! You can just be comfortable with anyone given the chance, can't you? Do you forget already who is your conversation partner? If you strike a wrong chord and cause his bad mood, you can be a goner in a second."

"Hey, he asked me so many things about my world. It's only fair that I asked him back something. That's what is called conversation, lady."

Peniel just shook her head at Jack's remark.

Chapter 846: Aerial Combat

In the following days, Jack just did his routine. Completing Greed's compulsory portal while grinding inside the endless wave portal.

After repeatedly going through the endless wave portal, he was getting more used to the mutated soldiers inside that portal. Hence, his speed of clearing the waves picked up. On his best day, he could even complete five rounds.

Since he counted twenty-two trees that had portals, he wondered what would happen after he completed all of them. Maybe Greed would let him go? Then one day, he saw a twenty-third portal on a tree that didn't have one before.

'Motherf*cker...! Did he add a new one? This is not going to end then,' Jack thought with apprehension.

During his foray into the portals, he met one that he was interested in as much as the endless wave portal. The portal was the one he entered today. The portal took him high up in the sky and placed him on the back of the neck of a large red dragon.

He was alarmed at first when he found himself sitting atop this monstrous beast, flying very high up in the air, nonetheless. He expected the dragon to start tossing around when it found an intruder on its back.

Should he attack first? Was his task to kill this dragon with a sneak attack?

But the dragon was calm. Jack was clearly sitting on it and yet the majestic beast treated this as if it was the most natural thing in the world. So, Jack decided to not do anything rash.

He wished that Greed would just not be so bloody stingy with instructions. Even a few clues would have been appreciated. He instead had to always do guesswork every time he entered a new portal.

As he was still confused as to what he was meant to do on top of a flying dragon. He saw several specks of shadow with wings in the distant clouds.

The shadows were getting closer. As they came out of the clouds, Jack saw that they were three yellow dragons. They did not look friendly.

While Jack was still wondering what the hell all this was about, one of the closest incoming dragons opened its maw and a fireball shot out from it.

"What the...!" Jack was panicky as he watched the huge fireball approach.

"Hey, dodge! Dodge...! Why aren't you moving?" Jack uttered as the red dragon he was riding seem oblivious of the incoming danger.

Jack cast Magic Wall. The fireball shattered the spell and crashed into the red dragon. The fireball didn't hit Jack directly but the resulting explosion engulfed him. He covered himself with Magic Shield but wasn't able to cover his whole body. He was singed by the flame.

Yet, he didn't receive any damage.

"Huh?"

But he saw the red dragon's HP decrease by a third, though. It also uttered a pain cry. Then the other two yellow dragons shot their fireballs. Two fireballs were rushing at him. Despite that, the red dragon was still flying straight.

"Am I riding a brainless dragon?!" He uttered. If those two fireballs hit, it would be a goner.

In his panic of seeing the next two approaching fireballs, Jack was no longer worried about offending the dragon he was riding. He grabbed the two long horns behind the dragon's head and pushed them to the side, trying to force the dragon to look to the left in the hope that it would alter its flight.

And it worked. The dragon flew to the left, narrowly missing the two fireballs.

As the red dragon flew in a new direction, the three yellow dragons gave chase. They continued shooting fireballs as they did.

Seeing that the red dragon didn't mind Jack playing around with its head, Jack continued the act. He steered the dragon by using its horns. The dragon did barrel rolls as it flew left and right to dodge the fireballs thrown by the pursuing attackers.

"F*ck! This is a flight simulation!" Jack said in realization.

Jack looked back at the three pursuing dragons and added, "No... This is a combat flight simulation."

"What's a combat flight simulation?" Peniel asked, she had been clinging to Jack when she saw that they appeared at the back of a flying dragon. Her flight speed won't contend with this creature.

"Never mind that. Can you heal this dragon?" Jack asked while still desperately controlling his dragon in evasive maneuvers.

"I try," Peniel said and cast Fast Heal. The red dragon's HP bar recovered to full.

"Good!" Jack complimented. Aside from focusing his attention to avoid the enemy's attacks, Jack was also checking around the dragon's body. If this was a combat flight simulation, there should be other controls.

He saw two oddly protruding scales at both sides of the red dragon's neck, nearby where his feet were located. Jack placed his two feet on those two scales. Those scales provided nice footing positions. Jack applied pressure on his left foot. The scale moved. At the same time, the red dragon slowed down, letting the pursuers catch up.

"What are you doing?!" Peniel scolded.

"Experimenting!" Jack shouted as he hurriedly pressed the scale on his right foot. As expected, the red dragon picked up in speed. When he pressed the right scale all the way down, a wind jet was produced behind the dragon and propelled it forward. The sudden burst of speed allowed them to dodge a fireball that was about to hit. The red dragon's burst of speed managed to let it put some distance from its attacker.

Yet, it didn't last long. After a constant ten seconds of high speed. The red dragon lost its acceleration. It started to slow down again.

'It has a stamina limit for this speed burst,' Jack thought.

But the sprint had allowed them a head start. Luckily, those yellow dragons weren't given the same advantage. Jack tried to find other controls as the enemies were catching up.

"Where is it? Where is it?" He asked as he looked around.

"What are you searching for?" Peniel asked in bewilderment.

"The weapon triggers!" Jack yelled. His eyes noticed a slightly broken-off bone on the dragon's right horn, one of which he was holding. Or, was it not a broken bone?

He pressed the so-called broken bone. The dragon roared and a huge fireball burst out from its mouth. The fireball traveled to the distance.

"Cool!" Jack uttered. He then noticed another thing. There was another small horn right at the center of the dragon. Jack lowered his position until his sight was in line with that horn. He then pressed the fire 'button' again.

He watched as the fireball the dragon produced traveled into the distance aligning with the tip of the horn in his perspective.

"F*ckin-A! It's a reticle!" Jack exclaimed.

"What's a reticle?" Peniel asked.

"Never mind that!" Jack gave her the same reply. "Time for a counterattack!"

He was not unfamiliar with combat flight simulation. He had played this kind of game in the past. He looked around until he spotted the sun.

He pulled the horn up and forced the dragon to make a pitch. It flew higher and higher. Due to gravity, its speed slowed, so Jack punched the turbo button. The wind jet again propelled the red dragon forward. After getting high enough, Jack did an Immelmann turn. Putting the dragon's back to the sun as he dove down.

The yellow dragons had difficulty targeting as they were blinded by the sun.

Normally, in aerial combat, it was unlikely to hit opponents who flew at high speed in a directly opposite direction, but Jack wasn't normal. He activated Dragon Eye. All the movements around him slowed. He then carefully aimed the reticle of the central horn at one of the yellow dragons. He pressed the fire button.

Jack watched in slow motion as his dragon spit its fireball and the fireball traveled slowly to its even more slow target. The fireball hit. The yellow dragon was engulfed in flame. Its HP bar zeroed and it fell with a charred body.

"Holy...! One hit!" Jack uttered spiritedly.

He received exp points from the kill. At the same time, he also received notification that he had received 20 draconic essences.

'Twenty?' He thought. What a pleasant surprise. It was the same number of draconic essences that he had gotten from killing a rare elite flame drake above level 50 in the Jagara region. But those rare elite flame drakes were very few in number. They also took a lot of time to kill. Not to mention, dangerous.

Now he got the same amount with a kill that was made with one hit. This was a fortunate find! Jack celebrated in his mind. He should be able to upgrade his Divine Gold Dragon Bloodline if he continued to collect draconic essences here.

With that motivation, Jack resumed the dogfight. He did a low yo-yo maneuver after passing the two remaining yellow dragons and came back behind them. His two opponents were not as agile as the dragon he was riding, they were unable to make complex maneuvers. Their speed was also not that fast.

Jack pick one as a target and pressed the brake on his dragon, slowing it down to prevent overshoot. He then fired at it from behind. Another 20 draconic essences were absorbed.

Not long after, the third and last yellow dragon was defeated.

Chapter 847: Equal Opponent

While there was no enemy, Jack experimented further with the controls. He tried pressing brake all the way. Normally, in flight simulation, if the plane's speed was too slow, it would stall. He wondered if it was the same here. As the red dragon's speed kept on decreasing, Jack discovered this dragon riding was different. The dragon had currently stopped advancing and just hovered in the same spot.

Yet, he didn't think he could utilize this feature in a fight. It took some time to come to a complete stop. If he wanted to use this stopping feature to make a fast turn, he would have been hit first long before that.

Jack looked around. Was that all? If it was, he was disappointed. 60 draconic essences were not enough for his bloodline to level up. He needed another 120 draconic essences to level up his bloodline to level 4.

He then saw in the distance four shadows in the cloud. He grinned and had his dragon fly over to meet the opponents.

The dogfight lasted for some time, but eventually, Jack emerged victorious.

"Two more!" Jack exclaimed as he looked around with a high expectation for the next opponents to appear.

After controlling the red dragon this long, he had also learned that the turbo speed had a one-minute cooldown before it could be used again.

Before long, Jack saw five more dragons incoming.

'Is this like the endless wave? Except this one increases the number of enemies every wave?' Jack thought. He didn't mind. The exp points were nothing much, but he welcomed the draconic essence gain. His only worry was that if these were endless waves, how would he exit this place? He didn't see any green exit portal. Should he fly to the ground and search?

He decided to deal with it later. For now, it's time for draconic essence gathering. As he flew over to meet the next wave, Peniel said to him, "Look at that."

She was pointing at the left horn. There was a broken bone similar to the one on the right horn which he used to fire the dragon's fireball.

"I remember that horn was flat," Jack remarked. When he found the broken bone on the right horn, he had looked at the left horn as well. There was no such broken bone then.

"Could it be... special attack?" Jack uttered after giving a thought.

"What kind of special attack?" Peniel asked.

"Dunno. Let's find out. Perhaps this button only comes out after a duration or after we make several fireball attacks or something. Anyway, let's try it out on these opponents."

Jack aimed the reticle as they neared. Normally in combat flight simulation, the other attack aside from the normal gun attack which shot in a straight line was missile attacks. Could this special attack be similar to missile attacks that tracked targets? Jack was excited to find out.

The five opponents were flying directly at him. He used Gold Dragon Sight this time, slowing everything in his perception. When he estimated the five yellow dragons entering his firing zone, he pressed the trigger on the left horn.

The dragon roared, then a thick fiery beam burst forth from its mouth. The beam tore through one of the yellow dragons, killing it instantly. The instant kill was not that impressive, considering the normal fireball also killed these yellow dragons in a single hit. However, Jack could feel using his mana sense that this fire beam was at least five times stronger than the fireball.

Moreover, the fire beam was still going strong. It didn't appear to end anytime soon. Jack felt lucky his vision was still in slow-motion mode, so his pondering didn't waste too much time in real-time. He immediately shifted the dragon's head as he aimed the ongoing beam at the remaining dragons.

The beam moved and tore through the dragons one by one following Jack's aim. Unfortunately, Jack failed to wipe out the entire pack with the beam. The fire beam stopped when the fourth yellow dragon fell. The fifth managed to fly away.

Jack estimated that in real-time, the fire beam lasted five seconds. He looked at the left horn and saw the broken bone had retracted into the horn. He had to wait for the horn to appear again before he could use the special attack.

He chased after the remaining yellow dragon in a dogfight. It was not a difficult battle. The fifth yellow dragon soon fell.

By then, his Divine Gold Dragon Bloodline had crossed over to level 4. This bloodline now gave a passive 32% of boosts to his attributes, HP, Stamina, and MP, increasing his massive stats even further. He didn't get a new active skill, though. Peniel informed that he would get one at bloodline level 5.

As he was marveling at his bloodline increase, he saw a shadow in the distance.

"One?" He said.

"It looked different," Peniel remarked when the shadow came nearer. "It's larger."

"The wing span is larger, the body actually looks slimmer," Jack said. His Dragon Eye allowed him to get a better look than Peniel.

"Shit! It's fast!" Jack uttered as he steered his red dragon to one side.

The red dragon rolled to the side just as a stream of dark energy zoomed past their previous position. It was the dark ball fired by the new enemy. As the new dragon flew past, Jack saw that it was a black-scaled dragon that was longer but thinner.

Jack controlled the red dragon by making a hard turn to chase after the black dragon. He came behind the black dragon but couldn't catch up. The black dragon's speed was similarly fast. The red dragon fired a few fireballs but the black dragon didn't just fly in a straight line like its yellow cousins. It moved in a zigzag pattern in the air, making it hard for Jack to land a clean hit.

"I need to close in the distance," Jack said and pressed the turbo button on his right foot. The red dragon burst forth in speed.

When the distance with his prey shortened and Jack was about to fire, the black dragon suddenly banked right. Jack tried to follow, but he was still in the effect of being propelled, so he couldn't turn sharply. As a result, he overshot his target's position while the black dragon made a loop and came up behind. Their situation had now been reversed.

The black dragon fired its dark ball. The red dragon just came out of its turbo state, so it was sluggish for a beat. This lapse caused it to get hit by the dark ball. The red dragon roared in pain as its HP bar dropped to half.

"Shit! This one's attack is also more powerful!" Jack exclaimed and steered the dragon away from the danger zone as another dark ball flew past. His dragon would be finished with another hit.

"Peniel, is your Fast Heal off cooldown?"

"Yes," Peniel replied and healed the red dragon's life back to full. "Don't worry, I can still do Group Fast Heal if we get hit again."

"Don't need it!" Jack exclaimed as he made a zigzag while the black dragon tailed them from behind and sent a never-ending stream of dark balls.

"Its rate of fire is also scarier," Jack commented. The black dragon was an overall upgrade compared to the yellow ones.

Jack sent Wind Slash at the pursuing dragon. Damage numbers appeared but the black dragon's HP bar didn't appear to go down.

"Heck! Offensive skills are worthless here," He uttered. He had given it a test to see the result. If the damage was decent, he planned to transform and go into a direct clash with the black dragon. But then again, this move also posed the risk of him losing his red dragon. He was not sure what this red dragon would do if he stopped riding it. Probably it would continue flying straight. If that was the case, he was not sure if his Supreme dragon's flight speed could catch up to it. So, he stayed on its back.

He tried two more spells, though. Magic Bind and Tracing Beams. Magic Bind broke immediately once it appeared. The Tracing Beams' knockback effect was completely not in effect. The black dragon just barreled through the beams without being slowed.

He made one last try by casting Myriad Venomous Vipers, but a notification voice was heard telling him that the spell required a surface to be cast on. He guessed up in the air was not considered the same as in an underwater situation where he could cast the spell anywhere.

"Guess Greed really wants this stage to be pure combat flight simulation. The only useful spells here are healing spells," Jack remarked. He gave up on using his skills and spells and focused on controlling the red dragon.

After trying to make a few turns to reverse the situation, the black dragon was still dogging them from behind. This opponent was equal in both speed and maneuvering ability.

"Damn it! I can't lose him with regular tricks... Peniel, ready your heal!"

"Oh? I thought you said you don't need it?" Peniel mocked.

"Just get ready!" Jack didn't have the time to entertain her.

He looked back at the black dragon position. He pressed the speed up to the maximum without the turbo effect, the black dragon also increased in speed. Jack then gradually slowed his speed down while continuing to try to dodge the enemy's attack. But when he was too close, he finally was unable to dodge, he was hit by the dark ball. Peniel cast her Fast Heal. But soon, another ball hit again.

Seeing that, the black dragon picked up in speed, trying to finish the deed.

Jack cast Accelerate on the red dragon and then made a hard pitch turn to get his dragon to go up while at the same time fully pressing the brake on his left foot. The red dragon spread its wing wide relying on the air resistance to bring its speed to fall drastically. The black dragon passed below them.

Once it did, Jack had his dragon make a slice turn, bringing its head back down to the opponent who was now in front of them.

"Yeah! Taste my cobra maneuver!" Jack exclaimed.

With the Acceleration spell still in effect, the black dragon appeared very slow. Jack fired. The fireball hit the black dragon's back, but it didn't die immediately. It only lost half its life.

Jack was not surprised. This black dragon was an overall upgrade compared to his previous adversaries. He had expected it. However, when he fired the second fireball, the black dragon sped up. Jack's shot missed. The black dragon also had a turbo mode!

Jack's turbo mode was not yet off cooldown. But luckily, the acceleration spell was still in effect. His red dragon's maximum speed under acceleration spell managed to keep up with the black dragon's turbo speed. Jack was not going to let this opponent flee.

The black dragon tried to make a turn. Jack read its intention and made the same turn, putting his aim slightly forward in lead pursuit. Jack fired again, aiming ahead of the black dragon.

The fireball flew towards where the black dragon was heading. The black dragon didn't have enough time to make another turn due to its turbo speed. It crashed into the fireball that came into its flying path. Its HP was then reduced to zero.

Chapter 848: Floating Fortress

Jack was catching his breath as he heard that he had received 50 draconic essences from the black dragon.

"Wow, more than twice the amount of the yellow one," Jack commented. But this black dragon's difficulty was indeed much more difficult than its yellow cousins. Heck, he would have an easier time going up against five of those yellow ones compared to one of the black.

A worry then came to him. Would this place throw two black dragons at him after this? That would be a problem. In aerial combat, fighting an equal enemy who had a wingman while he had none, his chance of winning would go down drastically.

As he was looking around in trepidation, fully expecting to see two shadows appearing in the distant cloud. The sky instead turned dark.

"Oh? The stage is changed into night setting?" Jack said and looked up.

As he did, he realized the sky didn't turn dark. It was simply being blocked, by an enormous rock that came down right above him.

"Holy mother of..."

Jack estimated the circumference of the rock was probably around one kilometer in diameter. That size could be considered an island already. Seeing such a mass falling from the cloud was mesmerizing. As he was marveling at the scene, he realized that he was directly under this rock. He would be a goner if the rock fell on top of him.

He hurriedly urged his red dragon to fly away.

As he did, he found that the rock was not exactly falling. Its descent was too slow. It was more akin to the rock floating down. Jack flew up to take a better look.

When he came close enough, all hell broke loose. Fireballs, lightning balls, ice balls, and even metal bullets came raining at him. He didn't even have time to curse when he instinctively pressed the speed-up button all the way, activating the turbo mode. The red dragon zoomed away with speed. It escaped all the big attacks, but it was still pelleted by the small bullets.

As they fled, Jack saw along the wall of the rock were multiple weapon platforms filled with guns and cannons.

"My goodness, a floating fortress?" Jack uttered.

Jack flew around circling the rock fortress while remaining outside the range of those guns and cannons.

"Well, this is definitely a boss!" Jack uttered. He couldn't inspect the rock, same as the enemy dragons before this. He had no idea of its HP, but he knew for sure he was meant to go against this enemy.

So, he had his red dragon fly forward at high speed. The guns and cannons started firing again once he was in range. The elemental balls shot by the cannons were easier to be dodged, but the bullets from the gun were not as easy. Luckily, the damage they caused was minuscule.

Jack released his dragon's fireball. The attack struck the wall of the rock. No damage. No HP bar.

"It can't be hurt?" Peniel asked. Jack, however, was not that surprised. He sorts of expected that. His dragon shot a second fireball and hit one of the guns that filled the rock. The gun exploded with one hit. A long HP bar was seen above the rock then.

"We have to take down those guns and cannons first," Jack uttered.

So, he flew around targeting the rock's weapons. The guns could be destroyed with one hit, but the cannons required two hits. After a while, Jack saw the extruded bone on the left horn appear again. So, he picked an area that was packed with cannons and had his red dragon shoot its fire beam.

The cannon was destroyed with one touch of the beam. Jack moved the beam around as it destroyed more cannons. He managed to take out seven cannons before the fire beam ended.

Peniel used her heal spells when the red dragon's HP fell below half from the bullets.

The rock was massive, but it was stationary. Jack found this fight much easier than the one against the black dragon. All he needed was patience. Hitting the weapons one by one while maintaining a safe approach. Flew away when the situation got too heated. It took a long time but he was making safe progress.

When the HP of the floating fortress fell by a third, six huge cannons suddenly bored out of several holes at the top of the rock. These cannons then fired six energy balls at Jack.

Jack made an evasive maneuver and flew away from the fortress. The six energy balls, however, turned around and followed.

"Tracing projectiles, I knew this has been too easy!" Jack uttered. He did not doubt that the power of these energy balls was also not to be underestimated. It was possible that these energy balls could kill his red dragon with one hit. He was not interested to find out.

The six energies were faster than the red dragon at its fastest speed without turbo, so they would catch up sooner or later. Jack did several acrobatic turns to dodge them, but they always came back again and again. These energy balls were not like the projectiles shot from the elemental cannons which dissolved after traveling a certain distance. It had been quite some time but the six energy balls still going strong. Jack must assume that these six would not disappear with time.

Jack used his turbo speed to put enough distance, before he made another sharp turn back, facing the energy balls. He aimed at one and fired. His fireball collided with one of the energy balls and exploded.

"It can be destroyed!" Jack exclaimed.

Jack dove and dodged the other five energy balls. He then flew back to the fortress again as the five energy balls turned and came back on his tail.

"What are you planning?" Peniel asked as he looked back at those energy balls that came nearer with each second.

"They can be destroyed," Jack answered.

"So?"

"You will see."

As Jack came into the fortress' range, the guns and cannons that were still intact started firing again. He flew to the side and kept within the fortress' range. Because of that, the fortress' weapons continued to fire at him. And because he was flying sideways, all the attacks rained behind him. As the five energy balls that were chasing Jack came near, they collided with the fortress' attacks.

Continuous explosions were heard. When the sound of explosions stopped, Jack asked Peniel, "Are all five of those balls destroyed?"

"Yes..."

With the menace of the tracing projectiles gone, Jack returned to his chore. Slowly destroying the weapons around the fortress one at a time. He was planning to destroy the large cannons at the top, but when he looked, those cannons had retracted back into the rock.

When the HP fell by another one-third, the large cannons came out again. Jack had been expecting them. He had saved his fire beam attack for them. He had also kept his flying position near the top. He used turbo speed and flew up, getting closer to those cannons. He then fired his beam before those cannons could aim at him.

Since those cannons were situated close to each other, Jack swiped his beam and managed to wipe them all out in one go.

"Yeah! Take that, sucker!"

He then returned to finish all the remaining weapons. Once they were all gone and the HP fell to zero, the top part of the rock broke apart, revealing a tunnel. A deafening roar was heard then. Jack looked into the tunnel and saw a gigantic crimson dragon in chains. It was struggling around as if trying to break away from the chains. It spotted Jack and opened its flaring maw. A thick red beam shot at Jack.

"What the...! It's not yet over?!" Jack uttered as he banked hard to dodge the beam.

"That must be the real boss," Peniel said.

"You don't say!"

Jack turned back and fired at the chained dragons. HP bar appeared when his fireball hit. The crimson dragon retaliated by shooting its own fireballs. Jack flew around dodging those fireballs and returned fire when possible. It was easy, considering he was mobile while the crimson dragon was restrained.

However, one of the chains suddenly snapped.

"Oh, shit! There is a time limit," Jack came to a realization. Once the chains restraining the crimson dragon were gone, Jack had no doubt this gargantuan dragon would make short work of his little dragon.

Jack picked up the pace, but he still took care not to get hit by the opponent's fireballs. Yet, in his haste, he was hit one time. His red dragon's HP fell by 70%. Peniel immediately sent her Fast Heal. Jack heaved a relief. Although the crimson dragon's fireballs were more powerful than the other dragons from before, it still didn't one-hit-kill his dragon.

At one time, the crimson dragon's mouth flared again. Jack was rather close at the time, so he immediately used his turbo speed to fly away. The crimson dragon swung its head to have its fire beam chased after Jack. The beam was just a couple of meters from him when its duration finally ended. Jack was having a cold sweat. He was sure that beam could kill his dragon with one hit.

Another chain snapped.

Jack made an estimation. There were originally ten chains. Now, there were only eight. At this rate, he won't be able to finish the crimson dragon before all the chains snapped.

"Peniel, can you use Invulnerability on this red dragon?" Jack asked.

"No. He is not considered as part of you like your spirit weapon," Peniel answered.

Jack thought for a bit before saying, "Peniel, ready your heals!" He decided to take a risk.

"Again? What are you planning to do this time?"

"Just get ready!"

"My heals are off cooldown already, but you need to know I can only do it two times, Fast Heal and Fast Group Heal. My other spells are useless here."

Jack nodded. He then flew up high into the sky before diving back down at the crimson dragon with high speed.

Chapter 849: Another Reward

The red dragon's turbo speed was still on cooldown, so Jack utilized gravity to gain extra acceleration. At the same time, he was fully focused on dodging the crimson dragon's fireballs.

He rolled left and right to dodge the fireballs while continued diving.

"You are crazyyy...!" Peniel screamed as she clung to Jack's shoulder.

As he got closer, it was more difficult to dodge. He was hit by one fireball.

"Peniel!" Jack shouted.

"On it!" Since the crimson dragon's fireballs caused more damage. Peniel used her two heals back-to-back, bringing the red dragon's HP back to full again.

"Rargghh...!" Jack decided to just risk it all. He was too close already. He would be hit even if he dodged, so he just dove straight down without any dodging attempt.

A fireball struck him again.

But since he was diving at very high speed. The window to fire at him was very short. The crimson dragon only managed to land those two successful hits before Jack dove past it.

Jack slipped through the gaps between the chains that held the crimson dragon and flew into the tunnels.

"Yes!" He uttered as he fully pressed the brake. His red dragon skidded to a stop.

The tunnel went very deep, but Jack had no time to explore. He looked back and saw the crimson dragon's back and grinned.

"Hehe, punishment time."

Since the crimson dragon was chained, it couldn't turn around. Jack had his red dragon hovered and fired his fireballs non-stop at the crimson dragon's back. The crimson dragon roared in rage and pain upon those attacks. It tried to turn its neck around but couldn't. All it could do was just struggle to break the chains faster.

Since Jack no longer had to fly around evading the crimson dragon's attacks, his attack pace increased substantially. The crimson dragon's HP went down at a rapid rate.

The chains' breaking rate actually became faster as more chains broke. Probably because there were fewer chains to resist the crimson dragon's force. Jack was sure now that if he only fought normally, the ten chains would all break before he could deplete the crimson dragon's HP. Then, he would have to fight the unrestrained crimson dragon.

Now, however, the crimson dragon was down to 5% of HP when the fourth chain broke. At the same time, his special attack was ready again. He happily pressed the button. The red dragon's fire beam pierced through the back of the crimson dragon.

The crimson dragon suffered the full five seconds of the fire beam, devouring all 5% of its HP.

With a death cry, the crimson dragon turned to dust. The rock fortress around them started to shake and then crumble. The enormous fortress broke apart into smaller pieces and fell to the ground.

Jack noticed something after all the rocks fell. At the place where it used to be the center of the fortress, was a green oval plate.

"It's the exit portal!" Peniel also noticed it.

So, the exit was at the center of the fortress. Jack wondered if he had ignored the chained crimson dragon and just headed into the depth of the tunnel. Would it take him to the exit portal?

But he was glad he had vanquished the chained dragon. It netted him a large number of exp points and 100 draconic essences.

With the other essences he had gathered, the total he gained in this stage was 390 draconic essences.

He checked his bloodline status. The number of required essences had increased. Before, it required 1000 draconic essences to increase a level. After level 4, he needed 2000 draconic essences.

If he was in the outside world. He would need a long time to hunt draconic monsters and gather this number. But with this portal, he could easily gain draconic essences. He only needed to enter this portal another five times to gain another level up for his bloodline.

He decided to shift his focus from the endless wave portal to this one. Draconic essences were harder to get than exp points.

With that determination, he entered the exit portal.

Greed was already waiting outside.

"Interesting," he said. "You are meant to fight the free crimson dragon as the final stage, but I guess whatever is fair as long as you get the result."

Jack looked back at the portal he had just exited. It had turned red. Same as the others. The only one he was allowed to enter repeatedly was the endless wave portal after he asked for it. So, he asked Greed, "Can I enter this portal again?"

Greed looked at him with a meaningful stare. He finally said, "All right, but only once a day."

"What? Why? I can enter that portal freely, right?" Jack pointed at the endless wave portal.

"You think I don't know what you are up to?" Greed said. "I know you have a draconic bloodline. You want to use my portal to hoard the draconic essences, don't you?"

"Um... Is that not okay?"

"Do you think the energy required to power up a portal that generates draconic monsters is small? I don't mind that other portal, you can use them all you want, but not this one. I am already generous to let you use it once a day."

"Okay, okay...", Jack said.

Hence, from then. His routine after the compulsory portal was three times endless wave portals and one dragon flight portal.

*

With this routine that granted Jack more exp points and draconic essences than the outside world, even after two weeks had passed, Jack no longer felt as if he was trapped anymore. Of course, he still worried something bad might happen outside while he couldn't help. But since he couldn't escape anyway, he just focused on getting stronger.

"There are big ships that can fly in the sky?" Greed asked. Jack had just completed a compulsory portal and they were now back inside Greed's hut. Jack was again telling the story of his world.

"We call it airplane," Jack answered. "It can carry many people inside to fly in the air."

"So troublesome. Why didn't they just level up and learn the flying spell?"

"Uh... We can't do magic back where I am from," Jack replied. 'Dude, are you not listening to my tale all this time?'

Jack saw Greed give him a weird stare. Jack was confused by it.

"So, all you people rely on in your world is this so-called teknowledgegy?"

"Um... It's technology."

"Hm... Interesting world. Here, you deserve another reward after your excellent performance for two weeks."

Greed summoned something out of thin air and then tossed it to Jack.

Peniel, who saw what the item was, immediately yelled, "No, don't catch it!"

Jack, whose hands were about to catch the item by reflex, immediately recalled its danger after Peniel's warning. He retracted his hands at the last moment and moved aside as the Eye of Illios flew past him and fell to the ground.

"Oops, I forgot that you are still low-level," Greed said with a chuckle.

Jack could only give Greed an annoyed look. He took out the glass cube Janus had given him and brought it to the Eye of Illios on the ground. As the cube and the artifact got into close proximity, the walls of the cube broke apart. An invisible force grabbed the artifact and brought it into the cube before the cube closed itself up. The Eye of Illios was now safely inside the glass cube. Jack used his Inspect on the artifact.

*

Eye of Illios (Legendary Artifact)

Survey distant places.

Restriction: Level 75 and above

*

"Fancy cube. The people from the Order of Magi gave you that?" Greed asked.

"Yeah, to safely bring this Eye of Illios to them," Jack said

"What do they need that thing for?"

"I don't know," Jack replied. The description of the artifact didn't say much. Did Janus want to use this artifact for long-distance surveillance?

Jack stored the glass cube. All he needed to do to complete the quest now was just bring this cube back to Janus.

Thinking about that, he asked Greed, "Um... Mister Greed. When may I leave?"

"Hm? You are free to leave. You are not a prisoner here."

"Oh...?" Jack's face brightened upon hearing it. "Thank you, mister Greed. Much appreciated. If you can only point me to the exit, I will be most grateful."

"I say you are free to leave. I never say I'm going to show you the way out."

"..."

"Do you mind telling me the way out then...?" Jack asked after Greed remained silent for a while.

"Nope," Greed replied flatly.

Jack sighed. His glad face turned dejected again. This God was just toying with him.

"What's so good about the outside anyway? You can have much more fun here. See how much fun we have been having in these two weeks?"

'Fun for you perhaps,' Jack grumbled in his mind.

Jack again saw Greed's weird stare.

Chapter 850: Greed's Reason

"Mister Greed, may I ask you something?" Jack asked.

"Is it going to be the same question as the last time?" Greed asked back.

"Ahaha, no. May I ask why you live here in solitude?"

"That is the same question as the last time only being rephrased."

"Ahaha...", Jack laughed awkwardly.

Greed was silent for a while before saying, "Well, I guess I don't mind telling you. I'm trying to prove a point."

"What point?"

"That I am who I am because I choose to."

"Huh?"

"I dislike the idea that I am being controlled."

"Control?" Jack had no idea what Greed was talking about. "You are one of the strongest beings in this world with a cult of minions at your bidding. How can you be controlled?"

Jack's memory went back to the ancient battleground when he was going up against the army of Greed. He could hardly believe someone that owned that kind of an army to develop a feeling of being inferior and being controlled.

"Cult? Do you mean my underlings? They are no more," Greed said.

"Oh? Where did they go?" Jack asked.

"To the afterlife. I sent them all there myself."

Jack didn't know what to say to that.

"Like I said. I dislike the idea of being controlled. Certainly even more so when I realized all those underlings were given to me. Not my own accomplishment."

Greed, who was sitting leisurely all this time, sat up and looked straight at Jack when he said, "You are an outworlder. So, I'm sure you are aware of the truth of this world." He then looked at Peniel, "You, on the other hand, might find this as somewhat of a shock. The world we are in now is not what we thought it to be. It is a world created by the outworlders as some sort of entertainment."

When Greed saw Peniel's flat expression, he said, "Hm... Not the response I am expecting."

"That's because she already knows," Jack explained. "But I'm surprised. How do you know about this truth, Mister Greed?"

"Hm... Well, I found out about it from another outworlder. This outworlder came before me and my brother and sister when we were convening. We don't do that often, so imagine our surprise when a low-level outworlder intruded on our secret place of meeting. Fear and I were ready to slay this intruder the moment he showed himself, but our sister, Wrath, gave him a chance to speak as recognition for his successful intrusion into our sanctum."

"This outworlder, is he by any chance goes by the alias Master?" Jack asked.

"Oh...? You know him?" Greed said with a raised brow.

"You can say that," Jack replied. "What did he tell you and the others?"

"At first, we thought he was just spouting nonsense. Saying that our world is a fake world that was made by outworlders. For entertainment purposes, he said. That all the existences in this world, including me and the other Gods and Goddesses, are just programs. I still have no idea what that word means. Anyway, he claimed that our natures, our characteristics, and our powers, are all given to us by these outworlder creators. Imagine Fear's and my responses. We blast him with our divine powers where he stood. However, he was protected by some kind of a prismatic shell."

'That prismatic shell can even block God's powers? No wonder Leavemealone's Fire God Barrage and Syndrillis' flame breath had no effect,' Jack thought.

However, Jack knew that the prismatic shell was created by a consumable tool. An alien entity that was not producible in-game. Those must have been defensive tools that Master had prepared before the world was changed by his machine. This meant that Master only had a limited quantity of them. Jack just hoped that Master ran out of that tool when they next met. Otherwise, Master would be invincible as long as he still had that prismatic shell tool.

"Imagine our surprise when a lowly outworlder managed to survive a combined assault of two Gods," Greed continued. "Since we couldn't do anything to him while he was inside that prismatic shell, he continued to ramble. But as he spoke, he started to reveal secrets that only us Gods know. He even told us some secrets that we weren't aware of and dared us to go check. We all left and checked those things he mentioned, only to find out that he was telling the truth. When we were back, he was still waiting for

us, completely unafraid. Furthermore, after being made aware of this world's nature, we did realize the structure of this world heavily favors the outworlder. Although we didn't want to, I guess the three of us started to believe his words then. He also told us that the God of Courage and Goddess of Joy are no more, a fact that we have sensed. He claimed to be the one who was responsible for those two's absence."

"So... When you said you don't like the idea of being controlled..."

"Yeah. I just can't accept the fact that I was made. I am the personification of greed. I am greedy to the core. I want to take everything that exists in this world for myself. But to think that this character is not truly mine. That I am greedy because someone made me this way, sickened and infuriated me tremendously."

"Even so, do you have to go on a killing spree and wipe out your entire cult?"

"If they are made just to serve me, then me exterminating them was relieving them from their predetermined design. I was setting them free."

Jack scratched his head, "I guess that's one way to look at it."

"What's the point of Master coming and telling you three about this truth?"

"He wanted to give us an offer. If we help him conquer this world and gather the seven divine treasures, he will help us escape this fake reality and bring us into the real world."

"Say what?!" Jack asked.

"He offered us access to the real world. A chance to be free from this fixed world that enslaved us. I don't like that outworlder, so I just outright rejected him. I have no interest in going to an unknown world. But I also dislike the idea that I am not my own self. So, I have been fighting my impulse since then, trying to prove that I can be something other than what I have been made to be. Trying to prove that greed doesn't rule my nature."

"What about the other two, do you know what were their responses to Master's proposal?" Jack asked.

"Well, after I rejected him, I tried to kill him one more time but failed again. Since I can't kill him, I decided to just leave. Wrath also left but she said she was considering the offer. Fear stayed. From his expression, I could guess that he would be taking up that outworlder's offer. I don't care. I don't want anything to do with them."

The fact that Fear was helping Master was something that Jack had known. He was asking simply because he wanted to know if the remaining bad God, or Goddess, in this case, was in Master's camp as well. From Greed's tale, it seemed that Wrath was still on the fence. Jack felt grateful for that.

'So, that lie is what Master used to employ Fear's services,' Jack thought.

"Lie?" Greed stared at Jack. "What do you mean?"

"Huh?" Jack was confused.

"Don't you pretend!" Greed uttered. "After that first day you are here when you and that fairy communicated by telepathy behind my back, I have installed a new rune diagram in this hut. I can hear your thought! Now, tell me the truth!"

'Uh-oh,' Jack thought.

"Damn right you should be uh-oh. Now tell me the truth! Remember that I can hear your thought. I will know it if you are lying."

Jack was unsure. Greed was staring at him, urging him to answer. Jack couldn't afford to think clearly as he didn't know which of his thoughts Greed might hear. He also didn't dare to stall too long as Greed had expressed his impatience. So, Jack decided to just come clean, for better or for worse.

"What Master told you about the creation of this world is indeed true," Jack said. "However, he was lying about taking you all to the real world. Because our real world, where we came from, is no more. This is the real world now."

Greed frowned, instructing Jack to tell him more. So, Jack recounted Wilted's story to him. About how Master used his mysterious machine to alter reality. Rewriting the world into one that was based on a game. Giving lives to the various denizens of this game world by sacrificing the lives and energies of the previous world, except for the sentient humans, who were reimagined in this new world as outworlders.

The offer that Master gave them was a lie from the beginning. Master never meant to revert the world to its previous state. He intended to harness the power of the seven divine treasures to become a God himself.

Jack stressed that Greed was now as real as he and Master, and so too this world. His personality might have been based on something someone wrote when they designed the game, but they were not something that governed him. As a real being, he had the right to choose. Jack emphasized this point strongly, in the hope of influencing Greed that what he did now was correct, to not succumb to the greedy nature that the game creator had preordained for him.

Jack was seriously afraid that Greed would go back to his original nature once he knew that he was real.

Greed was silent after Jack finished his tale.