

World 91

Chapter 91: Another Skilled Ranger

Jack then picked up the pace.

There was no monster in the vicinity. Areas closer to the capital had always been more sparse in terms of monster activities. Another reason was probably those unknown hiding players had cleared out the monsters around, so as to give them better control of the environment for their ambush.

As Jack approached the blue dot closest to him, he saw from the corner of his vision that there was a tree in that location. Said player was probably hiding behind its trunk or hiding above amongst its branches which were covered by thick leaves. Jack continued walking normally, pretending to not be aware of those players hiding around. He was vigilant however, prepared to make a move once he detected their hostilities.

The blue dot stayed still as Jack went past it. Could he really be just overthinking the matter? These hiding players were probably here for a different reason. Jack continued forward and passed the second closest blue dot. There was still no activity from them.

It was still fine when he passed the third. He was roughly halfway through their circumference. The fourth blue dot was hiding behind a huge boulder on the left side of the road. Jack continued to walk past as if he was having a leisure walk. He was almost convinced that it was just a misunderstanding and was just about to give the others a message asking them to just come out from their hiding places, when the blue dot behind the boulder suddenly made its move. Jack saw in his radar where it sprinted at a fast speed towards his back.

Jack was surprised, but he had yet to let his guard down, so he immediately spun around as he took out his black sword. He saw a blur of shadow when he turned, he didn't think too much as he slashed towards the incoming shadow.

The shadow was startled as his prey had found out about his ambush, and was making a slash at him using his long sword. His weapon was a short dagger, even if he managed to stab his prey, he would also get hit by his opponent's slash. Trading health was not his style, so he altered his stabbing trajectory and aimed it instead at the oncoming slash.

Sparks flew as two metal weapons collided with a loud clang. The attacker was shocked when he found out that he was pushed back by a massive force and suffered 61 damages. He opened his legs wide as his feet skidded to a stop a couple of meters back. He looked at his prey with wide eyes.

"Who are you? Why you attacked me?" Jack asked the attacker, who had his face covered with a cloth mask.

"Are you from Death Associates?" Jack asked again.

The mysterious attacker kept his silence. Jack was confused, what's the point of using a face mask? Players could simply use Inspect skill to find out about the other's identity. He used his God-eye monocle to Inspect.

Blackjack (Ranger, level 13)

HP: 230

Blackjack? Wasn't him the one Silverwing had mentioned before? The one that was Red Death's martial brother? He was not a member of Death Associates, but he certainly had ties with the guild. So it was really them targeting him again.

Jack saw Blackjack lifted his left hand up high. He was giving a sign? Jack then immediately sent a chat message to his friends, "now!"

He saw the green dots which symbolized his allies started to move towards the black dots, which had changed color from the previous blue once Blackjack made an attack on him. The black dots were also started moving, but nine at the most outer perimeter were intercepted by green dots and stopped advancing, the remaining five were coming towards him.

Blackjack seemed to have received a message from his party members as well, as he looked at Jack in consternation.

"How did you guys find out?" He asked.

Jack didn't answer, he returned back his opponent's previous silent treatment.

"Never mind, you will still die today," Blackjack said as he was joined by two players, one fighter and one Magician, both faces also wore cloth masks. Another three Jack saw in his radar were approaching from behind, one was still a little distance away, the other two were close enough.

Jack spun to his back as he executed Swing. His sword created a crescent-shaped light that swept horizontally. The two that were planning to attack his rear were instead caught off guard. Both of them were rangers, and both of them were hit squarely on their chests, suffering 83 and 86 damages respectively. The force from the move threw them flying backward, passing the Magician who was still making his way towards Jack. The Magician was just about to cast a spell before he was stunned by the spectacle.

"So the information is true," Blackjack commented, "you really do possess monstrous attributes."

He then gave hand signals to his comrades. The fighter who was holding a large two-handed axe advanced towards Jack, while the two Magicians stayed in the distance and cast Energy Bolts. Eight bolts of energy rushed towards Jack from the front and back. Since the bolts have tracking ability, Jack didn't bother to dodge. He made rapid slashes at the bolts coming from the front and completely ignore the ones coming from the back as they slammed onto his back. Five damages ranging from 24 to 28 appeared above him as he also missed one out of the four bolts coming from the front.

By the time, he finished dealing with the Energy Bolts, the fighter had arrived by his side. Jack made a short glance at where Blackjack was a moment ago, and was surprised to find that he was no longer there. Jack couldn't afford it too much thought as the large axe wielded by the fighter was speeding towards his waist.

Jack spun his body to give his sword enough momentum before it clashed with the axe. Despite he was using one hand while his opponent was swinging the axe with two hands, the collision threw the axe

wielding fighter back as Jack stayed in his position. But then he felt pain in his back, he could guess that it was done by the missing Blackjack. He had somehow made it to his back silently while Jack was distracted. Jack received critical damage due to the backstab.

Jack slashed his sword backward but Blackjack had retreated several meters away. At this time the two Magicians fired Mana Bullets. Jack jumped to the side and rolled on the ground. His roll was not as elegant as the Ranger's skill, but it still served its purpose as he evaded both the Magicians' bullets.

He rose and about to rushed to one of the Magicians as they were easier to kill, but Blackjack arrived next to him as if he had predicted Jack's move. He sent a Swift Stab at Jack. Jack had had experience fighting against Red Death, so he was treating Blackjack as a similar expert. He didn't bother to dodge Blackjack's attack but instead slashed at his chest, adopting an eye for an eye method. He received 38 damage as Blackjack suffered 69 damage.

Only Jack could use this method to fight depending on his large capital of HP pool. After suffering so many hits, his HP bar was still 60% full. While his opponent's HP bar had fallen to less than half with just two hits, and both were even only Jack's normal attacks.

Blackjack immediately stepped back to put some distance after witnessing Jack's high damage output.

Seeing as the ranger was reluctant to approach, he left him and ran towards the Magician again. The Magician panicked, he tried to run away, but his movement speed was utterly lacking. The fighter with an axe wanted to chase and provide support but his speed was also not a match to Jack. Blackjack who realized he had made a mistake for allowing Jack some freedom to move, immediately ran forwards. But even though he was a ranger, he failed to catch up to Jack.

Jack came up to the escaping Magician in less than three seconds. During his chase, he received two hits from the other Magician's standard attack and one stab from Blackjack's Weapon Throw. He completely ignored them as their damages were slim. He sent Power Strike onto the escaping Magician's back, which caused critical damage. Jack had intentionally aimed his Power Strike downwards, which sent the Magician crashing to the ground. He then followed it up by delivering several rapid slashes to the helpless Magician lying on the ground.

Chapter 92: Death Associates' Plans

By the time Blackjack arrived in front of Jack, Jack had turned his attention onto him, as the Magician on the ground had already lost his life. Blackjack was furious! They were the ambushing party, and there were six of them ganging up on a single prey nonetheless, but the first casualty ended up belonging to their group instead. He would lose his face if anyone found out about this.

Blackjack sent rapid thrusts in his rage, which Jack noticed was slightly similar to how Red Death fought, but less refined. It was clear that Blackjack's skill was still slightly lower compared to Red Death. With his strength and HP pool, Jack was never afraid of trading lives, he sent Blackjack a normal slash as he received the thrusts.

Blackjack was stunned as his HP had reached critical with the last exchange. He hastily broke away again as his comrade fighter arrived, who only lasted one second before being sent flying back again. The

fighter's expression was ugly, how could he fight if every time he approached, he was immediately blasted away again?

The two rangers who had healed themselves had come back again to join the fight, but they were flabbergasted when saw Blackjacks' HP was critical. They put themselves in front of him as cover while he took out a basic healing potion to drink.

Jack smiled, he also took out a basic healing potion and drank its content. His HP was immediately recovered by 200 points. He didn't stop there as he took out medicine and consumed it. His health starting to recover slowly.

Blackjack's people were speechless. It already took them so much effort and even sacrificed one Magician and they had barely reduced the guy's HP to half, but now he had recovered to almost full again. How were they going to continue the fight?

Blackjack's expression was getting even uglier as he noticed several names had disappeared from their Party window. He turned around and saw several players coming towards them. He didn't recognize them. He looked forward again and saw another group approaching. There were two that he recognized amongst them. They were the other two targets, Fierce Flame and Star Bowler.

With the situation becoming disadvantageous to them, he decisively called for a retreat. "Withdraw!" He shouted to the others. They then ran away towards the Capital.

Jack was fair and kind to his friends, but he would never be benevolent to his enemies. He ran after the fleeing party. Apart from rangers, no other classes could match his speed, and the slowest amongst the enemies was of course the Magician.

The Magician felt like crying after knowing him being targeted, he immediately cried for help from his comrades. The other four turned back to give support, but soon found Energy Bolts flying towards them. John and Bowler cast their spells once they were in range. Helpless, they could only keep on retreating while Jack freely abused their Magician comrade.

"Storm Wind! Stop now or we will become irreconcilable enemies!" Blackjack shouted in rage.

"You are being funny," Jack replied without stopping his attacks. "Are you saying we are not already enemies when you attacked us?"

More magic attacks landed on Blackjack's party as The Man drew closer to them. One of the rangers in Blackjack's team urged him to leave, "we can't save him anymore. We need to leave!"

Blackjack gritted his teeth as he stared at Jack grimly, "you will regret this. Don't think this is over!" They then ran away leaving the half-dead Magician.

Jack was bullying the Magician slowly as to bait Blackjack's people to stay until his allies could surround them. But since Blackjack had retreated, he no longer needed to extend the Magician's suffering. Jack sent him a Power Strike and ended his life.

"That's what you get from messing with us!" Bowler yelled at the fleeing Blackjack's party.

"Hell, yeah!" The Man shouted victoriously.

The Magician corpse at Jack's feet disintegrated as the battle ended and leaving behind a magic staff and a few coins. Jack picked them up. The staff was actually an uncommon staff! Good, he would need six more to upgrade his staff into rare grade. He stored the staff, no one was making a remark regarding him taking the Magician's equipment, they figured he was just going to sell it for coins.

He then looked at the place where the other Magician had fallen, there was a funny hat there. He came over and picked it up. It was a normal grade cloth headgear. He had already got a steel helmet which was better. He looked at Bowler and tossed the hat to him.

"Take it, you do not yet have a headgear," he said.

Bowler didn't stand on ceremony as he immediately accepted and equipped it.

"You guys should go check on the ones you killed. They might have dropped something of good values," Jack said to the others.

"Tip was on cleaning detail, he volunteered to stay behind to collect the drops. I would say he did it to avoid our enemy from identifying him," John said, then he asked, "did you find out who those enemies are?"

"The leader is called Blackjack," Jack answered. "He is not a member of Death Associates, but he has ties to that guild. He must have attacked us out of the request from that guild."

"Blackjack? I've heard of him," John said. "By the way, how do you know his identity?"

"What do you mean? I use Inspect skill on him of course," Jack answered.

John squinted his eyes on him.

"You did?" The Man interrupted. "I also used Inspect skill, but all I got was a bunch of question marks."

"Yes, it must be their face masks," Bowler added. "I think it enabled them to cover their identity. I must look for it when we get back to the capital. They must have bought it in a shop considering all of them equipping the same face masks."

The Man nodded.

Jack was astounded. The others weren't able to Inspect their opponent's identity due to their face masks? Why had he been able to? He then thought of his God-Eye monocle, that tool must have been the reason.

He realized John was still looking at him with a suspicious expression.

"I recognized him from his move," Jack tried to explain by changing his previous explanation with a lie. "He had a distinguished way of fighting so it is not very hard to recognize him as Blackjack."

John didn't change his expression. After a brief pause, he simply said, "okay."

The Man was not too bothered by the details, he said, "all right, now that our enemies had been vanquished. Let us return to the capital. We had many glorious stories to share with our brethren! Hahaha!"

Jack agreed at once just to avoid John's suspicious gaze. Tip had also joined them after collecting the dropped items, and they start distributing the loots amongst themselves. Jack meanwhile took a peek at his Container of Souls. He had vaguely seen a transparent fire came out of the Magician when their corpses disintegrated and flowed towards him the same way as the Elite Boss' soul. Before this, he had collected 112 souls from the basic monsters they had met along their way back to the capital. Now in his container were 134 souls. He had collected an additional 22 souls from those two Magicians. After some thought, he assumed the souls must be equivalent to their levels. Both of those Magicians should be level 11.

After finished deciding distributions on the loots, they then continued on their way back to the capital.

In the woods not far from there, two figures walked out as they looked at the departing Jack's party.

"It is as you said, he really can detect others' positions," Red Death said with a grim expression. "This will make him more difficult to deal with."

Scarface who stood beside her nodded.

"I was wondering why you asked Blackjack to positioned themselves beyond that small hill and not to place any sentry before it. You were trying to determine by how far the range he can detect the others, right?"

"You are right again," Scarface said. "from his response, I would say he can detect in an area of around two hundred to three hundred meters from him."

"If that is true, then we are outside of his area of coverage, he shouldn't be aware of us spying on him," Red Death said.

"I don't know what fortunes he had encountered during the Tutorial Period, but together with his abnormal attributes, he certainly possessed many secrets that put him ahead of other players."

"Then we should put more effort in eliminating him, in order to steal his treasures."

Chapter 93: Silver Grade Adventurer

"We have already researched, drop rate after death is not certain. His treasures might end up lost forever when he dies," Scarface said. "But it was true that we still need to eliminate him as soon as possible, not for his treasures but to prevent him from becoming a greater obstacle to our guild. It is unfortunate that we have made him into our enemy, that stupid Bigarm sure knows how to look for a foe. Now we need to stop him from growing."

"It will be difficult to make large movements against him as he had White Scarfs' protection."

"He is still protected as White Scarfs didn't see us yet as a menace. However, we now know that it was not only Bay City that had been affected by the world-changing event. There are other cities that had experienced the same incident. That means there are more players that have been transported into this world from other cities. Once we assembled the members from our Death Associates guild, White Scarfs will become just a small hindrance. At that time, if they still insist on protecting Storm Wind, they will be the one to suffer."

Red Death thought about Scarface's words, she then said, "but after these few days of searching, we still didn't see many of our members from other cities."

"There are possibilities that this capital is not the only city that us players had been sent to," Scarface replied.

"You mean there are other cities in this world where we might find players like us?"

"I would say that is highly probable," Scarface nodded. "Once our members reached higher levels that allowed them to travel into wilderness further, we will start exploring. If we find other cities and our other members, we can re-assemble our guild and regain our glory."

Red Death looked in the direction where Jack's party was.

"So for now we let them roam free?" She asked.

"For now," Scarface replied. "By the way, Blackjack would surely be pissed by your request this time. He lost quite a number of his gangs."

"He will get his compensation," Red Death said. "But I know his temperament. He will surely not let this go. While we focus on searching for our guild members, we can use his vengeance to create trouble for Storm Wind."

"That was kind of heartless of you, I thought he is your martial brother."

Red Death scoffed, "he is just a fool who thinks too much of himself, though he could be useful once in a while."

Scarface smirked, "heh, if this is how you treat people who are kind to you. I would hate to be your enemy."

Jack's group arrived in the capital without any other complication. When they passed through the city gate, the group could feel their tension loosened as they were now inside the safe zone, no more needs to worry about being ambushed by other players or monsters.

"So where are you guys going?" Bowler asked the others.

"I am going to meet up with my men who had died, then we are going to hang out in the tavern. Any of you want to join?" The Man asked.

"I will pass. I want to go hand our quest to the Adventurers Association," Jack replied.

"Me too," John said.

"Okay, keep in contact, Boss! Holler if you need anything," The Man said, completely ignoring John.

Jack nodded, "take care. Call me also if you need help."

"That's my boss!" The Man clapped him on the shoulder and waved goodbye to Bowler, Flame, and Tip. He again deliberately ignored John, who was also indifferent to his treatment.

He then left with the rest of Men of Solidarities. Jack turned to John, "you are going to hand over your quest to the Adventurers Association as well? Shall we head there together?"

"You go first, I want to visit some shops to make a few purchases first," John replied.

"All right. Keep in touch," Jack said to him.

"Oh, believe me, I will. One with ability such as yours would be a shame if I don't put you to use properly," John replied.

"You are really shameless, you know?" Bowler scorned.

John replied him with contempt, "you have been calling me detestable, despicable, and shameless. Go brush up on your vocabulary so you can add more colorful words to describe me next time."

"I would prefer there is no next time."

"The feeling is mutual, friend."

Flame was not interested in listening to their banter, so she left first. Jack followed her. When Bowler saw the two left him behind, he immediately ignored John and chased after the two.

There were even more people this time compared to last time inside the Bronze Hall of Adventurers Association. Soon every player, or outworlder, as the natives called them, would know about this place. When that happened, Jack afraid that people would need to start to queue up in order to take on a quest, despite the hall's large size and multiple counters. Luckily, he was just 3 points away from becoming a Silver adventurer. He expected that Silver adventurer would have their own silver hall to issue out quests.

Jack went to a counter while Flame and Bowler went to the other two empty counters. Currently, they still had the luxuries to choose counters. Although the three of them had accepted the same quest, they still need to report the quest individually to receive their rewards.

As Jack handed his completion report, he received the rewards of 3 silver coins, 2000 Experience points, 14 Adventurer Points. He immediately received a system notification afterward, "Congratulations, you have reached level 15 for your Fighter class."

Level 15 at last! He was now ready for his Advanced class.

While he was celebrating his level up in his mind, the girl at the counter had taken out a dark red orb. It was similar to the one Jack saw at the lobby counter when he got his adventurer badge.

"Sir, congratulations, you have accumulated enough points to become a Silver grade Adventurer," the girl at the counter said. "If I may borrow your Adventurer Badge, I will help you make the necessary process in becoming one."

There was still a process? Jack thought. He didn't think too much of it and handed his Adventurer Badge. The girl placed it into the orb which enveloped it. Jack and the girl waited for a period of time while the orb made some occasional flashes of dull light from time to time. This was like waiting for computer processing in his real world, Jack thought. Not long after the orb released his badge, which had different color now. It was silver in color with a metallic texture. There were some parts that were so shiny he could see his reflections on its surface.

"The process is complete, congratulations on becoming a silver rank adventurer," the girl said with a smile.

Jack took back his badge and admired it. It looked much cooler now.

The girl then gave him the direction on how to go to the Silver Hall which provide quests for Silver Adventurer.

"Before you go, I would also like to inform you," the girl added. "Due to you being the first Outworlder to become a Silver Adventurer, you have been granted VIP Adventurer status."

"What's a VIP status?" Jack asked.

"It's a status with some benefits of course," the girl replied. "One of which allowed you to use our VIP rooms. Inside the rooms, you can receive and submit quests as you did, similar to the counters here in the hall. But since they are exclusive for VIPs, you don't have to worry about queueing up with the crowd."

That was neat, Jack thought. He was just worrying about this place getting too crowded a few minutes ago. He didn't expect to have received a solution to that in such a short time. This was like being a VIP of a bank in his real life, so you don't need to waste time queueing up at the tellers.

Jack thanked her for her help and was just about to depart to take a look at the Silver Hall before Peniel's voice was heard beside him.

"Are you forgetting something?" She asked.

'About what?' Jack enquired back in his mind.

He could hear Peniel let out a heavy sigh, showing her annoyance.

"Exclusive List! Body Double skill!" She said out loud.

Chapter 94: Applying For Advance Class

"Right!" Jack recalled after getting reminded by Peniel. He immediately turned back to the counter.

The girl still smiled politely at him, "is there anything else I can help you with, Mr. Storm Wind?"

"I wish to exchange my points," Jack said to her.

The girl then brought out the exchange items interface. Jack scrolled to the top where the Exclusive items were. The four exclusive items were still there on the list, naturally, as since he was the first one to become a Silver adventurer, he was also the one with enough points to take out one of the items from that list. The Skill Book, interestingly, had its stocks reduced to nine. Someone had spent their 30 skill points for one of the Skill Book.

Jack didn't put much thought into it, he clicked on the Technique Book: Body Double. His Adventurer points automatically were subtracted. He checked his Adventurer Badge and saw its Adventurer points were still 111, but his available points now only had 11 points left.

The Technique Book materialized on his hand. He inspected it.

Technique Book: Body Double (Rare Consumable)

Grant the skill: Body Double

Restriction: Mage class

When he saw the description, he was dumbfounded. "This is a skill for Mage class?" Jack asked Peniel.

"Yes. Why? Is there a problem?" Peniel asked.

'I was thinking of becoming a Healer once I become a level 15 Magician,' Jack answered in his mind.

"Oh...," Peniel just realized she had not informed Jack about which class the Body Double skill is for. However, instead of admitting that she had been careless, she said, "Why be a healer? A Mage is a better class!"

'Really? I thought every class has its own specialties? So then no one class should be better than the others?' Jack said as he remembered the Fairy's words a few days ago. That was also how VR RPG class systems worked in his past gaming experiences.

Peniel was annoyed that Jack used her own words against her. She asked, "why do you want to be a healer anyway?"

'I thought it would work well if used in conjunction with my melee prowess, it would keep me survives in combat longer.'

"Well, it's your fault anyway for not telling me your plan from the start. You can't return the book anymore, give it to your friend then if you don't want it!" Peniel said in a sulky tone.

It's not that I'm blaming you, sister, Jack thought helplessly.

'Well, it's not that I'm determined to be a healer anyway,' Jack said. Since fate had given him an opportunity to learn a Mage skill, he might as well choose that class then. Jack stored the book away into his Inventory Bag.

'Shall we go check the Silver Hall?' Jack asked Peniel to try to change the topic.

"You should go get your Advanced class first. The quests from this Adventurers Association all had time limits. It's better if you only pick them when you have no other things to do."

'All right,' Jack agreed.

He then walked over to Bowler and Flame who had already finished submitting their quests some time ago, they were sitting on one of the benches waiting for Jack.

"Shall we pick another collaborative quest?" Bowler asked excitedly.

Jack felt bad after seeing the guy's spirit, but he had to prioritize his class change. Peniel had informed that attributes increase between advanced class and basic class were different, hence he needed to change his class as soon as possible before he gained another level.

"Sorry, I have an urgent matter to attend to. Maybe another time," he told Bowler.

"Oh... All right, no problem," Bowler replied. He tried to sound cheerful, but Jack could hear a hint of disappointment.

Flame was more indifferent. She simply nodded and said, "good luck with your matter."

She then asked Bowler, "you want to do quest alone or together? There is a quest for two people there, but there is also another one for four people, it gives more rewards. We could ask John to join."

"No! Not that guy!" Bowler immediately rejected. "I've put The Man in my friend list. I will ask him instead."

Flame shrugged, it was fine for her either way.

Jack bid them farewell and then departed from the Adventurers Association. As he exited the building, he didn't notice John entered. John went directly to the Bronze Hall to submit his quest. He also didn't see Bowler and Flame who were still inside the hall. Considering it was a very large hall, and there were many people roaming around inside, it made sense that they didn't notice each other. John went to one of the empty counters to submit his quest.

After receiving his rewards, he was grinning. He said to himself, "a few more points and I will have enough for that Body Double technique book, hehe."

Before he chose another quest to take, he opened the Item Exchange list again to make sure the book was still there. When he reached the top part of the list, his hand froze. He blinked his eyes a few times to make sure that they were still working properly. He looked again. There were only three items left in the Exclusive list. And it had to be his target the Body Double Technique Book that had gone missing. He thought he was very fast already in accumulating points, there was someone even faster?

"DAMN IT!" He shouted bitterly.

Bowler who was a few counters away peeked out. "Who the hell was it cursing inside this place? Hope the guards throw him out," he said.

Jack was looking around after he exited the Adventurers Association building. He realized he had no clue what to do to change his class. He then asked Peniel in his mind, 'what should I do to advance my class?'

Peniel soon replied, "that will depend on which class you want. You said that you want to be a Warrior instead of a Knight, in order to learn that Technique Book Gilbert gave you. Is that still valid?"

There was still a hint of annoyance in her voice. This Fairy was really a moody one, Jack thought. He then answered her, 'yes. I would still want to become a Warrior.'

"Then go ask the locals for direction to the Warrior Academy."

'Warrior Academy?'

"Yes, find that place, then go and apply in order to become a warrior."

Jack proceeded to ask the natives following Peniel's instruction. Following the direction provided by them, he came to the edge of the Business district which was closed to the Noble district. There were a

series of huge and luxurious buildings lined up along the street, with many guards patrolling along this street.

Not many players could be seen around this street, most were NPCs. Maybe because not many players understood the purposes of the buildings here yet. Jack approached one of the buildings, it was a white painted stone building with rib vaults and large stained glass windows. There was a high tower at the back of the building. Several men and women in white robes can be seen under the open vestibule at the building's entrance.

When Jack came to the vestibule, he could see inscriptions beside the entrance doors. It was written Healer Academy.

"Can I help you, sir?" One of the women in a white robe greeted him with a polite smile.

"I am looking for Warrior Academy. I was informed that it was on this street?" Jack said to the woman.

"It was the second building that way," the woman answered.

Jack thanked her and went on his way. He passed a building that had an insignia depicting a sword and a shield, he would assume it was the Knight Academy.

The next building after it was a little bit more modest compared to the others. It was made of wooden and steel materials with pointed arches and clustered columns. Jack went to the entrance of this building. There was a large man in a viking getup that stood guard at one side of the entrance and on another side was a placard. He looked at the engravings in the placard, which read Warrior Academy. He had arrived at the right place.

"what's your business here?" The Viking man asked when he saw Jack was about to enter.

"I would like to apply to become a Warrior," Jack answered with respect.

The Viking man scrutinized Jack from head to toe, before asking, "you are a Fighter?"

"Yes," Jack answered.

"You already reached level 15?"

"Yes, I have."

The Viking man nodded, "okay, go on then. Find an overseer named Gruff. He will let you know what to do."

Jack thanked him and entered.

Chapter 95: Class Change Test

The interior was huge, and it looked more like a tavern rather than an academy. There was a bar counter at one side of the room, supplying beverages to the occupants, while tables littered around the room. Several of the tables were occupied by rough-looking men. All of them were NPCs, he was the only player inside the room.

Jack looked around the room, he was at a loss as to where to find this Gruff guy. As he was looking around awkwardly, a female warrior in thick battle armor approached.

"You lost, kid?" She asked.

"I was told to look for Gruff? I am here to apply for Warrior class," Jack answered.

"New blood?" The woman gave him a playful smile.

"Come with me," she said as she waved for Jack to follow her. She took Jack past the tables with rough-looking men who send him several crude remarks.

"Lovely bunch, aren't they?" The woman said to Jack.

Jack did not comment.

They went to an opening at the far side corner, beyond it was a smaller room with a cupboard with drawers and a work desk filled up with stacks of paper. It looked like an office. Behind the work desk was a muscular man with a hard face covered by mustache. He was scribbling on a paper when the woman warrior and Jack entered.

"Boss, we got a new one who is interested to be a Warrior," the woman said to the man behind the desk, who stopped writing after hearing it.

"It had been a while," the man said as he put down his writing utensil and lifted his head up to look at Jack.

"An outworlder?" He said with a frown.

"Is there a problem?" Jack asked nervously, worry that his status as an outworlder might complicate matters.

"No, not a problem," the man said. His expression changed to a wide grin. Jack was confused by the fickle display. The man then turned to the woman, "you know what to do."

The woman chuckled and went through a door at the opposite wall from where they came in. The man stood up and came over to Jack. He offered his hand for a shake. Jack gave him his.

"You look like a strong man, as befitting of a warrior-soon-to-be," the man said as they shook hands. "I am Gruff. I will be the one processing your application. Come, have a seat."

He moved a wooden chair which was at one side of the wall to the side of his working desk. Jack sat on the chair as offered. Gruff then went back to his work chair and took out a different set of paper.

"This is just some formality for administration, I'll just ask you a few questions to collect your data," he said.

"All right," Jack replied.

Gruff started by asking his name, his class, his level, then went on to his age, height, and so on. This tedious paperwork started to feel much like real life. Did he seriously have to go through this in order to change his class? After what seemed to be unending QA sessions, the questioning paused when the

female warrior who took him here came back into the room. Gruff looked at her, who nodded. His mustache twitched as if he was smirking, Jack couldn't be sure due to his thick mustache.

"All right, we are done with the administration," he said to Jack. "We can now proceed to the testing session."

"test?" Jack was surprised.

"Yes, a test," Gruff said. "You don't think you only need to fill up some paperwork in order to become a Warrior, do you? You will need to pass a test."

Peniel didn't mention a test. He asked her in his mind, 'Peniel, is this true?' In which she replied, "yes. Good luck."

Jack was speechless. The Fairy still liked to give information in half.

"All right. What should I do in the test?"

"Simple," Gruff said with a smile. "You just need to survive."

Jack was perturbed. The test was something dangerous?

"Come," Gruff gestured for him to follow as he went into the room that the woman came out from.

Jack went in and saw it to be a much larger room, almost the size of the tavern-like foyer which he passed when he entered the Academy. However, the shape of the room was unusual as it was wide at the side where they stood, but it got narrower if they went further to the other side. The space seemed to be trapezoid-shaped.

The floor ahead of them to the opposite smaller side was divided into three sections differentiated by colors. The closest to where they were standing had blue color flooring. If they walked further, the flooring's color changed to green. The furthest section had red color, and beyond the red color flooring was a platform. On the platform was a large statue depicting a warrior in complete armor.

There were multiple wooden puppets lining along the colorful floors of the room, each puppet was holding a weapon. Jack had no doubt that this test would be involving these seemingly immobile and harmless puppets.

"So, what should I do here?" Jack asked.

Gruff chuckled, "you just need to make your way to the other side, and then kneel under that statue there."

"That's all?"

"That's all," Gruff confirmed.

"And I supposed those puppets around the room will just stay quiet?"

"What do you think?"

Jack was depressed, this fellow here seemed to be enjoying it. "Their weapons seemed to be real? Will they stop if my HP was almost out?"

"Normally yes," Gruff replied. "But for outworlders, no."

"What? Why?" Jack was bewildered.

"Because your kinds will come back to life. The least we can do is take out one of your levels. If you don't have any sense of danger, then what's the point of the test? A Warrior is someone who braves through dangers and can still laugh about it!"

At this point, the female warrior that had taken Jack to see Gruff, came into the room, followed by some rough-looking men who were previously hanging out at the tavern-like foyer. They lined up at the back in silence as if waiting for something to happen.

"You can start at any time now," Gruff said as he saw that Jack was still not moving.

"What are they here for?" Jack referred to the rough-looking men who had just entered.

"They are just here for the show," the female warrior answered. Those men started grinning and whispering among themselves.

"Show?" Jack asked.

"Don't mind them," Gruff said. "It had been some time since someone applied for Warrior class, and they are just bored. Go ahead now!"

"Yes, we don't have all day, boy. The sun is about to set soon. Let's get the show started!" One of the rough-looking men at the back said.

"Quiet, will you!" Gruff reprimanded the guy.

Jack stepped to the edge of the blue floor. He turned to Gruff and asked, "what's the condition for failure?"

"If you got killed," Gruff answered. "And if you come back to this side without reaching that statue there."

"Can I retry again if I fail?"

"Of course... After one week passes."

One week? It was enough time for Jack to increase several levels. Unless he purposefully not did anything to level up, but it would be the same waste. In other words, he could not afford to fail here. He took out his long black sword.

'Any advice you can give me for this test?' He asked Peniel.

"Don't die," she answered.

'Figures,' Jack said as he stepped onto the blue floor.

Chapter 96: Placing Bets

As soon as Jack's foot was on the blue floor, the combat puppets came to life. Their wooden body appeared rigid, but their joints were extremely flexible, giving them the ability to move fluidly as if living organisms. And their movements were also not slow, in just a few instants, the closest one had approached Jack. There were a total of seven puppets in the blue floor area, and all of them were dashing towards him. The eyes on their heads were marked with mystical green glows.

Jack brandished his sword and parry the blow from the closest combat puppets. A loud clang sounded out. The crowd at the back cheered as the action started.

"You set the difficulties to the maximum, right?" Gruff asked the female warrior.

"Yes. That was the agreed standard for outworlders," the woman replied. "But don't you think that's a bit too harsh? Usually, only Fighter who had reached level 20 would be able to conquer the maximum difficulty test. A level 15 practically has no chance to pass."

"The Gods and Goddesses believed the Outworlders to be special, that's why this treatment. We just need to follow their orders," Gruff replied.

"Yeah, I would say this serves them right," one of the men standing behind joined in the conversation. "It will teach them some manners. Do you see their lots trotting around the capital like they own it? Some are even making trouble when the guards are not around."

"That's true," some others agreed.

Gruff waved to calm the lots down, "the Gods and Goddesses believed they are important and they will play an important role in the coming conflict. So it is not our right to judge, we just need to play our parts."

"Hey, it's boring to just watch. How about we make a wager?" One of the rough-looking men said.

"What do you propose?" Another replied.

"Let's bet how far he can go! I bet 1 silver coin that he will fall on the green floor!"

"Are you sure? He looked to be in trouble already on the blue floor. I bet 3 silver, those don't dare to bet this amount just pissed off!"

"I bet 3 silver as well, and blue floor too."

"Green floor."

"Blue."

Gruff looked at them sternly, which caused all of them to pipe down.

"A bunch of degenerates," he said, then added, "if you are making bet with only that tiny amounts, then just go home to your mama and drink milk! 8 silver coins! Those that don't dare to bet this amount, get the hell away from my sight! And I said red floor."

The crowd turned rowdy with cheers and curses at the same time due to Gruff's provocations. Jack, on the other hand, was hearing all this talk about bet while he was weaving through the puppets' assaults. He was still conserving his strength and acted passively in order to study the puppet's movement and

ability. When he heard their talks, he got annoyed. They are using him as a subject for a bet and furthermore betting on him failing, none of them had bet that he would succeed. He started to pretend to be weaker, sometimes intentionally parrying blows that he should have been able to dodge cleanly. And made a show as if he got pushed back by the attack due to disparity in strength.

"Red floor? That's quite a high expectation you give him," the female warrior said.

"Well, I had the feeling that he still hasn't used all his strength," Gruff replied, then asked, "are you in?"

"In! Green floor," the woman said.

"Boss is giving us free allowance! I'm in! And I still say blue floor," one of the rowdy men said.

"Me too!" Another joined.

Soon almost all the others also busy placing their bets, until a shout shut them up.

"I bet 18 silver coins! And I say I will reach that bloody statue and pass this test!" Jack shouted out in the middle of his fight with the puppets.

The others looked at him in bafflement. Is this guy serious? He looked like he was already having trouble on the blue floor. Pass the test? He would need to go back first and come back again after he reached at least level 20, even then it was not a guarantee.

"Heh, getting angry just because of a few mocking?" One of the rough men said, "I will take your money then. I'm in! I still say blue floor!"

"He is not worthy to become a Warrior if he got reckless just from a few taunts. Let's teach him a lesson! I'm in also."

"Me too!"

"Count me in!"

Unexpectedly, the numbers of people joining the bet were even more than when the bet was 8 silver coins. All twelve of the rowdy men ended up betting, leaving only Gruff and the female warrior.

"You in?" One of the men said to the two of them.

"In. Green floor," the female warrior said.

Gruff on the other hand, was twirling his mustache while gazing at Jack's fight in deep thought. Was he being brash? He thought. Although the guy seemed to be having difficulty, he still managed to avoid direct hit all this time. And his movements seemed precise and not panicky. However, to pass the test at his current level, Gruff thought that it was still a bit far-fetched. He finally said, "All right. I'm in as well. Still red floor."

Jack made a quick glance and said, "is that everyone already?"

The rowdy men laughed, then one of them said, "what the hell are you asking for? Everyone had placed the bet. Just surrender now and come back here and give us your money. It will save you from losing 1 level."

Well, time to be serious then, Jack thought with a grin. It was quite a hassle to pretend to be weak anyway. He dashed forward with an explosion of speed, immediately went past three puppets that were gunning at him. The Warriors who were watching were still having a merry laugh a second ago, their laughs suddenly froze when Jack exhibited his real speed.

"You sure he is a Fighter and not a ranger?" One of them asked the female warrior, who didn't answer as she observed Jack with a frown.

One puppet managed to block Jack's advance while another one came from his left. He executed Power Strike to the one in front while he sent a kick to the one at his left. The puppet in front was blasted aside by the Power Strike. The kick to the other puppet didn't cause damage but it halted its movement. Its hands however still free as it stabbed at Jack's side. Jack ignored the damage and used his kick to push the puppet while propelling him away.

The test didn't require him to destroy the puppets, only to pass through them. So once he was free from those two puppets, he ran forward. The other five were too far away so they didn't manage to catch up to Jack when he passed into the green floor area.

The warriors who had betted for him to fail in the blue floor area were howling with distress, they were stomping their feet as they thought about the coins they had lost. Jack was grinning instead. Serve them right, he thought. He had gotten an idea to take away their coins after hearing them betting on him. It's a pity that he only had 18 silver coins in his bag. Otherwise, he would have baited them to bet more.

The puppets on the green floor started moving towards him, but he noticed that the seven puppets in the blue floor area stayed still once he exited their area. Jack realized that the puppets were tied to the area color and won't interfere with the other areas. This should make the test easier, Jack thought as he shifted his attention to the puppets in the green floor area.

The green area was smaller than the blue area, so his space of activity was more restricted. However, there were only five puppets in this area, so it should balance out the difficulty, or so Jack thought, before he noticed the closest puppet was already upon him.

It was faster?

Chapter 97: Breaking Through The Combat Puppets

Jack was caught off guard by the puppet's speed. He barely managed to parry the puppet's attack which was using a heavy mace. The strike pushed him back several steps until one of his feet stepped on the blue floor. The puppets at the blue area came to life again and rushed towards him. Jack was given a fright as he hurriedly pulled his foot back to the green area, and this caused the puppets behind to stop moving again.

Before he could let out a relieved sigh, his attention was taken again by the puppet with heavy mace in front, who swung its weapon from high up towards his head. Jack was caught off guard before because he had expected the puppets in the green area to have the same attributes as the blue area ones. Now that he knew they were faster and also stronger, he adjusted his pace. He jumped sideways to avoid the strike.

When he landed, another puppet was already throwing a slash onto his neck. Jack ducked then roll forward to put some distance, but he caught from the corner of his eyes the other puppets were closing in. He only needed to pass through them, so he tried his best not to make any physical contact with the puppets. He waded through the puppets one by one, but somehow when he was making some distance forward, one of them always managed to get ahead and pushed him back. Their teamwork was meticulous. Jack was having difficulty proceeding as he kept moving to keep them from surrounding him. He would be in danger if they managed to encircle him.

The rowdy men who were having ugly expressions when they saw Jack had made it to the green floor area easily, now wore a wide grin again.

"Hehe, does he think it will be easy?" One of them said.

"Yeah, he had overestimated himself," another added.

As the rowdy warriors were returning to their merry selves and made fun of Jack, Jack continued to observe the puppets' movements and actions. Their strength and speed were indeed superior compared to their blue area's predecessors, yet their moves were the same monotonous operation. They were only capable of normal melee attacks, no skill nor any ranged attack. As Jack got more used to their repeat actions, he led them to one side and then ran again to another side, causing them to move in a single line one after another. This way he could deal with them one after another.

Time to counter-attack, Jack thought. He had learned to treat this world as real life, hence he considered how to deal with his opponents the way he would if it was real. He saw that the wooden puppet's body had hard skin which reduced the damage they receive. Yet their joints seemed fragile, as it was required in order for them to move fluidly. Thus, he targeted the puppet's knee joints.

When the closest puppet arrived and was delivering its monotonous attack again, Jack easily dodged it and sent a Power Strike to its knee joint. It made a loud clang sound and the puppet fell to his knee. It rose up again promptly, but it was now moving with a limp.

It worked! Jack celebrated in his mind. Normally this method would not have worked in previous VR games. No matter which vital part he hit, it would only cause damage, or at best a critical damage, but it would not impair the target movements. Even if you hack the target legs thousands of times, it would still move normally afterward. This game world here was completely different and much more real.

As he saw that his method had borne results, he used the same method to the second puppet. And then to the third, and so on. As they had been set up in a linear formation, he managed to deal with them one by one. Each had their knee joints incapacitated to a limp.

The rowdy warriors who were laughing in merriment a while ago got their smiling faces reduced little by little with each cracked knee joint. When the seventh puppet fell on its knee due to Jack's stab, their expressions were completely serious, not a hint of a smile could be seen.

"We have seriously underestimated him," the female warrior said.

"There is still the red area. I don't believe he can really pass it!" Announced one of the men behind her.

"Naturally," another agreed.

Gruff made no comment as he continued to observe.

With the seven puppets crippled, they no longer had the speed to chase after Jack. He put a distance between himself and the puppets with ease as he entered the red floor area.

The red area only had three wooden puppets, but as he came near them, he could see that they were completely different than the ones before. Their wood skin was steely dark instead of the healthy brown color of the wood. And their sizes were twice compared to the other puppets. However, despite their sizes, their speeds were slightly faster than the green area puppets. These red area puppets did not carry any weapons. Instead, their hands were replaced by large round iron balls.

The first puppet charged at Jack like a mad bull. Jack had expected these puppets to be faster so he had made preparation. He leaped to the side once he saw the closest puppet made a movement. He rolled on the floor and rose as he saw the puppet rammed past where he stood. He would have been slammed back to the green area if that had happened.

The second puppet which saw his move had made its way towards him. It lifted its steel ball high and slammed it down. Jack managed to jump to the side to dodge, he then used the opportunity to attack its knee joint, hoping the same trick will work. But the sound when the attack hit was different, he knew immediately that his attack had failed to deliver sufficient damage to cripple the knee joint.

The puppet suddenly swung its steel ball horizontally, almost took out Jack's head with its violent lurch. Jack bent his body backward and managed to evade the swing, but he lost his balance and fell to his back. The puppet jumped at him and was about to use both his feet to flatten Jack on the floor. Jack rolled sideways to evade. Although missed, the puppet didn't stop as he continued to stomp its foot one after another in the attempt to trample Jack.

Jack continued to roll to avoid the stomping. Upon his rolling, he halted as he found out another puppet had come from the direction he was rolling towards.

Crap! He cursed in his mind. He made a quick-thinking and do a back somersault, narrowly avoiding the second puppet as it slammed down to the floor. Jack quickly rose and made a couple of backsteps. The two puppets who had failed, came chasing after him with fervor.

It was no use fighting with them, he thought. Their skins were too hard, even their joints were tough. He would just waste time if trying to deal damage to them. All he had to do was to escape from the red area to the platform with the statue. So he maximized his speed, and weaved through the two puppets as he crept closer to the platform.

His speed was thankfully still a bit faster than these puppets due to his dual-class attributes, but as he got closer, he found that the third puppet was standing in his way. The red area was the smallest compared to the other two prior areas. Hence he had much less space to move around, and the speed and size of the puppet made it easier for them to cover the range.

With his front blocked and another two menaces coming from behind, Jack had no choice but to run to the side. The puppet in front followed his movement but do not come forward, as if knowing that Jack might use the chance to sneak past him.

Shit! They were intelligent too, Jack cursed in his mind.

He had no choice but to fall back. The other two puppets continued to dog him while the third one kept watching near the platform. After running around for some time, Jack saw that there was no way to outmaneuver these puppets.

Seeing no other options, his left hand took out his magic staff.

Chapter 98: Warrior Class

Jack didn't take out his magic staff to increase his firepower, he was counting on its added defense. A magic shield constructed by light manifested at the tip of his staff as he charged towards the two puppets coming his way. Both of them swung their arms at the same time. Jack parried the puppet on his right with his sword and blocked the puppet on his left with his magic shield.

The impact threw Jack back as he skidded several meters on the floor before stopping, almost passing into the green floor area.

"I don't know a fighter has that kind of shield skill," one of the rowdy men said.

"That's not a fighter's skill," Gruff said.

After being pushed back, Jack jumped back immediately towards the two puppets. One of them reacted faster than the other and attacked first this time, Jack made rapid side steps to dodge it. The second puppet followed up with a horizontal swing. Jack blocked it with his Magic Shield and twisted his body to use the momentum as he slipped past in the space between the two puppets.

When the first puppet attacked again, he used his sword to parry. As he was already slightly past their defensive lines, every momentum when he defended instead pushed him closer to the platform. He continued to alternate between parrying with his sword and blocking with his shield, and made no attempt to counter-attack as he inched closer to the platform.

The third puppet which saw Jack becoming closer step by step, finally abandoned its post and moved towards him. It attempted to put Jack in the middle of a three-pronged attack, the human would not have enough limbs to defend by then.

Due to Jack focusing on defending the two puppets' attacks, Jack's back was facing the third puppet. He however paid attention to his radar, and was expecting the third puppet to move. When he saw the dot behind him approaching, he ignored the blow from the puppet on his left, while blocking the one from his right using Magic Shield and sending it a Power Strike at the same time.

The Strike pushed the puppet back a bit, halting its movements. At the same time, Jack suffered 58 damages from the left puppet's blunt attack. His HP had been falling to half from accumulating damages since the test started. He employed the force from the blow to push him slightly to his right. He then turned around and made a dash. The third puppet which was moving to his original position now found itself a short distance from Jack.

It smashed down as Jack was coming to its side, but Jack lunged forward and evaded it with a roll. He immediately stood up and ran towards the platform. All three puppets were positioned at his back, so no obstacle could prevent him from reaching the statue anymore.

When he celebrated his success early in his mind, he heard a clanging sound. He turned around just in time to see a steel ball tied to a chain was rushing at him from the side.

"Holy cra—" He didn't have a chance to finish his curse as the steel ball crashed onto his Magic Shield and sent him flying. He slammed onto the wall to the side. He felt as if his bone had been crushed. Clenching his teeth, he bore the pain and hurriedly rose up to his feet.

The steel ball that had hit him was hanging from a steel chain that came out from the third puppet's arm. The steel ball could disengage from its hand and became a chain ball weapon!

It was currently pulling the chain ball back and swung it in a revolving motion by its side. It then used the momentum and threw the ball straight at Jack, even as the other two puppets were running towards him.

The flying ball's speed was frightening, but Jack had prepared for it as he focused his attention on the puppet's motion. When it started to send its attack, Jack had already jumped upward. He then kicked towards the wall and pushed him higher. The steel ball crashed onto the wall and produced spiderweb cracks from its point of impact.

Jack landed on the floor and immediately continue to run. One of the puppets running towards him was closed enough as it slammed downwards. Jack parried it and cast Magic Bullet right at its knee joint. It didn't damage the joint but it did disrupt the puppet's movement.

The third puppet was still pulling back its chain. It would not have enough time to do another attack before Jack made it to the platform. The other two puppets had failed to hinder his movements, while he had halted the one closest to him. They would not be able to stop him, but Jack continued to pay attention to them. As expected, the other two puppets' steel balls detached from their arms and they sent their ball hands both towards Jack.

They swung it in a horizontal motion in order to throw Jack to the side, if they had made a straight shot, it would simply push Jack further into the platform. The two swings came from left and right, and both covered high and low positions. The left ball was aiming at Jack's leg while the right ball was targeting his upper body.

Jack made a quick calculation and jumped up, placing his Magic Shield in the right ball's trajectory. The left ball passed through below Jack, while the right one smashed onto the shield and sent him flying to the side, but Jack quickly stabbed his sword into the floor and used it to pivot himself towards the platform. Utilizing the momentum, he finally landed on the platform just before the statue. The three puppets instantly stopped their movements.

Gruff and the others were silent as their eyes continued to glue onto Jack who was now standing in front of the warrior statue.

Jack was catching his breath under the statue. That was close, he thought. He had managed to pass through the test mainly due to his outstanding attributes and his dual-class skills. Any normal level 15 would get crushed easily in this test. No wonder those warriors there did not have a good impression of him passing the test.

He wondered how many would actually successfully get their advanced class at the same level as him. Most would likely only become one at a higher level when they were stronger. Otherwise, they would need exceptionally good martial skills. Red Death for example, with her exceptional situational awareness and control of body movement, might have an easier time passing this test compared to him. Nevertheless, he was not sure if the test for Ranger's advanced class would be the same as the test for Warrior. He reckoned that they would be different, otherwise why had they set up a different academy for each class?

After collecting his thought and relaxing his body, he turned to the statue. It was a three-meter-tall sculpture depicting a male warrior wearing ceremonial armor and carrying a large two-handed axe. Jack did as he was told to and knelt in front of it. He soon heard a notification voice.

"Congratulations, you have passed the trial to become an advanced class. You are now a Warrior. Receive inherent skill: Physical Damage +10%, and a new skill: Charge."

He remembered Peniel had told him that Warrior focused more on offense. It was indeed the case, he had already got his damage increased by 10% once he became one. For the attribute increase, he would need to wait until he leveled up to 16 before he could find out the difference. He opened his skill window to look at the new skill Charge.

Charge, level 1/20 (Active skill, melee, require melee weapon)

Charge through a direction. Dealing damage and knocking all within the direction

Deals 120% physical damage

200% movement speed

Range: 8 meters

Cooldown: 20 seconds

Stamina: 30

Chapter 99: Shadow Bear Tasset

Sweet, it's a skill to deal with range opponents. He had no problem at this stage dealing with such opponents due to his high Dexterity, but this skill would be a great help to normal Warriors who had slow speed. Of course, with his fast movement, the Charge skill in his hand would become even more deadly.

After becoming a Warrior, he looked around and was confused about what to do next. There was no exit around the platform. Was he to travel back via the colored floors again? Would those puppets attack him again?

He called Gruff and asked about it. Those warriors at the opposite sides were snapped out of their daze due to the call. They were still having trouble believing what had just happened.

"The outworlders really aren't a simple bunch." One of them mumbled.

The others nodded.

The female warrior however said, "I don't think so. I think this one is special even among the Outworlders." He then whispered to Gruff, "you noticed that skill he used with his staff, right?"

"Yeah," Gruff answered. "Let's keep it between us first. I bet the King would be especially interested about this."

While they were talking among themselves, Jack called out again the second time, "hey! Can somebody tell me if the puppets will come after me again if I step onto these colored floors?"

Gruff chuckled. "Come over, it's fine! They will stop once you passed the test."

Hearing it, Jack let out a relieved sigh. He then walked over. He looked at the immobile puppets, couldn't believe he was having a life and death struggle with them just a few moments ago.

Once he arrived at Gruff's side, he said with a grin, "So, where are my coins?"

Gruff's mustache twitched. The others who were just about to congratulate him, froze on their spots. Their friendly faces turned stiff once they were reminded about the bet.

"Can't you be a little more lenient?" Gruff pleaded.

"A bet is a bet," Jack refused.

"Argh! Fine! Take out your coins, lads!" Gruff ordered.

They flocked together in a circle as they took out their coins.

"Ugh, I'm missing two coins, can I borrow first?"

"Brother, I also lack some coins."

Gruff knocked them both on the head, "why do you make the bet if you don't have enough coins? So how much are we missing?"

After they piled the coins together, they counted them together. Gruff used his coins to cover the coins his underlings lacked. He then put the coins into one leather pouch and handed it to Jack.

Jack felt bad after seeing Gruff sacrificed his own coins for his men. "It was noble of you to cover the shortage," he said.

"No worries, I'm deducting them from their next wages anyway," Gruff replied.

Jack instantly didn't feel as bad after hearing it. He accepted the pouch with glee, there were 252 silver coins inside! When the pouch entered his storage bag, silver coins that reach hundreds in numbers automatically converted into gold coins. He now had 2 gold coins, 70 silver coins, and 53 copper coins.

He felt rich now that he possessed his first gold coins.

"Okay, show is over! Now go back to where you belong!" He shooed the rowdy men away, then turned to Jack and said, "you, come with me!"

Jack was confused, wasn't his business with this academy over once he received his Warrior class? But out of curiosity, Jack followed him.

Gruff took Jack past his office and into another room. It looked like a storage place with a very messy organization. Gruff opened several drawers and storage boxes searching for something. As he combed through the room, he said to Jack without looking, "So are you going to tell me why you have both Fighter skills and Magician skills?"

Jack didn't answer.

"Don't take it wrong, I have no problem with that," Gruff added. "I have met people with multiple skills from different classes and have even fought with some, but they are all the natives of this world. It should be different for you Outworlders however, from what the Gods had told us and what we can read from the history books. It was said that you folks possessed a limitless potential for growth. However, your path of advancement in terms of class had always been fixed. So imagine my surprise when the first Fighter that came to apply to become a Warrior ended up breaking this common knowledge... Ah, found it!"

He took out a pant armor that was made of several interconnecting plates and covered by dark-colored fur.

"This was one of the armors I wore in my adventuring days back when I was young. Here, take it!" He shoved the armor to Jack.

Jack was puzzled as he received the armor. Why did this veteran warrior give him an armor? Is this a secret reward for being the first player to pass the Warrior test? He checked the armor stats.

Shadow Bear Tasset, level 15/35 (rare medium armor)

Physical Defense: 22

Magical Defense: 20

Durability: 40

Endurance +3

When HP is below 50%, defense is increased by 80%

A rare medium armor! Jack was dumbstruck. Did he really just get a piece of rare equipment as a secret reward? And the additional ability this armor had was quite a life-saving ability, his survival rate would increase dramatically with this armor. Jack looked at Gruff with surprise. The Warrior laughed, "Hehe, it seemed like you really like that armor."

"It's a really good armor," Jack agreed.

Gruff smirked, "of course! I don't spend my time with trashy equipment. This here was among the top even for rare equipment. It was made by a master craftsman using materials I got after killing a Shadow Bear."

"But why gave it to me? Is it because I am the first Outworlder to pass the Warrior test?"

"Don't be absurd, why do I give out my armor just because you passed a test?"

"Then why?" Jack asked with a confused expression.

"Take it as an investment," Gruff replied. "I can see you are unusual even among the Outworlders. There might be a time in the future when we might need your assistance. At that time, I hope you won't let us down."

Jack gave the guy's words some thought. If this guy had been a player, he would have rejected him and gave the armor back. But the guy's an NPC. If they need assistance, then that would mean a quest. Doing a quest would be beneficial to him unless it was an unreasonable one, but he did not believe this world system would throw him a quest outside of his capabilities.

After some thought, he agreed and thanked him for the Tasset. He changed his armor at once, replacing his level 1 leather pants with this new Shadow Bear Tasset. With this new armor, he looked more dazzling and different from the other players who mostly still wore standard leather and cloth armor.

"So how will you be contacting me if you need my assistance?" Jack asked. If it were with players, he could simply just add the guy as his friend, so they could send messages to each other when needed. But he had yet to learn of a communication system with NPCs.

Where do you stay in the capital? Tell me which Inn and I will send a message to the Inn when I want to look for you.

So it was a primitive messaging system, Jack thought with some disappointment. He then replied to Gruff, "I didn't stay at an Inn. I stayed in a shophouse called Amy's Bakery. You could leave your message to the shopkeeper Amy or her mother, Samantha."

"We will do that then," Gruff nodded. He then invited Jack to have some drinks outside with the other Warriors. Jack accepted. Now that he was also a Warrior, the other men treated him like one of their own and chatted cheerfully. Jack was relieved, as it seemed that these NPCs didn't bear any grudge against him for taking their coins.

After a few rounds of drinks, Jack decided to bid them farewell and made his leave.

He passed the female warrior who had just returned from an errand when he was on his way out. He greeted her before he continued on his way. The female Warrior went to sit next to Gruff.

"You have let the King know?" Gruff asked.

"I've passed the message to the Royal advisor," the female Warrior replied. "He said that he would send someone to keep an eye."

Gruff nodded.

Chapter 100: Learning Skills From Technique Books

When Jack came out from the Warrior Academy, it was nighttime already. So he decided to go straight back to Amy's bakery to rest. On his way, he felt that the number of Players, or Outworlders as the NPCs called them, had increased in number.

Maybe it was just his imagination, he thought.

He walked past the major shopping street, the shops were mostly still operational even at night. He saw the shop where he had bought the lockpicks and decided to go stock on some. Now that he had many coins, he could buy more of the lockpicks. He ended up spending 10 silver coins for 100 lockpicks. After finishing the purchase, he continued on his way.

When he reached Amy's Bakery, the shop was closed just like the other evening when he brought Samantha back. The difference was this time he was alone, and he didn't have the key to the shop. He felt awkward standing outside. Should he knock? What if they had fallen asleep? If they had, wouldn't they get annoyed if he woke them up? He was after all just a guest, he would feel bad if he caused them inconvenience when they had given him free accommodation.

Thought of using the lockpicks he had just bought to unlock the door came to his mind. But he soon dismissed it, what if somebody saw him and reported him to the guards? Things might get even awkward with Amy and Samantha if they found out about it.

In the end, he decided not to think too much about it and just simply knocked on the door, which opened immediately even before he finished the third knock. Amy stood behind the door with a smile when she saw it was him.

What the hell? Did she stay behind the door just waiting for him? Jack thought.

"Uh, hi. Is the offer for me to stay for the night still valid?" Jack asked.

"Of course, we were even worried that you have decided to no longer want to stay here," she replied.

"Where did you stay yesterday night?"

"Outside the city. My friends and I made camp at the foot of Siren Hill."

"Really? How exciting. Isn't it dangerous outside the city's wall? Are there many monsters?"

"Yes, there are, but we can take care of ourselves."

"Come in! We are just about to have dinner. Come join us and tell me all about it."

And so Jack joined Amy and Samantha for dinner. They chatted as if they were families. Jack even sort of forgot that this was a game world, it felt so normal. After the dinner, he went to his quarter.

Before he slept, he took out the two books that Gilbert had given him. The technique books containing the skill of Sword of Light and Life Burning Art. Now that he had become a Warrior class, he should be able to learn them. He put his consciousness into the book of Sword of Light, then saw a holographic interface asking if he would like to learn the skill.

Jack accepted. He heard a system notification voice, "congratulations, you have learned the skill: Sword of Light."

He then proceeded to the other book and learned the skill as well. Afterward, he checked them in his Skill page window.

Sword of Light, level 1/20 (Active skill, range, require melee weapon)

Sent sword energy in a linear direction, sword energy deals 200% physical damage. 30% added Critical Chance

Range: 10 meters

Cooldown: 3 minutes

Stamina: 50

Life burning art (Active skill)

Consume 30% HP to increase attributes by 100%.

While art is active, lose 1 HP each second

Duration: 10 minutes

Cooldown: 6 hours

The Sword of Light skill was pretty badass. It had the highest single damage output out of all his current skills that used a sword, and it could strike from a distance, which was an even longer distance than Charge. And it also had added effect on Critical Chance. This skill was obviously tailored to cover Warrior's weakness in range battle.

The Life Burning Art, on the other hand, was the only skill he had seen to have no level. Meaning he didn't need to waste skill points to improve it. It was already pretty powerful already thought, this skill can practically double up his attributes. But it would require him to sacrifice his life for it, as its name implied. He made some calculations, with his current HP, if he activated this skill and without consuming any restorative items, he would last a bit over seven minutes before he completely lost his HP. He would die first before the skill duration expired. It was a double-edged sword to use this skill.

But it was a good thing that this skill didn't need any skill point to be invested. There were already many skills to be upgraded from the basic skills, with the additions of the advanced class skills, he would need even more skill points. He had the Container of Souls, but till now he had not collected enough souls to even upgrade his basic skills.

He looked at his free skill points, he had 8 free skill points saved up till now. Since the basic skills would require fewer souls to upgrade, he would just leave those basic skills' upgrade later for the Container of Souls. He decided to use all the currently available free skill points for his new advanced skills. He invested 3 points on Charge and 5 points on Sword of Light.

Charge, level 4/20 (Active skill, melee, require melee weapon)

Charge through a direction. Dealing damage and knocking all within the direction

Deals 135% physical damage

245% movement speed

Range: 8 meters

Cooldown: 20 seconds

Stamina: 30

Sword of Light, level 6/20 (Active skill, range, require melee weapon)

Sent sword energy in a linear direction, sword energy deals 300% physical damage. 30% added Critical Chance

Range: 10 meters

Cooldown: 3 minutes

Stamina: 50

Charge skill got its movement speed increased in addition to the damage, this would be the skill to use when he needed to reach an opponent quickly. While the damage increase on Sword of Light was insane! With his current level, he could most likely kill a level 10 Ranger or Magician with low defense in a single hit. If he activated Life Burning Art, he could even do the same to higher-level ones.

"Gilbert gave you good stuff," Peniel commented.

"Yes, he did," Jack agreed. "Is the Body Double skill as good as this?"

"That skill doesn't do any damage."

"Huh? Then what good is it?"

"Get to Mage class soon and find out for yourself," Peniel replied.

Jack had learned that he would not get anything out of the Fairy if she did not intend to share the information from the start, so he just forgot about the matter. He closed his skill page window and went to sleep.

The next morning after Samantha's delicious breakfast, he went out to the shopping district and bought more cooking ingredients to stock. He had used most of them before they did John's quest. Afterward, he planned to go to the Adventurers Association to pick up a silver-grade quest. But Peniel told him to go to a different place instead.

"Hunters Association?" Jack repeated the place Peniel had asked him to go.

"Yes, asked the locals for direction," Peniel confirmed.

"Sounds similar to Adventurers Association, did they give out quests as well?"

"Yes."

"Then why invest in two associations? Might as well focus on one so I can increase my grade more quickly, won't I?" Jack argued.

"They have different functions. You can do them both. You will find out when you are there."

"Then why only go there today?" Jack continued to ask.

"Because you will need to be at least an advanced class in order to join the Hunters Association," Peniel replied. "Now stop wasting time and just do as I told you!"

"Fine, boss," Jack said helplessly.

He went and looked for NPCs who knew the way, then proceeded to go as directed. It turned out the building was not too far away from the Adventurers Association building, they were just two blocks apart.