

## **Second World #Chapter 1791 1791. Gods and Devils - Read Second World Chapter 1791 1791. Gods and Devils**

### *Chapter 1791 1791. Gods and Devils*

The battlefield that was filled with chaos a few minutes ago was now as silent as a graveyard. The Allied forces watched from one side while the six devils watched from the other. In the middle were two beings. Both looked like normal humans but they were anything but normal.

"This realm of the upper world is not yours," Serenity finally broke the silence.

"I know," Lucifer replied nonchalantly.

"Please return to your realm," Serenity said.

"I don't want to," Lucifer returned.

"You will cause untold bloodshed and chaos in this world," Serenity reasoned.

"And this is my problem, how?" Lucifer asked back.

Serenity narrowed her eyes. It was clear that Lucifer was unwilling to yield to her request.

Lucifer chuckled. "If you want me to leave, make me. You want to come at me alone or together with those three, I don't mind."

"Three?" Serenity asked.

Lucifer folded his arms and spoke, "Are the three of you planning to just continue watching from afar?"

His voice was soft, but everyone could hear him. Even the ones in the mobile fortress who were the furthest away. His voice didn't stop there. It continued to travel for miles.

Not long after he spoke, three beings materialized next to Serenity. Two of them were Pride and Greed. Serenity didn't expect these two to be nearby, but he was more surprised by the third being. She was eyeing her with suspicion. This third being was Wrath.

"Hm... Quite a welcoming committee here," Lucifer remarked. "But I see that you are incomplete. There should be more of you. Where are the rest? More importantly, where is Hope?"

"He is... dealing with something important at the moment," Pride answered.

"Oh... More important than welcoming me?" Lucifer said. "I'm not sure if I should feel hurt or not. He does know the lot of you is not enough to stop me now, doesn't he?"

"Is it now?" Greed asked.

Lucifer chuckled. "Hehe. Greed, you and I could have hit it off if we tried. How about it? Come over to my side and I will share the world with you."

"Well, I do remember you are called the Father of Lies. So, no thanks," Greed replied.

Lucifer simply smiled at the response. He turned to Wrath and asked, "What about you, Wrath."

Wrath folded her arms. "I don't deal with the denizens of the underworld," She answered.

"Hehehe..." Lucifer laughed quietly. "You, Gods of the upperworld, seem to have been spoiled too much by your superiority up here that you don't seem to know how to act when you meet your better."

Lucifer floated into the air as he spoke. His body glowed. Three shining halos appeared above his head. At the same time, three pairs of feathery wings materialized on his back. Each of the six wings was composed of a different color of feathers. The colors were white, black, red, green, yellow, and blue. While he was glowing, the area around him darkened.

Everyone in the Allied forces found themselves unable to move. Even their thoughts seemed to have stagnated. The four Gods of the upper world eyed Lucifer with wariness. Simply with this one display, they understood that Lucifer wasn't bluffing about him being their better.

The glow, the shining halo, and the six wings vanished as abruptly as they appeared. Everything returned to normal again. Lucifer floated back down.

He spoke again, "Though I would love to teach you punks some manners, I'm not a rude God. I know I am a guest, for now. At least until the corrupted mana fills this world and my underworld legions take over all the lands up here. Until then, how about we grown-ups stay out of our children's affairs?"

The four Gods and Goddesses looked at each other.

"We can't let his underworld forces do as they please," Serenity said.

Pride looked at Serenity. He projected his thoughts instead of speaking directly, "We don't have a choice. We have to agree for now."

Serenity was unwilling, but she knew that it was the truth. With Hope no longer around, it was not certain they could stop Lucifer.

Pride took charge and said to Lucifer. "Very well. We will stay out of this, but you have to promise you will do so as well."

"Hehe. I'm the father of lies, remember? But okay, you have my word. As long as you meddling Gods do not stand in my legions' way. I will sit back on this one. After all, from what I see just now. The forces of this world are nothing but an army of weaklings."

The six devils behind Lucifer laughed disdainfully at the words. The Allied forces could only grit their teeth in shame. They couldn't refute that statement after what had happened just now.

"Very well," Pride said.

"But you have to let this army leave!" Serenity exclaimed. "They are unprepared. Let them retreat and make proper preparation."

"Now, why would I do that?" Lucifer asked. "But then again, you might be onto something. If it is too easy, then they are not worth crushing. Do you agree with me, Satan?"

Satan laughed. "Harhar, I doubt that it will make any difference. But yes, I do prefer if they bite back a little."

"All right. Go away, you mice," Lucifer shooed the Allied forces. "My legions will advance following the spread of the corrupted mana. You can prepare yourself to be crushed, or you can start digging holes, hide, and hope that they don't find you."

"As for the four of you," Lucifer turned to Serenity and the others. "If you show up before me the next time, you better have Hope with you, because I won't be just talking to you the next time. Are we clear?"

"Very well," Pride said again.

"Okay then. Nice talk," Lucifer said and vanished from there.

The six devils stood their ground. They neither retreated nor advanced.

Serenity turned back and gave the Allied forces a look. They immediately caught her meaning. They started retreating. The mobile fortress had two broken legs. It was

limping as it crawled. Serenity pointed her finger. Green light wrapped around the mobile fortress. A second later, the fortress was as good as new.

"Hey! I thought we agreed no meddling?!" Mammon called out.

Serenity turned her eyes at Mammon, which caused him to recoil.

"Let's leave," Pride said.

They then disappeared one by one. Serenity lingered a while longer. She gazed at the retreating Allied forces before she vanished.

### *Chapter 1792 1792. More Bad News*

Pride, Serenity, Greed, and Wrath reappeared somewhere away. Pride swept his senses around. After making sure no being was in the vicinity, he waved his hand and a metallic sphere appeared around them. This sphere sealed them from the outside. Nothing would be able to peer through. Even if Lucifer came, he had to use force to find out what was going on inside. Pride would be aware then. Hence, they were safe to speak inside this sphere.

"Do you know where Joy is?" Pride asked Serenity.

Serenity shook her head. "After that incident, she had hidden herself away. I don't know where she is right now, but I believe I can find out. It will take some time, though."

"You do that. We need everyone," Pride said. He then turned to Wrath, "What about Fear?"

"He is still recovering," Wrath answered. "Hope did him in pretty badly... The fact that we are discussing this, so the rumor is true? Hope is no more?"

The three were silent from the question.

"Heh, I never thought I would ever wish for that stiff to still be around," Wrath said. "He just has to check out when he is needed."

"Do you think Fear can help us?" Pride asked.

"I think the proper question is whether he is willing to help us," Wrath answered.

"This is for his own wellbeing. If Lucifer dominates this world, there won't be a place for us," Pride said.

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"This is for his own wellbeing. If Lucifer dominates this world, there won't be a place for us," Pride said.

"I will go talk to him," Greed said.

"You know where he is?" Pride asked.

"Of course, we used to be pals. The guy has a problem with creativity, so I bet he is still at one of his old hiding holes."

"Do you think you can convince him?" Pride asked. "He was quite pissed at you for not taking his side. Maybe Wrath should go."

"I'm not someone who has the patience of convincing anyone," Wrath said. "He will have a better success chance than me."

"Very well then. Serenity, you go look for Joy. Wrath and I will watch over the underworld forces' movements from afar, making sure Lucifer is keeping his word. We will leave Fear to you, Greed. I hope you don't disappoint."

"No promises, okay," Greed said.

"Do you think it is enough?" Serenity asked. "The six of us against Lucifer."

"It has to," Pride said. "I won't let him take over this world."

"He doesn't have Hope's restrain. If we go up against him, not all of us will make it out," Greed warned. "Are we sure we want to do this? I mean, we can just hide. We might be unable to win but it won't be easy for him to flush us out as well."

"How can you say that?!" Serenity chided.

Greed shrugged. "Hehe. I just want to make sure everyone here is committed. Don't chicken out midway."

"You know I won't," Serenity declared.

"I can't stand those underworld creatures. This upper world is ours! I will do everything to drive them back," Wrath announced.

"We are in this mess because of me," Pride said. "If someone has to sacrifice to defeat Lucifer, I will gladly do it, but I want to make sure we succeed."

"Okay. As long as we are all on the same page," Greed said. "Let's just hope those mortals can last as long as we hope them to."

"Yes, let's... hope," Pride said. He undid the sphere sealing them. The four then disappeared from there.

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"Are we far enough?" Bowler asked. He was marching with the retreating army. He kept on looking back, making sure none of the devils were chasing them.

"Stop it, you chickenshit! You are making everyone uneasy," The Man reprimanded.

"How can I not be uneasy? You see how helpless we are. We have an army. They were just six!" Bowler exclaimed.

"Don't worry, our leaders will figure something out," The Man said. "Trust in them."

Bowler sighed. He did trust them. He just couldn't help but be worried. Here they were, seemingly so close to their victory. He thought this march was their last march. Once they took out World Maker's headquarters, everyone could go back to peacefully doing all the interesting gaming activities this world had to offer. But no, the situation just had to turn for the worse again. It was as if their struggle could never end. Problems worse than the last just kept on coming up.

He turned to the mobile fortress. "I hope they could bail us out from this mess," he said.

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Inside the mobile throne room of the mobile fortress, John was having a meeting with the guild leaders and country leaders.

"How fast is the spread of the corrupted mana?" John asked Wilted who was invited to join the meeting.

"At the earliest, it should cover the whole world in four months. At the latest, it will be six months," Wilted answered.

"That's too short a time to build up our forces..." Thelgrun said.

"We don't have that long," John said. "Master will become a God in three months. You saw how those Gods were when they faced Lucifer. From what I see, I don't think they can win against Lucifer. Am I right?"

John was asking Wilted.

Wilted nodded, "Only Hope can win against Lucifer."

"Even if the four work together?" John asked.

"... I can't say for sure. Maybe they can if they cooperate truly well, but the probability is still small," Wilted answered.

"Then we have less than three months to defeat this underworld forces," John said. "Facing only Lucifer is already a stretch for the Gods of the upper world, we can't let them add Master into it. They will be going up against two Gods then."

Everyone was somber after hearing the news.

"I hate to bring more bad news, but you all need to be aware of something," Wilted said.

Everyone turned to her.

"Once the main underworld portal is activated, all the not yet sealed underworld portals will be activated. The sealing domes won't work anymore."

Horatio and Thelgrun's eyes turned wide. "Do you mean..."

"Yes. Currently, the underworld portals in your countries will have demons pouring out of them," Wilted said.

#### *Chapter 1793 1793. Splintered Forces*

"Farking horse beard hanging upside down," Thelgrun cursed.

John and Wilted looked at the dwarf president with weird faces. John turned to Wilted and said, "I have no idea what that means. Do you know what that means?" To which Wilted responded with a shrug.

"In any case, this is very bad news," Horatio said. "I'm afraid my army will have to return to Sangrod immediately."

"If you do that, we won't be able to stop the underworld force!" Jeanny exclaimed.

"If I stay, my country will be overrun by the demonic horde even if we stop the underworld force here," Horatio returned. "I'm sorry. I have to prioritize my country and my people. That is my immediate concern. Once that is settled, then we will talk again about how to deal with the underworld force."

"I'm sorry to say this, but I have the same thoughts as him," Thelgrun said. "I don't have many troops left in this alliance, anyway. It won't make a difference even if I leave. I have to return to my country to organize my people to handle the underworld portal in my country."

"I will have to leave as well. My queen will need me," Dytess said.

Jennifer, who represented Aurebor, placed a hand on Jeanny, "Sister, I've just informed our mother about the underworld portal. She asked me to bring the remaining elven troops and return to Aurebor immediately."

Jeanny sighed. She was lamenting their situation. Here they were with an enemy seemingly much more powerful than them, and their alliance had to split at such a critical time. What hope did they have in stopping the devils and their underworld force?

Out of the seven main countries, only Themisphere and Verremor didn't have the threat of the underworld portal. This was because Jack had closed the portals in these two countries. However, Four Winds still needed to return. He needed to so he could go through the proper ritual and become Verremor's grand chief.

In the end, everyone said goodbye, and the Allied forces split.

John sent a message to the Allied Navy to not continue toward their target. The ships sailed back to the inner sea. From there, they would sail to Palgrost's navy base at the Daflue region. They would repair any damaged ships there and then prepare to make a stand. If the underworld force came to Palgrost through the sea, they would do their best to slow the enemy's advance.

After the country leaders left, John continued to discuss the situation with Jeanny and Wilted. Wilted advised them that it should probably take the underworld force around one month to completely overrun Liguritudum. That was roughly the speed for the corrupted mana to cover the entire country. After that, the corrupted mana would spread to Aurebor, Palgrost, and Hydrurond. The underworld force could advance to either of those three countries.

John asked if the underworld portals in those countries also released corrupted mana, to which Wilted confirmed they did. The amount was not as much as the main underworld portal, but they still accelerated the spread. Wilted said that her estimation of four months was if she considered the underworld portals in all the countries became active. While the six-month estimation was the case if all but the main underworld portal were closed.

Wilted also told them that once the main underworld portal was opened, the sovereign of the country could issue a nationwide evacuation command. This was done by accessing the monarch system using the throne. All the settlements of the country would become alert of the underworld force and would start moving to the destination country the sovereign had set.

Additionally, one-tenth of the evacuating population who were still civilians would convert into combatants. These newly converted combatants would only be level 30, though. This was to increase the chance of them surviving the evacuation process through the wilderness zone in between countries.

John and the others were now leading Themisphere and Liguritudum troops to head back to Dritzuut to issue this evacuation command. There was no way they could defend this country with just their force.

After one day of traveling, they received the news that Jack had woken up. Jack told them to go back directly to Themisphere. He was still in Dritzuut, so he would issue the evacuation command. Afterward, he would return to Themisphere. They could discuss their next move there.

With that arrangement, John sent the command for the army to change their course. Liguritudum's high marshall, Morphic, asked for permission to leave with the Liguritudum army. He wanted to aid with the evacuation process. With the protection from the army, the population would have a better chance of crossing through the wilderness.

John preferred losing the low-level population compared to these high-level soldiers, but he knew Jack would never agree to that. Jeanny was there so he couldn't hide this from Jack, so he let the Liguritudum troops go. Jack would be issuing the evacuation command and had Themisphere as the target country. If everything went smoothly, Morphic and the others would join them again in Themisphere.

Hence, the last two armies of the Allied forces separated and went their own way. The once great Allied force had now splintered.

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Inside the throne room of Dritzuut palace, Jack had just issued the nationwide evacuation command. Because Liguritudum was Themisphere's vassal state, all the kingdom coffer and mana were transferred to Themisphere when the evacuation command set Themisphere as the destination. The coins and mana weren't that many but they would still help to build the army needed to face the advancing underworld force.

After issuing the evacuation command, Jack had a meeting with Liguritudum officials inside the throne room. They discussed the details of the evacuation. The meeting was kept short due to the urgency of the situation. Jack emphasized for the officials to not delay. People had to start leaving today. He wasn't there when the Allied forces engaged the devils, but he heard from John about what happened. None of the settlements would be able to survive when the underworld force came to their doorstep.

Only after making sure these officials understood the seriousness of the situation that Jack leave. He used the zone portal and teleported back to Themisphere.

### *Chapter 1794 1794. True Dragons' Gathering*

Several days had passed from when Call to Arms and Mass Drill were out of cooldown, but Jack didn't use the monarch system after arriving back in Themisphere. Instead, he flew out of Thereath and headed toward Mount Thenias behind the capital.

He continued going higher until he reached the mountain's peak. At this height, the peak was covered by snow. He saw several Snow Minotaurs roaming the snowy landscape. He had engaged these minotaurs in the past when he visited the Blacksmith Circle. These minotaurs were too weak for him now.

He continued flying until he arrived at an enormous cave mouth. He observed that none of the snow minotaurs ventured anywhere near this place. When he was about to enter the cave, a voice greeted him from inside.

"When I first heard that you became Themisphere King, I thought it was a joke."

A large dragon with golden scales crawled out of the cave.

"Syndrillis! Where have you been all this time?" Jack greeted the dragon.

"I took a break from the world," Syndrillis answered. "After Galva lost Liguritudum to his son and died, I lost interest in involving myself in the world's affairs. I had been chilling out in the South for some time. Didn't expect so many things to happen while I was away."

"So, you are here for Broidrireg?" Jack asked.

"Not just me. The remaining true dragons are all inside. I come out to see which idiot dares to venture near this lair."

"Is this idiot allowed to hang out with the magnificent true dragons?" Jack asked.

Syndrillis chuckled. "Well, I guess if it's everyone's favorite idiot, I think we can make an exception."

Syndrillis turned around and gestured for Jack to follow her. The two went into the cave.

The tunnel became bigger as they headed deeper. It was also bright. Colorful stones that emitted light decorated the tunnel's wall. They came out to a vast cavern filled with its own ecosystem. Strange trees and plants filled the cavern. Sunlight slipped through the multiple gaps in the ceiling, providing the trees and plants with sustenance. A small lake stretched from one side of the cavern to the other. Rock islands of various sizes were seen around this lake.

On one of the largest islands, Jack saw five colossal beings huddle together. Those were the remaining true dragons aside from Syndrillis. They were Broidrireg, Eoranth, Quetzalcoatl, Jygorth, and Tiemezzys.

They noticed Syndrillis and Jack coming over.

"Hi, mighty one," Jack greeted Broidrireg with a smile. He then addressed the other dragons, "Hello, everyone."

Tiemezzys scoffed at Jack but was otherwise silent. Jygorth gave the strongest expression. "Why is an outworlder here?" The black dragon asked.

"He is okay, Jygorth," Syndrillis said. "He is the Themisphere King. Broidrireg wants him here. Now move aside, will you?"

Syndrillis pushed Jygorth to make room. Jygorth grunted but didn't resist. He moved aside to let Syndrillis sit with them. Syndrillis tapped the ground next to her, gesturing for Jack to sit.

It didn't take long for Jack to speak. "So, I have been wondering. What do you dragons chat about when you gather like this?"

Broidrireg chuckled. "First of all, it's very rare for us to gather like this. We dragons are very solitary creatures. Not many occasions can bring us together."

"It's not too different from us, outworlders," Jack said. "Most of the time, we only value something important when we are about to lose it or when we've already lost it..."

"Way to bring down the mood, outworlder," Quetzalcoatl said.

"How long do you have?" Jack asked.

"I originally thought I only had two more days. But from my life force, I believe I still have at least five more days, Broidrireg answered.

"Is there nothing that can be done?" Jack asked.

Broidrireg smiled. He shook his head. "I'm dying of old age. Not of a curse or a wound. Nothing in the world can cure old age. Not even the Gods."

Jack frowned after hearing that.

"Now, if you are going to keep scowling like that, I'm going to throw you out," Broidrireg threatened. "I don't want to waste the last few days of my time sulking."

"Forgive me," Jack said and forced a smile. "So, back to my question. What do you dragons usually talk about?"

"On rare occasions when we gather, we usually catch up on what we have done during our time apart," Syndrillis answered. "Considering we live a very long life and only meet after centuries, we have a rather long tale to share. Tiemezzys here was recounting the time when he formed a contract with the past Themisphere king when we sensed you approaching."

"Oh? Please continue," Jack said to Tiemezzys. "I am interested to hear about how you came to know the late King Theridan."

"I don't know Theridan," Tiemezzys said. "I form my country guardian contract with the third king, Thegromar. The kid enjoyed adventuring and led multiple military expeditions all over the land. One time, his expedition force was completely routed. While wounded and fleeing from the enemy, he ended up hiding inside my lair. I showed myself and gave him a fright. I was trying to chase him out of my lair, but he ended up becoming unconscious due to his wound and the shock from seeing me. I considered just throwing him out and being done with him, but I ended up taking care of him until he recovered. As strange as it sounded, we somehow became friends."

"Hehe, I didn't know you have a soft spot like that," Jack said to Tiemezzys.

"Can it, outworlder! I still haven't forgiven you for killing Themos," Tiemezzys exclaimed.

"Come on! You know he was under Marcus' influence. He was no longer himself," Jack defended himself. "Also, wasn't he just a descendant of your friend? Why do you care so much about him?"

Tiemezzys turned away. "He was a lonely kid. Thenodeep spent most of his time dealing with the country's affairs rather than being with him. Little Themos grew up into a teenager who always wandered about in the wilderness. One day he wandered into this lair when I still lived here. We met. We spoke. He came visit me often then."

"I see... I'm sorry," Jack said. "I'm sorry that I've killed your friend, but he was no longer the kid you know after he accepted Marcus' wicked offer. I don't regret killing him, but I'm sorry for the pain it causes you."

"Hmph," Tiemezzys just harrumphed for a response.

"Let me say this again. Way to bring down the mood, outworlder," Quetzalcoatl repeated.

*Chapter 1795 1795. Our Time Together*

"Enough about us. What about you, Jack?" Broidrireg asked. "Considering you are here instead of out there with your army, have your army finished raiding World Maker's headquarters?"

"About that, I think you will be surprised hearing this," Jack said. "My army was stopped by the devils."

"The devils?!" Syndrillis asked. "By devils, do you mean the devils from the underworld?"

Jack nodded. Jack reiterated to them the reports he received from John and Jeanny about what happened when their army was on the way to World Throne.

"This is truly bad...," Quetzalcoatl remarked.

"Bad is an understatement," Jygorth added. "This a catastrophe on a level never happened before since the ancient war, and we don't have as many true dragons as during the ancient war. The odds don't look good for this war."

"That might be true, but you don't have outworlders during the ancient war," Jack said. "This is the reason we are here in this world, to deal with this catastrophe."

Jack wasn't wrong. The underworld forces were meant as the players' final challenge in the original main quest. Things just didn't proceed the way the original story was meant to be since the main quest had been deleted.

Broidrireg let out a long sigh. "Here I thought the war was over after that battle in Liguritudum and we can return to enjoying peace again. It seems our struggle is not over yet. It's a good thing I've made an arrangement."

"What do you mean?" Jack asked.

"I've talked with Eoranth," Broidrieg answered. "He is willing to be your country guardian after I am gone. He is a great dragon. I always believe he will be a dragon greater than me. He already is, and he will become greater still. He still has much potential to go. He will be a better country guardian than I ever..."

"I don't want a different country guardian...!"

Jack's exclamation drew everyone's attention.

"I... I'm sorry... I think I should leave...," Jack said. He stood up and walked to the exit. Broidrieg and the others just stared at him.

After Jack was out of sight, Syndrillis said, "He is more sensitive than I thought."

"Yeah, it seems like he only tried to look cheerful when he came," Eoranth added.

Broidrireg let out another long sigh.

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Later that night, Jack was on the balcony at the palace. He was gazing silently at the city ahead. Grace was with him earlier. They chatted, but she could see that Jack was mostly distracted. She knew Jack would like to be alone so she left.

Jack closed his eyes as he enjoyed the night breeze. Everything felt so peaceful. He knew this peace wouldn't last. A world-ending menace was on its way here. His nemesis got the means to become a God and could very well become a worse menace. Everything was a mess. He knew this was not the time to laze around but he just needed these few moments of peace.

He heard a familiar voice then.

"Care to join me for supper?"

Jack turned around and saw Darmos there. In his hand was a bundle of lines tied to large fishes.

"I caught these from the lake next to Heavenly Citadel. If you want, you will have to do the cooking, though," Darmos said.

Jack grinned. "Let's do it," he said and took out his cooking tools.

"Here," Darmos handed the bundle of fishes to Jack.

Jack grabbed the bundle after putting his cooking tools down. As soon as the bundle of lines changed hands, the fish came to life. They wiggled and tried to bite Jack with their sharp teeth.

"Whoa...!" Jack jumped away and let the fish go. They fell to the floor and floundered.

"Hahahaha!" Darmos laughed hysterically while holding his stomach.

"The heck... I forgot how much you love pranks," Jack said.

"Haha... Hehehe...," Darmos was wiping the tears in his eyes for laughing so hard.

Jack went and picked up one of the lines that tied the floundering fish. "What the hell kind of fish is this?" He asked.

"This is Eras Fish," Peniel explained. "They can breathe outside water."

"That's why they are still alive," Jack said.

"Yeah, my draconic aura kept them still when they were in my hand," Darmos said. He finally stopped laughing. "Being alive also makes them fresh. Fresh fish make for a more delicious dish, don't they?"

"Considering you brought the ingredient, I'll let this prank slide, mighty one," Jack said. "All right, let's cook our meal!"

"You sure you don't want me to invite Ellie here? Her cooking is better than me," Jack asked while cooking.

"Nah," Darmos replied. "I have eaten her cooking almost every day nowadays. It has been some time since I ate yours. I want to remember how bad it tastes."

"Oh, yeah. If it's so bad, don't ask for extra, okay," Jack said and handed Darmos the first plate he cooked. "Here."

When Darmos grabbed the plate, rapid explosive bangs were heard. At the same time, the bottom of the plate lighted up. The sound and the light startled Darmos so much he dropped the plate.

Jack was laughing his ass off as it happened.

"Hm...?" Darmos had a good look at the fallen plate after the commotion ended. There was what looked like the remnant of a firecracker stuck to the bottom of the plate.

"Where the hell did you get this firecracker?" Darmos asked.

"He bought it earlier today," Peniel told Darmos.

"I thought you forgot I love pranks?" Darmos asked.

"Hahaha, I just said it to bring your guards down," Jack said as he wiped the tears that came out from his eyes due to the laughing. However, he found his tears didn't stop coming out no matter how many times he wiped them. Even after he stopped laughing.

"Jack...," Darmos said.

"I'm sorry... I don't want to be like this. I just can't help myself...," Jack said. Peniel flew to his shoulder and pat his cheek to console him.

Darmos came and sat by Jack. He put his hand on Jack's shoulder. "There is no need for you to pretend to be cheery. Just cry if you want to. Most of the time, the hardest

goodbye is the one you know will happen but can do nothing about it. That sense of helplessness is overbearing. Trust me, I know. I've had enough share of those tragedies. Now, it is my time, but please know that I am at peace."

"If I knew this would happen, I wouldn't have asked you to be my country guardian," Jack said. He no longer wiped his tears, but they continued to roll down his cheek.

Darmos shook his head. He said, "Let me tell you, my outworlder friend. If I can turn back time to when you asked me to be your country guardian. Even if I know what will happen to me, I will still choose to be your country guardian. In fact, I will not give you that bullshit demand about finding brimstone fruit. I will just accept your offer immediately. Supporting you have given my old bones a meaning to life again. You give me the feeling of having a family. Something that I have lost for quite some time. I don't regret our time together."

"... Thank you," Jack said. He looked up at the clear night sky filled with stars. "I'm going to miss our talk."

"Me too...," Darmos said as he gazed at the same sky.

#### *Chapter 1796 1796. Candidate for Suzuki's Seal*

Jack and Darmos spent the whole night talking to each other. They reminisced about their first meeting. They talked about light topics and left out the heavy problems. They were two friends who enjoyed their time together without letting the concerns of the world interfere. It was as if all their worries were forgotten. Jack could even laugh for real at one point.

Jack cooked the Eras fish in between their chat. He didn't cook them all at once. Darmos was happy to continue eating Jack's cooking. He brought plenty of fish. They lasted for the entire night.

During their chat, they touched upon the matter of Suzuki's seal. Darmos said he would have to pass the seal to one of the young dragons. Despite saying the same when he sealed Suzuki, he didn't expect things to happen so soon. He preferred to do this only after the other true dragons were old enough. This was because Suzuki applied constant fire pressure to the subject she was sealed in. The subject would feel as if constantly in a boiler. This could halt their growth.

If Uddroth was still alive, he would have been the perfect candidate. His affinity to the fire element should give him a strong resilience in resisting Suzuki's flame. He wouldn't be affected as much.

"So, who will bear the seal?" Jack asked Darmos.

"If I have to choose, I guess Syndrillis will be my first choice," Darmos answered. "She is the oldest after me. She is still considered rather young for a true dragon, though."

Darmos sighed. He said, "I guess the thing we old ones worry the most when we are about to pass is whether our young ones can face this world without us. I hate to leave such a burden on them."

"Can't you transfer the seal into an inanimate object?" Jack asked. "From what I heard, Azzarilth's seal was on a wall inside a cave."

"I need special materials for that. Those were hard to come by at this age," Darmos answered. "Do you think I want to bear this seal on myself if I have a choice?"

"Oh... I thought you had been so angry with Suzaki that you wanted to make sure no one could unseal her without going through you," Jack said.

"Well, that is true as well," Darmos didn't disagree.

Jack suddenly thought of something. "Hey! What about outworlders? Our body is special. Perhaps we can bear the burden?"

"Well... I never thought of that," Darmos said.

"Are you sure you want to take the risk by giving it a try?" Peniel asked.

"Peniel is right. You shouldn't take this lightly," Darmos said. "This is not an item we can pass around just like that. If the seal is transferred, it will take several days before it can be transferred again. By that time, I won't be around anymore. If the bearer can't bear Suzaki's fire pressure, he will have to suffer for the rest of his life. Under that condition, he might choose to give up and set her free."

"... Let's do it!" Jack said. Right now, he wanted to help Darmos, even if it was only one affair. He wanted to ease Darmos' mind in his last few days.

Darmos put a hand on Jack's forehead.

"What are you doing? I don't have a fever," Jack said.

"I'm happy that you want to help. However, you don't have fire affinity. Even though I don't know if outworlder will be fine if the seal is transferred, having a fire affinity will help. Just like when I said I wish Uddroth was still alive. What you have is lightning affinity. That doesn't help at all."

"Lightning affinity? I don't have lightning affinity," Jack said.

"You have the mark of lightning. That can be counted as lightning affinity," Darmos informed.

Hearing that, Jack said, "In that case, I got a better candidate! I'm calling him now to come here."

Peniel knew which candidate Jack was talking about. "Do you seriously want to risk another person for this trial? We still don't know what the effect will be on an outworlder. No way he will agree to your request."

"He is on his way here," Jack said.

"He is?!" Peniel asked with surprise. "How did you persuade him?"

"I didn't. I called my gramps and asked him to tell Haon to do it," Jack answered.

"..." Peniel was speechless hearing that.

"I'm going to call Janus as well," Jack said. "If there is anyone who can learn your sealing technique or at least learn the method to transfer it, he should be the most qualified person. Just in case something goes wrong."

"Who is he?" Darmos asked.

"The leader of the Order of Magi," Jack answered.

"I see," Darmos said. He didn't know about Janus but he knew about the Order of Magi. He thought Jack was right. The leader of such an organization should be well-versed in the arcane art. Such a person should be able to mimic his technique in case there is a need to transfer the seal.

"Take them to my lair. We will carry out the ritual to transfer the seal there. I will go first and wait," Darmos said to Jack. He transformed into Broidireg and left.

The reason he chose to do it at his lair was because the other true dragons were there. In case things went South and Suzuki was released, the dragons could subdue her so he could seal her again.

Jack also left. He flew to the hut where he entered the Order of Magi's headquarters. Young Janus was there to greet him. Jack had expected that. Even if this was already past midnight, there was always a copy of Janus at the entrance.

Jack explained the situation to Young Janus. Not long after he finished his explanation, a portal appeared behind Young Janus. Real Janus came out of that portal.

"Let's go," Real Janus said.

"Hehe. I remember how hard it was to meet you in the past. Now, you come at a moment's notice," Jack chuckled.

"It is not every day one can witness a master spellcaster like Broidrireg at work. He is a legend among us, practitioners of magic," Janus said.

"Nah, I know the reason is because we are tight now. There is no need to be shy about it. Okay, let's go," Jack said.

Janus scratched his head while looking at Peniel. Peniel just shrugged for a response.

## **Chapter 1797 1797. Transferring the Seal**

Jack met Leavemealone at Themisphere's zone portal. He was waiting there after teleporting into the capital. Jack explained to him about what they were about to do. Domon only told him briefly, so Jack wanted to make sure he was clear on what he was getting into.

"Okay," Leavemealone said.

"So... You are cool about it, aren't you? You understand there might be unknown risks, right?" Jack asked.

"You said my Mark of Fire most likely made me immune to the effect of the seal, didn't you?" Leavemealone asked in return. Like Jack, he also received a new inherent skill after losing the Fire God Blessing. His was the Mark of Fire.

"Well, I never said immune. I said your inherent skill should make you more resistant to whatever heat pressure Suzaki might throw at you in her attempt to bully you for her freedom. Plus, we outworlders have an undying body. Suzaki might not be able to affect us as much as when she was sealed inside a native's body."

"In other words, everything is speculation," Carnelia said.

"It's a logical speculation based on intelligent reasonings. Am I right, Janus?" Jack turned to Janus.

"Uh... This is all new to me, honestly," Janus said.

Carnelia turned to Leavemealone and said, "Haon, forget this. There's too many uncertainties."

"Peniel, can you deal with your friend there?" Jack said.

"What do you mean deal? And she is not my friend!" Peniel returned.

"Yeah, I am not," Carnelia said while sticking her tongue out at Peniel.

"Are you looking for a fight?" Peniel asked.

"I'm doing it. Let's go!" Leavemealone declared.

"Oh? You will?" Jack asked, slightly surprised. He had been preparing several other nonsense opinions to persuade Leavemealone. If everything failed, he would ask his grandfather to come over.

"I owe you for saving me in Dritzuut. Even if that was the enemy's plan, I still need to repay this debt. With this favor, we are square!" Leavemealone announced.

"Dude... Before Dritzuut, I saved you a couple of times already. When you were strapped by Master's machine and when you were about to be executed in Vacharest. Never heard you repay me for those rescues."

"Well... In that case, this favor will pay for those other rescues as well. After this, we are square!" Leavemealone exclaimed another time.

"Whatever, man. I'm just glad you are willing to do this. Let's go! Broidrireg is waiting."

They needed to fly to get to Broidrireg's lair on the top of Mount Thenias. Of this group, only Leavemealone couldn't fly. Jack summoned Pandora and let Leavemealone ride with him. Janus had the Fly spell, but he also had the wings tool. His wings tool was the same as Jack's. It produced blue-color wings.

The three took to the sky and sped towards Mount Thenias' top.

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When they entered Broidrireg's lair, a large rune diagram had been drawn on the ground inside the cave. Broidrireg was standing next to this rune diagram while the other true dragons were standing further away.

Janus flew to Broidrireg and greeted, "Lord Broidrireg, I have wished to meet you for a long time. I'm sorry we have to meet under such circumstances."

Broidrireg nodded. "Lord Janus, is it? It's good meeting you but I'm sorry if I sound like I'm in a hurry. As you should have known, I'm short on time. Let's get this over with quickly."

He turned to Leavemealone and asked, "Are you the outworlder with the fire affinity?"

"I have the Mark of Fire," Leavealone answered.

"That will do. What's your name?" Broidrireg asked again.

"Haon," Leavemealone gave his real name.

"Okay, Haon. Are you aware of the risk of bearing this seal?"

"I was told that the chance of a risk happening is very little?" Leavemealone asked in return.

Broidrireg turned to Jack. "Did you, now?"

"Ahaha... Well, it was an intelligent assumption," Jack laughed awkwardly.

"Can we reverse the seal if something does go wrong?" Leavemealone asked.

Jack turned to Janus and asked, "Can we?"

Janus had been observing the rune diagram after greeting Broidrireg. He walked around the diagram while sensing its power nodes. He was jotting down their arrangements on a paper. "I think I can manage to recreate this diagram," He replied.

"The diagram is only to help channel the mana flow for the transfer. You still need to mimic the transfer ritual," Broidrireg said. "If everyone is ready. Haon, please step into the center of this rune diagram."

Leavemealone did as Broidrireg asked but Janus told everyone, "Please give me a few more seconds."

Broidrireg also entered the diagram and stood right before Leavemealone. When he saw Jack was also inside the diagram, he told Jack, "You, get out of the diagram."

"Oh, okay," Jack stepped away.

"Okay, I'm done," Janus said. When he was about to move out of the diagram, Broidrireg said to him, "No, you stay. You need to feel the transfer ritual to mimic it. Stand at this spot and don't move. You will not disturb the mana flow so long as you stay completely still."

After everything was set. Broidrireg started drawing some runic symbols in the air. Janus recorded the symbols using his mind.

While the ritual was happening, Jack noticed Eoranth had changed position. He was now standing at the exit, guarding it. The other dragons spread out and seemed to be on an alert. It didn't look like they had much confidence in the outcome of this transfer ritual.

The space above the rune diagram changed color as the ritual progressed. Different colors filled the space, but they were mostly dominated by green, blue, and red. This multicolor energy converged on Broidrireg's chest where the seal was located. The elder dragon grunted as it happened. His face showed that he was in pain. Slowly, the fiery seal started to peel off Broidrireg's scales.

"Graahhh...!!" Broidrireg roared when the peeling was halfway. The rest of the seal was abruptly ripped out of his chest. He panted heavily after that happened. The fire seal was now hanging in the air as the multicolor energy held it in place.

The seal suddenly trembled heavily. A burst of flames was emitted from the seal, but the multicolor energy dampened the effect. Broidrireg made a few hand gestures. Several runic symbols appeared. The fire seal calmed down afterward.

"Get ready! We can't let it stay in the open for long," Broidrireg warned Leavemealone.

"Hit me," Leavemealone said. He had unequipped his chest armor following Broidrireg's instruction. His bare chest was exposed.

Broidrireg made a pushing motion with one hand while his other drew yet more runic symbols. These runic symbols floated to Leavemealone and formed a circle around his bare chest. Suzuki's fire seal slowly floated to Leavemealone.

When the seal touched Leavemealone's chest, a sizzling sound was heard.

"Grrhhh...!" Leavemealone gritted his teeth as he felt the intense burning pain in his chest.

As the seal continued to sear itself into Leavemealone's chest, the pain became so unbearable he started screaming. When the seal finally settled completely in his chest, a large burst of flame came out. It engulfed Leavemealone's entire body. The flame became bigger, until it grew wings. A bird head eventually came out on top of the flames and spoke.

"Hahaha! Old one, I told you your seal won't hold me for long!" Suzuki exclaimed.

## **Chapter 1798 1798. Goodbye**

The other dragons came forward as soon as they heard Suzuki's voice. Eoranth stayed and guarded the exit. Broidrireg was too weak to move after suffering the backlash from having the seal removed from him.

"Haon...!" Jack called as his weapons appeared in his hands. Was it a complete failure? Was he wrong to think an outworlder's body was special?

Suzuki flapped her fiery wings to fly, but she suddenly stopped.

"What...?" Her face showed confusion. It then turned into consternation before changing again into an expression of fear. "No... No! You can't...! I won't be... No, not again! No! Stop! Stooppp...!!"

The flames that formed her shrank. The speed of the flames shrinking increased with each passing second until finally Leavemealone was seen again. The only flames that were still burning were the seal in his chest. Those flames were soon doused as well. The seal was still emitting bright hot light but it was no longer burning.

"What... What happened?" Jack asked Leavemealone who was standing still with his eyes closed.

Leavemealone opened his eyes. He looked around at everyone who was staring back with watchful eyes.

"Don't worry, she is caged now," Leavemealone said. "I was taken by surprise when she entered me. I was unprepared. That allowed her to come out briefly."

"Are you sure? Do you feel uncomfortable or anything? Do you feel hot?" Broidrireg asked.

"I feel slightly hotter than usual but it's not unbearable. I think I am fine. I am... Sorry, excuse me for a bit," Leavemealone said before shutting his eyes again. After several seconds, he opened them. "Sorry, she was making so much noise inside. I have to beat her up a bit to shut her up."

"You... You beat her...?" Jack asked in surprise.

"You can make contact with her essence inside yourself?" Broidrireg asked. His tone sounded even more surprised than Jack's.

"Yeah. It is a bother to hear another person's voice inside my head, but I think I can manage. I already have some experience, after all," Leavemealone replied while glancing at Carnelia. "I can fight her inside my mind, so this can be some sort of mental training."

"Really? Won't it be exhausting fighting her constantly in your mind?" Jack asked.

"You misunderstood. When I said I could fight her, I meant I could choose to. Otherwise, I can just imagine a sealed box and shut her inside. I can still hear her muffled voice when I do that but I don't think it will bother me too much."

"Fascinating," Broidrireg uttered.

"Haha! See? What did I say? Transferring the seal to an outworlder is a correct choice, isn't it? I knew it would be a success!" Jack declared.

"If you are so confident, why are you holding your weapons?" Peniel ridiculed.

"Oh..." Jack hurriedly stored his weapons.

"Hehe," Broidrieg sat down with a smile. His expression showed that a huge burden had been lifted from him. He said, "Thank you, Jack, and also, of course, Haon."

"You are welcome, mighty one," Jack replied. Leavemealone just nodded politely.

"Well, since the process has been a success, I guess my service is no longer required," Janus said. "But I do feel intrigued by this seal. What I have learned is just the transfer process. Do you mind bestowing the sealing spell onto me, Lord Broidrieg?"

"Forgive me for being blunt, Lord Janus," Broidrieg replied. "I don't know you much. I won't teach such a powerful spell to anyone I don't completely trust. Furthermore, it will take you months to learn the spell, if not years. I don't have such a time anymore if you are aware."

"Fair enough," Janus said. "In that case, I will take my leave. It has been a pleasant experience watching a master at work."

"I will excuse myself as well," Leavemealone said. He had reequipped his light armor. The seal on his chest was no longer visible.

As the two left, Broidrieg said to Jack, "Let me fly you back. Want to ride on my back again?"

"Sure!" Jack exclaimed and climbed aboard. Broidrieg flew into the tunnel. The other dragons stayed inside. As they flew out of the cave, they saw that it was already dawn. They saw the beautiful sunrise in the East.

Broidrieg didn't fly directly to the palace. He flew around Mount Thenias, enjoying the scenery. They didn't talk. They simply enjoyed the moment together. After flying for some time, Broidrieg finally descended and arrived before the palace's balcony where they enjoyed supper earlier.

"Thank you again, Jack, for helping me transfer the seal," Broidrieg said.

"It's my pleasure, mighty one," Jack returned with a smile.

"I have a parting gift for you," Broidrieg gave Jack a book.

Hearing the word, parting, reminded Jack about Broidrieg's condition. His smile froze, but he didn't let his melancholy show. He accepted the book and used Inspect. The book was a technique book containing a mega spell, Wrath of the Ancient Dragons.

"Thank you!" Jack exclaimed. "With two seven-rune mega spells, I will have more options even with their long cooldown."

"Seven-rune? This one is an eight-rune spell," Broidrireg corrected.

"Eight? Doesn't the mega spell you cast have seven runes?" Jack asked.

"That spell is Wrath of the Elder Dragons. This one is different. This one is stronger."

"Really? Then why do you never use this spell?"

"At my age, it is not easy to pull off a mega spell. Such a powerful one causes a burden on my body. Not to mention, it needs a hell of a long time to cast."

"In that case, thank you very much, mighty one!"

Broidrireg chuckled. "I guess all good things will have to end sooner or later. Thank you, Jack, for being my friend. This will be the last time we spoke."

Jack couldn't find a word to respond.

Broidrireg told him, "Today, I will leave with my family to an ancient dragon graveyard. I will spend the rest of my days there with them. I consider you my family but that place is unsuitable for humans, or for that matter, outworlders. Plus, I believe you have many things to deal with in the coming days."

"... I'm going to miss you," Jack said.

"As with me," Broidrireg replied. "Well, it's not a custom for us dragons but I believe your kind consider a hug an expression of affection? Want to have one?"

"You bet I do!" Jack said. He pressed his body to Broidrireg's cheek. The dragon had one finger pressing Jack's back.

"Thank you for all you have done," Jack said to him.

"I thank you for being my friend...," Broidrireg returned.

Jack let go of their hug.

"Goodbye," Peniel said to Broidrireg.

"You take care of him, little fairy," Broidrireg said.

"Always," Peniel replied.

Broidrireg floated above the palace while looking at Jack and Peniel.

"I will leave this world to you. I know you can protect it. I know you will beat the underworld force. I believe in you," Broidrireg said. "Take care."

With those last words, he flew up and disappeared into the sky.

Jack continued watching the sky for some time even after Broidrireg was completely out of sight. Peniel sat at Jack's shoulder and leaned her body on Jack's neck to silently tell him that he was not alone.

## **Chapter 1799 1799. Preparing Against the Underworld Forces**

Jack didn't think he could sleep even after staying awake the whole night, so he decided to work. He went to the throne room and used the monarch system.

John already used the remote monarch system inside the mobile fortress to work on research and settlement constructions, so Jack no longer troubled himself in managing those. The matters John left for Jack to do were appoint officers and draft soldiers.

Jack had a higher luck stat and the runestone of luck. If Jack was the one who drafted the soldiers, higher-grade soldiers were more likely to appear.

Jack appointed officers into the blank portraits in the officer overview. Those were soldiers who had lost their lives during the battle in Dritzuut. He picked candidates based on John's report pointing out the meritorious soldiers from the same battle.

After finishing refilling all the portraits inside the officer overview, Jack started drafting soldiers from the settlements. When he did the first draft, he was surprised to see that the number of recruits was twice the draft from the previous month.

Peniel expected Jack's surprise. She explained, "Once the main underworld portal was opened, the world entered an emergency state. Go to the enchantment page. You will see a new enchantment."

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**State of Emergency (World enchantment)**

All draft attempts yield double outcomes.

Training efficiency is doubled.

The country with an active underworld portal receives triple effect for drafting and training.

Negative effects from tax are halved.

\*

"Oh? Even the training speed is doubled," Jack remarked.

"Yes, this is to prepare every country's military to face the underworld forces," Peniel said.

"So, all other countries also have this enchantment," Jack said. "The countries with the active underworld portals even receive the triple effect."

"Yes, but the active underworld portals have demons coming out non-stop. Even with the drafting volume and training speed tripled, the country will still have a problem keeping up."

"I understand. This triple effect is most likely given so the countries with the active underworld portals are not so easily overrun. The ones that contribute the main battle power against the main underworld forces will be the countries that have successfully closed their underworld portals. Sigh... I wish I had found more portal-closing stones. Right now, only Themisphere and Verremor are free of the underworld portal."

"If you ask me, finding two is already surprising," Peniel said. "Things could have been much worse with none of the underworld portals being closed."

Jack nodded. "I hope Four Winds has no problem winning the grand election tourney," Jack said.

Jack received the report that Verremor would hold the grand election tourney tomorrow. Normally, there would be a lengthy ritual accompanied by repeated meetings between the clans in power before the grand election tourney, but the appearance of the underworld forces gave everyone a sense of urgency. The grand election tourney would be completed within one day. Verremor would have a new grand chief by tomorrow.

If Four Winds won, his player status would provide him an edge in drafting recruits. Verremor would be the next country after Themisphere to produce sufficient troops in the hope of stopping the main underworld forces.

"His chance of winning is high," Peniel said. "His current level is enough to compete against the strongest native orc."

"Is the grand election tourney a tournament battle like the election tourney Four Winds and I took part in?" Jack asked.

"It is. The difference is the grand election tourney has participants only from Verremor's ten ruling clans," Peniel answered. "And the tourney will be a three-against-three battle

instead of two-against-two like the election tourney. Do you plan to help him win the tourney again?"

"No," Jack said. "Verremor's leaders already know my cover. Furthermore, as you said, Four Winds' level is high enough by now. So are his people. They are all experts. They will win even without my help. I have my own things to do. John and the others will return tomorrow. We will discuss the best course of action to deal with the current crisis."

Jack proceeded with the military draft in every settlement. He then finished the drafting process using Call to Arms. The total number of recruits was 996,000. If Horatio, Aldrith, and Thelgrun learned that he recruited almost a million soldiers in a month, they might bang their heads on the wall.

The increase in recruitable soldiers was not without a cost. The number of coins required to draft each soldier remained the same. This meant Jack's expenditure of kingdom coins had doubled. He could still afford it due to all the wonder buildings that generated coins. Themisphere's economy was also steady because John's city management was very good. Additionally, Themisphere received the extra coins sent by Liguritudum after John issued the evacuation process.

If it was the other countries, they might not be able to fully utilize the effects granted by the State of Emergency. Even if they did, they might need to sacrifice something to cover their coin shortage, such as selling some buildings or applying taxes. The state of emergency halved the negative effect of taxes, but it would still hurt the country in the long run.

Verremor and Aurebor should be able to recruit a decent number considering their sovereigns were players. He sent a message to Four Winds and Nova asking whether they had enough coins for recruiting. Four Winds replied that he had to wait until he became the grand chief to make sure. But as far as he knew, Verremor was doing well economically, so there shouldn't be a problem.

Nova admitted she was not as confident. Aurebor had just undergone a war. The economy was low. Mistress also spent a lot to build the country's military. Hence, Aurebor's kingdom coffer wasn't in good condition. Whatever was left, Nova had been using it to rebuild the country's economy. She expected the war to end after the Allied forces departed to Liguritudum. She had been eager to rebuild the country and show everyone she was a worthy sovereign. Alas. she didn't expect a menace like the underworld forces to appear. Now, she might lose the country without being able to show anyone her worth.

Jack used the diplomacy page and sent her 500,000 gold coins. Nova couldn't believe the generosity.

"I don't know how to thank you," She said to Jack in message.

"Slow the advance of the underworld forces as much as possible. That would be gratitude enough," Jack replied.

"I will do my best," Nova promised.

## **Chapter 1800 1800. The Ancient Sect**

After he was done with the diplomacy, Jack commissioned the construction of another two mobile fortresses. He spent 18 ruling powers to directly complete the construction. He then asked Thaergood to transport the newly produced mana cannons and other siege weapons into these mobile fortresses.

Jack sent all the new recruits to train in barracks and academy. This required another expenditure. Jack didn't bother about the coins. They needed to go all out at this moment. He also used Mass Drill. All the training aided by the effect of the State of Emergency should push the recruits into the battle-ready state, which was level 50, in less than a month.

Jack used the Runestone of Luck when he used Call to Arms. This time, another eternal-grade recruit appeared. The recruit's name was Boro. Aside from Boro, this round of drafting also produced three mythical-grade recruits. Jack asked if the State of Emergency increased the quality of the recruit, considering Peniel said that it was unlikely for another eternal-grade recruit to appear.

Peniel said that she didn't know if the world enchantment had that kind of hidden effect. She said it could probably be Jack's insane luck stat that had again triggered the appearance of an eternal-grade recruit.

Whatever the reason, Jack didn't mind. He was happy enough that this happened. He sent Boro and the three mythical-grade recruits to train inside Brave Academy.

After they defeated Dritzuut, the war in Liguritudum ended. Jack received the merit points from the victory even when he was unconscious. When he woke up, he was already a level 18 sovereign, which gave him access to his twelfth and last royal agent. Yet, Jack didn't send Boro an invitation for that role. He had a different plan.

Aside from gaining merit points from war victory, he had also completed many affairs during the war. His merit points were close to getting him to level 19 sovereign. He just needed around 200,000 more merit points to get to that level. Peniel told him that the highest sovereign level was level 20. Jack thought that he should probably be able to get to that level before the final confrontation with the underworld forces.

Peniel also informed him that level 19 and level 20 gave him access to sovereign powers that catered more to war campaigns, but she warned him those powers required many ruling powers. Hence, he was saving his ruling powers.

He no longer used Imposed Blockade on World Maker, World Ruler, and State of Galhana. This saved him 60 ruling powers. Those guilds had now hidden themselves inside World Throne, behind the underworld forces. It was unlikely for them to come out and cause trouble.

After using his ruling powers for Mass Drill, Call to Arms, hastening the mobile fortresses, and some requests from John for hastening a few buildings and research, he had 80 ruling powers left. He saved these ruling powers for his future sovereign powers.

After finishing with the monarch system, Jack spent the rest of the day in a meeting with Thaergood, Grace, and his other advisors. They discussed the preparation for the incoming refugees from Liguritudum. A lot of infrastructure would be required for these refugees.

Alsvelg, the city where Hydrurond's refugees used to stay in, had become a ghost city after the draconians left. Thaergood sent settlers to that city so the infrastructures there weren't wasted. This city could be used again to house the ethereal refugees who were on their way to Themisphere.

But one city wouldn't be enough to house the population of a country. Jack told Thaergood to prepare to build additional settlements in several other different spots near the border, so the Liguritudum people wouldn't be too much at a loss when they arrived. If the preparation was not sufficient, having so many refugees inside their country would instead cause instability.

It's a good thing the nationwide evacuation turned one-tenth of Liguritudum's population into combatants, even if they were all low-levels. Once the refugees arrived, they could mobilize these combatants and add them to their battle force to deal with the underworld forces.

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"Someone is requesting an audience with Your Majesty," Thaergood said as they closed the meeting.

It had been some time since Jack's last gathering with the nobles. He figured those nobles would be eager to meet him to express their concerns. Jack was sure these nobles would be edgy because the news regarding the underworld forces was already public knowledge. A world notification had sounded when the underworld forces hit Liguritudum's first settlement. That happened yesterday.

"Grace, can you take care of this for me? I'm not in the mood," Jack said. With all the troubles and the passing of Broidrireg, the last thing he wanted was to listen to the whining of some nobles, even if that was part of a king's job.

"Don't worry, I will deal with them," Grace said.

Thaergood chuckled. "Don't worry about the nobles, I've taken care of them. The guest I mentioned is not a noble. I think Your Majesty will want to meet this guest. I dare say he and his faction will be instrumental in facing the incoming underworld forces. I strongly suggest that Your Majesty meet this person."

"Oh?" Jack was intrigued after hearing Thaergood's words. "In that case, call him in."

Jack went to the throne room to wait for the guest.

Not long after, Thaergood came in with three people. All three were fully armored. From their armor, Jack identified which faction they were from and why Thaergood said they would be instrumental in their crusade against the underworld forces.

The armor the three wore was similar to the ones worn by his country's special unit, the ancient champions. Their armor was more intricate and elegant. Their armor had a constant shine even when no light was hitting the armor's surface.

They were the warriors from the Ancient Sect, a league faction that appeared with the Ancient Beacon Tower he had built in this capital. Although it was classified as a league faction, no player had joined this faction.

This was not out of disinterest. Many players had come to the Ancient Beacon Tower once it was built. When these players learned that it was a house to a league faction, they voiced their interest in applying. However, they were chased away. The caretaker told them the ancient sect didn't accept any members. Only natives who were official kingdom soldiers and fulfilled their requirements were allowed inside the tower to undertake the trial for becoming ancient champions.

As for the members of the ancient sect, they continued to seclude themselves from the society. They rarely set foot outside the ancient beacon tower. Only after the world notification of the arrival of the underworld forces that they start to get out more from their tower.

As for their sect leader, this was the first time he came out. He did so only after a kingdom's messenger sent him the confirmation that the king would meet with him.