

## **Second World #Chapter 1801 1801. New Country Guardian - Read Second World Chapter 1801 1801. New Country Guardian**

### **Chapter 1801 1801. New Country Guardian**

The sect leader was accompanied by two of his warriors. A human man and an elven woman. Both were mythical level 90.

The man was named Hipponion. He was a large man. His armor was slightly unique. Its base look was that of the ancient armor, but each of his seven-piece armors had the carving of different animals. The carvings were lion, bear, boar, deer, eagle, snake, and fish.

The woman's name was Atalente. She wore a tunic that covered half of her armor, which shone a golden color. She had a large golden bow on her back and two golden swords were slung beside her waist.

As for the sect leader, his name was Agamon. Jack's Inspect informed him that Agamon was a level 90 eternal-grade draconian. Jack couldn't tell Agamon's race just by looking. This was because Agamon's entire body was covered by armor, including his face. He wore a steel mask that was part of a full helmet. Behind him was a circular disc that seemed to be part of his armor. This disc constantly emitted a silver color.

"Greetings, your majesty," Agamon greeted. He and his two warriors gave Jack a half-bow.

Jack rose from his throne and returned the greetings.

"I'm glad to have finally met you, sect leader," Jack said. "Thank you for the trials you have provided for my soldiers. They have been of great help."

"Those are our tasks, your majesty," Agamon replied. "I dare say your soldiers are of high quality. Only a very small percentage failed our trials. I am genuinely impressed."

"I am very glad to hear that, sect leader."

"Anyway, I am not here for pleasantries. I am here to inform Your Majesty now that the underworld forces have shown up, my faction and I are at your disposal. We are ready to march with this country's army to face those foul demons."

Hearing that, Jack remembered the descriptions of the Ancient Beacon Tower. The ancient champions inside the tower could be commanded if it was a campaign against the underworld forces. A total of 5,000 ancient champions were inside that tower. All were level 90. Aside from the three here, there should still be eight more mythical-grade

champions. While the rest were rare elites. A regiment of 5,000 of such warriors was a power that couldn't be taken lightly. Thaergood was right. This meeting was a boon.

"Thank you, sect leader. I represent this country and the world for expressing our gratitude," Jack declared.

"There is no need to thank us. This is our task," Agamon said. "Just send as the order. We are ready to march anytime."

Jack nodded. "I will be having a war meeting with my people tomorrow. Once we come up with a plan, I will send a messenger to inform you."

"Then I will wait for it. Thank you for meeting us. We will take our leave now," Agamon said.

Thaergood still had something to say to Jack, so Grace escorted the three out.

"Your majesty, aside from them, there has been interest from other parties to join our war against the underworld forces."

"Oh? Which parties?" Jack asked.

"The league factions," Thaergood answered. "Among them are the League of Champions, the Order of Magi, the Assassins Guild, and many others."

"The underworld forces are a threat to all the people in this upperworld. It makes sense that these league factions can no longer maintain their neutrality," Peniel said.

"Yes. I believe all the factions in the world will fight the underworld forces in some way, but those who come to us are those who believe in Your Majesty. After Your Majesty helped them solve the case of faction leaders' murders, I say this response is natural," Thaergood said. "They believe it will be more effective if they fight as one, which is under Themisphere's leadership."

"This is great news. With all of us together, we might still beat this disaster. This is not over yet!" Jack exclaimed.

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Jack walked to his royal chamber after the meeting. A soldier came running to him when he was on his way. The soldier told him another guest had come to visit him. The guest was waiting at one of the balconies. Jack was at first confused as to why he had to meet this guest on the balcony. He understood after seeing the guest.

It was Eoranth.

Eoranth said Broidrireg and the others had departed to the ancient dragon graveyard. He would be joining them soon after he finished his business with Jack, which was the country guardian's contract.

Jack didn't say much about the matter. He proceeded with the contract procedure. He was aware that he had a long face because this reminded him of Broidrireg's coming passing. So, he apologized to Eoranth.

"I'm sorry. It's not that I'm not grateful for your willingness to be my country guardian. I am glad, truly. It's just that..."

"I understand. There is no need to explain," Eoranth cut him off.

Jack nodded and stopped speaking.

After the process was completed, Eoranth said, "After we sent off Broidrireg, my brethren and I will fly to the front line. We will aid the armies to fight the underworld forces there. If you want me somewhere else on the battlefield, use your King Badge to summon me."

"All right. Thank you for your help," Jack said.

Eoranth flew away afterward. Jack watched the dragon getting smaller in the sky. The direction he was heading to seemed to be the Northern part of Verremor. That was probably where the ancient graveyard was located. Maybe one day when this was all over and the world was at peace, he might look for that place and visit Broidrireg's final resting place. Broidrireg did say the place was unsuitable for other races. But considering this place was originally a game meant for players, he didn't believe there was a place inaccessible to them.

His sadness from thinking about Broidrireg returned. He sighed and stayed on the balcony a while longer before resuming his walk to the royal chamber.

## **Chapter 1802 1802. Sphere of Tiamat**

Inside the royal chamber, Jack sat down. He was very tired considering he hadn't slept since yesterday, but he didn't want to sleep yet. So, he decided to review his improvement and the loot he gained from the war. After he woke up from his long slumber, he hadn't had the time to do that yet.

His classes had all increased in levels after the battle. He spent a lot of time fighting near the capital before he sneaked away to save the hostages, so he received the exp points from the soldiers who fought nearby him. Considering he was the main commander of the Allied forces, he also received exp points gained by soldiers from the other countries, providing they were not too far away from him.

When Azzarilth died, he received exp points despite being unconscious. Even though Azzarilth died by a suicide spell, he and Broidrireg inflicted a majority of the damage. Hence, they were considered the ones who killed her.

As a level 98 eternal dragon, Azzarilth provided tons of exp points. Since Jack didn't form a party with other players and he was the only player who inflicted damage on Azzarilth, all the exp points went to him.

Combined with the exp points from the battle at the capital, Jack leveled up a total of seven times. His Brave Swordsmaster and Time Sage were level 87, while his Beast Monarch was level 86. He received 21 free attribute points. He also received 9 free skill points for Brave Swordsmaster and 6 free skill points for both Time Sage and Beast Monarch.

He spent the 21 free attribute points on his lowest stat, endurance. It was the only stat still below 3,000 points. After adding the points, this attribute also crossed the 3,000 points mark.

Before he started spending his free skill points, he checked his Container of Souls. The souls he had collected didn't beat the last time he fought Master's massive zombie army at Messephyria, but it was close. Azzarilth alone provided three million souls. The souls inside his container were 9,600,000 souls.

Following his previous conviction, he first used 3,000,000 souls to upgrade Void Displacement Eye to max ten stars. This skill could now hit a target 100 meters away. The maximum size of the created black hole had increased exponentially. He hadn't given it a test but Peniel told him his skill could now even affect a target as large as the mobile fortress.

Against enemies, the strength of the black hole's pull had also increased. Enemies would now find a harder time escaping its gravity. The duration which an enemy had to stay within the black hole was also reduced to only one second. If the enemy failed to escape within one second, the enemy would be teleported.

Before he spent the rest of the souls and free skill points, he took out a couple of items Azzarilth had dropped. Azzarilth had dropped many items. Even though Jack didn't use his Runestone of Luck due to being unconscious, someone of Azzarilth's caliber still dropped many quality items when she died. Additionally, Jack's base luck was already very high even without the Runestone of Luck.

Paytowin picked up the loots when Jack was unconscious. He then gave it to Grace who passed it to Jack after he woke from his slumber.

Out of the loots, four were legendary grades. The two items Jack brought out were among the four. One was a technique book and the other was an Evolve Seed. The

technique book contained the skill Azzarilth used during the battle, the Sphere of Svalinn. The Evolve Seed was Chaos Seed.

Jack had tasted how formidable it was when Azzarilth merged the Sphere of Svalinn with her chaos energy. He believed using this Chaos Seed on the skill should produce a similar result. So, Jack learned the skill and without delay, used the chaos seed on the skill.

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Sphere of Tiamat, level: 1/20 (Active skill)

Generate a sphere around the user. All received damage is absorbed by the sphere. The sphere has an HP bar of 300,000 HP. The skill ends when the sphere's HP is depleted.

Generates an explosion that deals 1000% chaos damage to enemies in a 10-meter radius if the sphere is destroyed before its duration.

Whenever the sphere gets into physical contact with an enemy, it deals 100% chaos damage.

All damage is increased by 30%, the increased damage is chaos damage.

All received damage is reduced by 50%.

Stats and movement speed are increased by 100%.

Immune to movement restriction and negative status effects.

Gains flying ability.

Duration: 5 minutes

Cooldown: 6 hours

Stamina: 500

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"Sweet," Jack uttered. He had seen how unstoppable Azzarilth was after using this skill. Even Arther, who had a much lower level, became very formidable when he used the Sphere of Aegis which was equivalent to the Sphere of Svalinn. With this skill, Jack would also be unstoppable when it was active.

Sphere of Tiamat was a skill learnable by all elite classes branched from the Fighter class, so the skill points to level up this skill came from the Brave Swordmaster's skill points. Without further ado, Jack pumped the 9 free skill points and 1,000,000 souls to max-level the skill to level 20. He then spent another 3,000,000 souls to max it to ten stars.

Each level-up increased the sphere's HP by 35,000 and increased the melee damage of the sphere by 5%. Each star increased the skill's duration by 1 minute and Jack's overall damage was further increased by 2%.

At max level and max stars, the sphere's HP was 1,000,000. It dealt 200% chaos damage when enemies touched the sphere. Jack's overall damage when the skill was active was increased by 50%, and the skill's duration increased to 15 minutes.

Jack then took out the parting gift from Broidrireg. He gazed at the book for a while. He had a sentiment to not use the book so he had something to remember Broidrireg by, but he knew that would be disrespecting Broidrireg's wish. Broidrireg gave him this book so he could become stronger to fight the underworld forces, to protect this world. He couldn't let Broidrireg down.

He learned the spell.

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### Wrath of the Ancient Dragons (Mega Spell)

Conjures seven dragons of the seven elements. The dragons will work their way to a marked target. Deals damage to any obstacles in the way.

Once the marked target is hit, the target will be incapacitated and receive damage for the remaining duration of the spell.

Duration: 10 minutes.

## **Chapter 1803 1803. Ancient Companion Token**

After reading the description, Jack understood why this mega spell was better than the one he saw Broidrireg use in the past battle. This mega spell produced seven dragons instead of five. The seven also had different elements which should make it harder for the enemy to counter. It was rare for one to have high resistance on all elements.

The mega spell didn't have levels, so he returned his attention to his other skills. After some thought, he spent Beast Monarch's 6 free skill points on Demonize Pet, bringing it to level 7. Each level increased the attributes increase by 5% and the duration by 1.5 minutes. At level 7, a demonized pet received a 230% attribute increase and lasted 39 minutes.

He then used 900,000 souls to fully upgrade Life Elevating Art to ten stars. His attributes now increased to 200% when this skill was active.

Out of the remaining 1,700,000 souls, he spent 1,500,000 souls to upgrade Superior Acceleration to eight stars. The spell now increased his speed by 1800%.

He used Time Sage's 6 free skill points and the remaining 200,000 souls to level up Hundred Mirages to level 9. Each level increased the spell's duration by 24 seconds and added another copy. At level 9, the spell summoned eighteen copies that lasted five minutes and twelve seconds.

Some of his other skills and spells had also received star upgrades. Some received their first star upgrades. They were Beast Command, Beast Tantrum, and Invisibility. Magic Shield had fully upgraded to its tenth star.

Each star of Beast Command increased the damage dealt after the skill's duration ended by 100%, and the duration where the pet cannot be summoned by an additional six minutes. Each star of Beast Tantrum increased the pet's defenses, attack speed, and movement speed by an additional 5%. Each star of Invisibility reduced the spell's cooldown by six minutes.

Magic Shield at its tenth star did not consume MP until ten seconds had passed after the spell was cast. But considering his huge pool of MP and high MP regeneration, this basic spell was practically free to use.

When Azzarilth fell, aside from granting exp points and souls, her death also produced a large number of draconic essences. Added with the draconic essences collected from the death of nearby mythical-grade obsidian dragons killed by Arlcard, Jack received more than enough for the 6,930 draconic essences required to level up his bloodline to level 10.

At this last level-up, the passive skill of the bloodline received a double increase, similar to when battle skill leveled up to level 20. One level-up of the bloodline normally increased the attributes, HP, stamina, and MP by 4%. When this bloodline increased from level 9 to level 10, the increase was 8%. At this max level, Divine Gold Dragon Bloodline increased Jack's attributes, HP, stamina, and MP by 60%.

At level 10, the bloodline also gave Jack one more active skill. The skill was Summon a Gold Dragon. Peniel explained that the summoned dragon would be an eternal grade with the same level as him. This meant he could summon a level 87 eternal-grade dragon. With this skill, he had another eternal-grade helper with power almost rivaling Syndrillis. The duration for the summon was three hours, and its cooldown was twelve hours.

After finishing reviewing his upgrades, he turned his attention to the last legendary-grade loot from Azzarilth.



Azzarilth dropped four legendary items. Two were the Sphere of Svalinn technique book and the Chaos Seed he had used earlier. Another one was a guild item called Dragon Rider Insignia.

Jack had given this insignia to Grace, who then brought it to Tip at Heavenly Citadel. Tip returned to Heavenly Citadel ahead of the army so he could manage the headquarters. The management had been largely neglected due to the war. Dylan was asked to manage the headquarters during wartime. He was the only core member Jack and the others trust who was not a combatant. Unfortunately, his heart was not in guild management. He didn't perform well enough, hence the need for Tip to return.

The Dragon Rider Insignia gave them a new special unit. The dragon riders were flier units who could fight both in melee and range. They were formidable with their teeth and claws. They were also very durable. Against ranged opponents, they could shoot fireballs from their mouths.

Together with the eagle rider hunters, their guild army could very well hold air superiority in the next battle.

Jack gazed at the last legendary-grade loot in his hand. It was a token. This token was the reason why Jack didn't choose Boro, the new eternal-grade recruit, for his twelfth royal agent. The token was called the Ancient Companion Token.

Peniel explained that when this token was used, a native from the past would appear. The token user could then form a companion contract with this native. Jack already had Arlcard and he had no intention of changing his companion. So, under normal conditions, this token was useless to him. But thankfully, he was also a sovereign. As long as the native was human, he could change from making the native his companion to his royal agent. Peniel told him that the token always summoned a native with the same race as the user, so that solved the problem.

The Ancient Companion Token was similar to the Guild Hero Token. The grades of the summoned native depended on the grades of the token, but the summoning percentage of this Ancient Companion Token was better than the Guild Hero Token.

A legendary-grade Guild Hero Token provided a 10% chance of summoning an eternal-grade guild hero. As for the Ancient Companion Token, it had a 30% chance of summoning an eternal-grade native. Jack figured with his high luck stat and his Runestone of Luck, the probability should increase significantly.

Additionally, Peniel informed him that the summoned native would always be around the user level. Either ten levels higher or ten levels lower, depending on luck. If the summoned native was eternal grade, he didn't need to waste time leveling the native up like he had to if he chose a recruit for his royal agent.



Jack summoned his Runestone of Luck. After pumping all his willpower into that runestone, he used the Ancient Companion Token.

## **Chapter 1804 1804. Twelfth Royal Agent**

The token in Jack's hand dissolved into dust once it was used. The dust drifted in the air before expanding and converging into a human-shaped figure in front of him. The figure solidified and turned into a man in light armor. The man looked around as he took in the situation.

The man appeared young on his face, around his mid-twenties. This disappointed Jack because he doubted a young native to be anything impressive. He was proven wrong, though, after using his Inspect.

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Tetsuo (Eternal Human), level: 90

HP: 4,600,000

Strength: 3,920

Physical Defense: 4,250

Magical Defense: 4,180

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"Level 90 eternal...", Jack muttered. His luck didn't disappoint. The Ancient Companion Token was not wasted. Level-wise, this native was as strong as a country guardian. But of course, a true dragon outpowered most monsters of the same level and grade, so it was not a good comparison.

Tetsuo's strength stat was higher than his even when he had three classes' attributes and a legendary-grade bloodline, but the native's defensive stats were lower than his.

"Where am I?" Tetsuo asked.

"You are inside Thereath palace," Jack answered.

"Thereath...? Never heard of it. What country?"

"Themisphere," Jack answered.

"Never heard of that as well."

"You are in the future," Peniel explained. "We summoned you using the Ancient Companion Token. Since you don't know Themisphere, you must be from more than five hundred years in the past."

"Future...? I remember now," Tetsuo said as he frowned and touched his head. "I have died during the war. So, you brought me back to life? You are an outworlder, aren't you? I have this unexplained desire to be your companion. Is this the effect of you resurrecting me?"

"Yes. Although I don't want you to be my companion. I want you to be my royal agent," Jack said.

"Royal agent...? You are a sovereign?" Tetsuo asked.

"Yes, he is the king of the country we mentioned before," Peniel informed.

Jack opened the royal agent page in his status window and sent the invitation to Tetsuo. Tetsuo accepted without much thought. He was compelled by the world system to accept. Jack checked his traits, affinities, and talents from his royal agent page.

Tetsuo couldn't cast magic. He only had skill traits. His skill traits were fist, gun, move, form, beast, tech, dagger, and club. His elemental affinities were light, wind, and soul. He had four talents. They were shapeshifter, tech-savvy, gun proficiency, and beast warden.

Shapeshifter allowed Tetsuo's beast form to last for two hours and also halved the beast form's cooldown. The cooldown of Tetsuo's beast form was only three hours. This meant during combat, he only had a one-hour gap when he was not in beast form.

Jack wondered what Tetsuo's beast form was. It was not explained in his skill list.

"Do you mind showing me your beast form?" Jack asked.

"I do mind," Tetsuo replied. "I don't want to use my beast form unless in a fight. It is disrespectful."

"Uh... okay," Jack didn't push.

The Tech-savvy talent gave Tetsuo 10% increased damage when using tech weapons or tech skills. It also improved his chance of learning tech skills.

Jack thought that technocraft and beastmaster were two classes that contradicted one another. One was inclined to machinery while the other to nature. For Tetsuo to embrace the two classes was very unusual. Jack wondered what kind of battle style his new royal agent had.

Tetsuo's third talent, gun proficiency, gave him an increase of 10% damage when using a gun as a weapon. It also improved his chance of learning gun skills. This talent allowed him to learn gun skills with a requirement of twenty levels above him. But considering he was already level 90, there weren't many gun skills he was unqualified for.

Jack noticed a handgun inside a holster slung from Tetsuo's left waist. On his right, a different weapon was hung. It was a mechanical claw.

Beast Warden, Tetsuo's last talent, provided his pet with a 10% increase in HP and defense. The talent also improved his chance of learning pet skills.

As a level 90 eternal, Tetsuo had an extensive list of skills. The skills mostly came from beastmaster, gunner, battle monk, and technocraft. Many of the skills Jack was not familiar with. He saw the Tame Pet and Master Tamer among those skills, so Tetsuo should have a medium-sized pet.

Jack was tempted to ask Tetsuo to summon his pet, but Jack suspected he would receive the same reply as when he asked about Tetsuo's beast form.

Probably Tetsuo would reveal his beast form and pet if Jack invited him to a spar, but Jack was too tired. He just skimmed through Tetsuo's skill list to find what skill from the kingdom's library he could add. After looking for some time, Jack inserted Shooting Dash and Ki Shield

When he checked Tetsuo's gear to see if he could upgrade them, he learned that he did no need to. All of Tetsuo's equipment was unique grade. He even had a wings tool.

After finishing, Jack said to Tetsuo, "You should be able to use the zone portal freely now that you are a royal agent. I will send you to join my other royal agents tomorrow. They are preparing to face a war in another country. You will be of great help to them."

"I am resurrected from my death only to fight another war? It figures," Tetsuo remarked.

"By the way, what war was you in?" Peniel asked.

"Hm... We don't have a name for that war, but it was a long one. It was mainly the battle between the true dragons and the beholders, but mortals got dragged into the war as well because of the beholder's mind-controlling power."

"The ancient war?! That was a millennia ago!" Peniel exclaimed.

"Oh, it has been that long already? So, what is this future war we are having here? Are we fighting to conquer another country?"

Jack heard a hint of sarcasm in Tetsuo's voice, but he wasn't offended. He answered, "We are having a war with the underworld forces. If we lose, the upperworld will be annihilated."

"I see... Well, I had a few encounters with demons during my lifetime. They weren't pleasant opponents. I was bound to serve you but I'm glad you are fighting a righteous war. All right, you can count on me!"

"Thank you. I will give you a more detailed instruction tomorrow morning. You can take a rest in one of the guest rooms. I will have a guard to bring you there."

"If you don't mind, I would like to take a look outside. I'm just back from the dead. I'm in no mood to rest," Tetsuo said.

"Very well," Jack said.

Jack called a guard to show Tetsuo the way around the palace. After Tetsuo left, Jack took his rest.

## **Chapter 1805 1805. Winning Chance**

The morning of the next day, Jack had another discussion with Thaergood about the arrangement of the army. He also called Tetsuo and instructed him on where to go. John was still on his way with the others to the palace but Jack had discussed some plans with him via messages.

The 1,000,000 troops that retreated from Liguritutum would be stationed in Hydrurond to help Aldryth defend the country. Emris and the mobile fortress stayed with this army.

The 648,000 recruits they left to defend Themisphere had now become a viable fighting force after more than one month of training. A majority of these recruits were now above level 50. Jack sent these troops to Palgrost to help Thelgrun protect his country. Arther would be heading to Palgrost to take command of this army.

The newly recruited 996,000 troops remained in Themisphere and underwent extensive training. They would serve as reinforcement when needed.

Out of the three countries directly bordering Liguritutum, Jack didn't send any troops to Aurebor. Aurebor had an outworlder sovereign. Adding the coins Jack had sent, Nova should be able to build a sufficient fighting force.

According to Wilted, it would take around a month for the corrupted mana to reach beyond Liguritutum. That would be the speed of the underworld forces' advance, so they had one month to prepare.

John and the others arrived sometime before noon. Following him were Wilted Tree, Jeanny, Paytowin, Jet, Bowler, The Man, Serpent Boss, David, Spring Crown, Wong, and Leavemealone. Domon and Grace had come earlier.

"So, strategist. Any brilliant plan to get us out of this mess?" Jack asked John.

"Well. I can tell you that whatever plan we make, we have a 90% chance of losing," John answered.

"Way to go to bring up the morale, genius," Jack said sarcastically.

"I'm simply stating the truth based on the facts," John replied.

"Yes, we choose truth over facts," Bowler remarked.

"The f\*ck are you on about?" The Man scolded.

John ignored the two. He said, "The most crucial factor is the God-level beings. We can battle the underworld forces but once Lucifer takes action, it won't matter how many troops we have. Currently, he stays on the sideline due to the interference of the upperworld Gods. However, he most likely stays idle because he doesn't know about Hope being no more."

"Won't Master tell him this fact? That guy surely knows about this truth," Jack said.

"We choose truth over..."

"I will smack you if you say that again!" The Man stopped Bowler before he completed his sentence.

"Can you two go out? You are disturbing!" John chided. He then resumed, "I doubt bringing the underworld forces into this world is Master's first choice. He only did that because he had been backed into a corner. I'm sure he plans to betray the underworld forces once he gets the chance. Otherwise, what's the point of ruling over a scorched world? He is only using the underworld forces to buy time, so he will keep this secret to prolong our conflict with the underworld forces."

"That makes sense," Jack remarked.

"This brings us to the next point. Once he finished fusing with all the divine power, we will have two God-level beings on the enemy side. Even with all the remaining upperworld Gods working together, I doubt we can win."

"So, we have to stop that from happening!" Jack exclaimed.

"That will be the best outcome, but I don't see any way for us to realize that," John said. "He has placed himself right in the middle of the underworld forces. We have to get through them to get to him. No way we can do that with a large army."

"What about a small infiltration force?" David asked. "My guild is an expert in this. We should be able to find our way to slip through the underworld forces."

"That might be doable, but do you think you can win against Master with a small force?" John asked back.

David couldn't answer that question.

"Jack can!" Paytowin exclaimed. "Just sneak him in. Once he meets Master, he can go and become super saiyan like when he fought Azzarilth. Even Master won't win against someone who can fight toe-to-toe against a level 98 eternal dragon."

"That plan is actually 5% out of my 10% chance of winning. If he can fight Azzarilth, he should be able to fight Satan too once he levels up a few more times. So...?" John turned to Jack.

Jack gave them a wry smile. "I'm sorry to disappoint you all, but I can't do that again. And it's not super saiyan, for goodness sake. It's called mana awakening!"

"You can't?" All of them asked with disappointed expressions.

"I've tried ever since I woke up from my long slumber, but I can't repeat it," Jack said. "I can't get into the complete emptiness like when I was hit by Azzarilth's mind-dooming gaze. Without that state of emptiness, I can't fuse with mana."

"Perhaps your mind is not clear enough?" Leavemealone asked. "We practitioners of martial arts have meditation techniques to clear and empty our minds. Perhaps you should train more to achieve that condition."

"Trust me. I've tried that," Jack said.

"It's true," Domon added. "Afei came to me after he woke up and asked for the training to further clear his mind. I've observed his meditation. I must say his meditation rivaled even me, if not better. I can't teach him a way to further empty his mind."

"Well, that's a downer," John said. "I guess it has to come down to the remaining 5% of the 10% winning chance we have."

"Which is?" Jack asked.

"I have talked with Wilted, I know about that conversation with the person who is the creator of the Second World game, or his ghost for that matter."

"His name is Chris," Wilted said.

"Okay, Chris said if our conflict with Master has not yet ended, we should go to his secret location bringing twenty-four players of different elite classes. I said he has something up his sleeves that can help us win this war. Since we have no better option, I say we bet on this."

## **Chapter 1806 1806. Plans to Close the Underworld Portals**

"Are you sure?" Jack asked.

John shrugged. "At this point, I admit I'm out of ideas. Based on Wilted's description, the main underworld force is designed to be faced by players who have reached the endgame supported by the armies from the seven countries. Currently, the seven countries' armies have gone through multiple wars that leave them weakened. Most players are also not in the endgame considering we don't receive any guides to begin with, thanks to the removal of the main quest."

"Additionally, we have more than half the underworld portals still active," Wilted added. "The more underworld portals are closed, the higher our chance because the native forces don't have to deal with the demonic disturbance in their countries. Right now, we only have Themisphere and Verremor free of the demonic incursions."

"I wish I had gotten more of those portal-closing stones," Jack said.

"Don't worry, we already have a plan to cover that," John said.

"You do?" Jack asked.

"We have the creator's assistance here," John pointed at Wilted. "She knew the locations of these portal-closing stones. With the underworld forces invading the upper world, security down there should be lessened. We will send teams to procure these stones. If we can close the underworld portals in the other countries, everyone should have a better time dealing with the main underworld force."

"That's great!" Jack clapped his hands. "What are we waiting for? Send me your team, I will bring them to the underworld and get these stones."

"Hold your horses. Your role is not to join the teams going after the portal-closing stones," John said. "You will be with the twenty-four players going to Chris' secret location."

"Oh? How will your teams get to the underworld then?" Jack asked.

"Hehe, boss. Do you forget about us?" The Man said.



"Oh, right! You and Bowler have the nightmares," Jack remembered.

"That's right. We will send two teams to infiltrate the underworld to get the portal-closing stones," John said.

"The nightmares have a cooldown for traveling between worlds. They can only carry one extra person. Unless you plan to spend several days ferrying people across, you will need to send strong players in this mission."

"Like I said, the security in the underworld should be thin due to the invasion. We don't expect to fight our way to get the stones. Who we need are people who are skilled in sneaking and stealing."

"You know such people?" Jack asked.

"I will be with one of the teams," Serpent Boss announced. "I had carried out many stealth and retrieval missions in the past. As long as the stones are there, I will get it."

"That's reassuring," Jack said. "Who will be the second person?"

"Now, the second one is more complicated. Wait, I will call him in here," John said.

Not long after, the door to the throne room opened and a player walked in. Jack found that he knew this person's name even if he had not met this person before.

"You...? But aren't you..."

"It's an honor to meet you, Your Majesty," Speedrun gave Jack a bow.

Jack turned to John. "Isn't he an enemy?"

"Was, Your Majesty," Speedrun corrected. "I served Master simply because I owed him a favor. But after hearing that he summoned demons from hell to ruin this world, I can't stay ignorant. I have to do something to save this world!"

"Stop trying to act like you do this for honor," John rebuked and slapped Speedrun's head. He then said to Jack, "I promise him freedom in exchange for his service. As long as we successfully close all the underworld portals, we will absolve him and let him go."

"You believe him?" Jack asked.

"Of course not. How can I believe a weasel like him?" John asked back.

"Dude, I am here," Speedrun said.

"I borrowed Corporate United's Shackle of Vows and used it on him. He had sworn under the artifact to steal the portal-closing stones for us. He will receive a curse and die if he breaks his promise."

"He can cheat death if he wears the amulet of rebirth," Jack said.

"He has already surrendered his amulet of rebirth. We keep watch over him until The Man brings him to the underworld. He won't be able to make another amulet there and he can't return to the upperworld without The Man. If he dies, he will rebirth in the rebirth portal of this capital. I've already placed guards to apprehend him once he appears there. So, he won't be free unless he fulfills his promise."

"Don't worry, man. I have promised you I will get you those stones. You have my words. Thief's honor!" Speedrun exclaimed.

"Thief's honor my ass! Don't expect me to believe the words of a thief," John returned.

"Well, in that case. You should hurry. When will you all depart for the underworld?" Jack asked.

"Right now," John said. "Wilted and I already briefed them about the stones' locations. We are just here to let you know."

"Then go ahead. The sooner the underworld portals are closed, the better."

"You heard the king. Move out!" John ordered.

"Aye, aye!" Bowler said.

"You can count on me, boss!" The Man exclaimed.

Serpent Boss gave Jack a military salute.

Speedrun bowed and said, "I am glad to be at your service, Your Majesty."

"Quit bootlicking! Let's move!" The Man pulled Speedrun away.

"Hey! There is no need for pulling!" Speedrun protested.

After the four left, they continued the meeting.

"Even if they succeed in their missions and the underworld portals are closed, we are already on the back foot. Do you truly think going to Chris' secret location can help us?" Jack asked.

John shrugged again. "Do you have a better idea?" He asked.

Jack said, "The twenty-four players of different classes that Chris asked Wilted to bring. I kind of have an idea what they were for, but I don't see how they can help us win the war. Sure, they will become stronger if my guess is correct, but what good are twenty-four strong players? They still won't win against the whole underworld forces. Not to mention, if Master becomes a God, it will be useless no matter how strong a player is."

"I think you and I have the same guess, and I must admit, you are not wrong," John said.

## **Chapter 1807 1807. Twenty-four Players**

"So? You still think this is what we should be betting on?" Jack asked.

John didn't answer. It was Jeanny who said, "Maybe if these twenty-four players can become stronger, we can sneak them in to face Master before he becomes a God."

"Even if we can sneak through the underworld forces, Master is not alone," Paytown said. "He has the members of several guilds protecting him, not to mention his guild army. He himself is a monster. I don't see a small team succeeding even if backed by twenty-four of the strongest players."

"I know. That's why I say our chance is slim," John said. "Anyway, we have to try every option at this point. There is a good chance we will meet Chris at that place, right? Or his memory. He probably has one or two secrets that we can use to get us out of our current situation. That is what I'm counting on."

"You will be among the twenty-four players going then?" Jack asked.

"That's right," John said. "Plus, no summoner is more reliable or capable than me."

Everyone rolled their eyes at his remark.

"If you go, who will make plans for our armies?" Jack asked.

"I doubt we will be gone for long. With our steeds, we should be able to arrive at Chris' secret location in less than one week," John said. "But of course, I prepare a contingency just in case."

John clapped and the door to the throne room opened again. John's father, Saint Jonathan, entered the room with a woman.

"You...?" Jack asked after seeing the woman.

The woman was Linda, Master's chief strategist.

"She will be making plans for our army during my absence," John said.

"Are you sure? John boy? Isn't she an enemy?" Jet asked.

"She was, but she decided to help us now," John answered.

"Do you trust her?" Jack asked.

"Not completely, but I used the same trick as with Speedrun. She had been bound by Corporate United's shackle of vows. Under the effect of that artifact, she took a vow to make plans for the best interest of our army. If she hides any malignant purpose in her plans, she will die."

"I will watch her," Saint Jonathan said. "If she dies, we will ignore the plan she had just made. This way, we don't need to worry about her sending us into a trap."

"We have also forced her to register her rebirth point in this capital, so she will rebirth here when she dies. We will capture her and bring her back to make another plan. The cycle continues until we got a plan where she doesn't drop dead."

"That's vicious," Jet remarked.

"Why, thank you," John said.

"I didn't mean it as a compliment...", Jet said.

Jack wondered if having the husband watch the wife was a good idea. But if John believed his father was up to the job, he trusted that judgment.

He said, "I see. Okay, we have a plan to deal with the other countries' underworld portals and we have someone to plan our defenses against the main underworld forces. Let's speak about our trip to Chris' secret location. Have we already decided on the ones who will go with Wilted?"

John gestured for her mother to leave the room.

"I know you don't trust me, but letting me know your full plan will help me devise mine better," Linda said.

"Thank you for your opinion, but as you said, I don't trust you," John returned.

John made another gesture, and Saint Jonathan took Linda away.

After the two exited the room, John said, "I've already discussed with Wilted about this. She will bring some of her people while some will be from our recommendation. We had also talked with the people we chose, except for you, of course. Here is the list, you are in it as well."

Jack looked at the paper.

\*

Sentinel = Giant Steve

Paladin = Nameless

Avenger = Arthur Bagrat

Dragoon = Jeanny

Berserker = Four Winds

Blade Dancer = Jack

Weapon Master = Spring Crown

Mage Knight = Handsome Joe

Assassin = Red Death

Battle Monk = Leavemealone

Bard = Will Corner

Technocraft = Paytowin

Elite Marksman = Fierce Flame

Gunner = David

Hidden Weapon Specialist = Anotherday

Beastmaster = Jet

Archmage = Scarface

Elementalist = Blackhole

Summoner = John

Warlock = Badass

Priest = Purple Mist

Druid = Freddie

Reaver = Wilted Tree

Inquisitor = Grace

\*

He didn't recognize some names on the list, like Nameless and Badass. He assumed they were Wilted's people.

"Four Winds' name is here. Can he join us? Isn't he having the grand election tourney today?" Jack asked.

"The grand election tourney will be completed in one day. Whether he wins or loses, he will settle his affairs in two days and join us. Several people on that list also have something to attend to for now. We have agreed to gather here in Thereath three days from now. We will depart then."

"I see," Jack said. "But you know, if our guess is correct, Scarface will be sorely disappointed for following us."

"We could be wrong," John said. "If we are right, I don't mind seeing his disappointed face. Do you?"

Jack chuckled. "Okay, then."

Spring Crown turned to Domon. He asked, "Are you sure you don't want to go? From what they said, there is a high chance the ones who go will become stronger. You are a better combatant compared to me."

"If we are talking about martial arts, I agree," Domon said. "But you are better at utilizing this world's game-thingy. I will just be confused by it. Furthermore, this is the world of the young. We old-timers will watch you youngsters from the sideline."

"Hehe, my boss said similar words. He left this chance for the young to shine," David remarked after hearing Domon's words.

Paytowin turned to Jet and asked, "Do you hear that?".

"What? I'm still young in my heart!" Jet declared.

Leavemealone turned to Wong. His eyes asked the same question as Spring Crown. Wong replied by folding his arms and looking away.

"Better not let Arthur hear what they said," Jeanny said. "He will decide not to come with us if he learns of it."

"Okay, it's settled then. Let us depart three days from now!" Jack announced.

## **Chapter 1808 1808. Going to a Psychologist**

The meeting continued for another half day. They mostly decided on the details of troop managements and the arrangements with the guilds. After the world announcement, all players knew they couldn't sit this one out. They had to fight, or the world was doomed.

The unfortunate thing was most of the player populace were low levels. This was because the majority of players preferred to stay safe inside the settlements and work normal jobs. While many with adventurous spirits were clueless for a long time. They went with the trial-and-error method and hence, their development was very slow. Not to mention, a lot died and had to repeat their levels multiple times. More than half the player population was still below level 50.

Even so, the number of players who volunteered to fight now was many times more compared to when it was during country wars. Although they were weak, these players supplemented the shortcomings of native soldiers which had diminished after the numerous wars.

As the leading guild in the player community, many players came to Everlasting Heavenly Legends to receive guidance on how to help. John happily arranged their mobilization. The remaining players who chose to be independent just marched to the frontline to assist however they could.

Jack instructed Thaergood to create a war summon quest against the underworld forces. He also suggested that other countries did the same. Even if the world announcement had compelled most players to act, the promise of rewards should motivate these players even more.

After finishing the meeting, Jack called for the team who entered the Ancient Battleground Legacy Dungeon with him the last time. He believed they should now be able to defeat the Herald of Greed. He thought they should try improving their gears before they left for Chris' secret location.

After checking with everyone, they agreed to gather the next morning in Heavenly Citadel.

Before everyone dispersed, Jet came to Jack. He said, "Yo, Jack boy. You said you need your mind to be empty to go into this mana-awakening form, right?"

"That's correct," Jack replied.



"Maybe you should try this person I know. He used to be a psychologist in real life. He is working the same gig here in this capital. He provides counsel for many frustrated players."

"Why do I need a psychologist for?" Jack asked.

"Because this one uses a special method. He used hypnotherapy. He can put you into a state where your mind is completely blank. Maybe you can get into that empty mind condition with his help."

"Hm... Okay, let's give it a try. Give me his address. By the way, you sound like you have experience with this psychologist. Did you use his counsel?"

"No. Of course, not. Why would I need a counsel? Haha. I just know this from a friend. Okay, I have sent his address to you via message. I have to go now. See you tomorrow morning!"

Jet walked away rather fast after saying that. Jack just looked at him suspiciously.

\*

Jack decided to go check out this psychologist. He originally wanted to do the challenge stages in either the League of Champions or the Order of Magi, but he supposed he still had another day free after tomorrow. So, he postponed his trip to those places.

Grace heard it when Jack was talking to Jet. She wanted to accompany Jack to see this psychologist.

Jack didn't object. He said, "If I can get into mana awakening again, I would prefer you to be there. Maybe you can see something with your mana perception to understand how I enter that state."

When Jack used mana awakening the first time, he was with Grace. But at the time, Grace's whole attention was on the battle between Broidrireg, Eoranth, and Azzarilth. She was only aware something was happening to Jack when the multicolor aura blanketed Jack's body. That was a short instant before Jack opened his eyes.

"Normally, a psychologist requires us to book a session in advance. You think he will meet us if we just come over unannounced?" Grace asked.

"I'm a king. I doubt he will pass up the chance of earning a king's favor," Jack replied. "Let's go."

The two of them went to the address Jet gave. It was in the business district. It was in a rather crowded area. The building at the address was a five-story building. There was a

plaque at the entrance of the building. The building housed different businesses on each floor. The psychologist was on the third floor.

"Although he only owned one floor, he must be doing rather well to open his practice in this area," Grace remarked.

"Doctor Schreber," Jack read the name on the plaque describing the psychologist on the third floor. "I am certain this is his real name. What kind of people use this for an alias?"

The two went upstairs. On the third floor, they saw a woman behind a receptionist's desk and three people sitting on a row of chairs. All of them were players.

"Whoa, so professional," Jack said after seeing the receptionist.

"Welcome. How can we...," The receptionist stopped mid-way when she turned to Jack. Jack wasn't in disguise. He was wearing his regal outfit.

"I... Your Majesty! Welcome to our humble establishment. How can we help?" The receptionist asked.

"We want to meet Doctor Schreber," Jack said. He then turned to the three players sitting on the chairs and asked, "Are they in a queue to see the doctor?"

"They are, but... uh, excuse me for a minute. The doctor is with a patient. I will inform him of your visit."

The receptionist hurriedly entered the room where the doctor should be. After a few seconds, she came out again. She had the face of one who seemed to bring bad news and would prefer someone else to tell the news if possible.

"Uh... The doctor... I'm sorry. The doctor is still with another patient," She said nervously. "He still needs maybe ten minutes. After that, Your Majesty can enter without having to wait for the queue."

When she expected Jack to burst out in rage, he heard a sigh of relief instead.

"Oh, thank goodness! I thought I had to wait till the end of the queue. Thank you very much," Jack uttered. He then sat next to the three players. Grace sat next to him. He said to the three, "I'm sorry. I hope you three didn't mind I cut the line. I'm rather in a hurry."

"We, uh... we don't mind," One of them said. The other two nodded in agreement.

## **Chapter 1809 1809. Meeting the Doctor**

Jack and Grace ended up waiting for fifteen minutes before the previous patient came out. They were then called to enter.

During the wait, Jack chatted with the three players waiting for their turn to see the doctor. He learned their names were Bob, Daniel, and Clay. He also learned what they came here for.

Bob wanted to be an adventurer but he kept having a mental breakdown whenever he encountered a new monster. Hence, he had died many times and could no longer afford to buy the Amulet of Rebirth. His current level was only 23. He had never gotten past level 30.

Daniel and Clay were friends. They were not adventurers. They preferred manual labor. They came to see the doctor together. They had the same problem where they couldn't seem to do the same job for long. They got bored easily. They had been fired or quit from their jobs several times.

Jack told them to come to the palace. He could get Bob to work as a guard at the palace's training caves. In return, Jack would let him use the training cave to get used to the different types of monsters.

One of the palace's training caves had a special feature where it could be set to be inhabited by a particular monster, as long as the monster existed in the cave's library. The monsters in this library could be added as long as someone linked their monster books. Jack had done so. Jack's monster books were more than half-filled, hence there was more than enough variety in the palace's monster library.

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Additionally, the monster's levels inside the training cave could be set freely. The user would never be in danger of dying. Hearing that, Bob was very eager to take up on Jack's offer. Jack said he had sent a message to someone in the palace. Bob just needed to go and inform the palace guards of his name.

To Daniel and Clay, Jack also offered them the chance to work at the palace. The palace was big. Multiple different jobs could be done, from cleaning, repairing, gardening, and the like. He could arrange for them to keep getting rotated so they didn't get bored of doing the same labor.

By the time Jack was called, they had been chatting as if they were best friends.

"I'll go in first. Thanks again for letting me cut the line. Remember my offers. Just come to the palace and say your names," Jack said before he entered the doctor's room with Grace.

"Nice fellow," Daniel said.

"Yeah, can't believe he used to be called a demon," Bob said.

"You can't always believe in rumors," Clay said. "It's good to know he is our king."

"Yeah... Hey, I feel rather good after chatting with him," Bob said.

"Me too. Maybe we should just go to the palace and take up on his offer?" Daniel asked.

"I agree. Let's go," Clay said.

The three of them then went down the stairs to exit the building.

"Eh...?" The receptionist watched in confusion as the three walked out.

\*

Inside the doctor's room, Jack met Doctor Schreber who turned out to be younger than he expected. The doctor seemed to be in his early thirties.

"Your Majesty!" Schreber rose from his seat and came to shake Jack's hand. "I was honestly rather skeptical when I heard the king himself come to my humble establishment. I thought it was a prank. I'm sorry to have made you wait."

"You should have come out to check if you think it was a prank," Grace chided.

"That I should have, fair maiden. Please accept an apology for my rudeness," Schreber gave them a bow.

"That's okay. I don't mind," Jack said.

"Well, I do mind. You should make sure to never let the king wait again. Otherwise, you can forget about working in this country," Peniel uttered.

Jack rolled his eyes at Peniel. Schreber maintained a calm expression, but his eyes showed fascination at the talking fairy.

"So, what can I do for you, Your Majesty?" Schreber asked.

"I heard you can do hypnosis?" Jack asked.

"I do incorporate hypnotherapy in some of my treatments," Schreber answered.

"Can you use it on me?" Jack asked.

"Please, have a seat first," Schreber gestured them to a comfortable sofa at the center of the room. He then took a seat opposite them. After everyone was seated, he asked, "Please, tell me what problem ails you mentally. I will then judge if we need to perform hypnotherapy or not."

"Oh, I don't have a mental problem. I just wish to become empty-minded," Jack said.

"I beg your pardon?" Schreber asked.

"I want to go into a state where my mind is completely blank," Jack explained.

"You do...?" Schreber was starting to think this was a prank again, but he had used Inspect when Jack entered the room. The person before him was indeed the king of the country, but what was this nonsense about wanting the mind to be empty?

"I understand you must be confused by this unusual request," Grace said to Schreber. "But please know this is for the good of the country and the world. His Majesty has a condition when he needs to be in that empty state of mind. Can that be achieved with hypnotherapy?"

"Well... Hypnotherapy lets one enter one's subconsciousness where it is easier for someone to plant a suggestion," Schreber said. "I guess it should be possible to suggest Your Majesty empty his mind once Your Majesty was under hypnotherapy. However, I don't truly understand what kind of empty mind you want. There are multiple definitions of it. Perhaps Your Majesty wishes to be relaxed and free?"

"No, no. What I want is for my mind to be completely empty. Without any thought. Like, I even forget who I am."

"Hm...," Schreber massaged his chin. It was clear from his expression he didn't truly understand what Jack was getting at.

"How about if suggesting one to return to a certain memory?" Grace asked.

"Memory?" Both Jack and Schreber turned to her.

Grace said to Jack. "Perhaps he can use his hypnotherapy to suggest you return to the state when you were under the influence of the mind-dooming gaze."

## **Chapter 1810 1810. Hypnotherapy**

Jack and Grace narrated to Schreber about the war in Dritzuut. They told him about the time Jack was battling Azzarilth, about how Jack was hit by an eye skill that caused his mind to become empty.

"Hm... I still can't believe we are now living in a world filled with magic, fairies, dragons, and monsters," Scrheber said after hearing their tale. "I guess my decision to not set foot outside this city is correct. I wouldn't know what to do if I encountered those monstrosities."

Jack believed him. Schreber was only level 11 and was still using the magician basic class. He wouldn't last outside the city wall.

"So, can you do it?" Grace asked Scrheber.

"I suppose I can. Although I can't truly tell if you will get into the state you asked for. You did say that state was caused by a magic spell, didn't you?"

"It's an eye skill. It's different from a magic spell. It's... Ah, never mind," Jack said.

"Anyway, what I'm trying to say is I don't know a thing about magic," Scrheber said. "I might be able to get you into the mental state similar to when you are under the spell, or skill, or whatever, but I can't guarantee if that state will be the same."

"I think it's worth a try," Jack said.

"Okay, in that case, please lie down on that lounge," Schreber pointed to a luxurious lounge next to the sofa.

"Fancy," Jack said as he lay down on the lounge. "Never saw this type of lounge since the world turned. Where did you get it?"

"I have it custom-made based on the one that I had in the past world," Schreber informed. "One needs to be in a completely relaxed state to get into hypnotherapy. Laying on a comfortable lounge does help."

He then took out something that Jack thought looked like a recording stone. Except when Schreber activated the stone, it didn't show any image. Instead, the sound of waves and birds' voices were heard.

"Is that a recording stone?" Jack asked.

"That's a sound recording stone," It was Peniel who answered. "It is cheaper than a recording stone and can record for a longer period, but it only records sounds."

"Yes, it took me some time to simulate the voice of waves and birds before I recorded them," Schreber said. "All right. Now, make sure you are comfortable. Close your eyes

and let your body relax. Simply listen to my voice and the sound of the waves. Imagine you are lying on a small boat on a calm sea and under a clear sky."

"If the sea is calm, shouldn't I hear no waves?" Jack opened his eyes and asked.

"Your Majesty, you do ask a lot of questions, don't you?" Schreber said. His tone sounded peeved.

"Yeah, he did that a lot," Peniel remarked.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I will zip my mouth," Jack said.

"Close your eyes again, please," Schreber said. After Jack did so, he repeated, "Focus on my voice, imagine you are lying on a small boat..."

Schreber continued to talk to Jack with a soothing voice, urging Jack to relax. He had Jack focus on slow and steady breathing. The entire process continued for almost twenty minutes. When he thought Jack was relaxed enough, he asked Jack to imagine going down a flight of stairs.

As Jack followed Schreber's instruction, Jack felt himself deeper and deeper within his thoughts. He was in a trance. Nothing else existed except for Schreber's voice.

When Schreber noticed that Jack was already in a trance state, he began his suggestion. "Now, return to the time when you are under the effect of the mind-dooming gaze. Imagine you seeing the black mirror and your reflection in it. Remember the torment brought onto you and the emptiness that followed."

Schreber repeated the details Jack had described to him prior, allowing his voice to guide Jack through his memory. Grace and Peniel saw Jack's face twisted as if he was in agony. That must be when Jack was under the torment of the mind-dooming gaze. He was reliving the moment. Soon after, his expression relaxed. This was when he was hit by the emptiness.

Jack also described to Schreber the sensation he experienced when mana fused with him. Schreber was repeating those details, "... You don't feel afraid of the emptiness. You let go. You let mana fill you. You believe that you are safe. There is nothing to worry about."

Schreber ended his speech. He just watched Jack in silence. From what he had heard Jack described, Jack should emit a multicolor aura if the process was a success. After more than a minute, nothing happened. He turned to Grace and Peniel. He said, "Well, it seems whatever state he previously experienced cannot be repeated simply by returning him to the same mental state. I guess I will just wake him up and..."

"Wait! Something is happening!" Grace exclaimed.



"Oh?" Schreber turned back to Jack. Nothing was different. Jack remained still on the lounge.

Schreber might not see it, but Grace did. Her mana perception allowed her to see the invisible mana. The surrounding mana was interacting with Jack in a way she had never witnessed before. She watched Jack's mana as if threads that spread out. The surrounding mana appeared glued to those threads. The threads then returned to Jack's body, bringing the surrounding mana with them. As they did, more and more mana rushed in. Grace was as if seeing rivers of light filling into Jack. The mana that entered became so condensed that it was as if an explosion occurred within Jack.

When Grace saw that illusory explosion, Schreber and Peniel saw a multicolor aura blanketing Jack's body.

"Success!" Peniel exclaimed. "It's mana awakening. You did it!"

"Well, I will be damned. I admit I was skeptical," Schreber said.

Jack opened his eyes. He stood up.

"How do you feel?" Grace asked.

"I feel that I'm invincible, like the last time when I was in this state," Jack answered. "But I know I'm not."