

## **Second World #Chapter 1981: Chapter 1981. Fusing with the Runestone of the Devil King - Read Second World Chapter 1981: Chapter 1981. Fusing with the Runestone of the Devil King**

### **Chapter 1981: Fusing with the Runestone of the Devil King**

Everyone dispersed to do their own things. Some took John's advice and headed straight to the training cave. Some preferred to cool their nerves by relaxing around the lake. Nobody blamed them. They had just fought a fierce battle against the devils, after all.

John stayed inside the lakeside pavilion. He was using the spying platform to monitor the situation. Chris operated the platform for him since only he could access it. Wilted stayed by their sides to make sure Chris followed John's instructions.

As for Jack, he went away to check on the Runestone of the Devil King.

"Anything I need to know before I fuse with this runestone?" Jack asked. "Don't make me waste time if you can give me clues."

"All right. I'll try to explain," Peniel said. "This runestone is special. Unlike normal runestones, you can't rely only on your willpower to endure tribulations. You need several factors to increase your chance of fusing with this runestone."

"And those factors are...?"

"Understanding of rune diagram," Peniel answered. "Which you lack. You have never learned the basics of creating a rune diagram. Thankfully, you have the experience of defusing several rune diagrams. Pretty high-level rune diagrams, I might add, so you are not exactly blind to it."

"What are the other factors?"

"Mana sense and mana manipulation, which you are superb at. The last factor is your runecraft level, which can also be considered top class."

Jack's runecraft was Advanced Master. There was still a higher tier, which was the Grandmaster level, but having the Master level could already be considered among the top. Jack could achieve this level because he constantly used the Runestone of Spellcasting during combat.

"Well, if you say it like that, I win three out of the four factors. I say my odds should be pretty good," Jack said.

Peniel rolled her eyes at that remark. "Go ahead and try it then. No need to worry. The runestone won't be gone even if you fail. You just need to start over again."

"Let's use the training cave," Jack said. "The time inside is sped up by twice. I can save time attempting the fusion inside there."

"But you will have to end the fusing process if you are under attack," Peniel warned.

Jack simply grinned at the warning.

Entering the training cave, Jack was sent to a different dimension for solo training. Inside this training dimension, he looked around. There was a choice to choose the terrain setup when entering the training cave. Normally, he chose plain terrain to maximize his killing spree. This time, he chose a mountainous terrain.

The first batch of monsters, which consisted of five goblin knights, were running over to where Jack was. Jack did not doubt those five were level 99 special elites. It took several waves before higher-grade goblin knights were spawned, to a maximum of the mythical grade.

Jack ignored those goblin knights. He continued to look around. He even took to the sky to get a better view. The goblin knights activated their wings tool and chased Jack into the sky. Jack continued to evade those goblin knights while searching for something.

After a while, he finally saw what he was looking for. A cave. He landed in front of the cave before summoning Therras and Spark. He entered the cave and left his two summons to guard the entrance. He then summoned his ten golden wolves. He commanded the wolves to search the cave to see if there were other entrances.

The goblin knights arrived. Therras and Spark easily dispatched the five monsters. Jack sent the two a mental command to take it easy in the killing. Their main objective was not to farm exp points but to keep the monsters from entering the cave. He left Peniel with the two so she could heal them when needed.

After the ten golden wolves confirmed that there was no second entrance to the cave, Jack unsummoned those wolves and sat down. He took out the Runestone of the Devil King and started the fusing process.

He soon found himself inside a different space, similar to when he fused with the other runestones. As he waited for an elemental tribulation to come, the space around him alighted instead. He suddenly found himself in a sea of stars. So many small orbs of light floated around him. He was confused and unsure about what to do.

"Hey, Peniel! Am I supposed to do something with these lights?" Jack called.

"Focus your mana sense to get a feel of your surroundings." Peniel's voice replied. She was with Therras and Spark, but her mental link with Jack allowed her to know what was going on inside this tribulation space.

Jack followed her instructions. He closed his eyes and focused solely on his mana sense. Due to his keen mana sense, he quickly identified what he was supposed to feel. The orbs of light floating around him produced the same luminous intensity. It was impossible to differentiate them using sight alone. However, with mana sense, he knew each had a different intensity of mana. The difference was subtle, but with enough focus, he could identify which light was stronger than the others.

"Again, do I need to do something with these lights?" Jack asked.

"Yes. You need to connect those lights," Peniel answered.

Jack looked around. There were probably hundreds of these lights floating around him.

"Find the light with the strongest intensity of mana, then work your way to the weakest one," Peniel explained.

It was not difficult doing that with his level of mana sense. He already identified the strongest and the weakest ones when he used his mana sense to sweep the lights earlier. Since he needed to connect the lights from the strongest to the weakest, he assumed he needed to find the second strongest light. Considering the difference between one light to the other was subtle, this task was harder... for a common expert. Thankfully, Jack's mana sense was among the top. He needed time to scan the lights but only needed a few seconds to find the one he was looking for.

He didn't need to ask Peniel how to connect the two lights. He knew from his mana sense that he could affect these lights. He manipulated the mana inside the strongest light and pulled it out. A line came out of that light. It went toward the one with the second strongest light.

"Hehe. This is easy," Jack uttered.

The instant the line touched the second light, an intense burst of fire engulfed him. He felt like he had been roasted alive. The fire soon vanished as abruptly as it appeared. "Wha... What the heck...?!" He stammered. He looked at himself. No burn marks, but the

searing pain still lingered.

He heard Peniel giggling.

"Hey! What exactly happened just now?!" Jack yelled.

"Who asks you to underestimate this tribulation? I've already told you it will be difficult for you, didn't I?" Peniel returned. "Every time you make the wrong move, an elemental attack will assail you. That is your tribulation. If you can correctly connect all the lights without making a mistake, you can fuse with this runestone without suffering pain."

"What mistake? I'm certain the one I've connected just now was second in terms of mana intensity," Jack protested.

"You didn't make a mistake in identifying the targets. You made a mistake in the way you are

connecting them."

"Huh? What do you mean?" Jack asked.

"Do you remember what the runic symbols within a spell formation look like? Do they consist

of only straight lines?"

"Do you mean... I need to form a particular shape when connecting the lights?" Jack asked.

"You catch on pretty quick," Peniel replied. "You can imagine these lights as the power nodes

of an enormous spell formation or rune diagram. These power nodes needed to be connected

into runic symbols to enable them to function."

"How do I know what the symbols should look like?"

"That's why I said your lack of the basics of creating a rune diagram will be the obstacle in fusing with this runestone."

"Then, what do you suggest? Don't tell me I have to go and join the Runecraft Society and learn their secrets before I can fuse with this runestone," Jack said nervously. "Not only does that take too long, but I am also vulnerable out there. You know Master is looking for me. His God Sense can detect me from a long distance while I can't tell for sure if he is around. If I'm not careful, he might catch me unaware. Once he does, he only needs an instant to end me. I can't take that risk just for the sake of fusing with this runestone."

"I did say it is difficult for you, but I never say it is impossible," Peniel said. "You just need to spend more time in the effort... You also need a great deal of luck, patience, and the willingness to suffer the tribulation."

## Chapter 1982: Without Question

"What exactly are you trying to say..." Jack asked.

"Trial and error method, of course," Peniel answered.

"Are you nuts? Are you asking me to draw a shape randomly when connecting the lights and hope to God I drew the correct shape by luck?"

"This is why you should have taken a basic class in creating a rune diagram. If you pay attention to the runic symbols inside a spell formation or a rune diagram, you will find that many of them are composed of the same shapes of lines. They are simply arranged differently. You can consider these lines as letters of power. When these letters were put together, they form a sentence, or in this case, form a runic symbol."

"The same argument stands. It's too late for me to take this basic class. Should I draw a line randomly until I hit the jackpot?"

"You don't need to draw randomly. Although you don't know these letters of power, I do," Peniel said.

"Why didn't you say that earlier? You make me worry for nothing," Jack scolded.

"I didn't because I know you will look down your nose at it! Do not think just because you know the letters of power, then everything will be easy. Learning the letters of power manually and learning them through a proper method had different applications. If you join the Runecraft Society, one of the things you can exchange faction points is this letter of power. If you gain the letter of power through this method, it can automatically show which letter of power is the most suitable to use when creating a rune diagram. The higher your runecraft skill is, the more likely this automatic guide takes effect. By learning manually, there is no guide. You must try each letter to find the correct one."

"Hm..." Jack pondered the explanation.

"Hey, do you understand what I just told you?" Peniel asked.

"I do. It has the same concept as the cooking system in some other games. If I have a recipe, I can use the ingredients following the recipe. If I don't, I can still cook the same thing, but the process will take me longer because I must try one ingredient after another until I find the -correct ones."

"I have no idea what you are referring to," Peniel said.

"Never mind that. Show me these letters of power."

"Close your eyes. I will project the images into your mind."

Jack did as Peniel asked. After he closed his eyes, strange lines started appearing in his mind. It was a few at first, but more and more continued to appear.

"Holy shit... Why are there so many?" Jack complained.

"How many do you expect?" Peniel asked.

"Uh... Twenty-six..." Jack answered.

Peniel didn't say another word. She continued to project the letters of power onto Jack's mind. After a while, new letters stopped appearing. Jack counted the various lines shown to him. There were one-hundred-and-thirty-six.

"F\*ck the designer of this game," Jack cursed.

"You are welcome to exit this training cave and say it directly to his face," Peniel offered. This time, it was Jack who opted for silence. He studied the various strange lines in his mind. Thanks to his high intelligence stat, it wasn't hard for him to memorize these letters of power, even when the number was rather overwhelming for a crash course.

Jack opened his eyes after around one minute. He had all the letters memorized.

"Time to put it to the test," he uttered.

He focused on the light with the strongest mana intensity. He tried drawing it using the first letter of power. When the letter ended at the second light, another burst of flame hit him. He was prepared, but it didn't make the experience less unpleasant.

He sighed. There were a-hundred-and-thirty-six possibilities. This meant he had a 0.73% chance of hitting the right letter on his first try. Although his next attempt pulled that probability down, it was not by much. He had to prepare to get roasted a bucketload of times.

"Oh, right. I need to warn you about something," he heard Peniel's voice. "The flames that burn you will get stronger the more mistakes you make."

"F\*cking great..." Jack cursed.

Linda was inside Thereath palace. Master teleported her here after his declaration to the world. He brought her here with a portion of his demon and zombie army. The demons were now in charge of the security within the capital while the zombies were on standby outside. The few Themisphere soldiers stationed in the capital were powerless to do anything about it, nor did they dare to.

Linda acted as Master's regent. She was allowed access to Themisphere's monarch system because she still had the royal advisor status she borrowed from John. Master tasked her to rule the country under his name.

Under the world system, Jack was still the legal king. Master could have Linda destroy the throne and place her as the new sovereign, but he didn't do that. The reason was that he wanted to try altering the sovereign status using his Godly power. He learned that Jack had reached the maximum sovereign levels and had a lot of ruling powers. If he could hack into the system and transfer the sovereign status, he supposed he could also transfer the sovereign level and ruling powers.

He failed after trying, but he didn't give up. He believed his Godly power would grow with time. He just needed to experiment more with it.

Aside from experimenting with the sovereign status, he also spent his time browsing the non-standard skills. While browsing, he learned all the non-standard skills he could learn. Since he had five elite classes, the number of skills available to him was massive.

He didn't need these skills since he was already the most powerful being in the world. He still learned them, though, because he was a perfectionist.

After searching the whole list, he frowned. He didn't find any spells that affected time the way Jack's spell did.

'Could it be Jack was not using non-standard spells...?' Master wondered.

If that was the case, it meant Jack had an unknown class. This didn't bode well. He at first attributed his unfamiliarity with Jack's time spells because he had missed these spells when he studied the game. There were too many spells. It was impossible to learn them all even with his extreme intellect. Classes, however, were more limited. He was sure he memorized all the available classes. He was sure there was no special class with spells that toy around with time the way Jack's spells did.

To learn more unknown things about this game world unsettled him. This world was his! He was the master of this new world. Everything in this world should be under his control and knowledge. The existence of unknown variables posed a challenge to his authority.

"Do you have any command for me?" Linda asked.

Master was sitting on Jack's throne. The throne was powerless to repel him. He couldn't access the monarch system, though. He had been on that throne for more than an hour without saying anything. Linda knew Master was not an idle person. Little did she know he was hacking the non-standard skill list.

"Govern this country," Master answered. "I will formulate the regulations for everyone to follow. Make sure everyone follows them. In the meantime, form a force composed of the native soldiers, players, and faction members to begin reconstruction of the settlements in Hydrurond. We will start from there and slowly rebuild the other wrecked countries. Xugguth will provide demon soldiers to act as overseers to ensure everyone is in line. If anyone is unwilling, slay them. If they are too powerful, mark them. I will deal with them personally." Linda wanted to comment that this was no different than slavery, but she stopped herself. She avoided offending Master by asking differently, "Wouldn't it be faster if you use your power to reconstruct the settlements."

Master was silent upon the question. In fact, he had given it a try. After his declaration and teleporting his force to Thereath, he went to Messephyria. He used his divine power to reassemble the broken buildings. He had two problems, though. Firstly, he never cared for those buildings, so he didn't have an impression or detailed memories of them. Secondly, he lacked imagination. When he tried rebuilding the buildings following his whim, they ended

up as plain cubes.

In his frustration, he destroyed the buildings he had just built and went away.

"That is not a job for God," Master answered Linda's question, to which Linda responded with

a nod.

"Once we rebuild Hydrurond, will we be relocating our base there?" Linda asked.  
"Hydrurond

is the center of this continent. That location will be a better testament to showcase your dominance over this world."

"No. We will continue to rule from Thereath."

"Why?" Linda asked, to which Master responded with a glare.

"I apologize," Linda hurriedly said.

"You should," Master chided. "Please remember you no longer speak with a mortal. I'm a God

now! You mortals should obey my every command without question. Do you understand?"

"I understand," Linda bowed.

Master stood and said, "I will be out for a bit. Take care of the things here in my absence."

"When will you return?" Linda asked.

"When I return," Master answered. He then vanished.

## **Chapter 1983: Visiting a Protector Deity**

Inside Heavenly Citadel, Tip was organizing the guild. The guild army had suffered many casualties after repeated battles with the underworld forces. Even Penny was heavily wounded. Their resources took a deep dive after spending so much to keep the guild army fighting strength throughout the war. Now, they had to reacquire those resources to rebuild. He organized guild members into teams and gave each team an assignment. Everyone was wearing a gloomy expression. Tip couldn't blame them. Though they beat the underworld forces in the war, they lost the main goal, which was to prevent Master from becoming a God.

Now that their enemy was a God, they couldn't imagine a good future. Everyone was depressed.

As they somberly received the assignments, the object of their ire appeared out of nowhere. Master floated above and gave them a condescending gaze. Everyone looked back at Master like a statue without knowing what to think.

"Who is in charge here?" Master asked when none of the players said a word.

Everyone turned to Tip. Tip gulped before he spoke, "I... No, you are in charge."

Master grinned. He said, "You are quite quick-witted. For that, I will reward you by staying my hand. Although your guild has been a thorn in my side for a long time, I know it's not your fault. It's your leaders. I could obliterate this entire headquarters with a flip of my palm, but I am a magnanimous God. I will not hurt you. Don't worry."

Everyone heaved a relieved sigh hearing that.

"However," Master continued, and everyone tensed again. "I will not forgive you if I find out you hide those leaders of yours."

"We... We are not... They are not here," Tip said.

"I know. I have swept this headquarters," Master stated. "I expect you to report to the authorities once they are back, or if you learn their whereabouts... Does any of you know their whereabouts?"

Everyone shook their heads. Tip did the same. Although he knew Jack was at this so-called Creator's Secret Garden, he did not know its location.

"Hm... Okay. I believe you," Master said. He couldn't read minds, but he had superb perception and senses. Combined with his knowledge of micro expressions, this allowed him to detect when someone was lying.

"Remember. Report to the authorities once you learn their whereabouts. If you are found guilty of defying my commandment, you will learn firsthand what it means to be smitten by a God."

Once Master finished speaking, the entire place rumbled. Everything suddenly broke apart. The ceiling, the walls, and the floor broke into pieces. No one was hurt, though. The rubble fell away from them. In an instant, they found themselves outdoors. The main building of their guild headquarters was no more. Only its basement was left.

"This will be my only warning," Master said. He then vanished.

Everyone just stood there without moving. They couldn't believe they had a God for an enemy. Only a bleak future awaited them. Many of the players there had the thought of quitting the guild.

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Master continued to busy himself. He went around collecting his former subordinates, primarily Mistress, Motherboard, and Sizhad. He also went and freed Gridhacker from Everlasting Heavenly Legends' jails. He saw Sinful Pleasure inside the jail but left the dwarf there. He had no use for the psycho.

He couldn't find Ronald, his last heavenly enforcer. He didn't waste too much time searching for the guy. If that gunslinger didn't want to enjoy his blessings, it was his loss.

One day passed, and Master went to Magna Masat, the capital of Verremor. Due to the war with the underworld forces, only three countries had intact territories, Themisphere, Verremor, and Sangrod. He brought Mistress and another portion of his demon army to Magna Masat.

Same as in Thereath, Master affirmed his authority in the orc capital. He appointed Mistress as the new sovereign. He only needed the throne in Themisphere to experiment with, so he let Mistress destroy the throne here and become the new

sovereign. Four Winds' sovereign level was not that high anyway, so it was not a waste. Furthermore, Mistress would want no less but to be a sovereign again.

Water Lily and the other Lord Chiefs were there, but they couldn't and didn't dare to protest. They bowed their heads and played along. Like the Themisphere's officers, they had also been instructed to endure. Four Winds promised that they had a plan to take down Master. They just had to be patient and bear the humiliation until the time arrived.

Master took their obedience as their fear of him. He relished this fact. He enjoyed the feeling of knowing that everyone had no choice but to obey him. His narcissism blinded him from seeing the optimism inside these people's eyes.

Master gave Mistress the same instruction. She was to govern in his name and organize a force to reconstruct the neighboring country, Aurebor. Considering that country was Mistress' previous territory, he figured the woman would be happy about the task.

Mistress didn't show any emotion as she received the task. Even with her haughtiness, she knew Master could slay her with a thought. She was seriously wondering now if she had made the right decision to help this man.

Master then did the same at Sangrod. There, he installed Motherboard as the sovereign. Arlcard stood aside and let them destroy the throne. He had received the same instruction from Jack to stand down. Since Arlcard didn't show any resistance, Master didn't bother doing anything to him.

Master left after that. No one knew where he went.

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Master reappeared somewhere underwater. Below him was a huge depression on the seafloor. It was a trench. As he went down this trench, it was revealed that the trench's wall was filled with many artificial caves. Shadows were seen inside these caves. Something was living inside the caves.

The water here was murky, but Master could see everything. Those inside the caves were the nagas. This was the settlement of the minor race that lived under the inner sea.

As he observed the place, he sensed growing pressure from underneath. Bubbles of water rushed out from the bottom of the trench. With these bubbles came a voice that caused the

entire water to quiver.

"New God, what are you doing in my domain?!"

Something gargantuan rushed out from the depths of the trench. It was a titanic serpent. Almost as big as the Caelum Whale. This was the deity that protected the Nagas, the Serpent

God.

"I want something from you," Master said. The pressure the Serpent God exuded didn't affect

him.

"There is nothing for you here. Begone! Or you will regret it," the Serpent God threatened. Master grinned. "It is true that as a fledgling God, I might not defeat you. However, you are also unable to defeat me."

"Do not assume that, new God!" The Serpent God hissed. The bubbles around him increased in number. So much that it covered the entire water around the two. They couldn't see anything past these bubbles.

The bubbles suddenly burst into jets of pressurized water that converged on Master. With so many bubbles, the pressure exuded by this attack was astronomical. Yet, none of the jets of water could touch Master. Master also had a bubble. This bubble encapsulated him and prevented the jets of water from touching him.

The Serpent God doubled down on the pressure. His body glowed bright blue. This blue light converged on Master and intensified the pressure many times. Master's protective bubble finally couldn't take it and burst. The pressurized water and light engulfed Master.

Despite seemingly being bested, Master's laughter echoed through the water.

"Hahaha! Not bad, serpent. Not bad."

An energy shockwave radiated out and repelled the pressurized water and light. Master was visible again. He didn't seem perturbed. The energy shockwave he produced also couldn't hurt the Serpent God. Their power was seemingly equal. Neither side could get an advantage

over the other.

However, the shockwave Master generated was not directed only at the Serpent God. It radiated in all directions. The Serpent God might have negated the energy coming at him, but the rest of the shockwave continued onward. This rampant shockwave struck the trench's wall. As a result, the portion of that wall crumbled. The nagas inside the caves were hit by the

fallen rocks and entombed.

"You...! Despicable!!" The Serpent God hissed.

"I am," Master replied with an evil grin. He aimed one hand at the trench's wall. That hand unleashed a powerful blast that destroyed more portions of the wall.

"Stop it!!!" The Serpent God exclaimed.

Master paid no heed. Rapid blasts shot out of his hand. The Serpent God zoomed toward the wall and erected a dense water curtain that blocked the blasts.

"Hehe," Master snickered at the attempt. He flailed his two arms, and many energy orbs flew

in multiple directions.

The Serpent God expanded his water curtain to protect a larger area. But in doing this, he weakened the overall durability of the water curtain. Master zoomed from one side to the other and shot concentrated blasts. The weakened water curtain couldn't negate these blasts. Their residual energies got through the water curtain and hit the trench's wall, killing more

nagas hiding inside.

"I said, STOP...!!!"

This time, Master did stop.

"Are you willing to listen to my demand now?" Master asked.

The Serpent God gritted his teeth. He asked with unwillingness, "What do you want...?"

## **Chapter 1984:. Making an Example**

Another day passed.

Linda was walking back to the throne room after a meeting in the war room with Sizhad and the native officers. Master placed Sizhad in Themisphere to help Linda deal with governing issues.

Linda never liked the guy and his men. They were valuable as expendable mercenaries, but that was the extent of their value. Now, his thugs went around the capital acting like they owned the place. Even the native guards didn't dare do anything about them, considering their connection with Master. As for the demon guards, they were instead happy with the disturbance those players caused.

While walking, Linda thought about how to persuade Master to tell Sizhad and his men to tone their attitudes down. She was still lost in thoughts when she entered the throne room. Only when she was close to the throne did she notice someone sitting there.

"My-My Lord! When did you return?" Linda asked.

"Only recently. I can see that you are occupied," Master replied.

"... Governing is indeed a busy occupation," Linda said.

Master smiled at the remark. He was silent after that. Linda felt uneasy with the silence. She had thought about several topics to speak with Master when he returned. But at this moment, she couldn't recall any of them. When Master was still a mortal, she had no problem talking as she wished. She didn't expect the situation would be so drastic now that Master was a God. The presence she felt from Master prevented her from treating Master the same as in the past. Her inner instinct kept making her feel like she was on edge. One wrong move, and she could fall and die. This made her unable to think properly.

After a while of uncomfortable silence, Master finally spoke, "You know... You never asked me about Jonn."

"... What about him?" Linda asked in return.

"Our deal is that I will bring you to him once I get what I want. I have gotten what I want, but you never brought the subject up."

"... I am going to be frank with you. I have looked for him using World Maker's resources in the past. I never found a trace of him. I know you are capable, but I am sure you don't have any secret place hidden from me. From those findings, I can only come to one conclusion. He is not in this world."

Master grinned at her words.

Seeing Master's reaction, Linda asked, "Am I right?"

"Hehe. I will also be frank with you. I was sincere when I said I would bring you to him once I fulfill my dream. I thought I could access everything after becoming a God. The truth is, I am unable to enter the place he is in."

"Where is he...?" Linda asked.

"If I can't reach him, you won't as well, no matter how you try. However, don't worry about it. I will fulfill my promise. My divine power will continue to grow. One day, I will breach that place, and you will be reunited with your son. That, of course, if you are still loyal to me."

"... You know I am," Linda said while bowing.

"Hehe," Master chuckled. "By the way, how is the progress of the reconstruction force? When can they depart?"

"I was just from a meeting about that matter. We have put out the announcement. Considering it is to help rebuild the ruined settlements, many volunteers. I am confident we can depart in..."

"Volunteer?" Master cut Linda's speech. "Perhaps you have misheard my command. If I want them to go, they go. Whether they are willing or not doesn't matter. Every native soldier, every player, and every faction member must join this reconstruction force. Only civilians may stay. No need to worry about the security of the country. The demon soldiers will take care of it."

"That is... I'm afraid that will be too extreme," Linda said.

"There is nothing extreme about my will! It is either I will it or not!!" Master boomed while standing up. Darkness covered the entire room. Linda shivered as she felt the temperature drop sharply.

"Un... Understood," Linda said. "I will revise the announcement right away."

"No need. I will announce it myself. I will also give them an example of what happens if they dare to defy me."

"An example...?" Linda didn't like the sound of this.

Master showed a sinister grin before vanishing. Linda was still in bewilderment when she heard Master's voice thundering from the outside.

"Warriors of the Council of Virtus! Your God demands your presence...!!!"

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Outside, Master was floating in the sky above the Sanctuary for Courage. The majestic building was the new base for the Council of Virtus. Inside this building was a main hall with an altar worshipping the God of Courage. Most of the faction members were inside this hall, diligently praying for the return of their God.

Master's thundering voice disrupted their prayers. They all stood up. They knew whose voice called them just now. It was not their God. They knew the owner of that voice. They knew the purpose of such a provocation. Even so, there was no fear in their faces. Pallas was the first to walk toward the exit. The others followed behind him.

Master waited in the sky. He was smiling while the members of the Council of Virtus came out of the building. The Forctis Lion also showed itself and perched atop the building. When the faction members flew to the sky, the Forctis Lion followed. They went into formation between Master and the Sanctuary for Courage.

After all the faction members were in position, Master said, "Kneel to your God."

"You are not our God! We will never bow to you!" Pallas exclaimed.

This so-called God before them was the same man responsible for the destruction of their original headquarters, the Daminos Square Garden. They were already restraining themselves by not looking for him when they learned he made Thereath palace his base. Now, he demanded they kneel to him? Unthinkable!

"Hehe, so be it," Master uttered. He was not surprised by the answer. He pointed his hand

into the sky.

"For Courage!!!" Pallas thundered.

"For Courage...!!!" The other members echoed the roar. The loudest came from the Forctis

Lion.

They all charged toward Master in the sky. When they were halfway, a blinding light came down from heaven where Master was pointing. This light bathed the charging warriors. As the light touched them, they disintegrated. All members of the Council of Virtus and the Forctis Lion turned into dust. There was no exception.

The blinding light continued down and bathed over the Sanctuary for Courage. The building slowly melted until it was nothing but a pile of melted stone and metal. The light didn't damage the people or buildings around the Sanctuary for Courage. The destruction was confined to the divine faction.

Almost all the citizens outside after hearing Master's voice, so they witnessed what happened. They were shocked and terrified by the incident. This was a divine faction they were talking about, and it was gone in the blink of an eye.

The whole capital was silent. No one dared to make a sound.

Master vanished and reappeared in the sky on another side of the capital. A different majestic building was below him. The inhabitants of this building were also outside. They had witnessed the destruction from afar. Now, the bearer of the disaster was on their doorstep.

Talia watched Master with trepidation. She looked at her members and the Joy's Recreational Hub behind them. They had just rebuilt their faction not long ago. They didn't expect a

calamity to fall again so soon.

"Kneel."

Master's voice wasn't loud, but everyone within the capital could hear it.

Talia looked again at her faction members and nodded. There was much at stake here than

their pride. They chose to bear the shame and kneel on the ground.

"Heh," Master sneered. He said, "Good choice. I will spare your lives. However, no one may worship another God but me!"

When he finished his words, an earthquake occurred. The large building that was Joy's Recreational Hub collapsed to the ground. The earth swallowed the building and left no trace

of it.

Talia watched the scene without being able to do anything. She chose to bear the shame to keep the altar safe. It was the place where Joy's essence could grow from their daily worship. Destroying the altar meant they were back in square one.

She didn't realize that this was Master's real motive. Making an example was just an excuse. He knew the divine essence of a God could reform. The deceased Gods could return with sufficient prayers. Although this process took centuries, he preferred to nip the bud before it

blossomed.

"You bastards...!!!" Talia screamed. She charged toward Master. The other faction members

did the same.

"Hehe," Master grinned savagely before clenching his fist.

Talia and all the members of the Council of Charites stopped in their tracks. Their bodies lose

color and then burst into dust.

"People of this world...!!" Master boomed. "This is what happens when you defy my will! By tomorrow morning, I want everyone with a level above 30 to gather outside the capital! You will obey my followers' instructions and do as you are told! Anyone who fails to do so will

suffer my wrath!!"

## Chapter 1985:. Runic Empowerment

Inside Chris' training cave, Jack was still working on fusing with the Runestone of the Devil King. He spent his effort all day long and every day just for the runestone. Outside the cave where Jack was hiding, Spark and Therras stopped the monsters from disturbing him. They followed his instructions and did not kill the monsters too fast. This way, the monster's spawning rate didn't increase.

Like the other runestones, there was a time limit to the fusion trial. In the other runestones, one passed the tribulation if they could endure the time limit without pressing the quit button. In the case of Runestone of the Devil King, if one failed to connect all the lights within the time limit, one was sent out of the tribulation space, and the fusion was considered a failure. One had to start from the beginning again.

The time limit for the Runestone of the Devil King was two hours. This was very short, considering he had to connect hundreds of the lights around him while using a letter of power with over one hundred variations.

Fortunately, the letters of power used to connect the lights weren't randomized between the tribulations. This meant if he learned what letter of power connected the first and the second light, he could use the same letter of power when he restarted the tribulation. All he had to do was memorize the letters of power he had successfully guessed in his last tribulation. Thanks to his high intelligence stat, he had no problem memorizing them.

Even though he had a working method, the process still took an unbearably long time. By the second day inside the training cave, which was one day outside, he only connected around fifty lights. When he compared these connected lights with the rest, he estimated he only covered around one-tenth of the total lights.

At this rate, he would need around eighteen more days to pass the tribulation or nine days if measuring normal time. He couldn't afford the time. They might need to move already in a day or two. He didn't want others to wait for him just so he could fuse with this runestone.

Yet, his chance was not that bleak. As he made repeated guesses and got burned for every failure, his affinity with these letters of power increased.

Through repeated trials, he learned that the sense when he drew a correct line, and an incorrect line, gave a different feeling. The feeling was stronger when he almost touched

the target light. Probably after doing it so many times, his mana sense had developed some sort of a sixth sense. He could feel the danger when he was about to make a mistake and get burned.

After testing this danger sense multiple times, he was sure he could trust it. He would stop connecting the line when he felt the danger. He went back and tried another letter of power.

This helped him not get burned from a mistake, but the process remained long.

He got accustomed to this danger sense with more practice. He learned that his mana sense could detect a minute change as he drew the line to connect the lights. He could feel the danger sense earlier.

By the third day, he could detect the danger much earlier. Some letters of power had the same starting line, but they always varied at least after one-fifth of the line. He could already detect the danger once this variation started. He could save much more time by ending it there and changing the line to a different letter of power.

Due to the picking up of speed, he memorized almost eighty percent of the letters of power connecting the lights by the start of the fourth day. Before the end of the fourth day, he connected the last light.

When that happens, all the lights and lines flared brightly. When the brightness softened, he found himself at the center of a huge constellation filled with runic symbols. This constellation revolved around him. He sensed its power as it revolved.

Without warning, this constellation shrunk rapidly and slapped into his body. A stinging pain coursed through him. He was taken aback by this sudden incident. The constellation burned into his skin. He felt like he was being burned alive. The pain was much worse than when he was roasted by the flames when he made a mistake.

The same as the flame burst during a mistake, the pain caused by this constellation was gone as abruptly as it appeared. Jack looked at his body after the pain was gone. There were burning tattoos in the shapes of runic symbols all over his body. These burning tattoos dimmed before disappearing altogether, but he could still sense them on his body.

He suddenly found himself outside the tribulation space. He was back in the hidden cave. He could hear the battle between Spark and Therras against the monsters outside. Peniel was out there helping the two. She left them and came to Jack when she sensed Jack had completed the fusion process.

"Congratulations!" She said as she flew over.

"Thank you," Jack said. He observed the Runestone of the Devil King floating beside him. It exuded a crimson aura.

"You know how to use it?" Peniel asked.

Jack nodded. Once the fusion was completed, the information went into his mind.

"Let's give it a try," Jack said. He rose before getting into a squatting position. As he did, runic symbols adorned his legs. The ground exploded as he pushed himself forward. With one leap, he shot out of the cave.

"Woohhh...!!!" Jack exclaimed. He felt the rush when the power of the runic symbols coursed through him. That just now was a normal jump, not a skill.

While in the air, he swung his sword and used the Sword of Light. Following his swing was a ring filled with runic symbols. A crescent light shot out from this ring. It left a trail while cruising through the air. The surface of this crescent light and its trail had runic symbols adorning them.

This crescent light hit one of the goblin knights below. It sliced the goblin knight's arm clean off.

Sword of Light didn't normally possess the ability to wound. This feat was due to the runic empowerment provided by the Runestone of the Devil King. The damage it caused was also much higher. Jack had seen a few powerful natives use this offensive runic technique. Now, he could also use this technique thanks to his new runestone.

Furthermore, the natives who used these techniques only performed them on a limited number of skills. They couldn't use it on every skill. Peniel explained that it was because using the technique on even one skill required a long training. The Runestone of the Devil King provided a shortcut that granted Jack the same expertise without needing to train.

After testing the technique's offensive capability, Jack landed amid the goblin knight swarm. The monsters were surprised by the audacity of their enemy. They didn't waste time to

pounce at him.

Jack let their attacks hit him. Before their weapons arrived, a layer of runic suit covered his body. It was similar to the runic suit Satan used. Even without activating a defensive skill, the damage he received from the goblin knights was greatly reduced.

"Awesome," Jack uttered. With his Hundred Synchronous Thoughts, he had no problem focusing on multiple things at once. He could focus his willpower on both the Runestone of the Devil King and the Runestone of Spellcasting while not getting distracted to fight

effectively.

Jack used Whirlwind Slash. Runic symbols accompanied the radial slash. A few goblin knights received instant death due to decapitation. Jack followed up his assault using Ice Ring. The radial ice energy was filled with runic symbols. As it passed through the surrounding goblin knights, all those monsters were frozen without exception. The runic empowerment greatly augmented the skill's ability to cause status affliction.

Jack continued to experiment with his new power. He felt both excited and mighty. Combining this runic empowerment with mana manipulation, his power output increased to

another level.

"Hey, you got a message!" Peniel said.

"Oh... It's from John," Jack said. He had been so absorbed by the fight he wasn't aware of the message. "He asked everyone to gather. Maybe Will has reached level 90, and it's time to set out?"

"Maybe," Peniel shrugged.

Jack ended the training and exited the training cave. Although Therras and Spark didn't kill the goblin knights too fast, it still granted enough exp points to increase Jack's and Therras' levels by one. Therras was now level 94. Jack's Beast Monarch increased to 91, but he again used the level-down pill to decrease it back to 90.

Coming out of the training cave, Jack headed to the lakeside pavilion. He heard a commotion even before he arrived. When he arrived, he saw almost everyone had gathered there.

"Let go of me! I'm going to kill him...!!!"

Jack saw the source of the commotion. It was Mihos. Chris had set it up so they could summon their companions here to use his training cave. It was counter-productive if their main objective was to level up quickly since the exp points were shared with their companions. But Paytowin was already level 99, so he didn't mind helping Mihos level up. That's why Mihos

was here.

Little did Paytowin know, his decision to summon Mihos here had saved Mihos from sharing the fate of his faction brethren.

## **Second World #Chapter 1986: Chapter 1986. Eliminating All Divine Factions - Read Second World Chapter 1986: Chapter 1986. Eliminating All Divine Factions**

### **Chapter 1986:.. Eliminating All Divine Factions**

"I said, let me go...!!!" Mihos yelled. Paytowin, Jet, and Giant Steve were holding him.

A shockwave exploded from Mihos. The force almost blew the three away, but they held their ground. At their current level, they had no problem overpowering this brave champion.

"... Please... Let go of me..." Mihos fell weakly to his knees.

"There is nothing you can do even if you go. You will only throw your life away!" Jet scolded.

"You are the last surviving member of the Council of Virtus. Your faction will truly be gone if you die," Steve added.

"Be patient, Mihos," Paytowin persuaded. "I'm also angry, but we will make a mistake if we act following our emotions. Our enemy is a divine being. We can't just charge in without a plan."

"That's right," Jeanny came to them. "That is probably what Master is counting on. He is doing this to draw us out."

"What exactly is happening here?" Jack, who just arrived, approached Grace and asked.

"It's probably better if you take a look yourself." Grace pointed at the lakeside pavilion. Most others were still there watching the projection.

Jack went over and saw the image inside the projection. It showed a bird-eye view of an urban landscape. He saw a large messy park surrounded by buildings. At first, he was unsure what he was supposed to see, but it hit him then. He knew this place. It was his city, after all. It was Thereath. He didn't immediately recognize it because something was missing. There was supposed to be a building there instead of a park.

"What... What happened?" Jack asked again.

John answered him, "What happened was a prick with the power of a God abused his power."

"... This is Master's doing?" Jack asked.

"This is not his only victim," John said. He then asked Chris to switch the image.

The image changed to a different location but showed the same devastation. Jack recognized the place. This one was where the Joy's Recreational Hub should be. The one before was the Sanctuary for Courage.

"What about the occupants...?" Jack asked.

"They were wiped out," John answered.

"Grhh...!!" Jack gritted his teeth. Like Mihos, he also felt the urge to rush over to do something, but he knew that kind of impulsive act wouldn't yield any result. As Jeanny said, perhaps this was Master's way of trying to draw him out.

"Master is probably doing this to ensure he has no competition," Wilted said.

"What do you mean?" Four Winds asked.

"I said before that the Gods we incorporated into the system are an integral part of this world. They do not truly disappear. With time, their essences will grow under the nurture of their factions' prayers. By taking out the Council of Virtus and the Council of Charites, Master makes sure the God of Courage and the Goddess of Joy will not be reborn."

"... If that is his motive, Chris, do you mind switching to the base of the other divine factions?" John said to Chris.

Chris inputted some coordinates into his device. The projection changed to what looked like a tranquil settlement beside a huge lake.

"The Village of Peace... Nothing seems to be a problem," Grace remarked.

Chris continued changing the scene. The next image was a place nobody here recognized. It showed a beautiful village filled with nature. Gardens with colorful flowers surrounded the ornate houses that made up the village. Chris explained to them this was the base of the Devotee of Passion, where the followers of the Goddess of Love lived.

The image changed again to an underground settlement. The surrounding was filled with rivers of lava. The inhabitants here were mostly women dressed in red garments.

"This is where the members of the Cult of Lytta live," Red Death said about the shown image. She was here when she actively served the Goddess of Wrath, so she was familiar with the place.

"Those two places are also fine," Purple Mist said. "Perhaps Master is simply trying to rile and draw us out."

Chris switched the image again. This time, they became tense after seeing the scene. The image showed another underground settlement. It was bleak all over with dim lighting. The spectators watching the image didn't recognize the place, but they recognized the inhabitants. The inhabitants were gathering at the center of the settlement. Among these gathered inhabitants were Strah and Korku. Their leader was the hooded elf with the skeletal face, Vekja. Next to Vekja was the towering Primordial Hydra. This place was the hidden base of the Cult of Phobos.

They gathered because they were visited by a being that was now floating above their settlement. This being was Master.

Vekja seemed to be saying something to Master, but Master simply smiled without saying anything in return.

"No audio?" Jack asked.

Chris pressed something. They could now hear what Vekja was saying.

"... have our differences, but we no longer wish to involve ourselves in the conflict of the world. There is no need for you to worry about us. We won't give you trouble. Please, leave us

be."

Master remained silent with his smile. This caused the members of the Cult of Phobos to become more wary.

When Vekja was about to open his mouth again, Master finally said something.

"I do not worry. You won't give me any trouble even if you wish to."

The arrogance in Master's tone was unmistakable. Yet, the Cult of Phobos' members didn't

dare to show dissatisfaction.

"... What do you want from us?" vekja asked.

"Denounce your God. Destroy his altar. Leave this place and worship me instead," Master answered.

"... We can't do that," Vekja uttered.

"Does he... or she speak for everyone here?" Master asked.

Nobody answered, but it was clear from their expressions. They weren't willing to leave their God, even in the face of certain death.

Master's smiling face turned sour. He didn't care whether they surrendered or not. He planned to wipe them out all the same. He was only toying with them. Even if they agreed to worship him, he wouldn't know if they were sincere. They could worship Fear in secret. He was not willing to take the risk.

What made him lose his smile was an unexpected feeling of jealousy. To see this crowd, this so-called group of villains worshipping a bad God, chose death over giving their reverence to him, made him feel small and unworthy again. This was a feeling from the past world he swore to never feel anymore. He didn't expect this feeling to come back even after he was a

God.

He didn't care for their adoration, but he could never forgive them for making him experience this unwanted feeling. Without saying another word, he pointed his open palm at them. The members of the Cult of Phobos reacted when that happened, but all they could do was take one step. They then stopped. They couldn't move. This included the Primordial Hydra. Their skin slowly hardened. They were petrified and turned into statues.

Master clenched his palm into a fist. All the statues broke into pieces. An earthquake followed. The buildings inside this underground complex started crumbling. Not long after, the wall and ceiling of this cavern started falling. Before long, the entire place was buried. Everyone was silent as they watched what happened through Chris' projection. Mihos watched it, too. He had calmed down and no longer attempted to blindly rush out for vengeance. He had mixed feelings seeing the fate of the Cult of Phobos.

Those despicable villains were his enemies. They were the reason he lost his faction the first time. Seeing them getting wiped out like this should have made him happy. Yet, it didn't. No matter how despicable they were, no one deserved this kind of fate.

"I think it is safe to assume he is targeting all the divine factions now," Wilted said.

"We have to warn the others!" Grace exclaimed.

John shook his head. He said, "Master can be on his way to another divine faction right now. If we go to warn those factions and happen to chance onto him as he arrives, you might not be given the chance to be teleported out of there. We can't risk that."

"Then all of us go! We can fight him now, can we? Will is already level 90!" Grace exclaimed. "Er... If I knew we were going up against that thing, I wouldn't have rushed my exp farming as I did," Will remarked, which earned him a slap on the back of his head from Jack.

"I know you care about those factions, but we can't rush this," Four Winds told Grace. "Master with his God power is unlike any enemy we have faced. If we don't prepare enough,

he could take one of us out before we have the chance to strip his divinity. If that happens, all our efforts are in vain."

"Four Winds is right. Furthermore, the other divine factions are not in immediate danger,"

John said.

"What do you mean?" Jeanny asked.

"I've just received a message that Master has just returned to Thereath," John answered.

"How do you know?" Jack asked.

"My mother told me," John replied.

## **Chapter 1987: Warning the Divine Factions**

"Linda? Not to sound disrespectful, but are you sure we can trust her?" David asked.

"I am seventy percent absolutely certain that we can," John answered.

David turned to Jeanny with a weird face. Jeanny just shrugged in response. Spring Crown was giggling behind them.

While they were talking, Chris changed the image in his projection to show Thereath. The image went into Thereath palace and zoomed into the throne room. Inside, they saw Master sitting on the throne.

"Well, there you have your answer," John said.

"I don't understand. Why does he return to Thereath instead of finishing the job?" Four Winds asked.

"He is pissed," Jack said.

"Huh? What do you mean?"

"I can't say for sure, but I think I know him enough after fighting him for so long and spending some time with him inside Euphosine's dimension," Jack answered. "He is a very emotional man, but he has learned to suppress his emotions to such an extent that

he appears cold. I think after gaining this God power, which allows him to no longer play by anyone's rule, his true color has surfaced."

"In other words, he is a selfish child in an adult's skin. Now that you mentioned it, I do believe I glimpsed that narcissistic side of him occasionally when I was working for him," Spring Crown said.

"Okay, he is pissed, but I still have the same question. Why did he return to Thereath instead of going after the other divine factions?" Four Winds asked. "He can kill two birds with one stone, venting his anger and completing his objective."

"Because he knows his flaws. Like I said, he has learned to suppress his emotions, which means he sees them as a problem," Jack explained. "He doesn't want to continue his work while his emotions go rampant. He is afraid he might commit a mistake if he goes under that condition."

"Are you saying he is cooling himself off right now?" Jeanny asked.

"If we put it simply, yes," Jack answered.

"Whatever the case, he has given us a breather," John said. "This allows us to act, but we must move fast! We will send five people simultaneously to warn the divine factions. Cleo, you go to warn your sisters in the Cult of Lytta."

Red Death gave John an irritated stare. She didn't like it when someone called her by her real name unless it was from people she considered close. She was even more upset when John considered her as a part of the Cult of Lytta.

John acted like he didn't notice Red Death's stare. He continued, "Jeanny, you go and warn the Council of Hybris. Grace, you go and warn Greed's faction. I don't know what his faction is named."

"He doesn't have a faction anymore. He wiped them out," Grace said.

"He is one weird God. In that case, you stay. Wilted, you go to the Village of Peace and warn the Harmony Keepers," John resumed. "Next, Spring Crown. You go to the Devotee of Passion and warn them."

"Why me?" Spring Crown protested.

"Because I say so," John replied.

"When you arrive, tell them what has happened to the three divine factions Master destroyed. Tell them if they don't want to face the same fate, they need to relocate immediately. Better yet, tell them to split up and hide until we bring Master down. Don't waste too much time there. If they are stubborn or don't believe you, leave them. We

don't owe them anything. We can't have you risk yourself being there when Master decides to resume his operation."

When everyone was silent, John stressed, "I mean it. Do not spend more time than needed. Do not try to convince them more than you need to. If you think you are not up to it, I will send a more cold-blooded person... I will have Cleo go to the divine faction one by one for the task." Red Death's irritated stare turned to one filled with killing intent. Jack hurriedly stood between her and John, to prevent anything untoward from happening.

"Hey, do you forget about Hope's faction?" Four Winds asked.

"I never forget a thing," John returned. "We won't be warning the Council of Elpo. I, however, will go there to talk to them. After we finish warning the other divine factions, we will all go there."

"Why?"

"The base of the Council of Elpo, the Sky Haven, will be the place where we make our final stand against Master," John answered. "Even though Master will most likely come alone, I don't want to take any chance. We will wait for him there and ambush him before he acts. Once we strip his Godhood, we will gang up on him together with the most powerful natives in this world. We will leave him with no chance of victory!!"

John was making a victory pose with his fist held high while saying that. The others looked at each other, not sure if they should mimic his enthusiasm.

"Uh... Yay...?" Jack uttered while lifting his fist in the spirit of solidarity.

John returned to normal pose as if nothing had happened. He calmly said, "All right, the five

of us will depart at once! Chris, use your Anywhere Portal and send us to the divine factions I mentioned."

"If anything, I admire his ability to feel no shame," Spring Crown remarked.

"I agree with you," David said.

"Stop chatting and come!" John yelled at Spring Crown and David.

"Okay! Okay! I swear, you are worse than Master in some ways," Spring Crown said. He followed John and the others who were heading to the Anywhere Portal.

Wilted stayed inside the lakeside pavilion. Chris had set the monitoring device so she could operate it. She was the only one allowed this privilege. She continued to monitor

the projection. Master didn't move from the throne, so she left the image as it was. John asked her to keep an eye on Master and messaged him if anything happened.

Inside Thereath Palace's throne room, Master remained silent on the throne with a brooding face.

Linda was in a meeting with Thaergood and the other native advisors in the throne room when Master showed up. They stopped their meeting and waited for Master's instructions, but he just sat there without saying anything. After a long and uncomfortable silence, Linda decided to resume the meeting, ignoring Master's presence.

It was almost half an hour before they heard Master's voice.

"I will be unavailable for one or two days. Tomorrow morning, if anyone disobeys my earlier decree to join the Reconstruction Force, capture them. You may slay them if they resist."

"Are you going to finish off the remaining divine factions?" Linda asked.

"How do you know I want to finish them off?" Master asked in return.

"You have taken out the Council of Virtus and the Council of Charites in this capital. You also took out the Cult of Phobos soon after. It's not difficult to guess your next action." When Master narrowed his eyes, Linda explained, "After the war, I tasked people to tail the retreating divine factions to find out the location of their bases. We never know if those divine factions can accept your rule. They might try to do something. That's why I have people remain in the vicinity to monitor them. I received a report not long ago of a huge cave-in burying the base of the Cult of Phobos. It is not difficult to hazard a guess about what had

happened."

"Hmph," Master harrumphed without asking for more explanation. He answered Linda's previous question, "I'm not in the mood to finish them. I will do that after I return. I am doing

something else."

"May I know what it is?" Linda asked.

"You may not," Master answered. He then vanished from there.

At Chris' secret garden, John was madly messaging the ones who had not yet returned. He had started doing that when Master said he would be leaving. He received a

message from Linda regarding this, which was unnecessary because he could hear their conversation from the projection device. Linda didn't know that, though.

Linda conversed with Master to delay him. Even though Master said he wasn't going to the divine factions, no one knew if he was telling the truth. John didn't want to take a risk. He insisted those who had not yet returned to do so immediately. Chris had sent them the invitation to teleport back here. But unlike when they completed their pinnacle class trials, they had to accept the invitation before they were teleported.

Out of the five, three had returned. The first who returned was Red Death. She warned Likokira with one simple sentence about Master's attempt to wipe out the divine factions. She called Chris to teleport her back afterward. Whether Likokira heeded her warning or not, she didn't

care.

The second to return was Spring Crown. He was not as indifferent as Red Death, but he didn't care too much as well. The third was John. He spent more time talking with Honuren because

they would use that place as a battlefield.

The two yet to return were Wilted and Jeanny.

## **Chapter 1988:. Special**

Wilted appeared at Chris' secret garden the same moment they saw Master vanishing from Thereath's throne room. Jeanny was not yet back.

Jack joined John in messaging Jeanny, telling her to hurry and accept Chris' invitation to teleport. If Master was lying and he happened to pick the Council of Hybris for his next target, he only needed around one minute to arrive.

Everyone in the garden was tense as they waited. John asked Chris to switch the image to show the Council of Hybris' base. The image showed a massive complex in a vast desert. The complex looked like a futuristic town with many high-rise towers. All the towers seemed to be made of glistening silver. The complex looked like a beacon of light in the middle of the desolate desert.

Everything seemed fine. Nothing was out of the ordinary, but Master could appear any second. They didn't see Jeanny. She was probably inside one of the towers.

When Chris started zooming in and out of the buildings to find her, Jeanny finally teleported back to the garden. Everyone heaved a relieved sigh.

"What took you so long?" John scolded.

Jeanny herself was showing an exasperated expression. "The people of that faction are truly intolerable. Their pride is outrageous. They chose demise over leaving their base."

"Didn't I already tell you to leave them be if they are stubborn?" John chided.

"I can't just leave them without trying my best," Jeanny replied. "I finally managed to talk them into at least sending their young ones away. Petunia and the veteran members will remain in the base to face whatever calamity befalls them."

"I say let them die, a bunch of cocky punks," Jet remarked.

"Yes, I should have sent you instead," John said.

Chris was cycling his projection to show the bases of the other divine factions. All of them were fine. A lot of activities were seen after the warning, but Master didn't show up.

"I think Apollyon is telling the truth about doing something else," Chris said.

"Can you track him?" Paytowin asked.

"This is a monitoring device, not a tracking device," Chris said. "I need to know the coordinates to look at the place. He can be anywhere. Hell, he can be in the underworld for all we know."

"His divine power can let him pass the wall between the planes?" Four Winds asked.

"No. If Lucifer can't do it, he certainly cannot," Chris answered. "But don't forget the main underworld portal still exists. He can use that portal to pass between the planes."

"Take a look at the underworld then. See if he is there," Will suggested.

Chris gave him an annoyed look and said, "How large do you think the underworld is? I have the same problem. I need the coordinates! Do you expect me to screen through the area one by one until I stumble upon him? We don't even know if he is in the underworld. I simply said that he could be there."

"Hey, how about we go and destroy the main underworld portal? If we destroy it while he is in the underworld, we can trap him there!" Badass proposed.

Chris heaved an exasperated sigh. He didn't bother talking anymore.

"All of you shut up and let your puny brains rest," John declared. "Leave the thinking to me. Now, gather over. I will tell you what to do."

Badass was annoyed for being called puny brain. He turned to Will to find a comrade to defy John, but Will seemed happy about following John's order. He was the first to head over and sat before John when John called. Seeing that, Badass grumbled while heading to where everyone was gathering.

John started speaking after everyone gathered, "I have talked with the old guy Honuren. He is not too keen about us using his base for our final stand, but I tell him, it is either that, his faction abandons the base, or his faction dies with the base. It is not a difficult choice."

"For you, perhaps," Badass remarked. He was still grumpy.

"This first one is free. If anyone interrupts me again, Jack will slap the person," John announced.

Jack made a weird face saying, 'When did I agree to that?'

"Now, the plan is simple. It all boils down to depriving Master of his divine power before throwing everything at him. But first, we must ensure he is within range before we activate the Council of Twenty-four."

Jet lifted his hand, which caused John to stop speaking.

"This doesn't count as interrupting, does it?" Jet asked.

"It does, but whatever. What do you want to say?" John asked back.

"How do we activate this council whatever thingy?"

John turned to Chris.

Chris got the cue. He said, "Put all your hands together. A display box will appear, asking if you want to activate the power."

Some got up and started putting their hands together. Seeing that, Chris said, "The cooldown is three days. If you accidentally activate it now, you must wait three days before you can use

it again."

"Ugh..." Everyone sat back down.

"Aside from stripping the divines of their powers, what else is the benefit of activating this council?" Four Winds asked.

"Uh... That's all to it," Chris answered.

When he saw everyone staring at him, he uttered, "I designed that feature specifically as a last resort against Master in case he attains divinity. What else do you expect?" "Forget him. Now, where was I?" John resumed. "We will go to the Sky Haven once we finish this meeting. There, we will hide until Master shows himself. Hopefully, he didn't just appear and blast everything up without saying anything. If that happened, we are f\*cked, but I don't think he will do that. His arrogance will compel him to boast over his victims before he acts, just like what he did when he destroyed the three divine factions."

"What is the range for our power to affect him?" Giant Steve asked.

"No need to worry. The range is the size of a city. As long as we are there when Master appears, our power will reach him. We only need to do it before he decides to destroy the buildings we are hiding in," John answered. He had learned this detail from Chris prior. "That's all to it, folks. Now, for the last inspiring speech before we head out, I will give the stage to Jack," John said. He made an ushering gesture for Jack to stand up. "Huh? What the heck, man? Why throw me under the bus like that?" Jack complained.

"You are our leader. I do not doubt you will be the key in the coming conflict. We are your support," John said.

"What leader? We never agree to a hierarchy between us. If it is about me being a sovereign, Four Winds here is also one."

Four Winds chuckled. "To be honest, you are the only one here whom I don't mind ceding the leader role. I daresay everyone here feels the same, and I want to hear your words as well."

"Go up there, Jack," Jeanny encouraged.

"Go on. You can do it," Grace said and patted Jack from behind.

Jack sighed. He stood and looked at the faces who stared back at him. He smiled and said,

"Thank you! Thank you for your support all this time and for being my friends. I prefer no one

else to go into this final battle than you all."

"Please don't tell me that's all you have to say," Paytowin said.

"I said inspiring, not gratitude," John joined in.

Jack felt like kicking the two.

"Well, if you truly want to hear my thoughts. All right. If I'm being honest, I must say I'm amazed with Master."

"Yo...! Again, inspiring! Not demoralizing," John protested.

"Shut up," Jack chided him. He resumed, "I said this because if you think of it. How many do you think can do what he does? I can't think of anyone. He gains his goal out of sheer determination and meticulous long-term planning. Everything he has worked for has been toward this end, where he stands on top of everyone. I dare say, in terms of capability, I don't think anyone here can match him, especially his intellect."

"Objection!" John exclaimed.

"Overruled!" Jack shot back. John was both taken aback and amazed by the swiftness of Jack's response. He refrained from arguing his case because of that.

Jack continued, "While Master has incredible capabilities, he also has flaws. If we are to triumph over him, we must utilize his biggest flaw."

After a few seconds of dramatic pause, Jack resumed. "During my last encounter with Master, he asked me what is so special about me. He asked me why people are willing to follow someone not special like me. In comparison to him, who has so many qualities someone can look up to. Honestly, I don't think I'm anyone special. However, I can tell you that people chose me over him because he had neglected one simple fact. People follow me not because I am special. They follow me because I consider those people special."

## **Chapter 1989:.. Just Have to Wait**

When Jack saw the questioning glance of his friends, he explained, "Maybe I should phrase it differently. Let's put it this way. If you don't care about others, others won't care about you. No matter how smart, strong, or capable you are. This is Master's flaw. He never cares about others. He is a narcissistic, selfish, and egotistical bastard. A very smart one, but still a selfish a\*shole."

"His entire aim of pursuing Godhood is because he doesn't want to ever rely on others again. He wants to solo everything. In his pursuit, despite all his intellect, he has instead thrown away the greatest asset humanity possesses. Let me ask you something. What do you think is the reason humans are at the top of the food chain in our past world? How did we transform the environment of our past world into something according to our will when other creatures simply lived within the boundary nature provides? Well, I believe it will also be the same in this new world, but to make it simple, let's limit the scope to our past world. Why do you think that is the reason?"

Paytowin shrugged, "Isn't it obvious? Because we have the intellect that animals don't. We can solve problems and stuff."

"Our intellect, eh? Okay, let me give you two scenarios. With all the intellect you possess, if I ask you to move one mountain from one side to another side, can you do it alone? The second scenario. If you venture into a cave and find it has only one exit. When you are on your way out, you find that the exit is blocked by an angry giant bear. With all your intellect, do you think you can beat the bear?"

Jet lifted his hand and said, "I have fought a bear..."

"Shut up, Uncle Jet!" Jack interjected.

"Ugh, I thought you were asking us a question," Jet grumbled in a low voice.

"The answer is no matter how strong or how smart you are, you won't be able to move the mountain. You won't be able to survive the bear. Not alone, you can't. But if you have a million people who are willing to cooperate, you can move the mountain. One person dug up one basket worth of soil from the mountain and moved it to the land next to it. One million people do this every day. In a few years, the mountain will move. You don't need Godly power to achieve that. The only thing you need is cooperation with others to perform this miracle." "What about the bear? We gang up on it with a million people as well?" Paytowin asked.

"No need. You might not be able to defeat the bear alone, no matter how smart or how strong you are. But if you have a rifle in your hand, it's another matter."

"Uh... I thought you were emphasizing cooperation...?" Paytowin asked while scratching his head.

"I do. Let me ask you then, how do you think that rifle came to your hand?" Jack asked in

return.

"Um... I bought it from a gun store...?"

"Sure, and where did the gun store get the rifle from? From a distributor, who got it from a manufacturer. A manufacturer produced the rifle from different materials mined by many other people from different places. These materials came together and became a rifle through a complicated process. A process that came from knowledge invented and experimented with through generations of people. For that rifle to be in your hand so you can defeat the bear, it was through the effort of countless other people. It was neither your merit nor your achievement.

"This is how we become the ruler of the earth in our past world. It's because we cooperate with each other, not only within our generation but across generations. We pass down our knowledge so our descendants don't need to start over. They pick up where we left off, and so on. This is how we built our civilization. This is humanity's greatest strength. Master let go of this strength in pursuit of selfishness. His goal is so he doesn't need other people anymore. This will be the reason for his downfall, and this is why we will win! Because we have each other. By working together, victory will surely be ours!!"

No one was making a sound. They sat there in silence, absorbing Jack's words. The one who broke the silence was Four Winds, who stood and started clapping. The others followed suit.

"Uh... You were supposed to be motivated, not clapping at me," Jack said with an awkward laugh.

"Make no mistake, we are motivated," Four Winds uttered. "We are now certain that we will win!"

"Yes. It's humanity against Master. No matter how strong or how smart he is, he won't win!" Paytowin exclaimed.

"Good speech!" Jeanny said to Jack.

John came to Jack and said, "I can tell you that strategists hate surprises, but I think I can make an exception for yours."

"Bloody hell... So, you don't believe my speech can inspire you even though you are the one who asked me to do it?" Jack cursed.

Wilted also came. She said, "I always thought I would be the one who brings down Master, but I can see now that my way of thinking is wrong."

"Yeah, WE will be the ones who bring Master down," Jack said, which drew a wide smile from Wilted.

"I'm proud of you. Domon sure is as well," Jet clapped Jack's back.

Grace came without a word and kissed Jack on the cheek.

"Okay, this is getting out of hand. We can celebrate when we have won! Everyone starts walking to the Anywhere Portal. We will leave at once!" John announced.

Chris cycled his projection one more time, showing the surviving divine factions, to make sure Master had indeed not attacked. He then led them to the Anywhere Portal.

Arriving before the portal, Chris said to them, "Remember, once you activate the power of the Council of Twenty-four, I will activate my world-enchantment tool to nullify all resurrection abilities. This includes your Rebirth and your Revive spell."

Chris was pointing at Nameless and Purple Mist.

"Peniel's Second Life as well?" Jack asked.

"Yes. All skills, spells, or passive that brought you back to life after your HP reached zero will not work," Chris explained. "But abilities that keep your HP from reaching zero, such as Avenger's Final Retribution or using a tool like the sacrificial dummy, will still work. You just need to make sure your HP doesn't reach zero."

"Just, he said," Jet jeered.

"It's better this way," Jack said. "Master has many spells and tools. He also has the Priest class. This will restrain him more than it does to us."

"So, is everyone ready?" Chris asked and activated his Anywhere Portal. The portal showed a majestic structural complex on a floating island. This was the base of the Council of Elpo, the

Sky Haven.

Everyone nodded. Jack took the lead and stepped onto the portal. Jeanny and John went next, followed by Grace and Paytowin. The others followed behind them and entered one by one. When it was Jet's turn, he asked Chris, who was standing next to the portal, "How about you join the fight this time?"

Chris laughed before answering, "Sorry, I'm not in the habit of risking my life."

Jet looked back and asked the others, "Anyone want to beat him up before we go and risk our

lives?"

\*

When Jack appeared at the edge of the floating island, he stayed there and marveled at the scenery. This was his first time here. He was fascinated by the sight. A lot of other floating islands were around the one he was at. His exceptional dragon eyes let him perceive some of the faraway floating islands. Those islands were also inhabited. The inhabitants of those islands were the winged eaglefolk.

A group of people came out of the buildings in front of him when Jeanny and the others joined him. The one leading the group was Honuren.

"Welcome," Honuren gave a simple greeting. He was already aware of this visit because John

had talked with him earlier.

"How are you?" Jack asked.

"I am still in slightly weakened condition due to the wounds left from the battle with Satan, but it's no big deal. I can fight," Honuren answered.

"That's good," Jack said.

"Have you briefed your people?" John asked. He didn't stay long during his earlier visit. He

left once Honuren understood his warning.

Honuren nodded. "They know the outline. I've also called back all members who are out venturing. We will be at full strength when that pretentious God arrives."

"Assuming he doesn't come here now," John said. He looked around, making sure all twenty-

three of them had passed through the portal. "We better hide now. It will be a problem if he

sees us when he arrives."

"Do you have an idea when he might come?" Honuren asked.

"I don't. We just have to wait," John replied.

"I see... All right, come with me," Honuren brought them to the second largest building there.

This building was where the faction members conducted administrative duties and where they accommodated guests. The largest building next to it was the shrine of Hope.

## **Chapter 1990: The Council of Twenty-four**

They ended up waiting for three days. Most spent their time relaxing inside the building. John forbade them to go out, whatever the circumstances. Master could show up any second.

Some, who were bored, played board games brought by Spring Crown. It turned out that the markets nowadays sell a variety of board games. All these board games were produced by players who didn't venture into the wilderness to make their living. When these board games were introduced to the natives, they proved popular. The players who made these board games earned a fortune. They ended up forming a guild and gathered more non-adventuring members. Their production output increased, and they gained more fortune.

After further talks while playing, Spring Crown admitted he was among the players who built the board game business in this new world. He didn't join their guild, though. It was his secret venture even when he was still working under Master. He provided the early capital for these players when they built the business, and he gained a share of revenue each month.

As for other more serious members like Four Winds and Leavemealone, they spent their time training mana manipulation and honing their martial arts.

Jack went all over the building doing a bit of each. Training, sparring, relaxing, and playing board games. He also chatted with the natives inside the building. He spoke with Honuren the most since he was there almost all the time.

He learned from Honuren that this place had a training dungeon where members could enter. He was very interested in trying, but it was in a different building. When Jack expressed his interest in going there, John stopped him. Jack argued that he could disguise himself while going out. John argued back that even if Master did not recognize him, it was still unusual to find a player roaming around this faction. Master might get suspicious and decide to attack without warning. Additionally, they would get separated if Jack went to the other building. If Master did show up, they had to wait for Jack to return before they could activate the Council of Twenty-four. So, Jack reluctantly stayed put.

During the three days, Jack also occasionally put himself under mana awakening. He wanted to get used to the transformation. He didn't stay in the state for long. It would be a problem if he couldn't use it in case Master came and he had exhausted the state.

During his experiment, he learned he could greatly extend his mana awakening state if he combined it with the runic suit from the Runestone of the Devil King. The runic suit stabilized the mana burning inside him during mana awakening. As long as he didn't use too many big skills during the state, he could stay under mana awakening for more than an hour.

Their boredom ended the morning of the fourth day after they arrived at this place. They received a message from Chris via his disc about Master attacking the base of the Council of Hybris. Petunia and a considerable portion of the faction truly stayed. They and their base were wiped out without mercy. Fortunately, she sent out their young members like she told Jeanny, so they still have members who continued their worship.

Everyone expected Master to go to the other divine factions before coming to the Council of Elpo. This faction was number one among the divine factions, after all. However, they heard Master's voice not long after Chris reported Master had left the Council of Hybris.

Little did they know, Master only attacked the divine factions whose Gods had been killed. As for Serenity, Love, Greed, and Wrath, they didn't die. They were turned into statues. Their essences wouldn't return to their shrines even if their worshippers spent thousands of years worshipping them. They would only return once the energies keeping them restrained wore off. Those energies would wear off by themselves unless Master renewed them.

"Members of the Council of Elpo, your new God has arrived."

John sent messages for everyone to gather in the main hall. Though they were in the same building, it was a large building. Everyone was pretty much spread out all over.

Jack happened to be inside the main hall with John and Grace. He took out his Staff of Illios and used its Eye of Surveillance ability to see what was happening outside.

The projection showed Master floating above Sky Haven. Honuren and the others came out to meet him once he announced his arrival. John had predicted this situation. He had told Honuren to advise his members to take their time coming out. Master's ascent to Godhood amplified his narcissistic tendency. He loved showing off. He would let the audience get into place first before taking action.

Still, John couldn't help but get nervous. He messaged everyone madly to hurry up.

"His equipment is different," Grace said.

"Right. It looks more... imposing but fiendish at the same time," Jack remarked.

"Those are set equipment he is wearing, the Devil King's Infernal Armor," Peniel informed. "It's a top-rate legendary-grade set equipment only attainable in the underworld. I daresay that set armor is equal if not slightly more powerful than your God of Courage's Divine Armor."

"So, he truly went to the underworld," Grace said.

"Why the hell does he need legendary equipment? F\*ck! He is already unbeatable as he is," Jack cursed.

"He probably has a hunch that we are plotting against him. He is probably making sure that whatever chance we have is reduced to as low as possible," Grace offered her opinion.

Grace was not off the mark. While Master was cooling off his temper inside Thereath Palace two days ago, he also contemplated many things. What filled his mind the most was the fact that Jack was still hiding. If it was only that, he wouldn't care. What brought Jack to his mind was Jack's words before Jack left.

"I will come for you."

If it was anyone, he would just scoff at those words. However, he heard confidence in Jack's voice and eyes when Jack said those words. He couldn't think of anything that could back that confidence. He knew everything about this world. There was nothing anyone could use or do to face him. Other than someone becoming another God, he is undefeatable. Yet, the thought of Jack's unknown skills came back to him. As irritating as it was to admit, there were things in this world hidden from his knowledge. Thus, unbelievable as it was, he must assume that Jack had a plan to face him.

This thought was the reason he went away for three days instead of finishing the rest of the divine factions. Aside from gathering the Devil King's Infernal Armor in the underworld, he also max-leveled his Devil Bloodline. That bloodline consumed the essence of demonic monsters. There was no shortage of those monsters in the underworld.

Master looked at the scene below with a condescending expression. He watched the faction members trickle out one group at a time. After a while, he was losing patience. This so-called number one faction had turned out to be rather undisciplined. How could they take such a long time to gather? If an enemy attacked, most would still be inside the buildings when the fighting started.

Master decided not to wait any longer. He asked Honuren, "Do you know my purpose for coming here?"

"... I have heard what happened to the Council of Virtus, Council of Charites, and the Cult of Phobos," Honuren answered.

"You should know. The Council of Hybris is also no more," Master uttered.

"So, you want to eliminate all the divine factions?" Honuren asked.

"Destroying is not my goal. I am simply a jealous God. No one may worship any God but me. If you are willing to change your allegiance, I don't mind letting your faction live. Of course, letting you live means only the members of your faction. This base has to go. This base is a testament to another God. It must be destroyed."

Honuren was quiet. He made a show like he was contemplating the offer.

After a few seconds, Master said, "Aside from being a jealous God, I'm also an impatient one. You have ten seconds to give me your answer. If I don't get one by the end of these ten

seconds, I'll assume you reject my benevolent offer."

The silence returned. Everyone was counting the time in their minds. Honuren was anxious. Master didn't give him much chance to stall for time.

When the ten-second limit was about to end, Master lifted his hand. As he did, a chant was heard. This chant seemed to come from everywhere. No one could make sure of its source. Even Master was baffled. He looked around, trying to sense if anything was out of the ordinary. His divine sense informed him that everything was out of the ordinary. The chant came from all around, and it sounded closer by the second.

"What is this trickery?!" Master exclaimed. He looked at Honuren below, who seemed just as bewildered by the occurrence.

Despite their confused expressions, Master believed they were involved in whatever this was. He didn't want to take a chance. He aimed his hand at the group of natives below and discharged his divine power.

To his consternation, his divine energy was blocked. It couldn't reach the targets below. While

he was wondering what could have blocked the power of a god, twenty-four golden statues

materialized around him, circling him.

"Wha-What...?"

These golden statues all had different appearances. One showed a person in heavy armor

carrying a tower shield. Another was seen carrying a spear, and so on. After making one circle to look at these twenty-four statues, he realized what they were. They were the representation of the twenty-four elite classes.