

## World 1171

### Chapter 1171: Demonic Guild Hero

Coming out of the Order of Magi, Jack visited the League of Champions. He also challenged stage 80 there. He was hoping with his new expertise in using mana manipulation on Brave Slash, he might stand a chance.

Unfortunately, he also failed here.

If he had a one-on-one duel with the mythical-grade opponent, he should have a chance. But the other opponents kept on interrupting him, especially the rare elites. He could only summon his spirit weapon here. His wolves and Therras were inaccessible for this challenge. Unable to fend off the interruption from multiple enemies, Jack failed to land a clean hit using mana manipulation Brave Slash on the mythical-grade opponent.

Thus, he just repeated stage 79 five times, scoring 395 glory points. With that addition, his total glory points were 3,300. These points were also not enough for worthy items in Angusticlavian rank as they all cost 4,000 glory points at least.

He went back to the palace and called it a night.

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The next morning, Jack teleported to Heavenly Citadel.

Jeanny conducted the auction the day before. It turned out that many guilds were interested. Very few could win a single combat against a rare elite of the same level, even among top experts. While hero tokens were too unpredictable. Some of them had gotten hero token but the token mostly produced low-grade heroes. That's why the interest in a level 67 rare elite guild hero.

Nine guilds joined the auction. Not only the guilds from Themisphere, but some of the nine were from other countries. The winner was Wicked Witches, who bought the hero at 20,000 mana cores. It was more than six times Jeanny's starting price, so she was happy about it.

She needed the mana cores for many things, so Jack didn't ask for a portion. The sold hero was also defeated by her, so the profit was all hers.

At the headquarters, Jack gave the exploding bottle and Hellish Spicy Steak recipe to Tip. Tip registered the recipe into the guild so guild members could use the recipes in guild workshops.

When Jack met Jeanny, she gave him two things. A copied technique book that contained the Wind Jet spell and a copied Shell Seed that John had gotten when hunting the dragon turtle.

Jeanny said she had gotten plenty of mana cores so she could spare some for Jack. Jack was grateful for them.

Jack proceeded to learn the Wind Jet spell without delay.

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Wind Jet (Active spell, requires magic weapon)

Shoots forward in a linear direction with 500% movement speed. Reduce damage by 10% when the skill is active.

Range: 50 meters

Cooldown: 2 minutes

Mana: 50

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This spell was as fast as Shooting Dash but gave him a longer range. It only traveled one time but Jack could use it in the air as well as on land. This spell used four runes spell formation.

As for the Shell Seed, Jack used it on his Time Sage's Time Domain.

After feeding the seed, the spell changed its name to Time Realm. The spell added a barrier to the edge of the time domain, stopping hostiles inside the domain from leaving. It also added two minutes to the spell's duration. The level 20 Time Realm had a duration of five minutes.

The barrier that locked hostiles within the time realm possessed HP equal to 200% caster's HP. Jack asked Peniel if the enemies broke the barrier, would his spell end? If so, Jack preferred the previous version. Peniel assured Jack that the time-warp effect would continue in the area where he cast the spell even if the edge barrier was broken. The difference was the enemies could then leave the area of effect as in the original Time Domain spell.

Jack asked Jeanny if she knew where Leavemealone was. He checked his guild page and saw that Leavemealone was not in the headquarters. He was also not present during the siege of Themelot. Jack had sent him a message but the guy just replied with a short cryptic message that he was away.

Jeanny told Jack that Leavemealone went with Domon somewhere. They didn't say. They just said they were meeting Domon's old acquaintance. Something about settling an interrupted business.

Since it was so, Jack took out the unique-grade fist weapons and gave them to Jeanny to pass them to Leavemealone when he was back. Jack also told her that if she happened to have enough mana cores, she could also copy these weapons before passing them to Leavemealone.

"Ready to get our first eternal-grade guild hero?" Jack asked.

"What's the percentage of one appearing again?" Jeanny asked back.

"Five percent," Peniel answered.

"With my luck, it might as well be one hundred percent! Haha...!" Jack laughed.

John, Paytowin, Jet, Bowler, and The Man came into the guild hall then.

"I bring in supporters to laugh in case you fail," John said.

"Sigh. You, people, should have more faith. If you want something, you should think about it hard enough to make it real. Believe that we will get an eternal grade hero and it will happen," Jack said.

"Hahaha! You have not even failed and you have made me laugh!" John laughed sarcastically. "Please don't sell that bullshit here."

"I believe in you, boss!" The Man exclaimed.

"Told you we shouldn't bring him," Jet said to John.

"Let's just use the token and get this over with," Jeanny said, not interested in joining their meaningless discourse. She took the lead and headed up to the Hero Altar.

Arriving at the Hero Altar, Jack took out the legendary-grade Infernal Hero Token and used it to interface with the altar. He also summoned his runestone of luck and focused his willpower to add the luck boost.

The hero altar connected with the infernal hero token and the process was completed. Everyone instinctively looked up, because that was where Nilrem appeared when they summoned her.

While they were waiting for anything to appear from up there, Jack sensed heat from under his feet. He looked down and was startled to find the floor directly in front of the Hero Altar was burning. He immediately jumped away just as flames burst from that burning floor.

From inside the flame, a demon with a large frame walked out. He had a pair of big curved horns of obsidian color, a muscular body covered with dark red scales, and a pair of large bat wings. In his right hand was a saber, while worn on his left hand was a glove with a glowing power crystal.

Everyone used their Inspect.

## **Chapter 1172: Another Visit to Verremor**

Rahab (Mythical Hero, Demon), level 70

HP: 1,620,000

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"HAHAHA...!" Loud laughter erupted. The laughter was from John, Jet, Paytowin, Bowler, and The Man. The Man quickly stopped laughing when Jack glanced over.

"What are you people laughing at? This is all because you people didn't will it enough. You all disrupt the flow of my willpower. If only I am alone here willing it, we will surely have gotten an eternal-grade guild hero," Jack uttered.

"You are still talking about that crap? Stop embarrassing yourself with excuses," John said.

"Getting a mythical-grade hero is very good already," Jeanny said.

"That's right," Peniel agreed. "Even though we were using a legendary-grade hero token, there is still a big chance to get lower-grade heroes. Even the chance of a mythical-grade hero using a legendary hero token is only 20%. So, I say this result is already considered very good."

"I know. I am glad about this result," John said. "I'm just happier with the chance to laugh at his absurd confidence."

"Whatever," Jack ignored the ridicule. He went and checked their new hero's statistics.

Like the previous heroes, Rahab also provided a passive boost to guild soldiers. All guild special units received +10% to their stats and damage dealt. They also have a 10% damage reduction when receiving attacks from non-demon units. These buffs were doubled to all friendly soldiers within a 30-meter radius of Rahab.

Rahab's passive buffs were geared toward special units. Special units were those that were not from the guild's six standard units. Footsoldier, archer, knight, cavalry, mage, and healer.

In their case, their guild had quite a collection of special units. Eagle rider hunter, blood count, twilight champion, brave rider, and demonic legion. So, Rahab's buffs were pretty beneficial.

Their guild also had ice cannon tanks and brave golems, but these were not considered special units. They were mechanical units. So, these two units didn't get Rahab's buffs.

After finishing checking the statistics, Jack turned to Jeanny and said, "Jeanny, go ahead and increased his level with mana cores."

"Why don't you use yours?" Jeanny asked.

Jack smiled awkwardly and answered, "I need the mana cores, hehe."

"And I don't?" Jeanny asked, but she still went to the hero altar and injected her mana cores. Rahab's level increased to level 75.

Like the previous time, Jack used his mobile blacksmith tools and started working on equipment suitable for Rahab. Rahab's current equipment was all just common grade.

Rahab wore heavy armor. This indicated that the demonic hero was a tank. But seeing the casting glove in Rahab's left hand, Jack figured Rahab was a hybrid of melee and magic combatant.

Jack had a selection of heavy armors and sabers of super rare grades, courtesy of the fusion result using the transformation prism. What he lacked was the casting glove. That equipment was pretty rare. Even after all this time, Jack only got enough to fuse the equipment to an uncommon grade.

Jeanny said not to worry about the casting glove. A member had recently acquired a recipe for a super rare grade casting glove, so she told Jack the guild would take care of the glove.

Since donning the regal outfits, Jack hadn't upgraded his equipment for some time. So, he had plenty of ores to spare. He had also taken the stock from the guild warehouse before coming here. With those ores, he upgraded Rahab's equipment until level 75. Jack's blacksmith level upgraded to Intermediate Master after the chores.

Starting from level 75, Jack needed 11 iron ores, 6 steel ores, 4 copper ores, 3 silver ores, 1 gold ore, and 1 mithril ore to attempt a level-up.

Rahab could wear higher-level equipment, but Jack stopped at that level because the success chance for the next level-up was only 25%. That was also after Jack's blacksmith level had upgraded and even after the success chance was boosted using the runestone of probability.

He didn't want to waste too many ores with such a low success chance, so he stopped. John mocked him, where was his previous confidence? Jack again ignored the ridicule.

Jack inserted the leveled-up equipment into the interface on the hero altar. Aside from the casting glove, all of Rahab's equipment had changed. The saber in his right hand emitted ice energy. The saber dealt ice damage and had a small chance to cause Freeze.

Jack then sent Rahab to the training hall to train with the other guild heroes and soldiers. Rahab flapped his demon wings and flew in the direction of the hall.

"What are you going to do now?" Jeanny asked Jack after Rahab left.

"I'm going to Verremor," Jack answered.

"Again? A proper state visit this time?"

"More like a secret state visit. A formal state visit takes a long time to arrange, I also have no time for all the festivities they arrange for me when I visit. I've called an inside man to sneak me into their meeting so I don't have to go through all the red tape."

"Is that proper?"

Jack shrugged. "I don't have time for bureaucracy crap."

Jeanny shook her head. "Do you want some of our guild members to go with you?" She asked.

Bowler and the others were also listening. They immediately raised their hands, signaling their willingness to accompany Jack as they did in Palgrost.

"No need," Jack rejected the offer. "I want this visit to be low profile, so I am going alone."

Bowler and the others showed disappointed expressions.

"All right then. Good luck," Jeanny said to Jack.

Jack nodded and left.

He went to the teleportation chamber and transformed into Iamanorc before teleporting to Magna Masat, the capital of Verremor.

Coming out of the zone portal, he looked around. He quickly spotted two familiar faces.

"You certainly took your sweet time," Water Lily greeted.

"I'm sorry," Jack said apologetically. "The thing I dealt with took longer than I thought."

"Four Winds is waiting in the palace. Let's go," Water Lily said.

"I will go hail a carriage," Coca said. He ran to the exit.

"Has Four Winds gotten the hang of ruling?" Jack asked as he and Water Lily walked to the exit.

"He is doing fine. Thanks to Peniel for her tips," Water Lily answered.

"You're welcome," Peniel said.

When they arrived at the street outside the exit, Coca had managed to get a carriage. It was a traditional carriage like the ones in Themisphere. But instead of being pulled by a horse, this carriage was pulled by some kind of an ox creature.

Coca told the carriage's driver about their destination and the three went inside.

### **Chapter 1173: Going to Meet the Council**

Inside the carriage, Jack asked Water Lily, "Do you bring them?"

Water Lily nodded. "Do you?" she asked back.

Jack took out one hundred magicite ores from his inventory. They were from Thereath's vault which he had Thaergood fetched for him the day before. These ores were to be exchanged with the mithril ores from Cipher Flight.

Water Lily accepted the ores. She then took out five hundred mithril ores and gave them to Jack in return.

When Jack sent Viral Cora and Life Runner to negotiate with Four Winds, Four Winds could only spare half of the number Jack needed. The exchange rate was also the bottom line Jack gave them, one magicite ore for five mithril ores. Now, Cipher Flight had got enough extra to exchange for another five hundred, so Jack did the transaction personally since he was visiting Verremor.

After accepting the mithril ores, Jack said to Water Lily, "Please understand that this is the last transaction we use this exchange rate. If you want to exchange more, the rate will be one magicite ore for ten mithril ores."

Water Lily frowned. They were indeed taking advantage when Viral Cora and Life Runner came with the offer of exchange. They also had limited mithril ores at the time, so they were playing hard to get. She thought they could continue exchanging in the future at the same rate.

From this conversation, Water Lily understood that the real quantity of mithril ores that Jack needed was only one thousand.

"Why do you need one thousand mithril ores anyway?" Water Lily asked.

Mithril ores were important. Aside from crafting blacksmith items, it was also needed for leveling up equipment starting at level 75. Currently, average players who have never died were level 60. As for top expert players, many had reached level 64. They were nearing the level where they could use equipment level 75, thus mithril ores would become even more valuable.

She thought Jack needed the ores for his guild members. If so, then Jack shouldn't stop at only one thousand.

What Water Lily didn't know, was that Jack had the transformation prism. So as long as there was enough time, he didn't truly worry about the need for equipment level-up. But since he needed a large quantity in a short time for the Arcane Forge. Hence, the transaction.

Jack didn't keep it a secret. He told her about the arcane forge.

"Does Verremor also have this tech?" Water Lily asked Peniel.

"No," Peniel answered. "Basic techs of every country are similar. But as research progresses, the advanced techs of each country become different from each other. Also, Four winds only have access to the regional officer, city, and military overviews from the monarch system. He has no access to research overview, so he can't affect the research development process."

"Maybe you people should start a coup and take over Verremor," Jack joked.

"Hm...," Water Lily contemplated with a serious face.

"Hey! I'm just kidding!" Jack said. He was here to build a relationship with this country. Everything would be a mess if this country ended up in a civil war.

"I'm also kidding," Water Lily said. Her face was still serious, though.

Seeing Jack's serious expression, Water Lily chuckled. She said, "Even if we want to, it won't be easy. After what happened to Liguritutum and Aurebor, Verremor had placed a regulation to not allow an outworlder into the throne room."

"Really?" Jack asked.

Water Lily nodded.

"We heard that Sangrod, Palgrost, and Hydrurond also adopted the same rules," Coca said. "After finding out that players can take over rulership of a country just by murdering the sovereign and destroying the throne, all the native sovereigns feared that they might be tricked using the same way."

Jack thought about his trip to Palgrost. He and his player friends were allowed into the throne room then. But at the time, it was only three days since Mistress took over Aurebor. So, perhaps the details of how Mistress take over the throne had not yet been learned by Palgrost's officers.

"But Four Winds were part of Verremor's council, right? Surely, he is allowed in the throne room," Jack asked.

Water Lily and Coca looked at one another before she answered, "The grand chief allows it, but most of the other lord chiefs in the council voted for prudence. Hence the council meeting is moved to another meeting room. The council no longer convened inside the throne room."

"How does Four Winds feel about it?" Jack asked.

"He said as long as he still has a say in the meeting, he doesn't mind where the meeting takes place," Water Lily answered.

"This is the meeting we are going to now?" Jack asked.

Water Lily nodded. "The meeting is conducted weekly. As you requested, you want to meet with all the council members, then the time when the meeting takes place is the best opportunity."

"Why do you want to meet the council members?" Coca asked Jack.

"You are not planning something mischievous, are you? Are you going to cause us trouble?" Water Lily also asked.

"Damn it! Am I that untrustworthy?" Jack complained.

"Hm, I don't know. We used to be enemies, weren't we?"

"Hello? I helped Four Winds get a seat in the council, remember?" Jack returned.

"Hm, anyway. I will be keeping my eyes on you," Water Lily warned.

"We've arrived," Coca informed.

They came out of the carriage. Jack found himself at the entrance of an enormous building. What drew his attention was a gigantic skull of some sort of creature at the top of a building. Was it a dragon's skull? But whatever the creature that skull came from seemed to be even larger than the largest dragon he had seen.

At the two sides of the entrance were also tusks of a gigantic creature. Jack wondered if the tusks came from the same creature with the skull up there.

Coca excused himself. He didn't follow into the palace. He went somewhere else with the carriage.

Two orcish soldiers were guarding the entrance. Seeing Water Lily, they opened the palace gate.

"Who is this?" The orc guard asked when they saw Jack.

"He is with me. Chief Four Winds is expecting him," Water Lily answered.

The guard used Inspect on Jack. After learning that Jack was from the same guild as Four Winds, he let Jack pass.

#### **Chapter 1174: Giving the Portal-closing Stone**

Jack followed Water Lily until they arrived before a large door guarded by ten soldiers. Violent Blizzard was among the ten. Jack waved at her. She didn't even respond with a glance.

Water Lily informed that the ten were the personal protectors of the ten lord chiefs who were meeting inside. Direct followers were not allowed to enter. Inside was another team of elite guards exclusive to the palace.

Water Lily told Jack to wait outside. She had informed Four Winds about their arrival via a message. The council was still in discussion. They would be let in once the current discussion was over.

It was almost half an hour before the door opened. An orc soldier came out from inside. He looked around until he spotted Water Lily and gestured for her to enter. Jack followed her in.

Inside, Jack saw a huge horseshoe-shaped table in the middle of the room. The table was occupied by ten orcs. At the center sat Kabaka Proudthusk, the grand chief, and an elderly orc woman. Four Winds sat at one of the ends of the table.

Everyone in the Verremor council already knew Jack's disguise. Jack saw some of them frown.



"What are you doing here again?" Jinga Loudmaw asked after seeing Jack.

"King Storm Wind has asked for an audience. He is my guest," Four Winds informed.

"How dare you let another country's sovereign barge into our meeting without permission?" Jinga said.

"I've given the permission," Kabaka told Jinga. "King Storm Wind wished to not make his visit a big deal. He just wishes to speak with us."

"Grand Chief, we shouldn't trust these outworlders. You've seen what happened to Liguritutum and Aurebor. For all we know, they could be plotting—"

A loud sound stopped Jinga's speech. Four Winds had stood up and slammed the table. "I don't mind if you keep on saying bad words about me throughout the meeting, but I won't stand by if you disrespect my guest!"

Kabaka raised a hand asking everyone to calm down.

"Everyone, please be silent. King Storm Wind has arrived. Why don't we just hear what he has to say?" Kabaka said.

Jack had changed back into his real self as he walked to the table. Two orc soldiers stood in his way indicating that was how close he may approach.

"Thank you, grand chief," Jack began. "And thank you to everyone for sparing me the time. I won't waste much of it. We all have important matters to deal with, so I'm going to cut to the chase. I've recently learned that it's not only Themisphere that had an underworld portal. Your country also has one."

Jinga immediately turned to Four Winds. "Did you tell him about this?"

"F\*ck you! I don't even know there is such a thing in this country," Four Winds replied.

The portal's existence was a secret kept by previous council members. As a new member, Four Winds was not yet told about this secret. Jinga assumed one of the old members had told Four Winds.

Kabaka sighed and again signaled for the two to calm down. He was getting fed up with these two's constant bickering.

"What do you want with our underworld portal, king Storm Wind?" Kabaka asked Jack. "Have you learned of its location?"

"No, I don't know where your underworld portal is," Jack answered. "I'm here to inform you that the underworld portal in Themisphere has been closed. We no longer have an underworld portal in my country."

The nine old council members frowned upon hearing it.

"Are you here just to gloat about it?" A council member who sat beside Jinga, Kale Strongbone, asked.

"I'm here to offer you a way to close the portal in your country as well," Jack said and took out a small stone.

Everyone used their Inspect and learned that the stone was the portal-closing stone.

"That's...", Everyone was wide eyes after learning about the stone.

"Aren't our records said that such a stone can only be found in the underworld?" The elderly female lord chief beside Kabaka, Mifu Longsight, said.

"How did you get your hands on that stone?" Kima Mountking asked.

"It doesn't matter how. Just know that this stone can close the underworld portal," Jack answered.

"What do you want in return?" Woga Braidedbeard asked.

"A promise," Jack answered.

"Promise?"

"Promise that Verremor will stand with Themisphere against Liguritutum and its ally."

The council members looked at each other.

"I'm not requesting an alliance," Jack said. "Just a cooperation to stop Liguritutum's expansion. This is for our mutual benefit."

"Do you think Liguritutum has the ambition to come our way?" Kabaka asked.

"That's absurd," Jinga uttered. "Liguritutum is the farthest country from us. They will have to go through Hydrurond to get to us. Those outworlder rulers in Liguritutum and Aurebor just use tricks to conquer the two countries. They won't succeed if they clashed directly with Hydrurond."

"I won't be so sure about it," Jack said.

Kabaka and Mifu had a private talk in a low voice, while the other members also talked with the ones next to them. Jack let them discuss. He continued holding the portal-closing stone in plain sight.

After some murmur, Kabaka said, "Please give us some time to discuss this, king Storm Wind."

Jack nodded. He wasn't surprised. This was the weakness of the council system. They took time to come to a decision. Jack stored the portal-closing stone back in his inventory. The soldier ushered Jack and Water Lily to a small waiting room beside the meeting room.

Jack sat there quietly and practiced mana manipulation. Water Lily who had advanced mana sense was surprised to learn of Jack's improvement. She had also started touching mana manipulation. Motivated by Jack's advancement, she also sat cross-legged and trained.

It was more than an hour before a soldier came in and called them.

When Jack was back before the council, Kabaka said, "We agree that we will send our armies to help if Liguritutum or Aurebor ever comes to invade Themisphere."

'Only a defensive pact?' Jack thought.

He pondered for a bit. He was hoping he could take the fight to Liguritutum, not just play defense. But he supposed he had to take things step-by-step.

He handed the stone to one of the orc soldiers who then brought it to Kabaka.

"Grand chief, can I follow and make sure the portal is closed?" Jack asked.

### **Chapter 1175: Heading Out to the Portal**

"Why do you want to go? You just want to find out the portal's location, don't you?" Jinga said.

"You moronic piece of shit! I've had it with you!" Four Winds slammed the table again. He was walking aggressively to Jinga. The orc soldiers around the room immediately ran over to block his path.

Jinga stood up. He was not intimidated. He was a level 72 rare elite. He was still stronger than Four Winds. "You want a fight? Come then. I also can't stand you any longer," Jinga challenged.

"Sit down, both of you...!!" Kabaka shouted. He also slammed the table to express his frustration.

Jack felt bad for the poor table. He could see some cracks on it already.

"Grand chief, you can see how unruly this outworlder is. He is not fit to be a council member," Jinga said to Kabaka.

"I said sit down...!!" Kabaka scolded. "Use your brain if you want to accuse someone! We have already had the portal-closing stone. The portal will be closed. What benefit does King Storm Wind have from knowing its location? Once the portal is closed, the location is worthless. We don't need to worry about demonic cult finding out anymore."

"Maybe... maybe this is just a trick for us to reveal the location and he might do something before we close the portal...," Jinga said.

Kabaka didn't say anything in response. He just gave Jinga a hard stare.

This caused Jinga enough discomfort that he sat back down without saying a word.

"Hmph," Four Winds grunted and returned to his seat.

Kabaka returned his attention to Jack, who just watched the drama without interfering. He was secretly glad that Themisphere was a monarchy. He won't stand being part of a council like Four Winds. With the constant argument to reach a decision, he might as well just leave and mind his own business.

"You may follow me to the portal," Kabaka said. He turned to one of the guards and said, "Please transmit a message to the garrison there. Informing them of our intention and that we will be there in an hour or two."

"King Storm Wind, please wait again. We will call you when it's time to leave. We have to finish up here first," Kabaka said to Jack.

Jack gestured with a slight bow. He was again ushered to the waiting room with Water Lily.

This time, Water Lily sat and trained mana manipulation before Jack. Sensing her mana, Jack's acute sense also picked up some irregular coldness within the mana. Curious, Jack used Inspect on her.

"Oh, I see you have gotten a special class, congratulations," Jack said to her. Water Lily's class was now a Cryomancer.

"Thank you," Water Lily replied and went back to training.

Jack asked Peniel in his mind, 'What grade is Cryomancer?'

'Second class,' Peniel answered. She further elaborated, 'Cryomancer is an Elementalist who specialized in ice magic. All spells with ice damage are enhanced. Furthermore, all the Elementalist's standard spells that are not of the ice element are changed to the ice version. For example, Fireball is changed to Iceball. But this is only for the standard spells, non-standard spells learned from technique books remained unchanged.'

'Element change? This makes me think, an elemental seed can change the skill's element, right? What if I use an Ice Seed on my lightning strike or an ice seed on my Perpetual Lightning Judgement?'

'Not all seeds can transform every skill. Some evolved seed is not compatible with certain skills. For example, an elemental skill that already has a particular element will reject the usage of elemental seeds. You can use enhance seed, empower seed, or other seeds on Lightning Strike, but not ice seed or fire seed.'

'Oh, so there is more limitation... I thought only skills like Tame Pet or Spirit Weapon that is off-limits to seeds.'

'Some powerful skill also has very limited compatibility with seeds. For example, your Perpetual Lightning Judgement. Only a few seeds can be used to modify that spell. You will just fail if you use common seeds on the spell.'

'Wow! I keep on learning new things every day. Thank goodness I have you. Otherwise, I will be lost.'

'Yeah, you are lucky to have me,' Peniel said with a proud face.

'This also makes me think about all those stories I used to read about reincarnated characters. If I am reincarnated and have to redo all this without you, I won't be able to remember half the things you have taught me, especially the small details. It makes no sense those reincarnated characters from the stories remember all the details of their past lives. If they had reincarnated and relived the same events a thousand times, like that groundhog day guy, then it makes more sense. But if they have only reincarnated once, no way they remember all the details. It's not like they bring a notebook when they reincarnate, do they?'

'I have no idea what the hell you are saying. What groundhog guy? And why do you discuss reincarnation all of a sudden? There is no such thing!' Peniel berated.

'Never mind that. Just my mind running wild,' Jack said. He cleared his mind from all the chaotic thoughts and trained mana manipulation.

Jack didn't know how long they had waited inside the waiting room when Four Winds entered. He paused when he noticed the intensity of Jack's mana manipulation. He sighed and knew that he had a lot to catch up to.

Jack opened his eyes when he sensed Four Winds' presence. "Time to go?" Jack asked.

Four winds nodded. "Follow me," he said to Jack and Water Lily.

Violent Blizzard joined them when they came out of the meeting room. The four then walked to the palace's teleportation chamber. Kabaka was waiting there.

"Let's go," Kabaka said. He spent a large number of gold coins to use the teleportation device. He felt that he had the responsibility to personally bring the portal-closing stone to the site.

Jack and the others then used the device which had been set to send them to a town called Urg Chomir.

The sun was setting when they came out of the town's zone portal. Kabaka said that it took half a day of riding to get to the portal's site. He didn't want to waste a minute closing the portal so they departed right away instead of waiting for tomorrow morning. Jack and the others didn't mind the haste.

A platoon of orc soldiers had been waiting outside the town. With that platoon as an escort, they headed out.

### **Chapter 1176: Closing the Underworld Portal in Verremor**

They were all using steed. The most impressive steed was, of course, Jack's nightmare. Kabaka and the others were flabbergasted when Jack summoned Pandora. Most of them rode a distance away from Jack since their steeds refused to be anywhere near Pandora.

Jack could have arrived at the destination faster if he used Pandora's full speed, but he adjusted to the others' pace.

Pandora's presence helped smoothen their journey since no monsters dared to approach. Even so, it was already the morning of the next day when they finally arrived.

The place was a fort by the mountainside. A soldier on the wall saw their approach and notified the others. The gate to the fort was soon opened.

After entering, Jack saw a familiar sealing dome at the center of the fort. He did not doubt the underworld portal was inside that dome.

He then noticed a pillar of light beside the dome. Runic symbols covered the pillar as the mages operated the rune diagram to supply power to the dome.

Jack checked the mages and found that they were not members of the Order of Magi. They were members of the kingdom faction. Unlike Themisphere, Verremor didn't ask for help from factions outside the kingdom.

Everyone dismounted and approached the dome. Jack saw a shadow behind the pillar of light beside the dome.

"Is the Totem Banner inside this light?" Jack asked.

Kabaka nodded. "After that legendary artifact is returned to us, we can better keep this portal sealed."

"What do you seal it with before I return the artifact?" Jack asked.

Kabaka was silent. It was a different voice that answered, "With orcs' lives."

Jack turned to the voice and saw Umeza Giantkiller.

"This fort is where I retired to after leaving the army. I continue serving Verremor by guarding this portal," Umeza said when he saw Jack's inquisitive gaze.

"What do you mean by using orcs' lives to seal this portal?" Jack asked.

"It is what it sounds," Kabaka answered. "We don't have an artifact of enough power to seal this portal after the Totem Banner was gone. So, our mages came up with another method. A crueler method. We have to sacrifice lives every year to power up this sealing dome."

"That's why many of the orc officials who know about this underworld portal hate Themisphere so much," Umeza added. "They were angry when the totem banner was lost. Several years after that incident, this underworld portal appeared. When we started sacrificing our people, those officials became angrier."

"This incident also caused the then-grand chief of the Raretooth tribe to resign," Kabaka said. "He couldn't bear the shame that his tribe was responsible for these sacrifices due to losing the totem banner."

Jack felt bad hearing this. Mojuto would be full of regret if he knew that he helped seal Themisphere's portal but was instead dooming his own country.

This revelation confirmed Jack's decision to close Verremor's portal and not the portal in the other countries was the right decision. Themisphere owed Verremor a great debt for borrowing the totem banner.

Thinking about this, he had to make sure that this portal closing went without a hitch.

He said to Kabaka, "Grand Chief, I have experience sealing the portal in Themisphere. Do you allow me to spearhead this operation?"

Kabaka and Umeza looked at each other before Kabaka answered, "We will trouble you then, king Storm Wind."

Jack nodded. He approached the sealing dome before turning back and speaking with a loud voice, "Everyone, listen up! When the dome is brought down, you might see that the field is empty, but it will not be so. Underworld demons have shadow meld ability. They are simply invisible because of staying still. Just follow my lead and send in ranged attacks even if you see nothing is there."

Jack then turned to Kabaka. "Grand Chief, follow me closely. The stone can only be used when it is close to the portal. I will open the path."

"I will protect the grand chief," Umeza declared.

"So will we," Four Winds said.

"One more thing," Jack uttered. "Do not kill all the demons before the portal is closed. There might be a strong demon waiting behind the portal to claim all the corrupted mana released by the defeated demon. If it consumed enough of this corrupted mana, it can cross over into this world."

After looking around to make sure everyone heard his message. He summoned Therras, his spirit weapon, and his ten golden wolves. "Bring down the dome!" He signaled.

Kabaka nodded to the mage leader in charge of the sealing dome. This mage leader powered down the rune diagram feeding the dome. The other mages followed suit.

Once the dome was unsealed, everything seemed empty except for the infernal portal. But those who had mana sense knew otherwise.

Jack unleashed the Judgement of Past Kings. As the great flood from Thenodeep washed over the seemingly empty field, Umeza shouted an order, "Archers and mages, fire...!!"

"Lily," Four Winds uttered.

"On it!" Water Lily was already forming a spell formation. When it was completed, a large area near the portal was assailed by icy winds. It was her Cryomancer's first spell, Blizzard. It was an AOE spell that dealt ice damage.

Many demons started popping up once attacks landed.

The orc soldiers didn't ignore Jack's warning. Although they were still surprised that so many demons suddenly materialized, they were ready. The melee soldiers were in formation to hold the demons while the ranged players bombarded them.

Water Lily continued her offensive with her Cryomancer's level 60 spell, Rain of Ice Needles. It was another AOE spell. But aside from dealing ice damage, this spell also possessed ignore defense property.

"Therras, charge!" Jack said when his Judgement of Past Kings ended.

Therras activated its armor's supersonic mode and used Tyrannical Charge. All the demon in its path was knocked aside. Jack's golden wolves ran forward following Therras while his spirit weapon attacked using ranged mode.

"Grand Chief!" Jack shouted as he charged forward. He cast Acceleration on himself, Therras, Kabaka, Four Winds, and Umeza.

With the increased speed, the five pierced through the path opened by Therras.

Two level 55 mythical-grade high demons came at them from left and right.

"I'll take care of this!" Umeza exclaimed and met the demon on the left.

"This is mine!" Four Winds said and clashed with the demon on the right.

Jack and Kabaka proceeded forward.

Therras used Imperious Pressure and Overbearing Stomp to clear the area around the portal.

Kabaka activated the portal-sealing stone once the portal came into the stone's effective range. Jack, Therras, and the wolves secured the perimeter while the stone worked its magic.

The stone worked fast. Within a short time, the portal was shut and it completely disappeared without a trace.

## **Chapter 1177: Telling Four Winds about the Truth**

With the portal gone, the corrupted mana cleared up. The few remaining demons couldn't survive without the corrupted mana. They would die even if they were left alone, but the soldiers made short work of them. The two mythical-grade demons were also vanquished by Umeza and Four Winds.

Everyone checked their comrades to make sure everybody was fine. Four Winds and his guild members started picking up the loot. Jack didn't join them. The loot here was theirs.

"Thank you, King Storm Wind," Kabaka said. "I'm truly grateful."

"After what your country suffered while we borrowed your national treasure. This is the least I can do, grand chief," Jack replied.

Kabaka nodded. "You are an honorable man, king Storm Wind. I hope you stay that way."

"I'll try my best," Jack said.

Kabaka smiled. "In that case, I'll also try my best to persuade my council members and the public. I hope the day when our two countries enter a formal alliance will not be far."

"I'll be very happy when that day arrives," Jack returned the smile.

They stayed at that fort for a little more while. Kabaka gave some instructions to the soldiers there. Since the portal was closed, there was no need to remain in this fort anymore. This fort was built solely for the portal, it held no strategic advantage. The troops were to return with him to Urg Chomir and from there, they would be reassigned to other posts.

Jack rest at one of the fort's sleeping quarters while he waited for them. Kabaka had invited him back to the palace to celebrate the portal closing. Jack didn't have the heart to turn the orc down.

When it was past afternoon, everyone was ready to leave. They marched back into the town and arrived at night.

Kabaka already sent word, so a feast was waiting for them when they arrived. The grand chief told Jack this was just a small taste compared to the celebration he prepared at Magna Masat's palace, which they would teleport to tomorrow morning. Kabaka figured everyone was tired already so they should just spend the night here in Urg Chomir.

Jack went around chatting with Kabaka and Umeza before he came to Four Winds.

"So, how does it feel managing a country and a guild at the same time?" Jack asked.

"Province, not country," Four Winds corrected. He then answered, "I have less time for my personal development, but it is a good experience. I like it."

"Well, I always peg you for a leader-type person," Jack said.

"And I always peg you for a not leader-type," Water Lily joined the conversation. "I heard you rely on a lot of other people to do the leading."



"Haha... You are not wrong," Jack laughed awkwardly.

"Everyone relies on someone. I also rely on you and the others," Four Winds said to Water Lily. "There is no way one person can achieve much. That's why people team up and form groups. An Individual can never challenge a corporation. A corporation can never challenge the government. The one with the biggest number wins. That is always the rule."

Four Winds then turned to Jack, "That is why you are here. Trying to secure an alliance with Verremor."

Jack nodded.

"But why?" Four Winds asked. "As a gamer, everyone who plays a country simulation game will try to expand. Win the game by dominating others. I believe you are an experienced gamer. I thought you would have wanted to conquer the world when you became a king. If so, the right strategy according to a famous strategist is to befriend a distant state and strike a neighboring one. But instead, you are befriending a neighboring state and preparing to strike a distant one."

"It's because this is not a game. I'm not trying to conquer the world," Jack answered.

"This world sure feels like a game to me," Water Lily said.

"There is something that you are not telling us," Four winds said. "Why are you so concerned about Liguritutum? To me, they are just a bunch of gamers who try to win this game world by domination. I'm planning to work my way up Verremor council and join that conquest race as well. May the best gamer wins. Isn't that how it should be?"

Jack stayed silent as he contemplated. He then said to the two, "Can we find someplace quiet to speak?"

Four Winds was as if expecting this. He gestured for Jack to follow. The three went to a small room next to the hall where the feast took place.

Inside the room, Jack and Four Winds sat while Water Lily locked the door.

Jack then told them about the truth of the world. The identity of Master who was the cause of what happened to the world and what his objective was. He told them if the Liguritutum army managed to conquer the world, Master would have the authority to more easily gather the divine treasures for his attempt at Godhood.

Four Winds and Water Lily stayed silent throughout the narration. They didn't doubt Jack's words. Jack's past actions supported his story, there was no reason for him to lie to them. This also explained why Jack tried so hard to turn Verremor from an enemy into a friend. All because he knew who the true enemy was.

"These divine treasures Master covets, one of them is what gives you the lightning power?" Four Winds asked.

Jack nodded.

"And Master has a way to tear it out of you?"

Jack nodded again. But then he remembered during his escape when he was captured, Syndrillis unleashed quite a powerful flame breath at the roof where they were. The machine that was used to pull Leavemealone's Fire God Blessing was also engulfed by the flame. He wondered if it was destroyed. He hoped it was. He was sure the machine was an alien entity, and an alien entity couldn't be produced in-game. But even if the machine was destroyed, maybe Master has a spare?

"Do you know where the other divine treasures are?" Four Winds asked. "I fought your guild member who has a similar power to you but of the fire element. I assume he also possessed one of the divine treasures?"

Jack nodded. He then said, "As for the remaining five. Master has three of them. I know of another one, but I'm sorry, I won't disclose the owner's identity. The last one is unknown."

"It's fine. Hm... This puts everything in a new perspective. Thank you for sharing this truth," Four winds said.

"I believe you are an honorable man who won't bend his knees to Master, that's why I don't mind telling you," Jack said.

"You are right. I would rather die than be a slave to a wannabe God," Four Winds said. He glanced at Water Lily and uttered, "My friends have the same opinion as me."

Water Lily nodded. "We will do our best to oppose the World Maker. We can..."

She suddenly stopped.

"What's wrong?" Four Winds asked. Water Lily gave a sign to indicate that she was reading a message.

While Jack was wondering what message Water Lily had just received, Jack also received one from John.

"Expert, come back. We have just received the news that both Liguritutum and Aurebor's armies were marching towards Hydrurond Dominion."

## **Chapter 1178: Liguritutum and Aurebor Invade Hydrurond**

Due to the news, Jack couldn't join the celebration in Magna Masat as planned. He went to meet Kabaka to let the grand chief know that he had to leave in the morning.

He also told Kabaka about Liguritutum and Aurebor's movements. Jack said that he planned to offer Hydrurond military assistance to repel the invasion. He asked whether Verremor could do the same.

Kabaka was not optimistic. The deal with Jack in exchange for the portal-closing stone was a defensive pact. Liguritutum and Aurebor were invading Hydrurond, not Themisphere. He believed most of the council members won't agree to send an army into a conflict that had nothing to do with their country. Not to mention, they were still rebuilding the army they lost during Verremor's past invasion into Themisphere.

Kabaka said that he would try proposing to the council about sending assistance, but he couldn't promise anything.

Jack couldn't blame the guy. He didn't push the topic further.

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After resting one night at Urg Chomir, Jack used the town's zone portal and teleport back to Thereath.

He went to the throne room and saw John, Jeanny, Isabelle, Thaergood, and Armstrong near the war platform. A 3D map was displayed above the platform.

"Ah, his majesty has finally graced us with his presence," John said after seeing Jack entering the room.

"You are using his majesty's title but why do I still feel that you are not respectful enough?" Thaergood asked.

"It is by design, good Thaergood. It is by design," John responded.

"What are we looking at here?" Jack looked at the map. It showed Hydrurond territory and a partial view of Liguritutum and Aurebor.

"We are still waiting for the intel on the number of the marching troops," John said. "But from the look of it, Liguritutum and Aurebor are sending their army through different paths. This means Hydrurond will need to face the invasion from two fronts."

"They have just started marching, haven't they? They have to go through these border regions between the countries. How long until they entered Hydrurond's territory?" Jack asked.

"Around one week," Isabelle answered. "Aurebor might arrive first, but the difference will only be one or two days."

"How do you want us to deal with this?" John asked.

"Do we have to do anything?" Armstrong asked. "I say we just let them fight and weaken each other."

"I agree," Thaergood uttered. "I don't think we should interfere in others' conflict. We are not in a good relationship with Hydrurond, anyway."

Jack didn't blame their suggestion for a pacifist response. They knew that Jack viewed Liguritutum as an enemy, but they never truly understood the reason. Jack didn't explain to them why it was important to stop Master.

"What do you think?" Jack turned to John.

"Although I think it will be great if we can join forces with Hydrurond to fight them, I don't think our aid is welcomed," John said. "Considering the situation. I agree with Armstrong. Let them weaken each other while we increase our military power. We will strike them once they are weakened."

Jack turned to Jeanny. "Are we aware of any guild in Hydrurond that is World Maker's subordinate?"

"Not to my knowledge," Jeanny answered. "World Maker has very few activities in that country. We have tried to poke around every country to understand their influence. Other than the World Ruler in Aurebor, they don't seem to have another direct branch."

Jack turned to Peniel. "If they didn't have someone of the draconian race to be put as the new sovereign. What happens if Master defeats Hydrurond's sovereign and destroys the throne? Will the entire Hydrurond territory be absorbed by Liguritutum?"

Peniel shook her head. "Hydrurond will become Liguritutum's vassal state. They can install someone to rule the country as its sovereign. This puppet monarch can be of any race, it doesn't have to be a draconian. A puppet monarch can operate the monarch system, but with many handicaps. Most of Hydrurond's gold and mana income will be greatly reduced, this is because part of the income is transferred to Liguritutum.

"Additionally, every settlement will have penalties to their stats. Coins needed to construct buildings, draft, and train troops will also increase. It will be difficult to develop the settlements and the army of a vassal state. Officers' loyalties will also hardly improve, no matter how much you send them payments and gifts. Many will likely quit their posts.

"In terms of military, Liguritutum will gain control of Hydrurond's army, whatever is left after the war. This conquered army will always be in low morale, though. Normally, the army of a vassal state is used as cannon fodder by the conquering country."

"I see," Jack muttered as he absorbed the information.

"In this case, they will surely be weakened after the war. I don't think they can take down Hydrurond without heavy losses," John said. "They might be planning to use the resources from Hydrurond to rebuild the army they lost during the invasion. After rebuilding, they will then add their army with the remaining troops from Hydrurond and go for the next country. From there, they will continue to repeat the same strategy.

"However, they will be at their weakest when the invasion ends. Liguritutum will need time to rebuild even with the extra income from Hydrurond. That is when we should strike!"

Armstrong nodded. "I agree with the royal advisor."

Jack looked at everyone one by one. From their expressions, they all thought that John's plan was the best.

Jack thought so too, but he hated staying back and doing nothing while a known evil was bullying a weaker party.

"Sigh, I can see from your face that you aren't going to heed my counsel," John was also paying attention to Jack's expression.

"Armstrong, rally the army to the border closest to Hydrurond. Have them on standby so they can move at a moment's notice," Jack ordered. He then walked to the throne and said, "I'm going to send a message to Hydrurond's queen, offering her our military aid to repel Liguritutum and Aurebor."

## **Chapter 1179: Falling into a Trap**

Jack sent the message via the monarch system. It took several days to get a response from Hydrurond, so he could only wait.

Armstrong left to carry out Jack's order to rally the army at the border. After further discussion, they decided to mobilize a third of the army, around one million troops, with Emris as the main general.

Duchess Isabelle also left to study the information from her intelligence network to better understand the number of enemy troops and their movements.

Jeanny returned to Heavenly Citadel to organize the guild members to join Hydrurond's war summon quest. Until Themisphere could formally join the war, it could not issue any war summon quest. Jeanny could later quit Hydrurond's quest and joined Themisphere instead. If she joined Themisphere's war summon quest, she could then summon their guild army.

Jack stayed in the throne room with John and Thaergood. He was operating the monarch system to insert the one thousand mithril ores he had gained from Four Winds.

The arcane forge had been learned and built. Mithril forging from the civil path had also been learned. So, they were ready to activate the first enchantment from the arcane forge.

The monarch system accepted the one thousand mithril ores. They disappeared from Jack's inventory. A new enchantment popped up in the country enchantment list, under Serenity's Blessing and Collective Ardor.

This third enchantment was Arcane Armor and Weapon, level 1. Its effect was +5% to all units' damage and defense.

The second level would have to wait. There was a one-week timer that prevented the enchantment to be leveled directly to the max, even if one already learned the required techs and had sufficient ores.

Since all Jack could do now was wait, he decided to go monster grinding to strengthen himself. He left John and Thaergood to deal with the logistic preparation. If they were to march into Hydrurond, they would need to prepare a good supply route.

"Where will you go?" Peniel asked.

"I'm very interested in that Gold Dragon Wings you mentioned," Jack answered.

"You want to go back to the underworld?"

Jack nodded. "Unless you have a better place to farm draconic essence," Jack said.

"There is, but it's much more dangerous."

"Even for my level?"

"A dragon gives more draconic essence compared to you killing thousands of amphipterelets," Peniel answered.

"Are you crazy? I am not fighting a being the level of Syndrillis," Jack said.

"I am not talking about something of Syndrillis' power level. She is a true dragon, the same as Broidrireg and Tiemezzys. They can be considered natives of this world. What I'm referring to are dragons that are considered monsters. These dragons can't communicate like true dragons. They are mindless creatures

that attack someone who came into their range of perception. Sort of like what outlaws are to human natives."

"Do they roam their territory alone?" Jack asked.

"Yes," Peniel answered.

"What are the lowest level and grade of this so-called dragon monster?"

"Most will be mythical grades of level 80 and above. But if you are lucky and patient, you might be able to find a level 75 mythical."

"Damn it. Level 80 mythical grade is as strong as Arther. I don't have another Divine Might Potion to level the playing field. You also once mentioned that monsters are generally stronger than natives of the same level and grade, right?"

"A dragon is even more so."

"Then let's just leave that option to when I am stronger. Let's limit ourselves to amphipteres and amphipterelets for now," Jack said and summoned Pandora.

After telling which region of the underworld he wanted to go to, Pandora activated his plane-crossing ability. They were soon back into the world of red and black.

"I think this world will be my primary grinding area from now on. This place is post-game content, after all. We might even get another portal-closing stone if we are lucky," Jack said.

"I will say it is unlikely. But after seeing you get the second stone just like that, I don't know anymore," Peniel said.

"Hehe," Jack chuckled. He was opening his map to check his position. He then indicated the direction to Pandora, who then flew up and cut through the sky with incredible speed.

They arrived at the familiar place where Jack used to hunt amphipterelets. Jack could even see several groups of them down there. He had Pandora landed a distance away so her aura didn't scare the amphipterelets away. He then ran over to the nearest group.

With trained effectiveness, he mowed down one group after another, harvesting their draconic essences.

In just half a day, he had covered more than half the territory where these draconic monsters roamed. As he was making his way, he sensed something unusual ahead. He stopped.

"... There is a very large rune diagram on the ground ahead," Jack said.

"Really? I don't see anything," Peniel said. She wanted to fly ahead to have a better look but Jack caught her.

"Hey! No touching without permission!" Peniel protested.

"The rune diagram is masked to be invisible. It can't be anything good. Don't go near it," Jack warned.

Peniel heeded the warning. She canceled her intention to fly ahead.

"Let's take a different path," Jack said and started walking away.

Suddenly, he sensed the rune diagram that he was avoiding came to life. Since mana sense had a limited range, the rune diagram was rather close to him when he was made aware of it. He sensed the energy erupted from the diagram and traveled outward, toward him.

He used Shooting Dash to move away, but a Magic Wall suddenly appeared on his path. He used Flame Strike when he slammed into the wall. The wall was shattered but his dash was stopped. By then, the energy from the rune diagram caught up.

He felt his body become slow. Not only that, but everything around him also slowed. The air, the mana, even his thought. Before they completely stopped, he sensed someone not far away. He glanced over sluggishly and saw someone who had not been there a moment before.

It was the demon mage, Saakir.

### **Chapter 1180: Breaking out of Stasis**

Jack's felt everything around him stop. It was the power from the rune diagram, it had somehow put everything in its vicinity into a state of stasis.

His body stopped. He couldn't move. He tried executing his skills, but his body didn't respond. He tried summoning Therras, but nothing happened. Everything had completely stopped. He also felt his thought move at a very slow speed even when he was still aware.

He then noticed Saakir approaching. Another demon materialized. They had been invisible. This other demon approached following Saakir. They were not affected by the rune diagram. The diagram seemed to be an explosive kind. Its effect burst only one time, affecting ones that were within its range.

Saakir looked at Jack from close range. "Yep, he is the one," she said.

"Are you sure?" The other demon asked.

"Of course, I'm sure. I have a close encounter with him. Furthermore, how many humans do you think can be found in this plane?"

"As expected of the demon scholar, you managed to pinpoint where he used to hang around just by his lingering aura. It's a good thing he returns. We didn't waste our time by spending days waiting at this place."

Saakir nodded. "Mammon will be pleased when we give him this offering. Imagine the rewards we can get. Hurry! We have to prepare the rune diagram to lock him. We can't bind him with a runic rope with that stasis field freezing everything around him. We have to finish the diagram within one hour before the stasis field ends."

They took out paintbrushes and a bottle. They dipped the paintbrush into the bottle. They then bent down on the ground and started drawing something around Jack. Jack figured the bottle contained mana paint, the required material to draw a rune diagram.

The two drew from two opposite sides. Jack couldn't turn his head to look around but his mana sense informed him of their movements. From their speed, he estimated they wouldn't take an hour to finish the diagram, maybe even less than half an hour.

"You sure he isn't aware of what happens to him?" The other demon said and looked up.

"Stop worrying, Buzz," Saakir said. "The stasis field completely stops the time inside, even his thought. For all he knows, the time skips ahead to when the stasis field ends and we are already binding him using runic rope while this diagram holds him. Now, get back to work!"

"Yes, ma'am," Buzz said.

'My thought is stopped?' Jack thought. Even though he knew his mind had slowed down, he was still perfectly aware of what was happening.

'Peniel. Hey, Peniel!' He sent his thought to Peniel. He couldn't see her, but he sensed her floating beside his head, locked in time as well.

No response from her. Was her mind in stasis as Saakir said? Then why could he still think?

He couldn't be sure of the reason. Perhaps it was because of his Time Sage class? Maybe the class made it so that time could not completely control him.

But even if it was so, what could he do about his current situation? If all he could do was think without being able to act, then there was no point. He still couldn't save himself. Once Saakir and Buzz finished drawing the rune diagram, then he would still get bind even when this stasis field ended. He had to free himself before that happened!

He tried to move again. He exerted all his thought and will into moving, but his body just won't move.

'Calm down, calm down,' he told himself. What could he do when he was unable to move?

'Something that I do when I'm not moving...,' Jack thought. He focused his mana sense and used his incorporeal state. He sensed his consciousness leaving his body.

'Okay, I can move now. But what's the use if I'm just a spirit?' Jack thought. At the same time, he felt the anomaly around him.

During the incorporeal state, his mana sense was augmented. He had a familiar feeling about what he was currently sensing. He tried to remember when he had the same feeling. Then he remembered. It was when he was in his Time Sage trial. When he connected with time.

So, he focused his sense on this stasis field until he perceived its atoms. He sensed the interlinked mana that caused time to stop around him. He inserted his will and tried moving it.

His mana manipulation was much stronger compared to when he was in the Time Sage trial. Thus, the process was easier compared to when he was in the trial. He identified the important nodes that formed this stasis field and forced them to start moving again. The stasis field tried to resist his manipulation. But in the end, it gave in.

The gears started turning. Time was flowing again.



Jack quickly went back into his body as it happened. He summoned his weapons. He used Whirlwind Slash and cast Ice Ring when both demons were still not aware of what was happening.

He then jumped away while casting myriad venomous vipers. Fifteen green large snakes burst out of the ground and entangled the two demons who had been slowed by the ice ring.

While the two demons were still confused and entangled, Jack summoned Therras and activated Ultimate Beast. He also called out his spirit weapon and activated its finishing mode.

He didn't know the real situation. It seemed that only these two demons were here, but he didn't know for sure. He couldn't take chances, so he needed to finish this fast.

He used beast form, activated Overlimit, then used Soul Breath and Lightning God Barrage. The combined explosion engulfed the two demons before they could react by casting any spell. They suffered the full brunt of the damage.

When the explosion ended, Buzz's body was lying still on the ground. Saakir had less than half her HP.

Jack saw her casting a Teleportation spell. Jack countered using Cancel Magic.

Saakir was an experienced spell caster. When her spell formation fizzled, she quickly changed to cast a different spell, Fly. Her body rose into the air in an attempt to flee.

Jack's dragon flight could have easily caught up to her flying speed, but Jack used an even more assured method to keep her from fleeing. He cast Time Realm.

A large dome formed, separating the area the two were in from the outside world. The area within the dome slowed Saakir. Saakir looked at this barrier dome in disbelief.

She then found that Jack was already above her. Jack used Flame Slash and she was slammed back into the ground.