

## World 371

### Chapter 371: Puzzle Games

As they continued through the dungeon, they encountered more contraptions and machinations. There was no more trap, but the contraptions they met were not any less troublesome.

There was a hall with floating blocks of stone, going in a fixed direction. Left-right, front-back, up-down, and diagonally. Some had combinations of several directions in a single block. They had to jump from one block to the other to reach the other side, crossing a bottomless abyss. Bowler took a small rock from the ground and threw it down the abyss. No sound of a rock hitting the bottom could be heard.

Then there was a narrow hallway filled with apertures which arrows came out from occasionally. The hallway was too narrow so by the time they saw the arrow came out of the aperture, it would have instantly gone in the other holes at the opposite side. No amount of reflex would be able to save them if they stood in the arrow's path. The density of the apertures was rather compact, so there was no safe zone once they tried to cross the hallway. They had to memorize the timing of when an arrow was shooting out from each aperture to determine the timing of when to advance and when to stop.

There was also a room where they were not in danger. In this room, they had to find corresponding tiles with ten pairs of matching diagrams amongst thousands of tiles of random diagrams. There was an hourglass with sand in it hanging from the ceiling. They had to find the matching diagrams before all the sand in the hourglass fell to the bottom. They failed several times. When they failed, the hourglass flipped to have the sand on top again, and all the tiles were reset magically. They had to start all over again. Though there was no danger, this room took a rather huge chunk of their time within the dungeon.

And then there was also a place where they had to hop onto a train of carts. The carts would then move on a railway that went haphazardly like a roller coaster. During their time on the cart, there would be projectiles thrown at them, they had to either hit these projectiles to deflect them or use defensive moves to block.

There was even a hall where they were at a loss, as to solve the hall they needed to pull a lever which was located inside a room that they could not access. Luckily, the room was not thoroughly concealed, there were some small gaps in the wall.

While everyone was looking for a clue as to how to get inside the room. Flame did a motion, a slim wolf which was slightly larger than a normal wolf appeared out of thin air. Its fur was green with some silvery lines running from its head to the tip of its tail. The fur kept on flowing as if there was a breeze blowing at it despite the absence of wind within this hall.

"Is that... your Savage Wind Wolf?" Jack asked.

Flame nodded.

"So the cub had reached adulthood?" The Man commented, "why didn't you summon it out when we were fighting with monsters outside the temple?"

"My pet can die. If it dies, it is permanent. I have to look for another one," Flame explained. "Those monsters in this expedition are all over-leveled for us. Sending my pet at them is simple suicide."

She then sent her wolf through the gap in the wall. The wolf was large, but its slim body allowed it to squeeze through the gap. Once it was inside, it bit on the lever and pulled it. The locked door of the hall opened and they could proceed to the next hall.

"Is that consider cheating?" Bowler asked.

"Whatever works, man," The Man said with a grin.

Flame unsummoned her pet as they all go through the open door.

There were more other contraptions they had to deal with. Throughout the ordeals, they lost another two members, Salty Trade and another one of The Man's subordinates.

"Another victim of this ill-fated quest," John commented when the first of the two died.

"Hey! I will really kick you out if you jinxed this quest," Jack warned.

There were only eleven of them left now if not including Sunset, who was still nowhere to be seen. Jack checked his radar and was alarmed to see his green dot was not seen anymore. But when he opened his party system, Sunset was still alive in the party.

While passing those rooms, they had occasionally met some traps again. Jack gave it a try and found that the difficulty was not as high as those they met at the first section of this dungeon. So he decided to try diffusing the traps instead of giving his Disarm Tools to Viral Cora. If he was left with only twenty, he then would give them to Viral Cora. He managed to disarm most of those traps in a few tries, resulting in his Detect and Disarm Trap skill increasing to Intermediate Apprentice grade.

After passing through several rooms, they were now in one that displayed a large wall painting which was divided into numerous sections. Each section's placement was completely not in the correct position. Hence, the painting made absolutely no sense. It was a wall jigsaw puzzle. Jack and John stood in front of the wall staring at the painting with full attention while the others wait for their instruction.

In solving the contraptions, it was always the two of them that figured out the solutions. So, the others just happily stepped aside and gave them the spotlight. Two out of three were solved by Jack, while John solved the remaining one-third. Such a pattern prompted Bowler to voice out his curiosity.

"Bro, as irritating as it is, I do admit that this fellow is smarter than all of us," Bowler talked to Jack as he pointed at John. "But how come you seemed to perform better than him in this dungeon?"

"Oh? Hm. Not sure? Maybe because I played lots of these kinds of puzzle and mystery games in the past?" Jack replied with a shrug.

"Well, in that case, how about I offer you my conjecture?" John said.

"Are you trying to make excuses?" Bowler asked.

"Why would I be making excuses?" John asked back with a clueless expression.

"Never mind... Please share your thought."

"To explain it, let me first explain to you the difference between autism and savant."

"What? What do those have to do with my question?"

"Do you want to listen or not?"

"Fine, fine, proceed," Bowler replied with a sigh.

"All right, now I believe you know about people who had autism, right? What about savant, do you know?"

"If I'm not wrong, it is someone with a condition similar to autistic disorder but exhibit extraordinary talent in one specific area, isn't it?"

"Yes. Now, mind you, I need to say first that there is not yet a definitive cause of autism and savant, but if I am to use an analogy to explain the differences between them, let me use the example of computer file organization. You see, a regular person's mind has a very organized storage system. Organized persons would separate their thoughts and memories into different classifications and store them in a folder that corresponds with the files. They will then label the folders accordingly. Files about fried rice or chicken wing will be stored inside the Food folder, files about dogs and cats will be stored inside the Pets or Scary Animals folder, depending on the owner's point of view, and so on. This way, when it is needed, they can quickly search the required folder and access the information stores within."

"Now, an individual with autistic disorder, however, has no such folders. Can you imagine if you have thousands of files on your computer and you simply put them all on your desktop? Can you imagine the hassle to shift through those jumbles of files to look for one particular file about fried rice? That's why autistic individual appears slow and difficult in social interaction, they have to work through their complicated memories before they can formulate a proper response. They are not in any way less intelligent, their mind simply works in a different way compared to a regular person. Imagine if you are working with two computers that have the same processor speed. One was with the neatly arranged folders while the other was with jumbled files without any organized folder. You will surely take more time to work with the latter even if the two computers' specs are the same."

"What about savant? You ever wonder why people with this syndrome, despite exhibiting slow response and significant challenges in every other field, yet display superbly on one specific subject? Such as music, or art, or maths. Why such contrast? If let says we take the computer filing's analogy again. If on your desktop, there is only one folder titled Music. All the files that go inside this computer, are separated between music and non-music. Music files will go into the folder, while non-music files go directly to the trash bin. Now imagine if a person, does nothing but spend his waking hours simply thinking about music. Don't you think he will become a genius musician?"

Bowler gave him a dull look. When he noticed John had stopped talking, he said, "dude, that's all very fascinating, but again, what does it..."

John cut him before he finished his words, "even a mentally challenged person if focuses his or her mind into doing the same thing over and over again, he will eventually become good in it."

It took Bowler a few beats to grasp what John had just said. Once he did, he swiveled to Jack and uttered, "bro, he just called you a mentally challenged person!"

"My goodness! Did you only listen to the bad parts?" John facepalmed his face. "What I trying to say is, hard work matters! If you keep on doing the same thing over and over again, even if you have no talent in a field, you will eventually become good at it. Better even than a talented person who treats his or her talent poorly."

Jack never turned when Bowler called, he was too absorbed trying to solve the jigsaw painting. "Got it!" He exclaimed not long after.

## **Chapter 372: Maze**

He went and started rearranging the painting. John soon joined in. "No, no, no, this should be over here," he said as he made the change.

"You sure?" Jack asked when he saw John make the change.

"Wanna bet?" John asked back.

"Well, if you are certain," Jack did not take him up on the bet. The two of them continued to busy themselves on the jigsaws, some quarrelings once in a while, while the others sat at the back and watched. They had learned to let the two maestros did their work rather than interfere and get scolded. Between the two of them, the jigsaw painting which made no much sense previously started to take shape.

Once they rearranged the last piece into the correct place, the entire painting glowed and a hum could be heard. Abruptly the walls on both their sides shifted, revealing eleven doors, five on the right and six on the left.

"What's this? Another puzzle? Giant Steve asked.

"So, which one should we choose?" Viral Cora asked.

"They all look the same," Bowler said as he went around looking at the details of each door.

"I don't think this is another puzzle," John said. "Notice the number of the doors is the same as our number?"

"You don't mean..."

"Yeah, I think this dungeon has decided to separate us now."

They stared at the doors for the longest time.

"Where do you reckon they will take us?" Bowler asked.

"Well, only one way to find out," Jack said as he walked towards one of the doors.

"Wait, bro! Are you not afraid that there might be a trap?" Bowler said.

"It's more like you are afraid if you will wind up somewhere else alone and could not solve the puzzle by yourself then you will be trapped, am I right?" John asked with a snicker.

Bowler's expression showed that John's guess had been correct. However, thought Bowler was the only one who revealed his worry. The others could not help but felt unsettled. They too had been relying on Jack and John all this time to solve the puzzles in this dungeon.

"Don't worry, Just use the Town Return scroll if you are stuck. But of course, that meant you have left this expedition and probably failed the quest. You all have a Town Return scroll, don't you?" John said.

Several of them informed that they do not have the scroll.

"Why the hell did you people not get one when you leave the capital?" John scolded. "Well, you can always try to get yourself killed by the previous contraptions, that should bring you out of this dungeon and back to the capital as well."

"That's very insensitive of you. Here, the ones don't have can take one," Jack took the scrolls in his possession and offered them.

"Not everyone is as wealthy as you, friend," John said.

After everyone had at least one Town Return scroll, Jack resumed his walk to the door. He opened the door, which revealed only darkness on the other side, and then went inside without hesitation. The door closed by itself once Jack entered the darkness beyond, then disappeared like it was never there.

"As I expected, one door was only meant for one person," John commented.

"I was more amazed by that Storm Wind," Giant Steve said. "Damn! He went inside just like that. Not even a glance back or a parting word."

"You expect a hug and a kiss?" John said and copied Jack's action, albeit with a swagger as he went to the door next to the one Jack used. It also vanished after.

"He must have the confidence that we will meet again on the other side," Jeanny said, referring to Jack. Then to the others, she said, "let's go."

They lined up in front of the doors, each taking one door. They looked at each other.

"See you on the other side."

"See you."

"Be safe."

"Why do you take the one next to me?"

"You got a problem with that?"

"I don't want to be stuck with you wherever we end up."

"Our door is adjacent doesn't mean that we will end up at the same place."

"No guarantee that it won't also."

"Cut the crap! Just go in already!" Jeanny scolded them. She then went into the door in front of her.

The others went in as well. Soon all the doors vanished from sight, leaving behind an empty room.

Jack reappeared in a small room. There was a brazier at the center of the room, but no fire. Around the room were seven torches with different colors of fire. Green, yellow, violet, red, indigo, orange, blue. He then went closer to the cold brazier and saw that the shape was of an eye.

The torch was obviously meant to light up the brazier, Jack thought. After pondering for a while, he took the yellow fire torch and used it to burn the brazier. A yellow color light flared on the brazier. He then took the blue fire torch and burnt the brazier with it. The fire was doused instead.

He didn't appear surprised by the fire going out even though he burnt it with a torch. He took a different torch, red fire this time, and lighted up the brazier. The flame returned. Next, he used the orange torch. The flame remained this time, a soft red and orange flame mixed together.

As expected, he thought in his mind. He then continued with the remaining torches. Yellow went next. Afterward, he used green, then blue, indigo, the last one was violet. The famous rainbow color, or more correctly, the spectrum of visible light. Hence, the eye shape of the brazier.

Once the last violet fire was mixed inside. The flame turned bright white. Jack had to shut his eyes due to the brightness. When he reopened them, the flame was gone. A section of the wall swiveled, revealing a way out of the room.

He was slightly relieved. That was an easy puzzle. If the others arrived in a similar room as well, they should be able to solve it even without him or John. He hoped.

When he came out of the room, he was met with a narrow hallway.

Hallway again? What's wrong with this dungeon?! He complained.

The hallway was short, there was a turn already a few meters ahead whether he chose to go left or right. He looked at his radar, there were many green dots scattered around. Great, they were transferred to the same place, he thought. However, their positions were pretty far away.

He chose one that was the closest and took the turn that seemed to head in that direction. But after he made the turn, he was soon met again by a crossroad. He took the turn, then was met again by another turn.

'F\*ck! It was a maze!' Jack exclaimed.

He could see from his radar, that he was the only one that was moving around. Meaning the others were still inside their puzzle rooms. He continued to walk in the direction of the closest green dot. Several times he was forced by the routes away from the direction he wanted, and on several occasions he was met with dead ends, forcing him to go back the way he came.

He saw on his radar some green dots started to move around already. They must have come out of their room as well, but all the ones that came out were the ones that were far away.

After repeated attempts, he finally got very close to the green dot he was targeting. It was still stationary. He was wondering, even if he reached that dot, if that dot had not yet solved the puzzle in the room, then the door would not be revealed. So he would still have to wait outside until the one inside solved the puzzle. However, when he arrived, he saw that the room that person was in had an opened door.

Eh? Why did the one inside not come out?

He entered inside with curiosity. The inside was much larger than he expected. In fact, it was the same layout and size as the temple's main hall where they entered this dungeon from. There was the same large stage at the far side, but in this one, there was no dungeon entrance behind this stage. A man was standing on this stage.

"Sunset?" Jack called out when he recognized the man on the altar. Sunset smiled as Jack approached him.

"I was worried, I thought you guys will not come here," he said.

"Have you been here long?" Jack asked.

He nodded.

"That is quite impressive of you," Jack commented. "Why didn't you go and find anyone? This room is not locked."

"I think everyone is meant to come here. So I just wait here."

Jack looked around. It would be poetic to end their journey at the same place as their starting point. Perhaps the creator meant exactly that.

### **Chapter 373: Zombie-chow**

"I guess you are right. You wait here then. I will go and help the others get to this place," Jack said

"Wait! You won't be able to do that. They need to arrive here by themselves," Sunset informed.

"Eh? How do you know that?"

"Trust me, I tried going out before. The layout of the maze changed from when I came the first time. It continued to lead me back here."

"Hm... All right, I will take your words for it," Jack said. He could imagine he saw a relieved glint in Sunset's eyes.

"It's better that we try to solve the endgame here in this hall. Once we solve it, the dungeon will be considered complete, and everyone will return to the temple."

"Really? And again, how do you know that?"

"It's a hunch," Sunset said as he pointed to the floor on the stage. "Look, I have been examining this hall. There is a strange indentation here that is out of place. It almost looks like something is meant to be placed on it."

Jack squatted down in front of the indentation Sunset mentioned. It was the shape of a triangle. It was indeed peculiar, but considering it was so tiny, it was rather splendid for Sunset to have noticed it.

"Anything to be put onto it comes to mind?" Sunset asked.

"As a matter of fact, yes," Jack answered. He pulled out something from his bag. It was a triangular pyramid, Memory of Elding, the alien entity as Peniel called it, that came as a result of fusing the three Fragments of Map. The shape and size of the base of this pyramid fit the indentation on the floor.

Jack went ahead and placed the pyramid onto the indentation. A click was heard. The pyramid glowed and shot a beam on the wall behind the stage. A similar liquid silvery portal appeared at the same spot where they had gone into this dungeon when they were still at the actual Temple of Divine Squall.

A dungeon within a dungeon? Jack wondered as he stared at the portal.

When the silvery portal appeared, Sunset Walking who had been kneeling beside Jack abruptly stood up and lunged towards it. As he was about to touch the portal, he noticed something coming from his side. He had hoped his abrupt action to catch Jack off-guard, but he was still wary enough to pay attention. Thus, he managed to erect a Magic Shield just before he felt an impact. He was sent skidding sideways away from the portal.

Jack stood there in front of the portal as he watched Sunset with vigilance.

"You... you expected this?" Sunset said.

"I have my suspicion, but I honestly hope I was wrong," Jack replied. He bent down and picked up the Memory of Elding, the silvery portal vanished. Sunset's face turned dark as the portal disappeared.

"You seemed to know from the start what this does," Jack said. "So, what is behind that portal just now?"

Sunset didn't reply. Instead, he asked back, "why are you suspicious of me?"

"Too strong to call it suspicious, let's just say I felt something was wrong with you. Mostly just small stuff, the main one I guess was because you lied about your Detect and Disarm Trap level."

"How do you know I lied? Even though I had more success than that lass in disarming the traps, it's still..."

"From the time gaps between you triggering the Disarm tools," Jack replied, copying Peniel's explanation.

Sunset creased his brows, he did not expect Jack to watch him till that detail.

"Why did you separate from us? From the speed you arrived in this main hall, I assumed you knew the routes already and the answers to the mechanism. The traps also didn't seem to faze you much."

Sunset was silent for a beat before answering, "I was hoping you get killed by the mechanism."

"Oh? But if that happened, won't you lose this thing also?" Jack asked as he lifted the Memory of Elding.

"That will drop when you die," Sunset replied, and before Jack said anything, he added, "even with your Immortal Soul, it will still drop."

Jack lifted his brow, "you know?"



"Of course I do!" Sunset exclaimed, his pitch was close to yelling. "Considering you stole it from me. How do I not know?"

"Stole?" Jack was getting confused.

Sunset Walking waved his hand and his appearance underwent a transformation. His look now appeared older. His name also changed to Sunrise Gazing.

He was using a disguise? Jack thought with surprise.

"Do you recognize me now?" Sunrise shouted.

There was a long silence between them, too long that it turned awkward. Jack scratched his head, "I'm sorry, who are you?"

Sunrise almost fell. He had gone through much trouble to get a one-time-use disguise tool, now that he had revealed his real face, the tool is not usable anymore. If he had known that Jack did not recognize him, he would not have wasted his time to get that tool.

"Do you forget already where you get that God-eye monocle at the side of your face?!" Sunrise screamed.

Realization finally dawned on Jack, "oh! You are that zombie-chow!"

Zombie-chow, such a degrading nickname. Not only did Jack forget about his look, but he had even given him such an ugly title.

"I'm sorry, all that happened so fast," Jack said. "I still cannot make heads or tails of what had happened to the world when you suddenly appeared and then so equally abrupt getting chomped by those zombies. I simply didn't have the time to take a good look at you."

Sunrise's mouth twitched, he did not know how to express his anger more, considering the person responsible had been so honest in expressing his sorry. Before he could say anything more, he saw something that attracted his attention.

Jack saw the change in his gaze as well. Sunrise's eyes which had been so heatedly concentrated on him all this time had suddenly moved to focus on something behind him. His radar didn't show anything other than the two of them within this hall, but his instinct screamed at him to not dismiss this visual cue.

He swiveled rapidly that instant as he put his sword in front of him. A clanging sound of metal against metal was heard. He jumped back urgently after feeling the impact.

In front of him was a young man, clad in black-colored light armor. The countenance on his face showed surprise. "You managed to block my Concealed Ghost Attack skill? Amazing!"

Jack's max-level parry allowed him to mitigate most of that ambush damage. The man in front of him now appeared on his radar after that attack, it was registered as a red dot now.

"Soundeffect?" Sunrise called out.

Jack made a scan and saw that this was indeed the man's name. He was a level 29 Rogue, he was also a part of a guild called World Maker. Quite an arrogant name for a guild, Jack thought. Other than his high level, the fact that another player was roaming around this far-side of the wilderness other than his team was already an astonishing matter.

Soundeffect looked at Sunrise as his name was called. He then expressed a look of disdain as he said, "so, you are that Sunrise Gazing, another useless fool who failed to carry out Master's command. We heard you have been hiding in Thereath, never imagine you to surface here."

"I'm not hiding!" Sunrise yelled. "I am still serving Master! I know the clue of one of the things that Master is searching for is at capital Thereath. I've been following it until here."

"Heh, you think you will get a pardon if you managed to get that thing?" Soundeffect gave him a mocking laugh.

"At least it's a start!" Sunrise said.

Looking at the glum expression when Sunrise uttered the words, Jack thought the guy himself did not believe his own words. Who was this Master? To have them acting so devotedly for him. Jack had been silent this entire time letting them converse, he was hoping to glean a little bit of information from their conversation, since it was unlikely any of them would answer him if he asked directly.

Soundeffect seemed to have lost interest to talk with Sunrise, he turned to Jack and said, "do you want to hand that willingly? Or do I have to pry it off your corpse? You heard the guy, it will drop if you died."

"You are pretty confident," Jack praised, playing with the triangular pyramid in his hand.

"Heh, that should have been my words. Don't think that you are strong already just because you have the attributes from two classes. Strength also comes from equipment, skills, expertise, and tools. Currently, I am wearing all Rare grade equipment at level 30, I also have a lot of non-standard skills. Don't think a backwater player like you can hope to match me."

"Wait, he..."

"Shut up, you failure!" Soundeffect interrupted Sunrise. "We will deal with you when we are done with him!"

'We?' Jack raised an eyebrow.

### **Chapter 374: Non-standard Skills**

Soundeffect made a sudden lunge at him, but Jack was ready now. He stored the Memory of Elding and took out his magic staff. He also did not forget to switch his title to Outworlder Slayer for a boost against players. As Jack was about to hit the approaching Soundeffect, he noticed a movement from above. A second Soundeffect had appeared above as he dived down.

Facing attacks from both sides, Jack decided to block both, his magic staff summoned Magic Shield to block the earth-bound Soundeffect while his sword parry the sky-bound one.

When the earth-bound Soundeffect touched Jack's magic shield, Jack felt no impact, it was just an image. While his sword that parried the diving Soundeffect made a loud clang. As Jack wanted to counterattack the sky-bound Soundeffect, the guy vanished into thin air.

This time, however, his dot was still visible on his radar as Jack saw him changed position to his back. This was a similar skill to the one Red Death used during their duel, or perhaps the same. Jack turned and swung to his back while executing Power Strike.

This move surprised Soundeffect but he still managed to send his stab to the approaching sword. The two attacks collided and Soundeffect was sent crashing to the wall.

He landed after bouncing from the wall with a shocked expression. His HP bar was less than half.

Jack was also surprised, a normal Rogue would have died outright being hit by his level 35 rare sword and max-leveled Power Strike. The guy was not kidding when he said he was geared in high-level rare grade equipment.

"I was trying to tell you not to underestimate him," Sunset said broodingly, but he still started casting Heal spell on Soundeffect.

Jack had expected it, he cast Mana Bullet at Sunset to interrupt his Heal spell once the rune started forming. Sunset had no chance but to cancel the casting and used Mana Shield to block Jack's spell. Jack ran to Soundeffect as he was still getting up.

Halfway through, blue chains shot up from the ground and coiled around his body. He was unable to move. He found this spell to be rather familiar. It was similar to the duke's crimson chain spell. Probably this was a weaker imitation of that spell.

He turned to Sunrise, but the guy was still reeling from his Mana Bullet, so it was not him that had cast the spell. While he was looking in Sunset's direction, he also noticed the air behind the healer distorted, and then two men were revealed. One was clad in heavy armor while the other was in a mage robe.

"I told you not to be hasty," the mage said, apparently to Soundeffect. "you should have activated your Concealed Ghost Attack first before you came out from the invisibility bubble. Sunset there had noticed you before your Concealed Ghost Attack turned you invisible. And his reaction had caused this guy to evade your ambush. You will not be able to do great things if you do not learn patience."

"I'm sorry, sir," Soundeffect replied respectfully.

Though Jack was surprised to see this cocky rogue acting so reverentially towards this mage, he was more surprised to see the tool besides their right eyes. It was the God-eye monocle, the same as what he was wearing.

"I didn't expect the one that had stolen from Master is also the one coming here with the key," the one wearing armor said. "It is good too, saving our time from looking for you."

Jack inspected them both. The mage was level 29 named Gridhacker, while the armored guy was a level 29 knight called GraphicZ. The two were also members of World Maker.

"Sir Gridhacker, mister GraphicZ," Sunrise greeted them.

GraphicZ didn't spare him a glance. Gridhacker asked him, "what is his level? He must be wearing some kind of rare camouflage equipment that can even block God-eye's Inspect."

"Level 27," Sunrise answered. Jeanny had given Jack the position of leader before they entered the dungeon, and Jack had kicked Sunrise out of the party once he confirmed the guy's intention, but Sunrise had seen Jack's level when he was still in the party.

"For someone that made it here, that's very low!" Soundeffect mocked as he drank recovery potion.

"Don't forget he had two classes. One with such trait will require more experience to level up, just like Master," GraphicZ said.

"Hmph, he holds no candle to Master. He is just a thief who gets lucky," Soundeffect said.

"Of course, let's prioritize on getting the key. Someone is coming," Gridhacker said. "Finish him while he is still incapacitated by my spell."

Jack also saw from his radar that a green dot was approaching. In fact, Jack had been giving instructions to this green dot to point him or her in his direction. He did not know who this green dot was, he simply waited for the dot to move towards him when he said in the party chat, for the ones in the maze to keep heading the way they were heading to at the moment. Although the maze was confusing, if they had a general direction to head to, they should be able to find a way. Just like him when he utilized his radar to come to this hall.

Of course, there were a few green dots that had already been on the move at this time. Because of Jack's instruction in the chat, the others who were not the closest dot were instead been sent in the wrong direction. But Jack didn't care about those other green dots, it's the closest one that he hoped to move in the correct direction.

Since his opponents also wore God-eye monocle, his would-be reinforcement was noticed. GraphicZ and Soundeffect moved towards him while he was still immobilized.

GraphicZ lifted his Two-handed broadsword high, a pitching sound was heard as his broadsword burst in flame. He then brought the broadsword down at Jack's head, while Soundeffect's dagger released drilling energy as he stabbed forward.

Jack waited until they made their attack, before he took out a small bead, Liberty of movement, and activated it. The blue chain shattered immediately. But it's too late, the two attacks had arrived. The flaming broadsword cleaved Jack's body cleanly as Soundeffect's drilling attack stabbed right through.

Yet, their faces did not show joy. Instead, bewilderment could be seen on both. Jack appeared at their backs while his image was still in front of them. "You people are not the only ones with non-standard skills and tools," he said as he executed Swing as a rune formation was forming on his staff.

His blade cut through them both, dealing damage. A cold blue ring followed soon, dealing another damage and freezing them at the same time. Sunrise who was nearby was also hit by the Ice Ring.

Jack was about to follow up with another slash to finish Soundeffect first, but a sudden black hammer slammed down on him. He felt a ton was weighing down on him as damage numbers appeared above

him, he had trouble moving even one step. He glanced back and saw that it was the mage again, who now cast energy bolts. Six bolts rushing towards him, followed by Mana Bullet.

Jack again used Liberty of Movement to dispel the weight that restricted him, he put Magic Shield in front of him while using Shooting Dash to barge through half the bolts and Mana Bullet, ignoring all the damages they caused and arriving abruptly in front of Gridhacker.

The Mage was surprised but not flustered. He put a Magic Shield in front of him, his magic shield appeared to be larger and thicker than usual, probably one that had been enhanced by an Evolve Seed.

Jack's Power Strike slammed on the shield. His max-level Power Strike was boosted further by the effect of the Shooting Dash. This assault should have killed a mage with a single hit, but that evolved Magic Shield of his opponent reduced half of the damage, but the knock-back effect still threw Gridhacker away.

Jack's Shooting Dash could do two dashes, so once his Power Strike connected, he had already dashed away to another side. He sent Sword of Light, this max-level skill with the damage boost from Shooting Dash flew towards Soundeffect. Jack did not believe this skill won't kill him with a single hit even if the guy was fully clad with high-leveled rare armor.

However, before the crescent light hit the Rogue, GraphicZ instantaneously appeared in front of Soundeffect and parried the skill. The Knight's HP bar dropped significantly but a healing light from Sunrise brought it back up to almost full again.

Jack assumed that the move GraphicZ used to defend Soundeffect was also another non-standard skill. No way a slow Knight could move that fast to give that kind of cover. This group was all fully equipped with the best equipment and skills, the fight would be troublesome.

GraphicZ took out a magic scroll and activated it. When Jack saw that, he had started running. No matter what the spell contained within, it would be harder to hit him if he moved rather than standing still. Jack formed a spell formation as he ran.

## **Chapter 375: Juggling**

Jack felt the floor beneath him trembled before several large spikes burst out. He jumped at the last minute, evading the spikes, and fell to the floor rolling. In his hasty move, he glanced at Soundeffect who also activated another magic scroll.

The spell formation on Jack's staff was completed as the Barrier spell took effect just as a sea of flame erupted around him. He felt the flame did continuous damage but his Barrier held. From within the flame, he saw Gridhacker also took out another magic scroll.

'Crap! These guys were as spendthrift as him!' Jack exclaimed in his mind. The scrolls he had left were only Wind Jet, recovery ones, and Haste scrolls. He was completely at a disadvantage here.

But before Gridhacker could activate his scroll. A Magic Bind restricted his body, Jack looked at the entrance and saw that Trinity Dawn was there.

His reinforcement had arrived! Thank goodness it was not Bowler, Jack secretly celebrated.

Trinity Dawn could see the situation and the urgency in Jack's party chat that these people were not friendly, so she took action once she arrived. Spell formations continued to form one after another as she sent them to Gridhacker. Her speed of casting was marvelous. Arcane Turbulence, followed by Ice Nail, followed by another offensive spell which she had not revealed before. A rotating wheel of blades materialized and advanced towards Gridhacker, attempting to cut him in half.

Gridhacker had cast a spell that was capable of freeing himself of the Magic Bind. He then cast Barrier to defend against Trinity Dawn's Arcane Turbulence, before it was shattered by her Ice Nail. He was now back to using Magic Shield again to defend against the Wheel of Blade.

As Gridhacker was occupied by Trinity Dawn, Jack was freed from his hassle. Not letting go of the chance, he dashed out of the flame. His target was still the rogue, Soundeffect. The Knight's HP and armor made him a more difficult target to kill.

Soundeffect felt humiliated by Jack's attempt in targeting him. It gave him the feeling of being underestimated, so he also ran forward to meet Jack in a frontal clash. Soundeffect clashed using normal attacks, utilizing only martial expertise, Jack returned in kind.

But after fighting someone like Red Death, Jack found fighting this guy was less challenging. Perhaps unbeknownst to him, his own martial skill had improved. Apart from that, Soundeffect enjoyed using large movements, in line with his boastful personality. Such large movement was a bane in true combat, it left the practitioner with large windows of weakness.

One such move was when he jumped up and made a roundhouse slash with his dagger, which Jack conveniently dodged by ducking and using the momentum to send an upward kick at him. Jack's strength stat caused the kick to throw Soundeffect all the way up almost hitting the ceiling which was around twelve meters in height.

Their clash had been going on for only a short few seconds due to both of them had high Dexterity. GraphicZ had just arrived by Jack's side when Soundeffect was thrown high in the air. He used a Swing at Jack who was still low on the ground after kicking Soundeffect.

Jack pushed on the ground and hung in the air as the horizontal Swing went past under him. He cast Energy Bolts while spinning in the air. The eight bolts flew all around as he was not aiming at all when casting the spell. But it doesn't matter, there were enemies all around him, so the bolts simply looked for the closest enemies autonomously.

GraphicZ was rather shocked to see that many Energy Bolts, it implied his opponent had leveled up that spell to the highest level. He twirled his broadsword around skillfully, cutting the bolts that come at him and at Jack's sword that cut down.

GraphicZ suddenly felt himself getting grabbed on his left shoulder. Jack had stored his magic staff and used his free left hand to grip his shoulder. Then he felt the guy kicked on his leg. No, not a kick, it's a step. Before he knew it, the guy's other feet had gone up to his shoulder as well.

'F\*cking monkey! He was using me as a stepping stone!' GraphicZ cursed.

Jack kicked again downward and his body went up high into the air. Soundeffect who was falling down was in shock seeing Jack getting closer. Even as he clashed with the Knight, he was still targeting Soundeffect.

In his panic, Soundeffect used his Throwing Weapon skill. Jack ignored the incoming weapon and ate the damage as his magic staff reappeared and he shot Mana Bullet at Soundeffect. Both ranged attacks hit, but obviously, Soundeffect suffered more damage.

As his thrown weapon reappeared on his hand, his distance from Jack had shortened. Jack's sword was swinging at him from under. Soundeffect thrust his dagger forward to mitigate some of the damages. Their weapons collided and Soundeffect could feel his body got pushed up into the air again.

'F\*cking a\*shole was juggling me!' Soundeffect screamed internally in frustration.

Jack had used Power Strike to keep Soundeffect in the air. As he went down, he made continuous shots at the helpless Rogue. He had activated his staff's burst attack. Each of his shots sent out three energy balls.

GraphicZ tried to save his comrade by sending continuous slashes at Jack but Jack expertly used his swordsmanship to keep GraphicZ at bay, while his left hand continued to shoot at Soundeffect. Soundeffect himself tried desperately to slash at the range attacks coming his way, but his attack was not enough to offset Jack's damage. Not to mention how difficult it is to do such a maneuver in the air without any footings.

Sunset had tried to cast Heal again at Soundeffect, but Jack used Shredding Fang at an angle that hit both him and GraphicZ, hindering them both as he continued to shoot at Soundeffect. In the end, Soundeffect lost his life before he even landed back on the ground.

Seeing the situation, Gridhacker gritted his teeth and called for a retreat. He, GraphicZ, and Sunset regrouped together at one corner. Jack had been waiting for them to bundle together. He took out a Disruptive Bomb and threw it at them. But before the bomb exploded, Gridhacker activated a magic scroll and they disappeared.

'Where are they? Did they use an invisibility spell again?' Jack asked in his mind.

Peniel responded to his question, "no, if it was an invisibility spell, it would have been dispelled by the bomb's explosion. That was a Teleport spell."

So they really had withdrawn. Too bad, if he could just kill one more and threatened the others, he might be able to get more information about their purpose and also about this Master they kept on talking about. He expected these guys would be troublesome opponents.

"Who the heck were those guys?" Trinity Dawn asked. "How did they get here? Was that Sunset just now? Why does he look older? And why is he with them?"

Jack shrugged, "I want the answers to those too, sister."

Jack looked at where Soundeffect's corpse was. It had vanished after the battle was over. There were a few coins and a piece of equipment. Jack picked them up. The equipment was rare light armor boots.

Sweet, he thought. He might give this to Flame.

"Who the heck is that guy? How come he is so strong?" GraphicZ asked. They had been teleported out of the dungeon. They were in one of the ruins at the outskirts of the temple. Apparently, there was another entry point to the dungeon, not just the one inside the temple where Jack and the others had entered from. That's how they had been able to get inside without the army noticing.

They had been waiting for the army to arrive before they entered the dungeon. In the dungeon, they used their knowledge to navigate through it to get to the main hall where the Memory of Elding would have to be used on and hid themselves using a Group Invisibility scroll.

Sunrise had arrived next. They had been expecting him to be the one to activate the artifact, but it turned out the guy just stood there and was also waiting. Sunrise was using disguise at the time so they did not recognize him.

"That's why I said, do not underestimate him," Sunrise said to the other two. "He is not just a lucky player who happened to get the Second Soul Remnant. He had fought against a coalition of hundreds of players and not only did he survive, he even beat them to a retreat."

"You are kidding, right?" GraphicZ said with skepticism.

"I didn't witness the incident directly, but from the way those famous guilds' members were evading him later. I'm inclined to believe the news to be true."

"Death Associates was amongst those famous guilds in the capital, right? I didn't hear White Death saying anything about that."

"I doubt he will broadcast such an embarrassing happening to others, won't he?"

They were silent afterward.

"What should we do now?" Sunrise finally asked.

"We? You still have the gals to ask? If it was not for you losing those items to him, he won't have progressed this far," GraphicZ scolded.

"I admit it was my blunder, but I'm sincere about helping. Let me help," Sunrise pleaded.

"That will depend on Master. We can take you to him and you can make your own case to him. We can't promise anything," Gridhacker said.

"Damn it! I almost manage to go into that portal just now. I would have been able to redeem my failure otherwise."

Gridhacker gave a mocking laugh. "If you did, you will be dead already."

"I know about the secret method to defeat the boss," Sunrise said, dissatisfied with the mocking.

"Even if you did, you will still be dead," Gridhacker replied, but did not bother to explain more.

"So, are we leaving now?" Sunrise asked.

"Are you joking? Of course not, how can we go back with failure?"

"Then, what are we to do?"



"We wait for them to come out. Hopefully, that guy managed to get that item."

"Wait for him? But, doesn't it have been proven that we are no match to him?" Sunrise asked.

Gridhacker grinned, "He will get a big surprise once he came out."

### **Chapter 376: Memory Of Elding**

Jack placed the Memory of Elding back into the indentation on the floor, the silvery portal reappeared.

"Another dungeon entrance?" Trinity said in surprise. "What could be on the other side?"

Jack shrugged at the question.

"Should we wait for the others?" Trinity asked again.

Jack looked at his radar. Most of the green dots were moving in the maze already, but there were still some in static, meaning that they were still dealing with the puzzles in their rooms.

"I will go check it out first," Jack said. "You wait here for the others."

"All right, be careful," Trinity said.

Jack stepped into the portal. Once he did, the portal vanished. Trinity was stunned. She looked to the floor. The triangular pyramid was still there, but there was some kind of transparent layer covering it.

That was not there before, she thought.

She bent down to pull the pyramid out of its socket. She was thinking that if she took it out and reinserted it, the portal would return. But when her fingers touched the layer covering the pyramid, a jolt of electricity shocked her hand. She pulled her hand back and saw a slight burn on it. She then stared at the wall at which the portal used to be.

Looks like the portal was only meant for a single entrance, she thought.

Jack, who had no idea that the portal had vanished once he entered, looked around the space inside. It was empty. It was just a dark floor and dark space extending to eternity. He looked back and saw that there was no sign of a portal he had come through.

It was a one-way entrance again. He would have to find another way for the exit.

But where? He looked around. This place was completely empty. There was not even a landscape. Every direction appeared the same. Where was he even supposed to go?

Peniel came out of her hiding dimension and floated around. "This is a separate dimension, similar to my hidden dimension."

"Do you have any idea which way to go?" Jack asked.

"Which way to go? It's a very limited space," Peniel answered.

"What limited space? It's the horizon everywhere I see."

"Try going as far as you can then."

"Which way?"

"Any way."

Jack picked a random direction and started walking. Before long, he hit an invisible wall. He used his hand to trace around and felt that the invisible wall went around in a curve.

"Uh, this felt familiar," he said as he thought back to the Tutorial period. The town where the tutorial period was taking place was similarly encased by such an invisible wall, albeit this one appeared much smaller in the area it circumvented.

"So what? We are stuck in a space with nothing and no exit point?" Jack asked.

"There is always a point in building an enclosed dimension, I don't think the creator of this dimension..." Her words were cut short when a spark of lightning appeared not far from where they were.

Lightning seemed to come out of nowhere and then struck the ground. Another lightning bolt appeared and hit the same spot, followed by another. Soon, innumerable lightning cracked and shot to the same spot in a rapid manner. It cascaded until it seemed like thousands of lightning bolts were congregating simultaneously at that spot.

The resulting light was so bright that Jack had to close his eyes, his ears were also ringing from all these lightning strikes. But as abrupt as this phenomenon occurred, it suddenly stilled. Jack opened his eyes and looked at the spot that the lightning had ravaged. There was something there.

Looking closely, he was surprised to find out that it was not something, but someone. A man with purple skin was kneeling. This person looked up and his eyes met with Jack's. This person's eyes were completely white without any pupils. Jack imagined that he might have seen a few small sparks of electricity snaking out of those eyes.

The man stood up. He appeared to be naked, but there was no genitalia on the underside of his torso. He floated up and spread out his hand, sparks of lightning shot out from his two hands.

"Uh-oh, I don't like the look of this," Jack mumbled as he used his Inspect.

Eldingar (Rare Elite Boss, Elemental), level 27

HP: 94,000

"Looks like you found the dungeon boss," Peniel commented.

"Odd, why is its level so low? I thought this area should be one with the average around level 40 to 50?" Jack said.

"It didn't make sense indeed," Peniel agreed. All the monsters they had encountered in the vicinity of the temple had been around that level. Didn't make sense for the boss to be at a lower level.

"Wait... Can it be that it is to match my level?" Jack asked, noting about his level which was also at 27.

"I don't see why it will do that, all this is very fishy," Peniel responded.

The boss didn't let them discuss further. It made the first move since the intruder was staying still. Arc of lightning shot out at Jack. Although Jack was talking with Peniel, his attention never left the boss. Jack's Magic Shield already formed when he suspected the boss was about to make its move.

The Lightning hit the shield. Despite the Magic Shield had been max leveled, Jack still felt the aftershock. 312 damage appeared. Jack had a total of 1450 HP, added with the Superior Body Recovery that healed 197.5 HP every 9.5 seconds. This damage should not be a problem.

But considering this damage was after it being partially soaked by Magic Shield, a direct hit would be rather worrisome. So when he saw the hands of the boss lighting up again, Jack started running. The lightning bolt was too fast. He won't be able to dodge it if he only moved after the lightning was shot. He only had a chance if he was constantly moving.

Arcs of lightning lashed out one after another, causing sparks as they hit the ground behind Jack who was running with all his speed.

Jack was morose. He had thought that his improvement was enough now to content with a special elite of the same level. But before he could test out his theory, the system instead threw him a rare elite of the same level.

Eldingar did not just continue to get fooled by Jack's running. Its one hand was still shooting lightning that chased after Jack, while its other hand shot at the place in front of Jack, cutting off his escaping route.

Jack was actually expecting this. Once the two lightning arcs closing at him from both sides, he used Flash Step to retrace back, causing Eldingar to lose him for an instant as it was expecting him to continue going forward. During this short window, Jack sent the boss a Sword of Light. The skill hit and produced 1832 damage. Though it was tremendous damage, for the boss who had 94,000 HP, this was nothing.

Eldingar who had shown indifferent expression all this time, lifted one of its eyebrows, and looked at the part where he had been hit. Its face displayed annoyance. It made an abrupt lift of both his hands and countless arcs of lightning coalesced there, forming a huge lightning ball.

"Come on! Do you have to get serious just for that small scratch?" Jack complained. He started casting Barrier. Whatever move the boss was preparing did not look simple.

Eldingar tossed the lightning ball in Jack's direction. Jack had already started running again when it made that throwing motion. The ball fell on the ground not far from Jack and a huge electrical explosion surged out.

Jack was shocked by its force. Countless electric snakes spread out from the center of the explosion. His Barrier endured the blast but broke after being assailed continuously by the electric snakes. He was reeling backward as the remainder electric current shocked his body. Damages after damages appeared, but luckily he survived. He quickly drank a healing potion and used a Heal scroll simultaneously.

Seeing his target had survived its attack, Eldingar made a scornful expression and lashed out its hands. Three arcs of lightning bolt shot out from each hand.

Jack did not dare to reserve his energy. He activated Life Burning Art then drank a basic healing potion and used a Regeneration scroll to counteract the skill's HP consumption. With the speed and reaction

boost, he ran again. He cast Mana Bullet, Energy Bolts, and shot burst attacks using his staff while evading the increased frequency of lightning strikes, sometimes using his sword to parry the lightning bolts. Not as effective as Magic Shield, but better than none.

He could not approach the boss as the lightning strikes were too tightly packed. He only managed to evade so many of the strikes due to the distance. If he closed in, he would be fried to oblivion before he could even land one hit on the boss. But his ranged attacks were not proving too effective. At this rate, he would be electrocuted to death long before he could grind down the Boss' HP.

From this, it was apparent that he was still far from being able to contend against a Rare Elite of the same level.

### **Chapter 377: Four Purple Balls Of Lightning**

While he was still thinking of a way out, he felt his back getting electrocuted. He looked back in consternation and saw a purple ball of lightning was floating not far away. After another inspection, four such balls had appeared out of nowhere at four corners near the edges of this enclosed space. They started to shoot out lightning bolts.

'Shit! As if this fight is not hard enough?' Jack complained. "Is this the boss' skill?" He asked no one in particular, but Peniel who was floating nearby still replied, "not sure, but I think these balls had appeared by themselves. I didn't see the boss doing anything in relation to these balls. And they don't seem to target you particularly."

Peniel was not in a fight, so she could observe things more clearly. The lightning shot out of these four balls indeed was random. He had been hit by one simply due to bad luck. Still, dodging the lightning from the boss was already hard enough, now he had to pay attention to these four balls' random shootings again. This had complicated the battle to another level.

All he could do was continue to persevere through. He continued with his pitiful ranged attacks to chip down however little the boss' HP as best as he could. On one occasion when he cast Energy Bolts again, several of these bolts went off flying towards one of the purple balls in the corner. When it hit, Jack saw a damage number and an indication of an HP bar.

They could be damaged? Jack thought. But should he waste his time to destroy those purple balls? Chipping the boss' HP had already taken a very long time, one that he doubted he could keep up. Even if he could destroy all four balls, it would simply put him back to the original situation, one that he was still at a disadvantage in.

But one thing he knew from his past gaming experiences, was that most everything was made for a reason. The purple balls seemed to be not part of the boss' arsenal, so they must have served another purpose. After a short thought, he decided to go after one of the purple balls. Although it also discharged electricity, it only did so at a long interval, unlike the boss. Hence, Jack could still dodge it as long as he timed the moment accurately.

He started to attack the purple ball once it was done discharging its electrical attack. This purple ball appeared to have an HP of 10,000, but its defense stat was non-existent, and it didn't move, so Jack had

a very easy time hacking at it. Jack's standard sword damage net around 350 damages, courtesy of the boost from enhanced whetstone and sweet dumpling, in addition to other buffs.

The boss also did not just stop attacking him, he still sent Jack numerous lightning strikes. Jack evaded them while attacking the purple ball. At one time he instinctively hid behind the purple ball and was astonished to find the boss' attacks actually damaged the purple ball.

'Eh? They are not allies?' He thought.

So he ended up just stood behind the purple ball and used it as a shield while the boss helped him to reduce the purple ball's HP.

Jack thought it was strange this rare elite boss continued to just attack him from a distance. If it had run over to him and blasted him with electricity in close range, he would be out of idea as to how to deal with it. But he would take a blessing any time, he would leave the questioning for later.

With attacks from both sides, the purple ball punching bag could not last long. Its HP soon zeroed. While Jack was expecting the purple ball to disintegrate into nothingness. It instead transformed into a pure white ball. However, it was no longer discharging any electricity that assailed him. On the contrary, the dot in his radar representing this ball, which was previously red, had turned into a green dot.

'Heh? It was my ally now?' Jack thought in confusion.

During his confusion, an interface appeared above this white dot. Because he was close to this white ball, he could see this interface showed a targeting system. He was in a hurry as the boss was still throwing lightning strikes his way, so he didn't think much and went ahead to interact with the interface. He heard a notification voice asking him to select a target. Without hesitation, he aimed the targeting system at the boss.

As soon as the targeting system locked onto the boss, a searing thick white lightning bolt shot out and slammed into the boss. The boss' HP reduced dramatically as the lightning continued to pour into its body. The white ball in front of Jack finally stopped discharging and turned into a dull grey ball. The boss dropped down onto the ground into a kneeling position. White lightning could be seen coiling around its purple body. It was unmoving on the ground.

It took Jack an instant, but he quickly snapped out of his surprise and used Shooting Dash to quickly reach the boss. This was a golden opportunity not to be wasted! He exclaimed in his mind.

Once he arrived, he executed Power Strike at the incapacitated boss. 2000 damage appeared above the boss. A max-leveled Power Strike aided with Shooting Dash amongst other boosts was truly monstrous. Even he would die in a single strike if he was hit by this.

He jumped back once he made his attack, in preparation if the boss retaliated, but it kept its kneeling position. The white lightning continued to coil around its body. After sure it was truly safe, he hurriedly went back in and execute attack over attack without reserve. Eldingar simply stayed there receiving all the assaults without any response.

Even as Jack attacked it frenziedly, he didn't stop paying attention. He noticed the white lightning was getting thinner and less as time went on. When it was almost gone, the boss started to nudge around.

Jack was not taking any chance. He quickly ran away. As expected, once the last strand of the white lightning was gone, it stood back up and went back to shoot lightning bolts from his hands.

Jack ran to the second purple ball. Now that he knew that there was such a way to incapacitate the boss, everything became much simpler. From the last attack, he had managed to take out almost a quarter of the boss' HP. Considering there were four purple balls, it should be enough to finish the boss.

He repeated the previous strategy by hiding behind the purple ball, ignoring its occasional electrical strike. He used potions and heal scrolls to recover his lost HP. While the purple ball was getting sandwiched by both Jack's and Eldingar's attacks.

Once the second purple ball transformed into a white one, he repeated the process, sending another thick pillar of lightning onto the boss. He then used Charge to increase his speed to get close to the boss, since Shooting Dash was still in cooldown, and then hack away the helpless boss with abandon, before quickly ran away again once the white lightning chains became thinner.

Jack continued using the same strategy, repeatedly utilizing the remaining purple balls. By the time the fourth ball was activated, Eldingar only had less than a quarter HP left.

'No more purple ball after this, need to make this count!' Jack exclaimed in his mind as the thick white lightning slammed into the boss. Jack rushed at him and started his final burst assaults to take out the boss' remaining HP.

While the prospect looked promising, when Eldingar only had a sliver of HP left, a strong force suddenly exploded out of its body, eliminating the remaining white lightning chains that were still holding it and pushed Jack away. It then jumped back and flew away to the other end of this enclosed space. It lifted both his hands up. Jack was assuming it would use that giant lightning ball toss again, but instead of one giant ball, more than ten giant balls appeared.

"Holy shit! Is this its dying struggle?" Jack exclaimed in alarm. The lightning ball toss from before had proven that he could not evade it, he would still get damaged by its aftershock. If those many balls exploded at the same time, he would still die even with his Barrier spell on.

In a split second, Jack made a decision. If he could not evade, then just gamble who would die first. He used Shooting Dash which had gone off cooldown to get close to the boss who had run to the other corner. He sent Sword of Light after getting in range. With the additional damage boost from Shooting Dash, the skill produced almost 4000 damage!

Unfortunately, it was still not enough to take out Eldingar, it still had a tiny 500 HP left. Jack had hoped for the 30% critical chance of Sword of Light to take effect, but sadly his high luck stat didn't help this time. But he had also prepared a contingency if it didn't happen. He had pointed his staff at Eldingar and activated Dragon's Eye the moment he executed Sword of Light. He could only rely on ranged attacks, there was no more time to move closer to get the boss into melee range.

## **Chapter 378: Lightning God Sphere**

Through the slow-motion view, Jack could see that just as his Sword of Light hit, Eldingar's hands were about to come down, bringing the doom of countless lightning balls down at him. At this time he cast Arcane Turbulence.

In his perception, his spell formation was forming at a normal pace. However, under an outsider's perception, the runes on his magic staff were formed at five times the normal speed. Hence, the spell was cast in less than one second. Jack didn't stop, he continued to cast Ice Ring. Although the boss was floating in the air, it was floating very low, the Arcane Turbulence and Ice Ring could still hit it.

Without stopping, Jack also cast Energy Bolts and Mana Bullet. All four spells were cast at almost the same time due to the Dragon's Eye effect. The two latter spells needed travel time to reach the boss, while the first two struck at a faster rate, almost instantaneously.

Jack was hoping the first two spells would have been enough to devour the boss' remaining HP. The latter two were only for precaution, but if so, then it would be a race to see if the latter two could hit the boss before it released its toss.

Even though it was a dire situation, he did not forget to summon his runestone of luck just before the first two spells connected, boosting his luck stat.

Fortunately, this time his luck went through, probably due to the luck boost on the runestone as well. The combination of Ice Ring and Arcane Turbulence managed to finish the boss. As its HP reached zero, the giant balls of lightning in the air dissipated. Eldingar's head lifted up, he was looking up as he silently dissipated, leaving a few sparks of lightning in its previous position.

"That was a surprisingly peaceful death," Jack commented on his opponent's behavior before its death.

He then heard a voice notification, "Congratulations on defeating Eldingar. Receiving 310,000 experience points."

Considering the level of this boss was not that high, the exp rewarded was not as abundant. But due to its Rare Elite grade, it was still high enough that it elevated Jack's Warrior to level 28 and Mage to level 27.

"What are you grinning about?" With the fight over, Peniel now flew back to near Jack. She had been flying high in the air during the fight. "You have been through many close calls before, didn't see you being this happy."

"Hehe, I just realized something," Jack said to her.

"What?"

"That I can already pass the test from that Janus guy."

"Why suddenly think about that test?"

"Never mind that, I can only give it a shot after we return to the capital," he said as he walked to the spot where Eldingar had dissipated.

"Eh?" He uttered as he looked around. "Why is there nothing?"

He turned to Peniel and asked, "did you pay attention when the boss dies? Did you see it drop anything?"

"Why would I be paying attention? It's not like I am the one that will get the loots," the fairy replied.

"What, no loots? So I get only experience for that whole damn fight? So I have used the runestone of luck for nothing?" Jack complained. "Do you know why such things happened?"

"As I have said, something is fishy. This whole expedition is weird. Not to mention, what are those four purple balls? Why is there that kind of crippling mechanisms in this boss fight?"

"Hey, it was because of those purple balls that I could win. Don't complain about good things."

"I know. I'm just saying that it is strange."

Now that he thought about it. Sunrise had been trying to get into this space when he had activated the portal. Did he already know that there would be a boss here? If he had known, then surely he knew about those four purple balls as well. Otherwise, with his capability, he would only be running into his death if he tried to fight the boss. But then again, even with the help of those purple balls, he doubted that Sunrise would be able to survive against the boss. Especially the boss' final struggle, Sunrise did not have the firepower to finish off the boss before it obliterated him. Did this mean that Sunrise himself was not fully aware of all the information in this boss fight?

He decided to not think too much about it. The idea that some players possessed this kind of knowledge about this game world was unsettling. This might point that these players might also know why they had been forced into this game world. He would ask Sunrise again the next time he met him.

He looked into the Container of Souls inside his storage. Even though the boss did not drop loots, it should at least give some souls, right? Considering its grade was Rare Elite like the Grim Sand Drake, the soul it gave should not be low, even if it was much lower level than the drake.

"Are you f\*cking kidding me?" Jack cursed after seeing inside the container. There were only 236 souls inside, this soul must be his leftover ones added with the ones he got when he defeated Soundeffect. That boss just now did not generate any soul at all!

"No souls, no loots, what an absolute waste of time!" He complained.

While he was wallowing in his bad mood, he felt some tickling at the top of his head. He looked up and saw a light up there, and it was slowly floating down. As the light came down, the tickle spread to his entire body. He felt as if he was experiencing mild electrocution.

'Such strange feeling,' he thought. His body even beginning to shiver slightly as the light was about to drop to the ground.

"That's... No... Not possible," Peniel seemed to be at a loss of words. She then flew closer to the light. "It's... It is! But... How can this possibly appear here?"

Jack was curious about Peniel's reaction. Rarely did something cause the fairy to stutter. He went and approached the light as well.



"What is that?" He asked when he arrived. The thing floating in front looked like a small ball that was constantly emitting light. There were also occasional sparks of electricity coursing out of it. The surface of the thing seemed to keep on shifting, as if constantly moving, but it was stationary the whole time.

Peniel was still staring at the thing, she was mumbling something inaudible. She perhaps did not even hear Jack's question.

Not bothering to ask a second time, she used Inspect on the floating thing. A loading bar appeared.

Wow, it was sometimes already since I saw this loading bar, Jack said. The God-eye monocle allowed him to inspect items or persons no matter how high-level it was, but it was still subjected to some of the standard limitations, such as the time needed when identifying high-grade items. Which meant, the thing floating in front of him was one such high-grade item.

He was full of anticipation again. It would be a true let-down for not getting anything after the fight with that Rare Elite boss, and from Peniel's reaction, this thing was certainly not simple.

Peniel finally turned to him while the loading bar was still ongoing, her face showed complicated expression. "Are you using inspect on it?" She asked.

"Yes, it is still loading. So long! It is more than one minute already and it was still at 4%! What is it anyway?" Jack asked. It was even longer than when he inspected the Transformation Box.

"Wait for your Inspect to finish then you will see," she answered.

Out of boredom, he used the time to practice his skill and cast spells for proficiency. As long as his eyesight was maintained on the item, his actions didn't disturb the Inspecting process. After a long half-hour time, the identification process was finally over. This Inspect had also given him an abundance of proficiency that pushed this skill to Advanced Apprentice.

He was, however, not paying attention to his support skill's level-up, as his thought was currently transfixed by the words in front of him.

Lightning God Sphere (Divine Treasure)

Required soul link to use

"Divine?" He blurted out. The highest grade he knew of an item's classification as depicted in the beta guide was Legendary. What was this about Divine? It sounded way better than Legendary.

He turned to Peniel, who was still having a complicated expression. "Is this Divine grade better than a Legendary?" He asked.

"It is," Peniel nodded, confirming his guess. "In fact, there are only seven such divine treasures in the world. This here is one of them."

"Wow! Ain't I super lucky then to get my hands on it?"

"You are more than lucky. This is simply incomprehensible. There is no way a Divine Treasure to appear here. Especially not when it is only guarded by a measly level 27 Rare Elite. Such treasure was supposed to be guarded by at least level 70 Eternal creature."

"But it is here right now in front of us, isn't it? Or is it some kind of a counterfeit?"

"No, it is a genuine Divine Treasure."

### **Chapter 379: Lightning God Blessing**

"Then no need to sweat the small stuff," Jack uttered as he took the Lightning God Sphere in his hand. He didn't get shocked by the tiny electricity that occasionally shot out from the thing, but the hair on his body did feel all raised up.

"You like to take things too easy, you know," Peniel said.

"Thank you for your compliment."

"That's not a compli... wait! Don't link with it!!"

Jack was startled by Peniel's shout. An interface had appeared when he took the sphere into his hand, asking if he wanted to soul-link with the treasure. He had clicked Yes just now.

"What? Why?" Jack was taken aback by the panic in Peniel's voice. A loading bar had appeared, he could felt the tickling feeling on his entire body intensified after confirming the link, and it was still gradually getting stronger.

"Why are you so hasty?" Peniel complained, she was gritting her teeth with displeasure.

"Lady, don't get so angry. I will cancel the process," Jack offered.

"No, stop! Can you quit just doing things immediately? If you cancel it now, the backlash will most likely kill you," Peniel said. "Even with that Immortal Soul of yours, I doubt you will come out unscathed."

"Uh, so what do you propose me to do?"

"Now you bother to ask my opinion?!"

Jack kept his mouth shut while displaying an apologetic expression. Looking at the situation, whatever he said will just anger his fairy friend more.

Peniel sighed after Jack was silent for a while. "Just continue with the linking. I don't see any other choice now."

"Will something bad happen due to the link?"

"Just complete it first. Do your best! If you fail, you will still get the backlash that might kill you."

"Yes, mam!"

Peniel rolled her eyes at him. At this time the space around them collapsed, they were back to the interior of the temple dungeon, but in a different room than the main hall where they were before.

Jack heard a notification voice, "congratulations on completing the dungeon, receiving 80,000 experience points and 10 gold coins. As the person who had defeated the boss of the dungeon, you are awarded a Gold treasure chest. You can exit this dungeon anytime by going out the door."

"Treasure chest?" Jack exclaimed. He could see the door the notification had informed, but where is the treasure chest? He turned back and saw it, a gleaming large treasure chest of golden color. The sight of it mesmerized him.

"Hey, concentrate!" Peniel yelled. The shout snapped Jack back to focus on the linking. The electrifying pressure was increasing in intensity. "Don't go failing just because you get distracted!" She added.

"Yes, mam," Jack said again, with a little bit grumbling tone this time.

As time passed, several sparks of electricity started to appear around the room. Looking at the phenomenon, Jack had a bad feeling. Not long after, as he had slightly expected it, one of these sparks shot a lightning bolt at him, causing him to spasm. 100 damage appeared above him.

"Endure it! It is part of the process," Peniel informed.

Holy crap! This is starting to feel like when he was absorbing the runestone with the lightning element. The difference was, the torture caused by those runestones was only mentally, the whole process occurred only within his mind. This time though, it had taken place in real space, and the lightning affected him physically. Heck, he even got damage from it. Luckily, he was considered out of combat, so his two body recovery skills were in full effect, quickly filling back his missing HP.

The frequency of lightning strikes increased. He hardly had the chance to breathe properly with all the electrocution. He somehow felt lucky that he had experienced the lightning torture twice from the Runestone of Probability and Runestone of Luck. He could say that he was trained already in enduring the agony from these lightning strikes, but still, it was truly tormenting. No matter how many times he had experienced it before, he could be sure that he would never get used to it.

While his willpower had been trained to endure the pain, his body though, did not. As time passed and the intensity of the lightning increased, his HP decreased at a rapid rate, his body recovery skills were having trouble keeping up. He started drinking recovery potions.

He did not know how long the process had been going. One hour? Two hours? His vision was starting to blur. He was just busy trying to keep his HP at a safe threshold amongst the unending pain. He had even used the remaining Heal scroll and Regeneration scroll in his bag when the potions were no longer sufficient.

He felt truly lucky that he had a huge HP pool compared to others. If it was normal players experiencing this, they would have succumbed long ago.

When he was panicking as he ran out of his recovery magic scrolls while the basic healing potion and healing potion usage were still in cooldown, the Lightning God Sphere in front of him suddenly broke apart into pieces.

Jack was terrified when it happened, thinking that he might have failed the linking and thus the phenomenon. But then the broken pieces transformed into small bolts of lightning and stabbed into his body. He cringed from the pain, it was as if he was jabbed by a countless number of needles. The pain slowly subsided as his blurry vision turned clear. His body was drenched by cold sweats. He then realized that his blur vision was caused by tears from his eyes.

Shit! The pain caused my eyes to cry? Such a disgrace! Luckily no one was around, he thought as he quickly wiped the tear in his eyes. He then noticed that Peniel was staring at him.

"Uh, Um... Sand got into my eyes," Jack said to her.

Ignoring his pitiful excuse, Peniel asked, "did you succeed?"

Jack looked around, he didn't hear any notification voice, the Lightning God Sphere was also nowhere to be seen. "I think so?" He said.

"Look inside your status window, genius!" Peniel said.

Feeling sheepish, he opened the status window, while inside he grumbled, 'try getting electrocuted for hours, see if you can still think straight.'

"You do know I can sense your dissatisfaction, right? Project your thoughts directly at me, if you dare," Peniel taunted.

"No, mam," Jack replied.

He looked into his status window. He assumed that whatever effect the Lightning God Sphere gave should be under the Inherent Skills section, just like the Immortal Soul.

Lightning God Blessing, Level 1/3

Lightning resistance +50 (passive skill)

Every attack +10% lightning damage and 1% chance to cause Paralyze for 2 seconds (passive skill)

Lightning God Barrage (Active skill)

Shoot 20 balls of lightning that explode dealing 300% lightning damage each in a 5-meters diameter area, 30% chance of causing Paralyze for 10 seconds.

Range: 20 meters

Cooldown: 5 hours

Upgrade to next level require: 1 Divine Gem, 10 Magic Crystal, exp: 0/3,000,000

Jack stared at the description for a long time. Wasn't this a little bit too overpowered? This active skill when activated, would cause a total of 6000% if all 20 balls were concentrated on a single target. The amount of damage would be astronomical! And anyone who was caught within a five meters area around the target would also be blown to smithereens. He had truly gotten a boon this time.

As he was getting elated for this boon, he suddenly realized something. Eh? Why was Peniel getting so troubled when he soul-linked with this Lightning God Sphere? He turned to the fairy and reported, "I got this inherent skill called Lightning God Blessing. It gives me lots of wonderful passive skills and one kick-ass active skill."

"That's all well and good," Peniel said with a blank face. "It has levels, doesn't it? Does it show what is needed for level up?"

"Yes, it said here, I will need one divine gem, ten magic crystals, and three million exp. I'm not sure this exp..."

"Three million?" Peniel blurted out, interrupting him, "only three million? Are you sure?"

"Didn't you say you can look at my stats after we linked, right? Why don't you take a look for yourself if you don't believe me?"

Peniel did just that. Kind of making Jack felt slightly offended as it suggested that she really didn't believe him.

"It really is only three million..." She muttered.

"Now, why did you go all panicking when I soul-link with that divine treasure. Doesn't it give me such a wonderful ability?" Jack asked.

Peniel gave him a side glance, irritation returned to her eyes. "Although you have dodged the big bullet this time, doesn't mean you come out clean. Three million exp points are still a lot. It will be roughly the same amount if you level up your current level ten times! How long do you think you will need to accumulate that amount?"

### **Chapter 380: Quest Item**

"Well, just leave the leveling for later. It's not like I'm in a hurry to level up this skill. I also don't have either Divine Gem or Magic Crystal yet, so there is no point to accumulate exp for it now."

"You don't get it, do you?" Peniel said with a snort. "This skill came from divine treasure. It takes priority. Whatever exp points you get now will get absorbed by it. You have no control over this."

"That..." Jack's eyes turned wide. "Are you saying I will not be able to level up until I fill up the exp needed for this blasted blessing?"

Peniel nodded.

"This is not a blessing, this is a curse!" Jack yelled.

"That's why I am angry with you soul-linking the sphere without knowing the consequence!" Peniel yelled back.

"Alright, let's take a moment to calm ourselves down. All these yellings are not good for us," Jack said as he turned around, took a deep breath, then cursed out loudly, "f\*ck! F\*ck!"

His dual-class had already requiring lots of exp compared to normal players, now he got a bottomless pit to feed the exp points some more. He could imagine the huge gap where everyone left him behind in terms of level.

"You can still consider yourself lucky, you know," Peniel said.

"Yeah, I am very lucky," Jack said sarcastically.

"Remember when I said a Divine Treasure was normally guarded by a level 70 Eternal creature. Meaning such a creature could only be defeated by lots of level 70 Elite class adventurers, or several level 70 with special classes."

"Special classes?"

"Don't get side-tracked. Anyway, this divine treasure is meant for those level 70 adventurers. Under normal circumstances, the experience required to upgrade its level is around ten times a level 70 adventurer needed to level up. That's why I'm so surprised that it only needs a paltry three million exp here."

"Oh..." Jack understood what she was saying.

"That's why I was panicking when you soul-linked with it. Imagine if you are required to collect the amount of exp needed by a level 70. Not to mention a level 70 can fight a level 70 monster which gives tons of experience. If you try to collect the same amount of exp by fighting only the low-level monsters afforded by your current level. You can forget about leveling up for the next one hundred years."

Jack cringed when he heard her words. If that really happened, he should either retire to being an auxiliary job worker like Ellie or find a way to remove this Lightning God Blessing. He truly, as Peniel had said, had dodged the bullet.

"Perhaps the experience required is adjusted to my level, that's why it was this amount. Similar to the boss just now who matched my level," Jack offered his deduction.

"It shouldn't have done that in my knowledge, but the fact is in front of me, and I can't deny that divine treasure just now was genuine." After a pause, Peniel added, "Three million is a lot, but it is still doable. You just have to accept the fact that you will fall behind the others. Once we are done with this expedition, I will show you a place where you can gather exp points quickly."

"There is such a place?" Jack's hope was reignited. "Oh, fair fairy, you are truly my savior!"

"Save your bootlicking, go see what that treasure chest hold," Peniel said.

"Oh, yes, the treasure chest," he had completely forgotten about the gold chest. He turned to look at the treasure chest, but as he did, he saw something behind the chest, on an altar. It was a simple bottle, but it was marked by his God-eye monocle, meaning the bottle had some kind of a function. He went to the bottle first instead of the treasure chest, and use Inspect on it.

All-curse Expulsion Potion (Quest item)

Remove any curse

Seeing this potion reminded him again of his SSS quest. If he got this potion, won't that quest be as good as complete? Could it really have been this easy? Well, it was not that easy actually coming til here, but he would have expected more from a quest that was graded the highest in difficulty. Probably what Peniel said was true, there was something wrong with this quest. Could those players, Gridhacker and the others, have something to do with this?

No point in dwelling on it. He reached for the potion, but hesitated for a moment. Will there be a trap? But his God-eye monocle should have sent him a warning if there was one, right? Not to mention his Investigative talent also had a probability to notify him if anything was out of the ordinary.

He walked around the altar, scrutinizing every detail. Trying to see if anything was out of place. He couldn't find any, so he just resolved himself to take the bottle. He closed one of his eyes and cringed as he lifted the bottle, expecting something to happen. But fortunately, nothing did.

"You are weird," Peniel commented after seeing his act.

"Hey, you never know what will happen with this tomb raiding type of game. Traps were always abounding," Jack tried to defend himself.

After storing the quest potion, now he could finally deal with the chest. He admired its shiny surface, he could see his reflection through that golden shine. Even from look alone, the Gold treasure chest outclassed the Bronze one by a mile.

He took out his Enduring Lockpick. He was sure that this chest would require a ton of attempts, luckily he had stocked up on lots of lockpicks before the expedition. He also summoned his Runestone of Luck, but then realized something and asked Peniel, "do I have to have this runestone in effect while I lockpick? Though I can multi-task, I still prefer to concentrate while doing the lockpicking."

"You can summon your runestone of luck once you heard that your lockpick is successful. No need to have it on effect all the time while doing the lockpicking," Peniel explained.

Jack nodded. The success rate of lockpicking this Gold Treasure Chest at his current Intermediate Apprentice grade would be abysmally low. He would need to score a perfect execution on every attempt to compensate for it. Otherwise, even with his deep stock of lockpicks, he might still not manage to open the chest. If he ran out of lockpicks and this treasure chest was still locked, then he might truly cry. He did not think the dungeon would still let him get to this treasure chest if he re-entered.

As he was about to store back the runestone of luck, he stopped. He looked at the runestone in bewilderment.

Runestone of Luck (rare runestone)

Increase luck by approx. 5 points for 10 seconds.

Elemental energy required for upgrade: 850/1000

The last time he checked, the elemental energy was only 50 points. Now it suddenly shot up to 850? He didn't remember feeding it any gemstone. Peniel also gave her attention when she saw Jack looking at the runestone.

"You mentioned that this Runestone of Luck's element is lightning, right?" She asked.

"It is," Jack answered.

Peniel pondered a bit before saying, "probably there is some excess lightning elemental energy after you merged with the Lightning God Sphere. This excess elemental energy got absorbed by this runestone."

"There can be such a case?" Jack asked. He then remembered something and summoned another runestone, the Runestone of Probability. He used Inspect on it. as expected, the elemental energy inside this one was 910, way more than it should be. Both the lightning element runestones were now close to upgrading to Super Rare grade.

Just to make sure, he summoned his other non-lightning runestones. They were still at a pitiful amount of energy.

"Too bad not all of them are lightning-element runestones," Jack commented. "Otherwise they would all have received a free bonus."

"You wish!" Peniel said. "I bet the excess energy was divided between the two. If you have four lightning runestones. Then the excess energy would have been divided by four. The total amount of excess energy will remain the same. In other words, if only your Runestone of Luck is lightning, it would have been upgraded to Super Rare Grade by now."

"I see. But this is still a great free boon. Do you know of any way I can get a similar boon again?"

Peniel didn't even feel like deeming that with an answer. Did he think a Divine Treasure was something that he could find at the side of a street?

Seeing his fairy friend was ignoring him, Jack didn't bother her anymore. He sat down beside the Gold Treasure Chest and started to work on the lockpicking process. Despite his perfect execution, the twelve counts inside his Enduring Lockpick were soon exhausted with failures.

He didn't think too much of it. Expecting to open this treasure chest with only twelve tries was like asking for a miracle. He took out his standard lockpicks and got back to work.