

World 621

Chapter 621: Entering Legacy Dungeon

Jack spent the night in Heavenly Citadel. He had informed Jeanny that he was good to dive into the legacy dungeon tomorrow morning. Jeanny said that she would prepare the manpower for tomorrow.

Before going to rest, Jack also sent another message to one other person on his Friend List.

"Yo, Haon, how are you doing? You are not getting captured again, are you?" Jack said in his message.

"What do you want?" Leavemealone asked back.

"So cold! And here I thought we have bonded enough after what we went through together. Well, anyway. I called you to ask if you know about the World Tournament?"

"What World Tournament?"

"Heh. I figure a hermit like you will have no idea. Go to the nearest main city and ask the country officials about it. They should post a request looking for outworlders to participate in a World Tournament. You can try to offer yourself as a champion for the Sangrod Empire."

"Is that so...?"

"There will be lots of strong people participating. Aren't you on your way to competing in the world championship before the world turned? This is your chance to continue what you are meant to do."

"... I will think about it."

"Don't think too long, the tournament happened less than three weeks from now," Jack said.

He didn't receive any reply from Haon anymore.

"Damn! Talk about being rude," Jack said to himself.

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The next morning, Jack went to the place that housed the Legacy structure. It was an open plaza with a large horseshoe-shaped sculpture at its center. This sculpture was where they activated the gate for the legacy dungeon.

Jack had learned that this legacy dungeon have a cooldown after activation. Unlike the natural dungeon where people can continue entering without limitation. The different difficulties were calculated differently. The Easy difficulty had a six-hour cooldown. Once a team entered, another can only enter six hours later. The medium difficulty had a one-day cooldown. While the Hard difficulty had a three-day cooldown.

The maximum number of people that could enter at a time was the same as the natural dungeon, ten players. When Jack arrived there, the other nine people had been waiting. They were Jeanny, John, Fierce Flame, Giant Steve, Viral Cora, Star Bowler, Balo, Jason Wu, and Olddemon.

"My gramps is not joining?" Jack asked.

"He was helping The Man and his team on a guild quest," Jeanny replied.

"Yeah, instead of an expert, we are stuck with this one instead," John said as he pointed to Bowler.

"A word of warning. You can go ahead and heal yourself inside. Don't expect me to cast any heal on you," Bowler threatened.

"As if anything can touch me," John said.

"You are joining? I thought you are too lazy for this kind of shit? You are not waiting for everyone to study and get accustomed to this dungeon first before joining the raid yourself?" Jack asked John.

"Well, I suppose I can join for fun once in a while," John answered.

"All right! Everyone ready?" Jeanny asked. She had activated the interface on the sculpture while everyone was talking. A silvery gateway now appeared before the structure.

"Do we really have to try the Medium difficulty?" Bowler asked. "The Easy one is already rather difficult. Why take the risk? We should give it a try later after we level up further."

"See what I mean?" John ridiculed Bowler's words.

"If it's difficult, just take it as a challenge. If it's an easy win, then be grateful," Jack said to Bowler.

"That's a pretty laid-back way of looking at a situation," Viral commented.

Jack shrugged, "It's practical."

"We have to try it to know how far we are from conquering this difficulty," Jeanny said to Bowler. "The last time the scout team consisted of only average players. Now we are trying it with our best members. Considering the rare timing when Jack is here, we should give it a try."

"Why does it sound like it's my fault?" Jack asked.

"I have to correct you about this team being our best members, considering... you know," John again pointed at Bowler, which retorted with a glare.

"Enough with the bullshit! Let's go!" Jeanny announced. She then stepped into the portal.

"Okay, the second leader is entering next!" Jack said as he walked to the portal.

"You are right! The second leader is entering," John exclaimed as he ran past Jack and dove into the portal.

"So childish," Jack said and entered next.

The others followed in after.

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They came out into an ice world. The sky above was filled with aurora while the ground was solid ice. Around them were trees that had been frozen solid.

The silvery portal was behind them. As with most natural dungeons, they could opt to retreat from this portal if they thought they couldn't successfully raid this dungeon.

"It's colder than the Easy difficulty," Viral remarked.

"Everyone, gather here, please," Jeanny said as she took out a magic scroll. "This is the scroll that contained Resist Ice spell. It will increase everyone's ice resistance in the next fifteen minutes."

"Cool. Where did you get that scroll?" Jack asked.

"Our advanced expert Scrollmaker made it for us, the native that joined us after we completed Dylan's quest. He made this scroll with the help of Trinity's spell. This Resist Ice spell was originally hers," Jeanny answered.

"Oh, that one," Jack remembered. It was the quest that Dylan had asked for his help but he redirected it to the guild. "So, why did Trinity not join this raid? We don't need a scroll if she joined. Was she busy as well?"

"Her ability is not suited for this dungeon. Most of her spells are ice-based. The monsters here have very high ice resistance," Jeanny explained.

Once everyone gathered, Jeanny activated the scroll. A soft blue light shrouded them. The cold that they felt was lessened. Jack checked his status window and found out his Ice resistance had gone up 30 points to 80. He already had a very high ice resistance prior, contributed by his Ice Swift ring, chest armor, amulet, and Archmage's inherent skill.

"I have more of these scrolls. I will cast it every fifteen minutes as long as we are still in here," Jeanny informed.

Everyone nodded. Everyone then got ready and started advancing slowly with Jeanny and Giant Steve taking the vanguard position. The frozen woods around them were eerily silent.

"It was also empty of hostiles around the starting position in the Easy difficulty. We should meet with enemies once we proceed deeper," Jeanny explained.

The Savage Wind Wolf was beside Flame. Flame had summoned it from the start since a pet had no duration limit, she only needed to take care that the pet didn't die while it was out. One thing about that pet surprised Jack, it was wearing some sort of armor in the shape of dog clothing.

"Is your wolf wearing armor?" Jack asked.

"Not only armor, see her feet?" Flame answered. Jack noticed after Flame said it, the wolf's paws were also wearing some sort of metallic claws.

"They can wear equipment?" Jack was astonished.

"They can," it was Peniel who answered. "It can only be made in a special shop, though. I didn't see any in the cities we have visited. Where did you make the armor for your pet?"

"Mine was made by a native hermit who dwells inside a forest near the edge of this country. I stumbled upon her by chance. She gave me a quest and we became friends after. She rewarded me by crafting the

equipment for my wolf. I still have to pay her with coins and materials, though. I can take you to meet her if you want, but I can't guarantee she will craft the equipment for your pet," Flame answered.

"Yes, please bring me there," Jack said with excitement.

"I haven't seen your pet by the way. Why not summon it yet?" Flame asked.

"Well, my pet's level is still below average. I'm just afraid this place's monsters will be too strong," Jack said. But after giving it a thought, considering his pet was a rare elite and his Tame Pet skill that boosted the pet's HP was at maximum. The players here would most likely get killed first before his pet did, so he summoned it.

The Therras Beast appeared beside him majestically. The players nearby needed to move aside to avoid bumping into the beast. Flame's Savage Wind Wolf felt intimidated by Therras' presence and moved away. Therras was now level 36, Jack had continued feeding it with the expensive pet food.

Jack had made a detour to the magic association shop to buy the pet food when he visited Commander Quintus' tower yesterday. He had spent another 108 gold coins for another two months supply. He planned to keep on feeding Therras until his pet caught up with the mainstream level. He was probably the most luxurious player in growing his pet.

"That is an unusual beast," Flame commented.

"Unusual in a good way, right?" Jack said proudly.

"I think so. Its aura is really strong," Flame said. The others also felt that way. Most of them already had the basics in mana sense, so they could tell.

"Hehe, I do believe that it..." Jack stopped when he noticed movements on his radar.

John caught the same thing in his. "Incoming!" He warned everyone and started casting a spell.

Chapter 622: The Threat of the Frozen Dungeon

John's spell formation was completed and his dual-sword-wielding Avatar appeared. He continued casting and eight dirt golems came out. They stood in a formation surrounding him.

"Oh? You have increased your spell level?" Jack asked. The last time he fought against John, the dirt golems he summoned were only seven.

"The enemies were pretty fast!" John uttered while he watched his radar. "There are three. Coming from ten, twelve, and three o'clock directions!"

"What?" Balo asked, puzzled. Jason came beside his fellow martial artist and used his arm to point in the directions John meant.

They heard the sound already, of frozen leaves getting crushed by fast movements.

"Above!" Jeanny shouted.

Three pale blue creatures rushed out from the trees' branches above. They looked like deformed pterosaurs. They had leathery wings for arms, two clawed legs, and a tail. Their heads ended with a sharp beak. Jack used inspect on them.

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Ice Ray Bird (Special Elite monster, Avian), level 45

HP: 205,000

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"Ranged players, attack!" Jeanny commanded.

Only two amongst them had no ranged capability whatsoever, Jeanny and Giant Steve. The others started shooting ranged attacks at the three birds while Viral played her music to increase everyone's attack speed. Viral gained a ranged skill when she went past level 40, called Sonic Darts. It allowed her to shoot sound projectiles periodically when her music was in play. Balo also gained a ranged skill called Ki Bullet at level 40. His punch shot out an energy wave that hit an opponent in the distance. This attack could only be used every thirty seconds, though.

Seeing that his two summons served no purpose against these monsters, John cast another spell to summon his Fae. The Fae joined the others in shooting ranged attacks.

The three birds were fast and durable. Despite so many bombardments, not many hit. The few that hit resulted in damages less than usual. The birds themselves attacked by shooting ice bullets from their mouth. These ice bullets dealt ice damage and caused either slow or freeze.

"Head's up!" They heard Olddemon shout.

A dark red energy rope shot out from him and entangled one Ice Ray Bird that was about to swoop down using its claws. The energy rope was Warlock's Hell Whip. The rope was pulled and the bird was forcefully dragged down. Jeanny, Giant Steve, and Balo immediately pounced at the grounded bird.

Jack was not to be left behind, he cast Magic Bind at one of the remaining two birds in the air. Losing its ability to flap its wing, it fell to the ground. Everyone immediately focused their attacks on these two.

The remaining one, seeing its two comrades were bullied, swooped down in an attempt to disrupt the players. Its two claws came down at Balo's back who was still pinning the grounded bird.

Balo was aware already that danger was approaching from behind, but he heard a voice, "Don't worry, I got your back."

Jason came and put himself between Balo and the ice bird. The claws struck Jason's long mace. Everyone was worried because Jason's level was low, at 38. He had been focusing on leveling up after becoming an inquisitor, but it was only a few days since then. He was selected because his class was healer-based, Jeanny figured they needed at least two healers on the team. There were, of course, higher-level healers. But when it came to survivability, this martial artist still beat the other healers without a sweat.

Jason's mace turned the same time the claws hit. In one fluid motion, Jason redirected the force of the bird's attack, sending it reeling to the side without suffering any damage. Jack thought Jason's timing was uncanny. This senior of his was truly the best when it came to martial redirection methods.

John's avatar came over to deal damage to this ice bird that was losing balance. Jack rushed over as well, but Jack only managed to hit it one time before it flew away.

John's avatar unequipped his swords and grabbed two small dirt golems by its feet. It then threw the two golems at the bird that had not yet flown far. One of the golems missed. The other one hit the bird and cling to it. The extra weight caused the bird to not be able to fly higher.

"Good job!" Jack said and jumped. His superhuman jump brought him to where the bird was due to being bogged down by the golem's weight. Jack used Flame Strike, slamming the bird to the ground below. The avatar and the other dirt golems came at once to keep the bird from flying back up again.

Jack's magic bind was still holding the other bird. Although this bird was not strong enough to break the magic bind, that spell also didn't last indefinitely. When the duration ended, the bird immediately tried to break away. But before it could fly far, one arrow hit it and energy chains came out from the point of impact and locked it again. It squawked frustratingly for being sealed yet again.

That was Fierce Flame's Lock shot, another non-standard skill she had learned from a technique book.

The three birds were helpless as the players battered them to submission. When the three birds were in critical health, John noticed many red dots incoming.

"Many more are coming!" John shouted. He continued watching the new red dots on his radar. The way these new ones were moving was different, they were faster. "New ones are different monsters. Hurry up and finish the ones here!"

"Then why don't you help us attack instead of just standing there?" Jack complained.

"My summons are attacking," John countered. "Now shut up and continue attacking. I should be the only one who talks."

They managed to kill two. For the one getting locked by Flame's lock shot, when the skill ended, another magic bind hit it again before it could fly. It was cast by Olddemon. The bird seemed resigned after being sealed for the third time. It just received the players' attacks quietly.

The last bird lost its life just as the new monsters arrived. They were dog-like creatures of pale-blue skin, similar color to the Ice Ray Bird that had just been defeated. These dogs were level 44 elite monsters.

These ice dogs ran around haphazardly. The party figured that trying to chase after them would be troublesome, so everyone assumed defensive formation and waited for these dogs to approach.

Viral, Bowler, Flame, and John took positions at the inner of the group while the others stood circling them, including ranged class players such as Olddemon and Jason. Olddemon cast Demon Hand spell. His two hands enlarged and turned crimson, ready for melee engagement. Jason readied his long mace, he cast Empowering Prayer, giving everyone increased defenses and HP recovery bonus. John had his summons guard the rear. The eight dirt golems stood around the avatar in nine stars formation.

All the ones with ranged capability shot at the dogs as they approached. The ones that didn't, stay their ground until the dogs came before they attacked.

The ice dogs attacked with claws and bites, but they also spew short-ranged ice breath. All their attacks dealt ice damage and caused slow or freeze.

It's a good thing everyone's ice resistance had increased, reducing the damages they suffered.

Flame's Savage Wind Wolf didn't lose in terms of speed against these dogs. In fact, her wolf was even faster. Whenever it managed to pin a dog down, Flame's arrows arrived soon.

Therras had more difficulty trying to catch these fast-moving dogs, but Therras' HP was much higher. It just waited for these dogs to come swarming at it before it activated its Imperious Pressure. All the dogs in the vicinity lost their speed.

Seeing that, Jack immediately dashed over.

"Cover my gap!" Jack told the others.

Balo who was next to Jack was taken by surprise when Jack suddenly left. Luckily, he had a good reflex. An ice dog attempted to charge in through the gap left by Jack, Balo turned his body and gave it a roundhouse kick that sent the dog away.

With the dogs incapacitated by Therras's gravity field. Jack's sword art speedily took care of them.

Even though there were many more of these dogs compared to the Ice Ray Birds, they were one grade weaker and also ground-based. With the cooperation between the ten expert players, these dogs were soon routed.

They advanced once the coast was clear.

Not long after, they met another wave of these ice dogs and ice ray birds again, and again, and again. They spent almost an hour going forward. Jeanny had used four Resist Ice scrolls in that time frame.

"How far is the easy difficulty?" Jack asked.

"Less than this...," Jeanny replied. "We would have met the boss twenty minutes ago if this is the easy version."

"Guys, do you feel yourself getting slower?" Jason asked.

"Oh? You feel it as well? I thought it is only me," Balo said.

"What are you two saying?" Bowler asked.

"They are martial artists, they are more sensitive to the change in their bodies. Actually, I also feel a bit slower than I should be," Jack said.

"Really?" Peniel asked.

"Hm? Do you know something?" Jack asked Peniel.

"Well, some higher-level dungeons or special locations possessed something that we called environmental buildup. The longer you stayed in that location, the more you get affected. Considering this icy environment. If it has this kind of buildup, it should be affecting your speed. At one point, you might get notified that you are affected by the Slow status. If you continue to allow this buildup to accumulate, you might end up with a frozen status. This status couldn't be cured like usual. If you get frozen, then it is over."

"What the...!" Bowler suddenly uttered.

"What?" Jack asked.

"I just got notified that I have been afflicted by the Slow status," Bowler answered.

Chapter 623: Another Ice Demon

"Shit! So it is really as Peniel said," Jack cursed.

"Why does he get it while we don't?" Giant Steve asked.

"Your ice resistance affected the rate of the buildup. The higher your resistance, the longer you can last," Peniel answered.

"Is there a way to eliminate the buildup?" Jeanny asked.

"By leaving this dungeon, or completing it before everyone got frozen," Peniel answered.

They all looked at each other.

"We've come quite far," Jack said.

John shrugged, "We will just lose one level if we die in this dungeon, right?"

The others' expressions said that they had no problem continuing.

Jeanny nodded, "All right! Let's proceed. Now that we know we are against time, let's pick up the pace!"

Everyone nodded.

"Yeah!"

"Right!"

"Have at thee!"

Everyone showed high spirit. They advanced forward by running, no longer applied caution.

They met another two waves of monsters after. At the end of this second wave, John, Flame, Jason, and Viral were also afflicted by the Slow status.

Seeing half of their team was already afflicted, Bowler asked worriedly to Peniel, "What if all of us get frozen here? Are we going to stay in this place forever?"

"No. If everyone is frozen. This raid will be considered a fail and everyone will be sent out minus one level," Peniel answered.

Jack turned to Bowler, "Come on. This is originally a game. You don't think Wilted would have designed a game that traps their customers forever now, do you?"

"Can't help to worry. I'm getting really slow now, you know. Have to put in a lot of effort just to run," Bowler replied.

"Yeah. You are truly slowing us down," John said.

"You are one to talk! You are also getting a Slow status already!" Bowler retorted.

"Don't worry, people. Once we meet the boss, it will be over soon. Whatever the boss is, my companion will make short work on it," Jack declared to motivate the others.

"How do you get that companion anyway. It was indeed very powerful," John said. He had seen firsthand Arlcard's performance via the hologram platform in Saint Edge's Guild Hall.

"We get the report also. It said your companion mowed down Saint Edge's members without breaking a sweat," Jeanny added.

"I don't like to burst your bubble, but I'm afraid you won't be able to call your companion here," Peniel told them.

"Huh? Why is that? Our other summons worked just fine," Jack said.

"Companion is not a summon. They are considered as another person. This dungeon allowed only ten people to enter. There are already ten of you here," Peniel answered.

"What? Why didn't you tell us this rule before we enter this dungeon?" Jack asked.

"Why didn't you tell me you plan to call Arlcard?" Peniel scolded back.

"Don't worry. We only need to open one spot, right? Let's just kill the most useless one here to make up for space," John offered while pointing at Bowler.

"I will kill you first!" Bowler said, taking a fighting stance.

"That won't work. Your party is already registered when the first ten people entered. Even if one dies or left this dimension afterward, your party is still considered as full already. No new addition is allowed," Peniel said.

"Damn... Should we leave and retry again? Well..., tomorrow, considering the cooldown time," Giant Steve asked.

"We've come this far..." Jack said again.

Everybody looked at each other again.

Seeing everybody's down expression, Jeanny uttered, "As Jack had said. We have come this far! Even if we fail, we will only lose one level. We can use our current run for reference next time. The scout team never make it this far and this long. We need to reach the boss first to see how feasible it is for our next run."

"Okay."

"Fine."

"Let's go."

Everyone agreed but with much less zeal this time.

They encountered another monster wave again. After they were done, it was Olddemon that got the Slow status.

While they were worried about who would be next, the terrain sloped down to a huge dry basin. They could see the entire basin. At the center of the basin sat a large yet strange-looking creature. Not so strange to Jack since he had seen a similar-looking creature before.

"My money on that is the boss," Viral Cora said.

"It is," Jack said. "I fought something like that which get me the legacy item that makes this whole legacy dungeon possible. This one is slightly slimmer though. The one I fought before also didn't have those two protruding skeleton things on its back that look like it wants to grow wings but decided against it halfway."

"Good. It's a good thing we reach the boss before all of us get slowed or frozen. We should..." Jeanny paused. "Uh, I just got a Slow status," she said.

"Damn! We should hurry up then. Will be difficult to fight the boss if all of us get the handicap. Not to mention if get frozen mid-fight," Giant Steve uttered.

Bowler shifted uncomfortably. Since he was the first to get a Slow status, he would also be the first to get frozen. He felt like he carried a ticking bomb inside him.

"All right! All the ones that not yet slowed, which mean the three of you," John said while looking at Jack, Giant Steve, and Balo. "You three engage the boss. We will stay at the back and provide backup."

Jack rolled his eyes. "You sent your summons also to accompany us!" Jack said to John.

"Fine, fine," John said. He called out his entire arsenal. The avatar, dirt golems, and giant lizard. Only the Fae stayed behind since it was a ranged attacker.

The others who could summon also did the same. Olddemon opened up his Hell Gate spell to call out his hellhounds. There were three this time, meaning that Olddemon had leveled up this spell since the last time to at least level 10.

Jack called out his wolf pack and rock golem.

They decided to let their summons engage the boss first, but Olddemon suggested letting him do the opening strike. He took out a magic scroll.

"This is a scroll with an enhanced spell that let me increase my spell range and power," the old veteran said. "I will snipe him using my Hellish Explosion. I won't be able to use that spell once you all traipsing around the beast. Might as well use it first."

Hellish Explosion already had a very long-range, but Olddemon still used the enhanced range scroll for precaution. If the boss started acting once they came into its area of perception, it will be harder to target it.

They walked slowly until the limit of the enhanced range for Hellish Explosion. It was also the range by which they could use Inspect on the boss.

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Ice Demon Fiend (Rare elite boss, Demon), level 50

HP: 530,000

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'A rare elite of nine levels higher,' Jack thought after seeing the boss' data. It also carried the name Fiend instead of Spawn. Meaning it was a different type of monster than the Ice Demon Spawn he had fought.

If he was alone, he would be sure that he won't be able to win against the boss. At least not without Arlcard's help. But with his friends' support, he thought that maybe there was still a chance. Even if most of his friends were under Slow status.

"What can you tell us about this boss?" Jack asked Peniel.

"As I said before, I can't say for sure about its complete arsenal. Considering it is a rare elite, it sure packs quite an amount of surprise. Anyway, this Ice Demon Fiend is both strong and fast, unlike the spawn who is lacking in speed. It also had a natural ice aura. So whoever gets close to him will have the environmental buildup further accelerated. But unlike the spawn, it doesn't have high resistance against physical attack. It's still weak against fire except for its mouth area."

The boss was still sitting leisurely on its spot while they chatted. Logically, it should have seen them already but it just ignored them. As long as they didn't attack or get into a minimum set distance, it won't do anything. Talk about the convenience of the gaming system.

Jack looked around the basin. There were countless ice spears stabbed randomly all around the basin. He felt gloomy seeing those spears because he knew what they were for. He told the others about those spears.

Olldemon completed his spell formation and unleashed the powerful spell without delay. They watched from the distance the flash that turned into a tiny red orb of energy above the Ice Demon. The appearance of this orb drew the demon's attention that it looked up. The orb then exploded with a devastating force covering a large area.

"Forward!" Jeanny uttered her battle cry.

Everyone started running forward. The summons took point with Jack, Giant Steve, and Balo followed closely. The others trailed behind slowly due to their slow status.

When the dust subsided, those with high mana sense already found out the result of their first strike. The boss' aura didn't reduce at all.

"Crap! It was not hurt at all!" Jack uttered.

Chapter 624: Frozen

What they saw in front of them was an ice sphere. Its surface glistened. No crack was seen on the almost perfect sphere. The sphere abruptly broke into tiny particles that dropped to the ground, forming a pile of ice dust. The Ice Demon Fiend which was inside the sphere was now standing. It was facing the incoming intruders. The large mouth on its stomach was grimacing menacingly.

Jack felt something building up inside that mouth.

"Move to the side! Move to the side!" He shouted. He used Roll at the same time.

Balo, Jason, and John who were more adept at mana sensing also hurriedly ran to the side. The others were more clueless but seeing the urgent warning, they didn't dilly dally. All their summons did the same.

The ice demon's large mouth opened and a large beam of ice shot forth. It went in a straight line. Everything it touched got frozen. By the time the beam ended, there was a tall jagged ice wall along the path the beam had touched, separating the basin into two.

Everyone was flabbergasted by the display of power. It was fortunate that everyone had taken evasive maneuvers early. One of Olddemon's hellhounds was hit by this ice beam though. It was currently trapped inside the jagged ice wall.

They saw the hellhound's HP bar was below half already, and the HP was still going down rapidly while the hellhound was helpless inside the ice. When the hellhound's HP reached zero, the ice wall broke apart into ice dust.

The Ice Demon, after making the initial assault, took a crouching position before dashing forward. Jack was taken aback by the speed. It was indeed not lacking in speed, but it was more than Jack expected.

When it almost ram into the nearest player, something fast with a blazing trail crashed into the charging ice demon. It was Jack's Terras. This pet didn't appear intimidated by the ice demon despite being fourteen levels lower.

Jack felt pride seeing his pet. But after that initial clash, it was pretty obvious that his Terras was at a disadvantage. The Ice Demon Fiend's every swipe of claws created a strong gush of icy wind. The skeletal half-wings behind it were also not just decorations. Their sharp ends stabbed and caused damages in addition to the demon's claws.

The demon made a forceful grab and caught Terras' neck, it then slammed the pet hard onto the ground.

Jack cast Mana Beam. The pillar of energy knocked the arm that was grabbing Terras, allowing the beast to break free.

Flame's Savage Wind Wolf came from the back leading Jack's wolf pack and the remaining two of Olddemon's hellhounds, they swarmed the ice demon, clawing and biting with hit and run tactic.

John's avatar, dirt golems, and giant lizard also came surrounding the ice demon in a nine gate formation. John planned to trap the demon inside the formation and wore it down while they sent ranged attacks.

The demon's body suddenly glowed and a ring of light radiated out. All the summons were knocked away. Some were frozen while the rest slowed.

"That's... Ice ring!" Jack said, recognizing his own spell. But of course, the ice demon fiend's ice ring was more deadly and powerful, considering it had a higher level.

The Ice Demon Fiend made a throwing motion. An orb of ice appeared in his hand halfway through that motion, it was then thrown out at the end of the motion. As if a stone being thrown from a catapult, the icy orb left a blue trail as it flew in a curve towards the players at the backline. Those players had been sending the ice demon ranged attacks non-stop.

Everyone hurriedly tried to run away from the point of impact. But their slow status made their movements very slow. The orb hit the ground and a shockwave of ice energy spread out, hitting everyone, causing high ice damage and further slowing them.

The Ice Demon Fiend attempted another throwing motion. Before it did, a crimson whip shot out from behind and caught the ice demon's arm mid-motion, canceling its throwing attempt. It looked back and saw Olddemon behind, holding his Hell Whip which was entangling the demon's arm. The old veteran had intentionally separated from the others and sneaked to the ice demon's back.

The ice demon made a hard pull. Its strength completely eclipsed Olddemon's. Olddemon was yanked into the air towards the demon. The ice demon readied its claw to receive the incoming outworlder.

Olldemon didn't panic. He released his hell whip and rapidly cast another spell mid-air. His two hands turned into giant demon claws. The two claws clashed with the ice demon's one. Shockwave erupted as Olddemon shot away from the impact, crashing onto the ground and sliding some distance away.

Jack, Giant Steve, and Balo came before the ice demon before it sent another ranged attack at the backline players again. Giant Steve activated Protection Field to reduce the damage to Jack and Balo.

Giant Steve also used Shield Stance, Sentinel's level 40 skill. It increased his defense by 200%, reduced all damage received by 30%. This skill had no duration, he could keep it active indefinitely, but his movement during this stance was slowed by 80% and his attack speed slowed by 40%. He could deactivate this stance by choice, but once deactivated, he had to wait for a cooldown of twenty seconds before he could go into the stance again.

Giant Steve used Shield Bash. His large tower shield rammed the ice demon and drew its agro. Jack and Balo went to its flanks and started dishing out damage.

The backline players who had been scattered by the ice catapult now resumed their range assaults.

Jeanny didn't have any ranged capability. She waited until the Ice Demon Fiend's attention was fully drawn by the three melees before executing Jump Attack, striking from above before jumping to the demon's back. She kept herself at its back while delivering her stabs.

The summons also came back and joined the attacks again. Jason cast Hallowed Ground, level 35 Inquisitor's skill. The spell marked an area around the Ice Demon Fiend. Every ally in the area received a small regenerative effect, increased defense, and increased resistance. This spell was inferior to Peniel's Healing Field in terms of healing effect, but the increased defense and increased resistances made up for it.

While things seemed to go their way, both Balo and Giant Steve informed that they had been afflicted by the Slow status. Jeanny also felt that her movement was getting slower.

"As I said, this ice demon has a passive cold aura. The elemental buildup will be accelerated if you continue staying close to it," Peniel told them.

But leaving would be disastrous. The four of them with their summons were currently employing multi-layered Nine Star Formation around the Ice Demon Fiend, controlling its assaults and preventing it from moving away at the same time, while the ranged players bombarded it with attacks. Unless the demon used another Ice Ring or Ice Beam skill, they should be able to wear this boss to death in this way. If they moved away, the demon could go at them one by one.

"Oh no!" They heard a shout.

Those that could spare to look, found that Bowler had turned into ice. The elemental buildup had finally completed its course in its body and he was frozen. This was a huge blow since Bowler's healing had been great at reducing the pressures on those meleeing the ice demon. Now their healers were down to Jason and Peniel.

"I... I don't think I can last longer...," Jeanny uttered. Her movement had been getting slower and slower.

Not long after, she became rigid amid her stabbing motion. Ice then coated her entire body, turning her into an ice block. She was not the second person that got the Slow status but because of her vicinity to the Ice Demon Fiend, her elemental buildup had been accelerated.

Her stopping had caused a gap in their formation. The Ice Demon Fiend, who had lost more than half its HP, noticed this gap. It turned around and in a powerful motion shattered frozen Jeanny into pieces. It then ran through there.

The wolf pack and dirt golems tried to block the demon, but they were smacked aside easily.

It ran with speed in a curve and headed towards the ranged players.

Jack used Shooting Dash and came before it. John had predicted the demon movement and had his avatar blocked the demon's path as well. Both John's avatar and Jack executed Formless Flowing Sword Style, showering the demon with sword lights.

Jack felt the mana gathering inside the demon. "Back!" He shouted. But the ice ring had been fast. Both he and the avatar were still hit.

The demon then jumped very high and made a grabbing motion towards the sky. The ice spears around the basin were sucked up into the sky simultaneously.

"Already?" Jack said dismayingly.

Even though Jack had informed everyone, countless ice spears raining from the sky were not something that could be avoided despite knowing. Jack cast Magic Wall and had it facing upward. It was like he was holding a huge rectangle umbrella above himself. Terras and his wolf pack came to take cover under the umbrella.

The ice spears hit the magic wall repeatedly, finally breaking it. While the magic wall was blocking the spears, Jack cast Barrier. After his magic wall broke, he used the same trick as before. He activated Dragon Eye's slow-motion vision and used forty-eight burst slashes to deflect the spears. His barrier protected him from any spears that were still falling after his burst slash ended.

His barrier and burst slashes didn't cover his summons. Most of his wolves died after all the ice spears fell. His Terras was still fine since it had a very high HP pool.

When he looked back. He was dismayed that most of his teammates were gone already. There were only Giant Steve, Balo, and Jason. The others had perished from the ice spear move.

At this time, Jack heard a notification, "You have been afflicted with Slow."

Chapter 625: Fighting Against Time

Jack's ice resistance was the highest among all of them, hence it took him the longest to get afflicted.

Giant Steve's had survived the ice spears due to his high defense and also because he activated Final Shield, the skill that had saved him when going up against the Grim Sand Drake.

Balo and Jason survived due to their martial art expertise. Balo's HP was in critical condition, though. Jason was surprisingly in a better condition despite his lower HP. He had used a master redirection martial technique called Reversing Heaven and Earth. His long mace moved in a rapid movement that created a field that deflected almost any incoming attack. After seeing the result, Jack thought the technique was aptly named.

"Eh?" After another look, Jack realized the avatar was still around. This means... He looked around again. There he was, John was walking back slowly. Shit, Jack thought. The dude had run out of the area when the ice spears fell, leaving everyone behind. He must have stayed as far to the back as possible after hearing Jack's explanation about the ice spears. John was the only one who could afford to fight that way since he fought mainly using summons.

But still, Jack was amazed that the guy had predicted the boss would use his ultimate skill early. Jack had been reserving from using his Lightning God Barrage because he thought the boss would only use its ultimate skill when its HP was at a critical. Jack planned to use his divine skill once the boss HP's touched 100,000. Hoping that this divine skill would do enough damage to one-shot it at that state, thus eliminating the chance for it to use its ice spears move.

When the Ice Demon Fiend landed back to the ground, Jack first cast Myriad Ensnaing Chains. He knew the chains wouldn't be able to hold this high-level boss for long, so he had Therras used its Imperious Pressure as well.

The two restraining skills rooted the boss in place for a brief moment. Since there was no need for Jack to save his divine skill anymore, he unleashed it on the incapacitated boss. The twenty balls of lightning landed on the Ice Demon Fiend.

When the tempest of lightning energy subsided, Jack saw that his skill had taken out 80,000 of the Ice Demon Fiend's HP. Less than he had hoped for. The demon's HP was now only slightly above 100,000.

It was paralyzed by the lightning attack. Jack took this chance to approach and meet it head-on. His speed was not as before after getting a Slow status, but he compensated with finesse. His two swords danced with precision as he focused all his attention. He incorporated his offensive skills in between his sword arts, trying to wear the boss' remaining HP down.

John's avatar was in a bad shape, it was saved due to its high HP and high armor value from the full set of rare equipment. Peniel cast Group Fast Heal, bringing everyone's HP up again. Jason also used his Heal on Balo, who was the one most near death.

The avatar, Balo, and Giant Steve came to help Jack. Peniel cast Healing Field for them. Jason stayed at the back and sent them Heal once in a while.

As time passed, Balo succumbed to the frozen status. Not long after, it was Jason. They had lost their remaining healer player, leaving only Peniel as their sole healer. Peniel's healing though was much more powerful, its cooldown was also much longer than the player's Heal.

The avatar who was with them suddenly vanished, they knew then that John had been frozen.

After a while, Giant Steve was so slow that he didn't do much except for being a human punch bag. The demon gave the sentinel a strong punch and Steve flew away. Jack saw the big guy become solid ice in the middle of his flight.

Jack was the only one remaining now, accompanied by his Therras Beast and Peniel.

But the Ice Demon Fiend was also not in the best shape. Its life hit 50,000 HP when Giant Steve got frozen. Seeing his opponent's HP hit that mark, Jack decided its time for the final struggle to decide winning or losing.

Jack activated Storm Breaker's Overlimit. His body then enlarged into a large werewolf. The werewolf's black fur also turned golden at the same time as Jack activated his bloodline's Gold Scale Armor. He forwent evasion and went full offense, clawing and biting in a manner more ferocious than the demon he was fighting.

Despite his increased HP and defense, Jack's HP still went down faster than the demon. Luckily, Peniel's Fast Heal had come off cooldown. She brought Jack's HP up again to give him more time in the brawl.

But time seemed to be against them. Due to his near-perfect mana sense, Jack could feel the elemental buildup within him. He knew the frozen status was coming soon. It was like he heard an internal timer via his mana sense.

The demon's HP was almost 20,000. Jack hoped that if he unleashed his forty-eight burst slashes, this move should finish the demon. But when he was about to do it, he felt familiar mana from the Ice Demon Fiend's large mouth.

"F*ck! Peniel, invulnerability!" Jack shouted urgently.

The demon's mouth opened and the devastating ice beam poured out at Jack point-blank. There was no chance for him to dodge. Therras was situated further away, Jack had sent it a mental order to run away to not get caught by this ice beam.

He watched his entire vision turn white. He wondered if Peniel had managed to cast her spell in time. After the beam subsided, he found himself locked inside the jagged ice wall created by the ice beam.

He looked at his HP, it was not going down. Peniel had made it in time. One other thing Jack noticed, according to the internal timer of his mana sense, his body should be frozen by now due to the elemental buildup, but the accumulating mana was currently halting. He surmised it must have been due to the Invulnerability as well. The spell had halted the buildup progress, meaning he had bought himself 3.5 seconds.

The Ice Demon Fiend was directly in front of Jack. Jack saw its triumphant expression as it thought Jack had been incapacitated inside the ice wall it had created.

Jack used his race skill, Willpower, which broke him free of any restriction. The skill shattered the ice wall imprisoning him. The Ice Demon Fiend's triumphant expression turned to shock when it saw the scene.

Before the demon could react, Jack's two claws danced in a frenzy. The demon was caught unaware and thus was not adopting any defensive action. All forty-eight burst slashes of Jack's sword art landed on the demon's body. Due to no missed nor blocked attacks, the damages were fully boosted by combo multipliers.

By the end of his assault, Jack saw the demon's HP zeroed.

As the demon fell and disintegrated, Jack wondered if the elemental buildup carried on? If he got frozen after this victory, would the raid still consider a fail?

Luckily, he felt the cold mana accumulating in his body slowly dispersing. At the same time, he heard a notification that the guild had successfully completed this dungeon. The guild received reputation points, gold, mana, building materials, and some resources for craftings.

The boss itself dropped loots, Jack did not forget to use his Runestone of Luck when he executed his burst slashes.

For being the two sole survivors, Jack and Therras received full exp from killing the boss. As for clearing this legacy dungeon, all party members received exp, even those that had been killed. Those that had been frozen were considered killed as well. Jack saw their frozen bodies crumble when the victory

notification was announced. Extra exp points were granted to all members for clearing this dungeon's difficulty for the first time.

Jack's three classes were already close to level up. So from this triple exp he received, all three of his classes leveled up one time. Terras only received the exp from killing the boss, but it also leveled up by three levels to level 39.

A notification informed him that he could opt to exit this dungeon at any time or wait until five minutes before he was automatically sent out.

Jack crouched down and reviewed the boss' loots.

There were the usual coins and mana cores. Since this was a guild party effort, he decided he would just donate these coins and mana cores to the guild. A few uncommon equipment and materials. One rare gun weapon. 'Weird,' Jack thought. There was no gunner in their team but the monster still dropped a gun. Maybe this was because it's a guild dungeon.

Jack had left the three most unusual items for the last. After he stored the other loots, he looked at these three. Two out of the three exuded denser mana compared to the others, so Jack knew they were the best grade among the loots. One looked like a tiny medicine tablet. The two with denser aura were a round bottle and a piece of ice rock.

Jack picked up the medicine tablet.

*

Exp Pill (rare grade)

Grant 1,000,000 exp points

*

"I'll be damned," Jack uttered.

"Now we know the place that drop this thing," Peniel remarked.

Without delay, Jack used the pill for his Blade Dancer class, filling its exp bar by a million points. He then picked up the remaining two items.

*

Thousand-Year Wine (Super rare consumable)

Usage on players: Add 15 days to age

Usage on NPCs: Increase level growth rate. Duration: 30 days. Cooldown: 90 days

Restriction: Human race

*

Heart of Ice (Super rare material)

For crafting purpose

Chapter 626: Grinding and Dungeoning

Thousand-Year Wine? Jack remembered Peniel mentioning this potion. It was equivalent to the Ancient Blood Awakening Potion except it was used on the human race. While the Ancient Blood Awakening Potion drew out the hidden strength of a native vampire and gave them a burst of strength for a short duration, this Thousand Year Wine boosted a native human growth rate for a long duration.

Their functions on players were the same though, adding fifteen days to age.

Jack thought for a bit. Since there was only him here and he was the one that killed the boss, he thought no one would complain if he took all the best loots, would they? He would just compensate by giving all the coins, cores, equipment, and materials dropped by this boss to Jeanny. So, he proceeded to open the lid of Thousand-Year Wine and emptied its content into his throat.

"It was unexpectedly delicious," Jack uttered.

"It isn't called wine for nothing," Peniel said.

It was three days yet before his age reached age 7 months. Due to this Thousand Year Wine, he received notification that he had reached that month once he finished drinking. His race skill, Limitless Potential, was upgraded to rank 5. This skill now granted 1000 HP, 150 to Stamina and MP, and +5 to all attributes except luck.

He checked his status window, his next rise in age would be eighteen days later.

'Cool,' he thought. If he could get another of that Thousand-Year Wine, he would be one month ahead of the general population.

Jack then checked the Heart of Ice. It was described as crafting material, but he remembered another item with a similar name and description.

"I figure I should be able to use this on my Amulet of Summoning, shouldn't I?" Jack asked Peniel.

"You are correct," Peniel confirmed.

"Awesome! That rock golem had been rather lacking as a summon. About time, that I get a better one," Jack uttered. Considering this thing dropped from the Ice Demon Fiend, did it mean that the rare elite demon would be the monster that was summoned when he used his amulet?

He was excited to find out. He immediately interfaced his amulet with this ice rock. The ice rock merged with the amulet smoothly.

"Hm? I don't get my Heart of Rock back?" Jack asked when the merging was completed.

"No. This is different from imprinting. If you make a change, whatever previous item you merged with this amulet is lost," Peniel said.

Jack didn't think it a waste, he had no use for the Heart of Rock anyway.

When he wanted to test the summon, he was surprised to find out the summoning cost.

"O—One hundred mana cores..?" He uttered. The cost was ten times when he summoned Rock Golem.

"What do you expect? The Ice Demon Fiend is a rare elite monster. Do you honestly think the summoning cost will be the same?" Peniel said.

Jack canceled his attempt. With his current stock of mana cores, he could only do the summon four times. He won't waste it just to have a look at his new summon.

Seeing that there was nothing further to do here, he exited this ice world.

Outside, the others had been waiting. They had heard the successful notification and received the exp points. All of them had lost one level due to death, but some went up back to their previous level due to the exp granted.

"Expert! Color me impressed. I thought for sure the raid was a fail already when I, as the main character, left the dungeon," Jack heard John's words when he came out.

He completely ignored the guy's narcissistic comment and went to Jeanny. "Here are the rewards," Jack said as he gave Jeanny the loots from the Ice Demon Fiend. "I took some of them. I hope you don't mind."

"The guild already received rewards from clearing the dungeon. Considering you are the one who killed the boss, I'm sure nobody will object if you take all the loots," Jeanny said.

The others nodded.

"It was teamwork," Jack said. "I wouldn't have won if it was me alone." But then he thought, if it had been him alone, he would have been able to summon Arlcard and the dungeon would have been completed as well. But he kept that thought to himself.

"Well, I guess this taught us one thing. We are still not strong enough to raid this medium difficulty," Jeanny said. "We will have to just continue raiding the easy version for the time being."

"I beg to differ. As long as we enter with only nine members, we should be able to clear the dungeon regularly," Jack said.

"Oh? You surprise me again, expert. I thought you are going to tell us that you have some other thing to do and will leave us again first thing tomorrow?" John said.

"I need to join the selection tournament five days from now. I won't be able to do much with such few days, might as well spend my time here raiding this dungeon and using the training cave," Jack said.

The training cave in Heavenly Citadel had been built to accommodate levels 40 till 50. So it was a suitable place for leveling up. Jack only needed to pay contribution points to use it. He had lots of contribution points so that was not a problem. The drawback of the training cave was the monsters inside dropped no loots, coins, or mana cores.

Another reason why Jack was willing to stay and farm the medium difficulty legacy dungeon, was due to the two items he had gotten just now, Exp Pill and Thousand-Year Wine.

Jack told the others that he would like priority on these two items if they dropped. He let go of all other loots in exchange. The others responded that if the medium difficulty was successfully raided, it was all due to him, so he had the right to ask for priority.

*

In the remaining days, that was how Jack spend his schedule. The medium difficulty had a one-day cooldown, so Jack could only enter once a day.

As planned, they entered with only nine members, leaving one for Arlcard. On the first run with nine members, Jack summoned Arlcard once they entered. One thing that Jack noticed, when Jack last summoned him, Arlcard's level 49 exp bar was only around 10%. Now it was around 30%. It was getting more difficult to level up after reaching such a high level, so Jack could see that his vampire companion was not less passionate than him in getting stronger. Why such passion though, the vampire didn't seem to have the interest to share.

Everything went as expected, not only did Arlcard make short work of the Ice Ray Birds and Ice Dogs, but he also didn't appear to have any difficulty soloing the boss despite the boss having the same grade and even one level higher. This vampire companion was exceptional even amongst same grade opponent. Peniel mentioned that Arlcard could probably be considered half-mythical grade already. Jack asked the other eight members to stay back while he and Therras helped Arlcard to speed up the process.

After the Ice Demon Fiend was slain, Arlcard said to Jack, "next time, call me only when you reach the boss. Don't call me for small fries. I don't have all the time in the world."

The vampire left afterward. Jack was morose. Perhaps he was the only player that ever got scolded by their own companion.

So on their next run, Jack and the others fought the small fries by themselves and only called Arlcard after they arrived at the boss.

With Arlcard, running the medium-difficulty Ice Throne Legacy Dungeon became low-risk. Thus, Jeanny allowed other weaker core members to enter as well. Just to get the experience for future reference. All they needed to do was get to the boss as quickly as they could, to allow sufficient time before the frozen status hit the one with the lowest ice resistance. The rest they left to Jack and Arlcard.

Not every run rewarded Jack with the items he wanted, but he still got some after the next five runs. He got three rare-grade exp pills, twelve uncommon-grade exp pills, and another bottle of Thousand-Year Wine. There was no doubt, of course, this drop rate was due to Jack's very high Luck stat added by the boost of Runestone of Luck. Peniel said if it was any other person, perhaps they won't see one bottle of Thousand-Year Wine even after more than ten runs.

On the day before the challenge tournament, he only needed fourteen days to reach age 8 months. He drank the second bottle on that day, so he immediately became 8 months old. He was now officially one month ahead of the others.

At the age of 8 months, his Limitless Potential became rank 6, granting him HP +1200, Stamina and MP +180, all attributes +6 except for luck.

He used the three rare-grade exp pills for his Blade Dancer, while all the uncommon-grade pills went to his Beastmaster class. With the boss and dungeon's generous exp rewards combined with Jack's non-stop grinding using the training caves. On the day of the Selection Tournament, Jack had managed to level up his Blade Dancer class again to level 43, while his Beastmaster went up two levels to level 40.

Chapter 627: The Selection Tournament

When his Beastmaster was level 40, Jack received another new skill.

*

Combination Assault, level 1/20 (Active skill, requires pet)

Perform a joint charge with Beastmaster's pet against a single target. Deals 400% physical damage. 10% chance to Dizzy and Fear. Reduce target's defense by 30% for 10 seconds.

Range: 20 meters

Cooldown: 10 minutes

Stamina: 100

*

Jack had 18 free skill points for Beastmaster saved up, he used them all for this skill. On level 19, this skill dished out 760% physical damage.

He also had 6 Blade Dancer and 3 Archmage skill points. He spent them on Wind Slash and Myriad Ensnaring Chains. Both became level 12 after.

Wind Slash now dealt 410% damage and shot three wind energies. Myriad Ensnaring Chains released thirteen chains, each of its chains was also more sturdy, more resistant to breaking.

The Ice Demon Boss provided a large number of souls. After all the runs, Jack had collected 530,000 soul points. He used them to again max out his advanced skills and spells. With the current available amount, he maxed out Charge, Shredding Fang, Arcane Turbulence, and Ice Ring.

Jack had 21 free attribute points, he distributed them to Dexterity this time. His Blade Dancer and Beastmaster already gave excellent Dexterity stat, but he figured he should just enhance it more, trumping the speed of all the challengers in the tournament. Combined with the boosts from his race skill and equipment, his Dexterity was at 573 points.

*

On the day of the selection tournament, Jack went first to Amy's Bakery and Ellie's Restaurant to take his profits. He received 84 gold coins from both establishments. Amy's Bakery was now five-story tall after becoming a luxury shop and featured a much better look. It was three-story less than Ellie's Restaurant despite being the same grade, but Jack didn't complain. He was happy as long as the profit it produced increased.

Afterward, he joined his fourteen guildmates and went to the League of Champions' building which housed the tournament. The news of the tournament was already spread. A lot of players crowded around the building, hoping to be allowed in to watch the tournament.

But only tournament participants and members of the League of Champions were allowed access. Even the faction's members were not allowed into the arena hall where the tournament was carried out.

Due to the popularity of the tournament amongst outworlders, the league of champions had arranged to broadcast the tournaments at selected venues, charging them coins for the views. These venues were at theaters, VIP rooms of taverns, and other public closed buildings. The VIP rooms of Ellie's restaurant were selected as one of these venues. These crowded players hurriedly ran to those venues, fearing the venues would be filled up if they were late.

Jack and his group went into League of Champion's building after rigorous checkings. Together with him were Jeanny, Domon, Fierce Flame, The Man, Bowler, Giant Steve, Trinity Dawn, Viral Cora, Balo, Jason Wu, Michelle, Olddemon, Sturdy Serpent, and First Mate. First Mate was part of the Warriors of Solidarity, he was The Man's adjutant, a level 44 Avenger.

Before they left, Jack had used the stock of ores in the guild's warehouse to increase the level of these fourteen's equipment. All of them had rare equipment on them. With the increased levels, Jack was confident this team was the best in terms of equipment amongst the participants.

John had ridiculed Bowler for joining, but Jeanny defended by saying that Healer's tournament was focused on their healing, not their fighting prowess.

Jack submitted his list of participants to the prince a few days ago. Since every prince was told to bring only thirty participants with equal numbers between the six advanced classes. They would have to bring five participants from each advanced class. So after receiving Jack's list, the prince adjusted his selection of participants outside Everlasting Heavenly Legends.

The fifteen of them were brought into the hall where the selection tournament took place. It was another huge round hall, much like the colosseum-like hall where the members of this faction underwent the challenges. Yet, Jack didn't see anything that looked like an arena.

There were, however, similar large plates along the wall as in the challenge hall. The plates here were simply missing the numeric numbers. Several natives of the faction were seen tweaking those plates. From this scene, Jack figured the tournament would take place inside constructed dimensions similar to faction challenges.

Many players were already inside the hall. These others huddled into three different groups. One was led by Garland Thunderhand. Another had the cloaked man who stood behind Prince Rhemos during the tournament meeting in the palace. Commander Quintus stood amongst the third group. Those would be the tournament participants representing the three princes. Jack went to the group led by Commander Quintus.

Jack saw many familiar faces among the participants. Rhemos' team mostly consisted of coalition experts. Red Death, Yellow Death, Princess Purple, Selena, Stonecleave, Warpath, Grimclaw, Killmonger, Goliath, Lustful Elly, and Beauty Beholder.

Among Therribus' team, he saw Blackjack, Kill Order from Black Cloak guild, Honeycomb and Dashrunner from White Scarfs, and Radiant Phoebe from Saint Edge.

All the others were unfamiliar faces. Jack didn't see any of the old experts such as Ironfist and Forcelabor. Jack thought perhaps this kind of tournament was beneath them. Or perhaps they were worried if they lost, they would lose the current prestige they enjoyed.

"Hey, I recognize that person," Bowler said. He waved at the person, who was with Therribus' camp. The person nodded back with a smile.

"Who is he?" Jack asked.

"That's David," Bowler answered. "He is one of the high-ups in the mercenary guild that John asked me to build relationships with."

"The Dogs of War?" Jack asked, remembering the guild's name.

"Yes," Bowler replied.

Domon also nodded to another person from Therribus' camp. This person didn't return the nod, he instead looked away.

"You know him?" Jack asked his grandfather, surprised that the old man socialized with people outside the guild.

"Master Domon beat his ass during the coalition's latest invasion attempt," it was Bowler who answered. "That guy's name is Regim. He is in the other mercenary guild that helped the coalition."

After a while, Royal Advisor Mason appeared with a League of Champions' executive, who Jack knew as well, Gruff. Gruff clapped his hands loudly, attracting everybody's attention. Everyone stopped their chatting and turned to him.

Mason spoke first, "For those who not yet know me. My name is Mason, the royal advisor to this Themisphere Kingdom. On behalf of this kingdom, I thank you all for having come here. I know that you are not of this world and this is not your real country, but we would like you to think that it is. We have accepted you with open arms, and now we hope you can do something in return to contribute to this country. I will hand over the explanation on the details of this selection tournament to my associate here, Mister Gruff of the League of Champions."

"Thank you, Royal Advisor," Gruff said with a slight bow. "As is requested by the kingdom, we will host this selection tournament to select amongst you to represent the Themisphere kingdom in the World Tournament. We need the cream of the crops so that you can bring honor to this country. Glory and rewards await those that are sent to the world tournament!"

Cheerings were heard. Mostly from the league of champions' staffs around the hall. Probably Gruff had them do that to rile up the room. Gruff continued, "Now, all of you will be divided into six groups based on your past advanced classes. Each group will have fifteen participants. Each of you will fight against all

the participants in your group. One round will have ten minutes. Winners will be given two points, loser zero point, if no one win after ten minutes passes, both will be awarded one point. The ones with the highest points will be the ones who are sent to the world tournament!"

"Oh? A point system? I thought at first we are going to do an elimination system," Jack mumbled. That meant he had to fight fifteen times. He had been hoping this event to end early so he can go back to grinding.

"The fight will be inside constructed spaces. Everyone's match will take place at the same time, so we can round this up by today. No need to worry about dying. You won't lose any level or equipment by dying inside the constructed space. Please note, however, that tools are restricted in that space. This rule is the same as when you fight in the world tournament. No tools! You can rely only on your skill or your equipment only."

Jack turned to Peniel. "Is companion token considered a tool?" He asked.

"Yes," Peniel answered.

'Darn! And here I thought I can bully everyone using Arlcard,' Jack thought, then added, 'Well, I still have the Ice Demon Fiend.'

'I'm afraid that is not available as well,' Peniel informed.

"What? It's my amulet's ability. Equipment can't be considered a tool, right? Are we supposed to fight buck-naked in the match?"

'Your amulet is not a tool, but the Heart of Ice is. Even if it has been merged with your amulet, it is still considered as one. So you can't use your amulet's summoning ability.'

'Sigh, never mind then. Not like I need them anyway.'

Gruff was still speaking, "Now, everyone! Please separate yourself based on past advanced classes. We have placed an icon under the wall indicating your class. Please head over to the corresponding walls. The staff there will give you further instructions."

Everyone looked over to the indicated walls. There were now icons above the plates on the wall. Shield, sword, dagger, bow, staff, and a plus sign. Shield icon should represent the Knight class, sword for the Warrior class, and so on. Jack thought the healer icon with the plus sign was rather modern for this world's setting, but as long as people understood, he guessed it's fine.

Gruff ended his speech by shouting passionately, "Let this selection tournament begin!"

Chapter 628: Pointless

Jack, Domon, Michelle, and The Man shared the same advanced class, so they went together. Arriving in front of the walls under the sword icon, he saw Stonecleave, Warpath, Killmonger, and Goliath from Rhemos' group. He didn't recognize anyone from Therribus' group.

"Why do you pick this section?" Stonecleave asked Jack when he arrived.

"Why? Because I am a Blade Dancer of course. That class came is from the Warrior class, in case you didn't notice," Jack replied.

"But you are also an Archmage and Beastmaster. Why pick this one?"

"Oh, now that you mention it. You are right! But then again, I will still choose this place. Hm... Can it be that you are worried because I am here, you people have no chance?" Jack asked back.

Stonecleave turned away, he didn't deign to answer.

"Hmph! We can still strive for the second!" Warpath exclaimed.

Jack was amazed. It seemed that the guy had accepted reality by now. In the past, he would have made some stupid excuses to indicate that he was still the better swordsman. But this type was more dangerous. That meant he knew his shortcomings and thus could work on improving them, as opposed to those daydream lunatics who kept on making excuses for their failures.

Still, Jack felt pity for him. Perhaps if Jack was alone, then these people could still strive for second place. But with his grandfather beside him, it was a tall order. Even Jeanny had told The Man no need to participate. It was better to give the slot to players from the other classes, but The Man insisted. He was not to let go of this chance to have a spar with the other experts, even if he knew he won't be the champions selected to go to the World Tournament.

Once everyone gathered, the staff explained to them that seven matches would happen at the same time, meaning fourteen participants. The last participant would wait. After the first fourteen came out, the last one would join the next matches, while one of the fourteen would sit out one match. The process would continue in this way until every participant had fought the other fourteen. Once all the matches were completed, the points would be tallied to decide the champions.

The staff threw a dice to decide the order. It didn't matter really. Since in the end, everyone would fight everyone. And unlike the real world. After coming out of the space, all HP, Stamina, MP, and fatigue would be restored to full. So it didn't matter who fought who first.

The dice were thrown. The first fourteen to fight then came out to the plates on the wall. Jack looked beside him and said, "Good luck."

His towering opponent replied, "Go f*ck yourself."

"So rude," Jack uttered.

The plate in front of them glowed. Goliath touched the plate and vanished. Jack did the same.

For members of the League of Champions, they were familiar with such a process. Jack came out into the empty space similar to when he took the faction's challenges. Goliath was opposite him. While Jack was observing, both of them heard the voice, "Fight!"

Goliath, who was now a level 45 Berserker, activated his Berserk skill at once. Black tattoos covered his skin as he lunged forward.

"So hasty!" Jack uttered.

Goliath used Punishing Cyclone. His body spun rapidly. His large two-handed heavy axe came at Jack with destructive speed.

Any opponent would have retreated seeing such a threatening move, but Jack was not anyone.

"I won the last time we competed in strength when I only have two classes. Now that I have three, let's put it to test," Jack said as his Storm Breaker slashed forward. The sword was engulfed by fire as it went to meet Goliath's high-speed spinning axe.

CLANG!

The two weapons met. Flame Strike against Punishing Cyclone. Under normal circumstances, any other player who used Power Strike would have his arm smacked aside before the player got cut to pieces by the Punishing Cyclone. But in this instance, it was Goliath who got smacked aside. His Punishing Cyclone was forcefully canceled due to the huge difference in force.

Jack then crossed his two swords while Goliath was unbalanced. Devour Cross sent thick dark energy, sweeping Goliath's body. His 3650 HP was zeroed instantly.

"Oh...," Jack uttered. He forgot his Devouring Cross had already fully maxed to level 20. It dealt 700% darkness damage. Additionally, Goliath's Berserk was a double-edged skill that reduced his defense, causing him to receive more damage than he should.

Jack looked at Goliath's slumped body below his feet. Jack didn't mean to finish the guy in one hit. This was not a life and death battle, he felt like he should have let the fellow fight a bit longer, allowing the poor giant to keep some of his dignity.

"Well, what's done is done," Jack shrugged.

Everyone's fight was broadcast. The people in the hall outside could see the fight, as well as those that had paid to watch in selected venues. Multiple screens were portraying different matches, but everyone's attention was on the same screen. Both the ones in the hall and at the venues were silent.

No one would have expected any of the fight to have ended so fast. This was a fight between experts, for goodness sake. How could the difference be so vast?

The plate on the wall shone brightly. Jack and Goliath materialized in front.

Jack looked to the big man who was wearing a gloomy expression.

"Good fight," Jack said, trying to display sportsmanship.

Goliath didn't reply. He just stormed away, walking all the way to the exit.

"Wait! You still need to fight the others, don't you?" Jack called out.

"Go f*ck yourself...!!" Goliath repeated his previous curse, with much more intensity this time.

'Crap, did I just cause a participant to abandon this tournament?' Jack thought, scratching his head.

Since he finished his fight so fast. He came back to Commander Quintus' side. There were chairs there. He sat on one.

"I can see now where your confidence comes from when you said you will win this tournament," Quintus said.

"Exactly, right? It's just a waste of time for me to be here. I said already, it's pointless for me to join this selection tournament. I'm sure to get selected anyway," Jack said.

"Not too humble, aren't you?"

"By the way, is there any reward for being the champion of this selection tournament?" Jack asked.

"The reward is the right to join the World Tournament," Quintus answered.

"What? So boring," Jack sighed. He then remembered something. He said to Quintus, "I remember last time you said you will help me learn your sword skill after I help the prince with a couple of assignments. I help with a couple already, haven't I?"

Commander Quintus laughed. "All right. Tell you what, I will try to talk with one of the kingdom's basic master scrollmakers. I will try to get the technique book for you before you leave for the World Tournament. How about that?"

"That will be great!" Jack uttered.

"I still need you to pay the coins though."

"Sure. Here," Jack said as he offered one hundred gold coins.

"I need a hundred and fifty," Quintus said.

"Eh? Last time you said one hundred."

"One hundred is for the materials and production process. Since you can't find your own scrollmaker, I still need to pay the scrollmaker for his service."

"Oh, okay," Jack fished out another fifty gold coins. It's a good thing he had picked up his profits earlier today. Otherwise, he won't have enough. After giving the coins to Commander Quintus, he only had 33 gold coins left in his purse.

After a while, the other participants finished their matches one by one. Some took the entire ten minutes without a clear winner. They were forcefully ejected out of the match. The staff then called for everyone to gather again for the second round.

For the Warrior class section, since there were only fourteen participants left, no participant needed to wait anymore. Jack was paired with Stonecleave for this second round.

The staff told everyone that they should enter.

When Jack was about to enter, Stonecleave uttered, "I forfeit."

Jack looked at him questioningly. Stonecleave turned to the staff who asked him, "Are you sure?"

Stonecleave replied with a nod.

"All right. I declare Storm Wind the winner, receiving two points. Stonecleave zero points."

Since there was no match, Jack and Stonecleave went back to their respective groups.

"He must have heard what happened to your first opponent," Quintus said when Jack came.

"Yeah. How wonderful it will be if everyone just forfeits and let me become the champion without even needing to lift a finger," Jack joked.

Bored, he decided to walk around looking at the projections of the fight in the other places. He came upon the Rogue section and saw Red Death was fighting against Balo on the screen. Seeing that match, he didn't know who to cheer for. He should be rooting for his guildmate Balo to win, but he felt that he preferred to have Red Death going to the World Tournament with him.

The two fought fiercely. Being both a martial art expert, the battle was evenly matched. Balo had a deeper understanding of martial arts, but Red Death had more experience with gaming mechanics. Their equipment seemed equally powerful, but Red Death's possessed more non-standard skills. In the end, Red Death managed to wear Balo down when the time limit almost ended.

"Ah, too bad," Jack uttered. Peniel was beside him. Jack was saying pity but why did she sense that he was feeling glad instead?

It's the third round now. Everybody was preparing to enter again. Jack was now paired with a stranger, a level 44 Mage Knight.

When it's time to enter, this Mage Knight said, "I forfeit."

Chapter 629: Game Skills Vs Martial Arts

In the subsequent matches, every player who was paired with Jack forfeited. Even The Man, when it was his turn to fight Jack, he said, "Although it would be great for me to experience fighting you, I will never be able to bring myself to raise my weapon against my boss, so I surrender."

As a result, Jack mostly sat on the waiting bench through the selection tournament. He continued sitting even when it was time for everyone to step in front of the wall plates because his opponents would just forfeit again. Until one time, the staff called for him, "Storm Wind! If you don't arrive in the next ten seconds, you will be considered forfeiting!"

"Eh? Someone is not forfeiting against me?" Jack uttered with surprise. He hurriedly went to the wall. As he approached, he understood why the person was not forfeiting.

"I forgot you are in the tournament as well," Jack said to the person waiting in front of the wall.

"You forgot your own grandfather?" Domon said.

"Hehe," Jack simply laughed.

The staff asked them to enter. The two did. They soon appeared inside the empty constructed space.

"Should we fight for real?" Jack asked, flexing his arms.

"Sure, we never do that, do we?" Domon said. "We don't lose anything by dying here, right? So, this is a perfect chance for me to see how good you have become."

"You sure I should go all out? I don't want you to lose your dignity. People out there are watching, after all."

"Hahaha! If you can beat me, I have nothing to complain about."

"You are still underestimating this world's game skills," Jack said.

"And you are still underestimating our world's martial arts," Domon replied as he took a fighting pose.

"Come at me with all you got! Let's see if your game skills or my martial arts that is better."

"Tell you what, I will use everything except my divine skill and summons," Jack uttered. He then cast Magic Weapon, turning into a dual-swordsman. His swords swung, three green and sharp energies shot at Domon with incredible speed.

Domon jumped but his body was a little bit at an angle, he also spun a bit. Jack felt strange seeing that weird jump. He then saw his three Wind Slash' energies fly beside Domon, missing the old man by a hair-breadth. One passed next to his head, cutting a little bit of his hair, one passed below his back that was on the air, the last one flew past in between his opened legs.

"F*ck! How did he dodge them with such accuracy?" Jack uttered with shock. Such an uncanny mana sense and body control.

While Jack was still shocked, Domon landed and immediately lunged forward. His glaive thrust out, leaving a trail of energy in a straight line.

"One Word Thrust!" Jack recognized the move that he had learned himself. His left magic sword immediately formed a Magic Shield. The thrust struck the Magic Shield and broke it to pieces, Jack reeled backward from the impact.

'Such a powerful hit!' Jack thought with alarm, and that was not even a game skill.

"He used mana manipulation with his attack!" Peniel informed. She was allowed inside this space. Unlike the space in League of Champions' challenges, this space didn't restrict Jack's other classes.

"Exactly, now that my body is stronger. I can do it more frequently," Domon said as he got into a low stance.

Jack felt dense mana accumulating on the blade of Domon's glaive. This move his grandfather was about to unleash was not less dangerous than a high-leveled game skill. Jack used Flash Step to move back, but he still felt the danger, so he made his super-human jump when he sense Domon was about to strike.

"Heh, don't think you can escape!" Domon uttered as he slashed vertically. A dense and straight energy line went up to Jack who was in the air. It was Domon's One Word Slash, the last time he used it in a horizontal slash, this time he did it vertically adjusting to his opponent's position.

Jack who still felt the danger had been casting a spell while he was in the air. A Magic Wall appeared in front of him. The one-line energy hit the magic wall, causing it to tremble for a sec before shattering.

'Shit! Only one hit to destroy my magic wall? He is not kidding about the power of mana manipulation,' Jack thought. But as the danger had passed, he was ready to take the offensive.

"Now is my move! Watch my swords!" Jack uttered as he fell back down towards Domon. His two swords blurred as forty-eight burst slashes targeting Domon's whole body.

"You managed to reach phase two this fast, impressive!" Domon said.

Domon's glaive whirled at high speed in front of him. Jack saw as if the air in front of Domon became compressed. All of the sword energies Jack sent get deflected to the side. None of Jack's burst slashes touched Domon's body. Jack recognized this martial art, it was the same one Jason was proficient with, Reversing Heaven and Earth.

Jack's swords which got deflected give his body an opening. Domon's palm came then. Jack saw in his vision as if Domon's palms broke into eight palms, it was the Eight Gates Illusory Palms. Every palm hit Jack's chest successively. Each palm made Jack feel as if a small detonation happened inside his chest. These palm hits also generated more than 300 damage each hit, resulting in almost 3000 total damage. Jack flew away from the hits.

Jack skidded to resist the force. For an attack that didn't calculate the weapon's stat, such damage was very high. Domon was not even a Battle Monk. Jack made the right choice by not relying on his defense to tank through Domon's glaive attacks.

His lost HP slowly went up again due to his exceptional body recovery ability. Jack aimed his left magic sword at Domon. Mana Bullet and Energy Bolts shot out.

Domon easily swatted those magic attacks with his glaive, such basic spells were meaningless against him.

But those basic spells were only distractions, the ground underneath him started to glow. Domon quickly jumped to the side, he used his glaive to push him further, bringing him out of the danger zone as Arcane Turbulence took effect.

When he landed, the ground glowed again. This time, thirteen crimson chains came out.

Domon's body turned into multiple images. It was as if the old man shook with high speed at the same spot. The chains came but all they hit was the afterimages. Several of the chains were smacked by Domon's glaive. Domon's shaking body moved slowly to the edge of the area as the chains failed repeatedly to grab Domon.

"Hey! Why are you gaping? It's the perfect time to shoot," Peniel said.

Jack was indeed planning to attack once Domon was incapacitated by his chains. But seeing how his grandfather constantly dodged his chains, he couldn't help but be entranced.

Domon finally stepped out of the area where the chain could grab him.

"What was that just now?!" Jack asked.

"You don't recognize it? It's the Eight Diagram Illusory Steps. Didn't I teach that to you as well?" Domon asked.

"The Eight Diagram Illusory steps?" Jack muttered. He thought he had become quite proficient with that movement art. But after seeing Domon's display just now, Jack understood then that he had only touched the surface of that martial art.

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Outside, everyone was transfixed by the scene showing Jack and Domon's fight. Everyone had been expecting Jack to finish this round instantly at first. Domon had swept the other challengers as well, but they didn't truly see anything special. Only after this fight did they see his real ability.

"Who is that person?" Yellow Death asked.

"My former master, Domon Fei," Red Death answered. The two of them were coincidentally the fifteenth players who had no match at that moment.

"Oh, that is the other expert you said residing inside Everlasting Heavenly Legends?"

Red Death nodded.

"I felt like I have heard that name before," Yellow Death said while pondering.

*

At selected venues, most of the top guilds' high-ranking had paid to watch the competition. Everyone had wondered the same thing about Domon's identity. Despite clashing two times with Everlasting Heavenly Legends, they didn't clash much with Domon. The first time, Domon was absent until they used the disaster items. The second time, Domon mostly clashed with the mercenary players they hired.

In one of the VIP rooms inside Raven's Den, General Manager Ironfist and Director Forcelabor were watching with the other Corporate United's brass.

"That person..." Ironfist muttered.

"Do you know him?" Forcelabor asked.

Ironfist nodded. He said, "That is Domon Fei."

"Domon Fei...? That Domon Fei...?!" Forcelabor uttered.

"Who is Domon Fei?" Steelhand who was also in the room asked.

"Your generation might not know him. But he was a legend during our time. I heard he retired and opened a martial art school somewhere obscure, but then any news about him disappeared completely some years ago. We thought he had gone to live as a recluse or even pass away... Never expect to see him here. How did that guild even recruit a legend like him?"

"Is he really that famous? I never heard of him in the gaming community," Steelhand asked.

"He never plays a game. He also didn't promote himself even in the martial art community. But even without promotion, no true martial artist of our generation not knows his name. He was recognized

unanimously as the best martial artist of his generation. He held the world championship title ten years in a row, never suffer a defeat."

"Send people to find out about him. If there is any possibility. We must bring him to our side!"

Chapter 630: Best of Both Worlds

Inside the constructed arena space.

"What are you doing daydreaming during a fight? You know that is a taboo to expert practitioners!" Domon uttered. He came again with his glaive swinging.

Domon performed Death Carrying Cyclone. his glaive glowed with white light, he had activated Ki Weapon. The glowing glaive swung in a wide arc as his body spun. His spinning was not as absurdly fast as a Berserker who used Punishing Cyclone, but it was more controlled and accurate.

Jack dodged the initial swing. When the glaive came again, Jack used Flame Strike. The two weapons collided with a loud clang.

When a similar impact occurred between Jack and Goliath, Goliath had been forced reeling back while Jack was completely fine. This time, both Domon and Jack were staggered as they took one step back.

Jack couldn't stop being shocked by mana manipulation. This technique had turned a normal attack into something as strong as a fully-leveled skill. It was truly heaven-defying. At the same time, he couldn't help to be excited. He would double his effort to learn this method!

Domon's body which was pushed back suddenly turned in the other direction. Instead of fighting the force, he had utilized it for his own. His body swiveled and his glaive thrust forward again with One Word Thrust.

Jack had sensed the attack coming, he used Roll to move away.

Jack used Shredding Fang at the end of his rolling. Domon countered using his Ki Wave. Shredding Fang was only an advanced skill, but since it had been max-leveled, it could still cause a stalemate against Domon's elite skill.

"Let's see how you deal with consecutive skills!" Jack uttered. He slashed forward, sending Sword of Light.

Domon stepped to the side, evading the crescent light. But he soon sprang in the other direction as Jack's body zoomed past. Jack's Blitz Slash didn't hit Domon, so the five slashes didn't activate.

Jack had been casting Magic Bind while he blitz past Domon, but Domon again sensed his attack and jumped away as a magic ring attempted to lock his legs.

Jack continued with Mana Beam while running forward. Domon easily dodged the thick energy beam. Jack swung the beam to the side, chasing Domon. Domon uncannily ducked and slid below the beam before dodging to the other side from where Jack swung his beam.

"Bloody heck! It's like trying to catch a fly with chopsticks!" Jack cursed.

"I can catch a fly with chopsticks," Domon still had the time to give his remark.

"Good for you," Jack was close enough now. Domon also didn't show any intention to back away. The two clashed head-on.

Jack tried capitalizing on his superior speed, but Domon's perfect finesse allowed him to perfectly evade, parry, and even counterattack with fewer movements.

At one opportunity, Jack executed Penta Slash. He had mastered this skill enough that he could control the rapid slashes accurately. His experience dealing with Formless Flowing Sword Style did help in this department.

Yet, all five slashes failed to touch Domon. Domon used his glaive to deflect the second and fourth slash while dodging the rests. Domon's glaive was still alight with the energy of Ki Weapon, enhanced by mana manipulation, it was enough to eliminate Penta Slash's high damage.

At the end of Penta Slash, Jack didn't stop. The fifth slash ended using his right hand, his left hand continued with a sixth slash. A fiery sixth slash in the form of Flame Strike.

Because this sixth slash was not part of Penta Slash, it was much slower. Domon used Engulfing Vortex. His glaive spun, forming a whirlpool that sucked in Jack's energy.

John's avatar had also used this move to terminate Jack's Flame Strike the last time they fought. After that clash, Jack had thought about how to deal with this martial art. He activated Dragon Eye, the entire scene turned to slow-motion.

Domon had taught Jack most of his martial arts, including this Engulfing Vortex. It's just that Jack wasn't proficient enough to use it yet. Another reason was that Jack didn't spend much time practicing it. He didn't think learning too many arts was good for him considering his limited time. Better for him to focus his time and effort on a few selective martial arts instead, following the quote of one martial art legend, "I fear not the man who has practiced 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the man who has practiced one kick 10,000 times."

However, despite not practicing Engulfing Vortex, he knew its basics. It was basically a form of redirection. The vortex drew the opponent's blow and guide it in a clockwise turn. This vortex would then let the force of this blow run its course. Once the force was fully absorbed, the weapon would lose its power and thus easily deflected.

In the slow-motion vision, Jack could see the vortex's current. He let his weapon get sucked into this whirlpool. Instead of fighting the current, Jack accelerated the clockwise turning of the vortex instead. So instead of letting the vortex eliminate the energy of his sword, he increased the spinning energy.

Jack's sword picked up in speed within the whirlpool. Domon realized something was wrong but it was impossible to modify the art's execution midway.

When the Engulfing Vortex ran its course, Jack's sword was not deflected. Jack used the chance and activated Drilling Thrust using that left hand's sword. Spiraling energy shot out, knocking Domon's glaive away as well as causing damage.

Seeing the opening, Jack's right hand slashed forward. But his arm stopped midway as a strong kick hit his right hand's wrist.

Dragon Eye's active ability was still in effect. Even then, Jack almost didn't see the kick. He knew then it was the shadowless kick. Jack activated his Gold Scale Armor, just as a series of kicks landed on his body.

Under normal circumstances, these kicks would have pushed the opponent away, allowing Domon a respite to rebalance himself. The Bloodline power prevented that. The Gold Scale Armor made Jack immune to knockback, so the kicks only caused damages but failed to force Jack back.

Jack even forced himself forward by using Charge. With Domon's glaive hand still open and his leg in the middle of kicking, Domon had no chance to dodge. Jack's body shot forward and bumped into Domon's. The old man had completely lost balance now. His body was stuck with Jack's as he was carried forward by Charge.

A martial artist who had lost control of his body was no different than normal people, no matter how expert he was. Jack didn't let this chance go. He used the burst slashes of his sword art again, this time at point-blank while his Charge was still active. The swords slashed multiple times at Domon's body.

By the end of Jack's Charge, Domon's HP had been depleted by the slashes. Domon fell to the ground once the Charge ended.

A notification voice was heard soon and the constructed space dissolved.

Both Jack and Domon found themselves back in front of the wall.

Jack turned to Domon, wondering how his grandfather took the loss. The old man was, surprisingly, smiling.

"That is a good one. I've seen you combine both your martial arts and game skills before, but it still surprise me when you did," Domon said. "You merged the best of both worlds. I am genuinely impressed."

"I'm glad that you take it well," Jack said.

"Don't be absurd. I'm not a petty person. A true teacher will always be glad if their students overtake them. True parents will be relieved if their offspring performed better than themselves," Domon replied. "Oh, but don't be so glad, boy. A true teacher is also one who learns from their students. I honestly never really put much thought into these game skills, tried to use them as little as possible. I guess I will give them more consideration from now on. Let's have a spar again some other time."

"Sure!" Jack uttered with a grin.

*

For the remaining tournament. Not only did Jack's opponent forfeit, the opponents that faced Domon also did the same. Grandson and grandfather ended up spending most of their time on the waiting bench chatting with one another. They only fought one more time when going up against another of their guildmates, Michelle.

Michelle knew that she was not Domon's opponent, but she simply saw the match with her teacher as a training spar to improve herself further.

When it was her turn to fight Jack, she fought seriously. Jack was her junior martial brother, after all. No reason for her to forfeit. Even though Jack had beaten Domon in the previous match, Michelle still challenge him to make sure that his win against her teacher was not a fluke.

The two fought fiercely. Jack was inspired by Michelle's expertise in dual-wielding. Despite not having the Hundred Synchronous Thoughts, Michelle's right arm and left arm were both coordinated and independent at the same time. It's like the two arms had a mind of their own and could deal with incoming attacks separately, yet still exhibited a harmonious unity. It was like fighting two persons with linked minds.

But Jack had fought such opponents before when he took his Blade Dancer trial. Additionally, Jack's Hundred Synchronous Thoughts didn't lose in this regard. Jack's higher attributes and better experiences of in-game skills gave him a solid advantage over his senior sister.

Michelle lost. But same as her master, she didn't show any ill-feeling on her loss. She congratulated Jack on the win. And like her master, she told Jack that she would like to have a spar again once in a while if Jack didn't mind.