

神達に拾われた男

2

The man picked up
by the gods

Roy

ILL. りりんら



THE MAN PICKED UP BY THE GODS (REBOOT)

– Kamitachi ni Hirowareta Otoko –

- VOLUME 2 -

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[Neo Translations]



「空を泳いでいるように見えますわ！」

水を動かしてちよいと水の形を玉から小魚へと変えてやると、まわりから軽く驚きの声上がる。

一流の冒険者たちと一緒に、
仲良く魔獣討伐の依頼を
遂行中——!!

ウエルアナ

ミゼリア

ミーヤ

たけばやし りょうま
竹林 竜馬

シリア

ジェフ





「『アースフェイス』」

盗賊にも俺を子供と見るなり増長して
あんな事を言う奴らはいたけれど、
目の前の連中ほど気に障らなかつた。
おそらくこの世界に来てから比喩でなく
一番イラッとした瞬間だった。



Chapter 24

A Holiday's Early Afternoon

The next day.

I opened my eyes to the warm sunlight pouring into my room.

Ah~ ... I slept well. It's been a while since I last pulled off an all-nighter like that...

The sun's already pretty high...

Hmm? High?..... That's not good!

"Good morning, Ryouma-sama." [Sebasu]

"Sebasu-san, what time is it?" [Ryouma]

"It's just before noon. It seems you really were exhausted. I hope you were able to have a good night's rest. Would you like to have your meal now?" [Sebasu]

"Thank you, but I need to go to the guild. I'll have it when I come back." [Ryouma]

"Very well." [Sebasu]

I quickly did my preparations and went to the guild.

What a pain... There's no time left.

...Can't be helped.

"Draw the veil upon this body, "conceal" it from prying eyes."

I put up a Barrier of Concealment around me, invoked a 'Body Reinforcement' [1] spell, and then ran through the rooftops to get to the guild as soon as possible. Whenever there wasn't anything to step on, I would use Dimension Magic to teleport me across. Like that I managed to run almost straight to the guild.

“Excuse me.” [Ryouma]

By the time I got to the guild and was brought to the room, the other people were already there.

“Ryouma, you came. With that everyone’s present.” [Wogan]

“Sorry for making you wait.” [Ryouma]

“You made it on time, actually. Almost late, but still on time, so don’t sweat it. It’s time to hand out the rewards!” [Wogan]

On top of the 3 medium silver coins I got for taking the latrine pits cleaning job, I also got 30 small gold coins. Everyone else got 10 small gold coins each.

“Hold on a minute there, old man. Don’t you think you’re getting a bit too spendthrift here?” [Jeff]

“For real. Not that I’m complaining, of course, but you do realize that all we did was keep a look out, right?” [Wereanna]

“Don’t you think this is too much? I know we could’ve gotten sick, but we didn’t really do anything personally. Just half would’ve been fine, I think.” [Mizelia]

“Nah, that much is just right. As for the reason, that’s because... Ryouma.” [Wogan]

“Yes?” [Ryouma]

“You said the disease in the latrine pit is called Idake, right?” [Wogan]

“That’s right. It’s information from the Identify skill, so it should be accurate.” [Ryouma]

“Yeah, well... Apparently, that Idake Disease is some really nasty stuff. An old hag I’m well acquainted with says that it’s so nasty that even if people live through it, they’ll be completely unable to move their limbs, leaving them with no other choice but to die.

That reward properly reflects the risks you took. The fatality rate from that Idake Disease is low, sure. But children and the elderly aren't likely to survive, and for the rest who do, they'll have to live the rest of their lives unable to work." [Wogan]

Everyone drew cold sweat upon that sudden revelation.

That's really bad... Of course, the prognostic syndromes themselves are bad, but not being able to work perpetually is fatal. Because that means no money.

If this world had insurances and disability rights, perhaps it could still be somewhat bearable, but as it stands, that's no different from a death sentence. If you can't work, then all that's left is to starve to death.

"Thank goodness we stopped things before it got any worse, nyaa..." [Miya]

"In one sense, it could actually be worse than diseases with a high fatality rate." [Mizelia]

"If you catch it and die, you pass on, but if you survive, you're in hell..." [Jeff]

"Because of this incident, the government office got a good scolding. Word says the boss and his lackeys have been apprehended, and those left behind are pulling their hair out figuring out what to do with the latrine pits from now on." [Wogan]

"Can't they just leave it to the slum people as usual?" [Wereanna]

"Unfortunately, that's no longer possible. The big wig responsible for refusing to pay them was fired, but even if the government office promises to pay them the old amount, the slum people can't trust them anymore. Besides, the slum people have already found a new job.

Other towns aside, this is a mining town. There's no shortage of dirty or labor work to be done here. Since they can get money elsewhere, there's no reason for them to clean the latrine pits.

Also, since it's the government office that's at fault in the first place, they can't really tell them to give up their work and clean the latrine pits, so they've already given up on them and are currently looking for another solution." [Wogan]

"What are they going to do? We're fortunate this time around cause Ryouma noticed

it, but if this happens again, it won't be funny." [Jeff]

"Right, right... Honestly, the only reason we took this job is because the guild pushed it onto us. From here on, the guild might have to turn this job into compulsory work to punish members that fail a lot of missions or break contracts." [Mizelia]

"You can leave it to me, I'll do something about it, de aru." [Raypin]

"You make it sound so easy." [Jeff]

"Personally, I can take the job while I'm here." [Cher]

"That would be a huge help." [Wogan]

"Nyaa? Ryouma, did you come from another town, nyaa?" [Miya]

Come to think of it, I went straight to work, so we didn't have much opportunities to talk.

I explained to them how I ended up in Gimuru.

"You lived in a forest all by yourself at 8? What a reckless guy." [Wogan]

"You going back to Gana Forest?" [Jeff]

"I'm wondering about that too... I do have some attachment to the house I lived in for 3 years, but I could also live in a nearby forest." [Ryouma]

"If you're going to be living nearby, then why not just live in town? Does it have to be a forest?" [Mizelia]

"Chores are taken care of with magic and food is taken fresh from the forest via hunting. It's actually a pretty refreshing life style, you know. Money isn't needed too." [Ryouma]

"Ryouma, this one thinks you might be a bit too young to be a hermit, de gozaru." [Asagi]

"It does feel somewhat like that..." [Syria]

“Well, don’t sweat it. It’d be a load off my back to have you around, but no one’s pressuring you to stay here. Just live as you please.

Anyway, the government officials embezzling funds have had their properties forfeited and their subordinates’ salaries reduced. The money from that is being used to cover the maintenance costs of the town. In the worst case, that money can be used to hire enough people to do the job, so it should be fine.

...Alright, with that I’ve given you your dues and have informed you of what you need to know. I just have one thing left to tell you. The day after tomorrow there’s going to be a big job.

There’s a mine that’s officially going to be abandoned this year, although it’s actually already been defunct since last year... A lot of monsters have taken nest inside it. They’re all small fries, but there’s a lot of them, so the area that needs to be covered is huge. The guild is going to need adventurers to deal with them. If you can participate, that would be a huge help. That’ll be all! Dismissed!” [Wogan]

After that we all went our ways.

When I got back to the lodging, the ojousama and the others were there waiting for me.

They were waiting so that we could have lunch together. I thanked them and took a seat, and then the ojousama spoke.

“Ryouma-san, might I invite you to train with me?” [Elialia]

“Why all of the sudden?” [Ryouma]

“I’ll be learning magic from today onwards, so I thought you might be interested too.” [Elialia]

“Elia’s training is actually a part of our itinerary.” [Reinhart]

Apparently, the Jamil Household had a custom of sending their children out to travel once they were old enough. Depending on what they wanted, they might even become adventurers.

“It is good to widen one’s perspective and learn new things, but before one can set off, one must first gain the power to protect oneself. Going on a journey accompanied by guards is also a choice, of course, but that wouldn’t be very fruitful. Traveling without any of the struggles will only result in half the benefits, which is why we’re having Elia learn how to protect herself.” [Reinbach]

“Even without traveling, one might still be summoned to deal with a monster threat or a group of bandits, so the power to protect oneself is a necessity.” [Reinhart]

That explanation was a little surprising.

“The ojousama too?” [Ryouma]

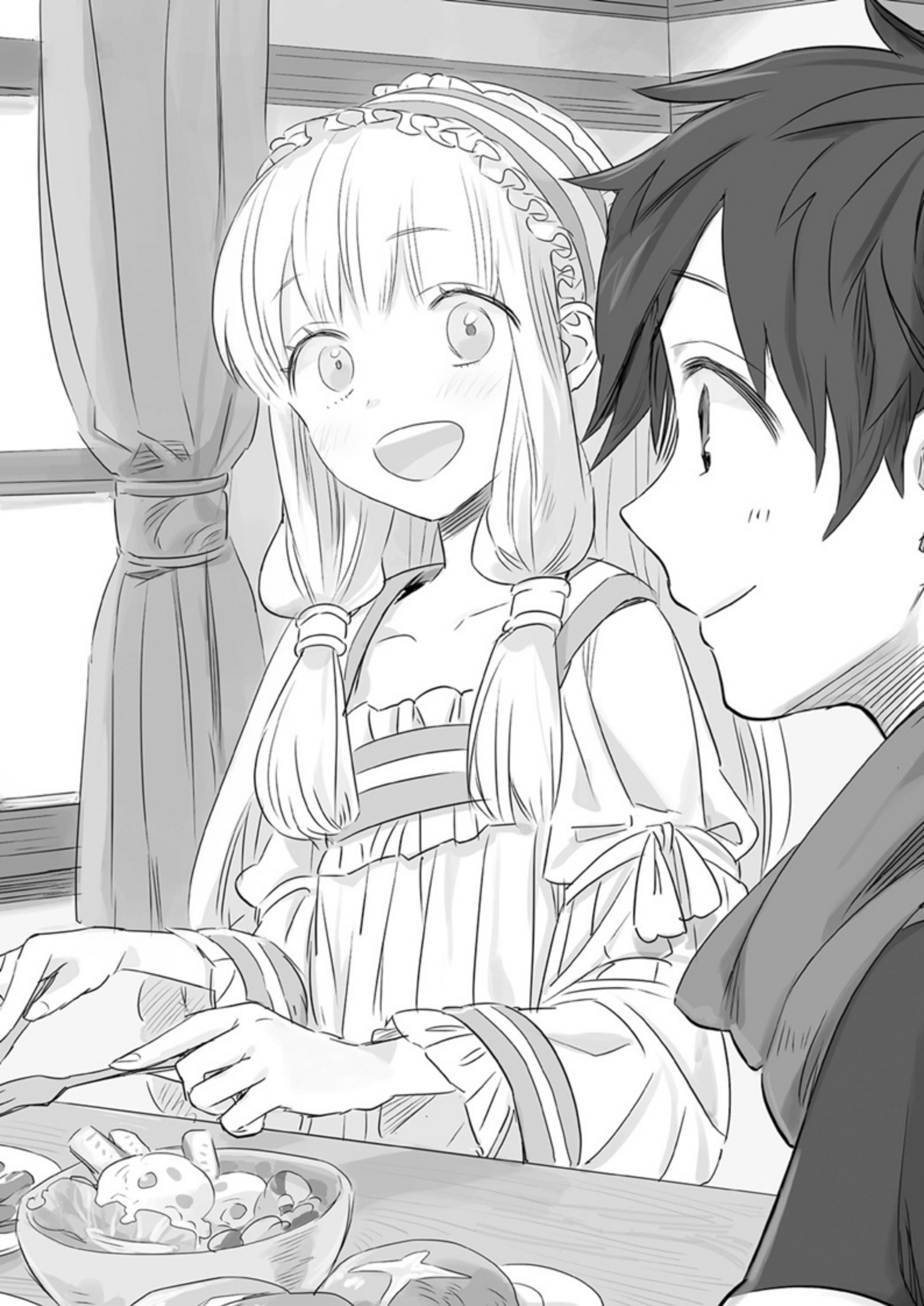
“Not just Elia, the bigger the scope, the more likely nobles will have to join the fray. It raises morale and paints a good image, after all. Protecting one’s own fief, there’s few better propaganda than that. But that’s also why power is a necessity.” [Reinhart]

Oh, right. There’s magic in this world, so there’s not much of a difference strength-wise between men and women.

“To that end, I’ll be attending the academy in the capital starting this year to study magic as well as other subjects. But I’d like to have some experience before that.” [Elialia]

“So that’s why you came here.” [Ryouma]

“That’s right. I’ve been training since this morning and I’ll be training later this afternoon, So, how about it? Won’t you train with me, Ryouma-san?” [Elialia]



...Sure, why not? It's a good opportunity and I did promise to teach her how to play with magic, so as long as I won't be a bother...

When I told them that they agreed, and it was decided that we would be going to the training grounds in the afternoon.

The training was mostly about magic and the training grounds would be a 20-minute trip on carriage to a rocky area outside town.

After lunch.

When we got to the designated area, Jill-san was there to meet us.

"Ojousama, I've been waiting. I see Ryouma is also with you. I hear the last three days have been difficult for you." [Jill]

"I could say the same to you." [Ryouma]

"Well yeah." [Jill]

"Come on, you two. Let's start already!" [Elialia]

"By the way, Ojousama. What attributes can you use? I can't teach you how to play with magic without knowing that first." [Ryouma]

"I specialize at fire and ice. I have a lot of mana, so I'm sure I'll be able to use lots of powerful spells as long as I practice." [Elialia]

Looks like she'll probably end up specializing on powerful spells. But fire and ice, huh...

"Is something the matter?" [Elialia]

"Water and earth are relatively safer, so there's plenty of ways to play with them. But compared to them fire and ice are a bit..." [Ryouma]

"Well, you certainly can't play with fire in the middle of the forest." [Hyuzu]

“It won’t be a laughing matter if you start a forest fire, after all.” [Jill]

Hyuzu-san and Jill remarked as they watched me and the ojousama from a distance.

They’re right, though; and in my opinion, the hardest attribute to play with is poison.

“This is the only game I can teach you with the fire attribute. ‘Darkness’ ‘Little Fire Flower’.” [Ryouma]

After darkening the area on my hands with the dark magic, Darkness, I made a really small flame at the tip of my index finger and lit up the darkness with its sparks for a few seconds.

“How beautiful.” [Elialia]

“Indeed.” [Reinbach]

“Ah, it stopped.” [Elize]

“It’s a little sad seeing it end like that.” [Reinhart]

Well, it is a toy fireworks.

It’s a pretty spell, but that’s it. It has no other use. One day I’d like to turn it into a full-fledged fireworks, but that will have to wait until I’m a little better at magic.

As for the ice magic games, all I had were skating and ice sculpting.

At first, I had my hands full just maintaining a giant block of ice, but I later managed to turn it into something much bigger.

As for ice sculpting, I tried it out because I had experience working part time as an assistant in making them. Ice sculpting takes time, though. It’s not something you can just pick up and do.

It takes a lot of stamina because you have to pile up lumps of ice and there’s also a chance everything might collapse, so it’s also dangerous. Because of that it paid pretty well, though.

Making ice sculptures and keeping them in the cave sure made hot days that much

more bearable.

On a small-scale, you could make a magnifying lens with it and heat up stuff too, but it's only fun until the novelty wears off. If you want to start a flame, it's quicker to just go use fire magic.

How troubling...

“What about water? It's not a specialty of mine, but I can use water too.” [Elialia]

“Oh, I have lots. For example, ‘Bubbly Water’” [Ryouma]

I put my finger tips together to form a circle, and then inside that, I used a water spell to produce water.

The water produced wasn't just water, however, but one that was particularly viscous, so it was able to create a thin film.

I blew softly on that thin film, and a bubble the size of a human's head appeared.

That bubble floated under the windless sky with the sky as its backdrop. As sunlight shone upon it, it looked like there were countless dazzling stars reflected on its surface. Before long, however, the bubble popped.

“Oh my, that looks like a fun one. It's like soap bubbles.” [Elize]

“It's so pretty.” [Elialia]

The ladies in particular seem to like my bubble magic. This world does know soap, but they're expensive, so they would never use them for something like this. The guys seem to be enjoying it to some extent too.

“We can use water attribute mana to make the water stickier. For example, ‘Water’, ‘Wave’” [Ryouma]

I used my hands as a container and poured water on it, then I moved the water with another spell.

“This ‘Wave’ is an elementary water spell that can make waves. With it we can create waves using water mana, and after a little practice, we can... do this!”

I threw the water in my hands upwards. Normally the water would come falling back down because of gravity, but this one didn't. Everyone looked up at the water ball floating up my head. I'm using a spell that can move water, so naturally *the water can float*.

Everyone knows there's an offensive spell under the water spell tree called Water Ball, so no one was surprised, but I'm just getting started.

Go!

As I moved the water a little, its shape changed from that of a ball into that of a small fish, causing voices of exclaim to rise from around me.

I've been killing time with this spell for three years, so it's already stupidly detailed to the point that there are even scales on it. That water fish moved through the sky while bending loosely back and forth...

"Ah! It's swimming in the air!" [Elialia]

"You're pretty good." [Reinbach]

Applause rolled out from around me.

That's a little embarrassing.

"Well, something like that. I figured since I could move water, I could probably make it stickier too. The result was that Bubbly Water from before. You could think of it like we're joining water droplets together." [Ryouma]

"Like this? 'Bubbly Water'" [Elialia]

After hearing my explanation, the ojou-sama created a thin film of water in her hand. Unfortunately, it broke when she softly blew on it.

"Use a bit more water mana and imagine the sticky slime's sticky liquid's stickiness when making it." [Ryouma]

She'd already succeeded, so I just gave her some practical tips.

The ojou-sama excitedly tried out those tips. Mana poured out from her like water

gushing out, and then she chanted the name of the spell.

“Bubbly Water.” [Elialia]

The water this time was a lot more viscous, and when she spread it into a circle with her fingers and blew lightly on it, a bubble floated in the air.

“I did it!” [Elialia]

“You can change the size of the bubble with your breath. Once you’ve gotten the hang of it, you’ll also be able to do this.” [Ryouma]

This time I used more mana to create the bubble. The result was a basketball-sized bubbled floating in the air. I pushed that bubble toward her.

“Look.” [Ryouma]

“Huh!?” [Elialia]

I pushed the bubble but it didn’t break. Instead, it slowly flew over to the ojousama.

The ojousama looked at that bubble with eyes full of curiosity as she received it and bobbled it.

“This one doesn’t disappear like the one earlier.” [Elialia]

“The more mana you use the more viscous the water becomes. A bubble like this won’t pop even if you touch it. Of course, if you hit it hard, it’ll break, but if you just leave it be, it’ll eventually pop on its own.” [Ryouma]

By the way, these bubbles are made purely with water mana, so they can’t harm the human body or the environment. Even a baby accidentally drinking it won’t pose a problem.

“It’s just like a slime.” [Elialia]

The ojousama poked at the bubble, and when it shook, she laughed.

I guess it was worth teaching her if she’s having this much fun. When there’s a chance I’d like to show her the other attributes too.



「空を泳いでいるように見えますわ！」

水を動かしてちよいと水の形を玉から小魚へと変えてやると、まわりから軽く驚きの声上がる。

Chapter 25

Magic Training

“Now then, shall we start?”

We played with the bubbles a little, but after a while, our training for the day was finally starting.

“The ojou-sama has been practicing her control since this morning. Ryouma-sama, is there anything you would like to study?” [Sebasu]

“Personally, I would love to study the various offensive spells of the different attributes. As I mentioned back at the church, I don’t really know much of offensive spells.” [Ryouma]

“Oh, right. In that case...” [Sebasu]

“I’ll teach.” [Camil]

Sebasu-san turned to Camil-san. Looks like he would be the one teaching us.

“Seems like you can use all the attributes. As for me, I can use all the lower attributes, as well as lighting and ice. I can’t teach you poison, wood, and the advanced attributes, but I can teach you the elementary spells for everything else.” [Camil]

“I’ll be in your care, Camil-san.” [Ryouma]

“Same.” [Camil]

“Well then, Ryouma-san. I’ll see you later.” [Elialia]

Apparently, the ojou-sama would be training away from me.

After bidding me goodbye, the others left to see her off.

We’re not training in the same place?

When I asked Camil that, he answered.

“It’s for safety reasons. You know that the ojousama has a lot of mana, right?” [Camil]

“Yes.” [Ryouma]

“Because of that she can’t control it very well. She’s gotten a lot better recently, but in the past, there were plenty of instances when her spells went a different direction than she’d intended. On top of that, they packed plenty of heat.” [Camil]

That does sound dangerous...

“But don’t worry! That was before. She’s a lot better now. We’re just being safe.” [Camil]

Camil-san assured me that it would be fine.

It’s probably because she’s pretty much his boss.

Staying on this topic any further wouldn’t do us any good, so I suggested we start the training.

“Sure, let’s start. Ryouma-kun, you said you didn’t know much about offensive spells, but I take it you know a little?” [Camil]

“Yes, but only the beginner spells.” [Ryouma]

“Show me.” [Camil]

“Sure.” [Ryouma]

As requested, I turned toward a nearby rock and casted the basic spells of fire, water, wind, earth, lightning, ice, and poison, which were respectively Fireball, Waterball, Wind Cutter, Earth Needle, Stun, Ice Shot, Poison.

“Basics are basics, but that’s pretty good. With that you’ll probably learn the next spells easily... I’ll show you some new spells, and you’ll copy them, ok?” [Camil]

“Got it.” [Ryouma]

“Let’s start. First is fire. ‘Fire Arrow’ ” [Camil]

As soon as Camil-san recited the chant for the spell, an arrow of fire appeared on the palm of his hands and promptly shot forth in a straight line toward the rock, giving rise to a light sound as the fire burst.

“This is the fire attribute’s elementary offensive spell, Fire Arrow. It’s faster than Fireball and has greater piercing strength. It’s the most convenient spell under the fire spell tree, so it’s commonly used. Give it a shot.” [Camil]

“Alright.” [Ryouma]

As I recalled Camil-san’s Fire Arrow, I did my best to imitate it. I produced fire on the palm of my hands just as I did with Fireball, then I compressed it and imagined an arrow shooting out.

” ‘Fire Arrow’ ” [Ryouma]

As I chanted out loud the words, a spell just like Camil-san’s shot out and hit the rock.

“Well done. Since you were able to get it on the first try, you must have a good understanding of magic.” [Camil]

Uh oh, is he going to get suspicious like people usually do in those cliché light novels? Maybe I should try misdirecting him a bit.

“I’m an archer, so visualizing an arrow is pretty easy.” [Ryouma]

“Oh, yeah. There’s that too.” [Camil]

“That too?” [Ryouma]

“From time to time, there are people with high level in magic from using them in their day-to-day lives, but haven’t learned any offensive spells.

These people can usually learn offensive spells after a few tries so long as they’re able to visualize the spells.” [Camil]

Oh, so it’s not that cliché setting in light novels when the protagonist learns magic too fast... Well, that’s good.

Come to think of it, didn't the ojousama also learn Bubbly Water in two tries? If I'd remembered that I wouldn't have worried needlessly.

After that I also learned the offensive spells Water Shot, Wind Hammer, Rock Bullet, Stun Arrow, and Ice Arrow. I also learned the defensive spells Fire Wall, Water Wall, Wind Shield, and Ice Shield.

After that a different problem rose.

"Well~ With that I don't have anything left to teach you... Should we go straight to the intermediate class? We could also just keep working on your elementary spells... Hmm..." [Camil]

Looks like while my learning speed wasn't abnormal, it was still fast. As a result, everything Camil-san had to teach was exhausted before our time.

It was then that Sebasu-san came.

"What has you so troubled?" [Sebasu]

"Sebasu-san." [Ryouma]

"Ryouma's too fast of a learner. He's already learned all the spells I could teach." [Camil]

"Oh, is that so? Then in that case, how about I teach him. I can teach him dimension magic." [Sebasu]

Lucky! I get to learn dimension magic from one of the country's top dimension magicians.

"I'll be excusing myself then. Good luck, Ryouma-kun." [Camil]

"Thank you very much, Camil-san. I'll be in your care, Sebasu-san." [Ryouma]

I thanked Camil-san and bowed to Sebasu-san.

Sebasu-san smiled cheerfully and spoke.

"Before we begin, I would like to confirm one thing. Ryouma-sama, do you know any spell under the dimension spell tree other than Item Box?" [Sebasu]

“I can use teleport.” [Ryouma]

“Can you show me?” [Sebasu]

“Of course. ‘Teleport!’” [Ryouma]

~Side Sebasu~

Ryouma-sama invoked Teleport, and in the next instant, he appeared beside the nearby rock. He invoked it 4 more times after that, appearing and disappearing around me, until the fourth invocation where he appeared in front of me again.

Teleport is a spell that instantly changes one’s position, so many beginners lose their footing after casting it, but Ryouma-sama did not lose his footing even once. It was a spectacular Teleport.

It may only be a beginner spell, but you can really feel his experience with it from how natural and how quickly he invokes it. He must have spent much time training with it to use it to this extent.

“Masterful performance, Ryouma-sama. If you can use it that well then you should also be able to use the intermediate dimension spells, Dimension Magic and Warp.” [Sebasu]

“Really!?” [Ryouma]

“Yes. Ryouma-sama, do you know why dimension magic is the hardest attribute to use among the higher attributes?” [Sebasu]

“No. Why is it the hardest?” [Ryouma]

“Can you explain how to use dimension magic?” [Sebasu]

“Use mana to interfere with the space and distort it.” [Ryouma]

“Exactly. But it is that very basic concept of interfering with space that leaves so many boggled.

Space is ever present, but only few can truly grasp it.” [Sebasu]

To make things worse, most of the textbooks teaching dimension magic are filled with exaggerated wording such as ‘that which envelops all things within the world’, making it difficult for aspiring dimension mages to grasp the proper image. In the end, the image they visualize often ends up poorly, leaving them with nothing more than a shoddy attempt at interference.

In actuality, the most important thing is to use mana precisely and grasp it deeply within the space. Unfortunately, that’s not something that could be explained with words.

Words alone can only give half the picture. There’s no other way to succeed but to keep on trying until one is able to grasp the sensation. Until then learning intermediate dimension magic or higher will remain but a dream.

“This might surprise you, but actually, the lower dimension spells aren’t actually any different from the intermediate spells.” [Sebasu]

“!?” [Ryouma]

He he... A fitting reaction.

“In the past, dimension magic didn’t have the lower spells it has now. It didn’t have such distinctions. After all, the first step to mastering dimension magic is to grasp space, and those who fail to do that are considered incomplete.

With time the people who could use dimension magic grew less and less, until eventually, the standard for dimension magic plummeted and the spells grew weaker. The elementary spells today are none other than the weakened intermediate spells.” [Sebasu]

“So you’re saying I could use the same image I use for Item Box and Teleport to cast Dimension Home and Warp?” [Ryouma]

“Yes. You’ll need to supplement Dimension Magic with something else, but for Warp, it’s exactly the same image. The casting range of Warp is far greater than Teleport, so as long as you can grasp your destination, you can go as far as your mana permits. Let’s see... How about the top of that rock?” [Sebasu]

I pointed toward the farthest and biggest rock around.

The top of that rock was flat, so there was sufficient foothold. He shouldn't get hurt even if he falls.

"Sure. I'll give it a shot." [Ryouma]

Oh, Ryouma-sama looks quite eager to test his mettle. Students like him are truly worthy of teaching.

How many students have I taught just like this?

When I was born and it was found out that I possessed an aptitude for dimension magic, I spent all my time training and working as a butler.

My magic proved most useful during my travels with the previous lord. When the previous lord stopped traveling, I worked daily as his aide.

I believe it was around this time when I was praised as one of the country's leading dimension mages. The reason behind that was because I often used Dimension Home to carry most of the previous lord's luggage. There were plenty of times when I appeared in public too.

Because of that countless people asked to become my disciple.

I ignored all the letters sent to me, but there were some who used their connections with the previous lord to have their sons or retainers taught.

Naturally, I couldn't ignore such people, so I taught them. I know for sure that I've taught over a hundred people, but I stopped counting after that, so the actual number is a mystery, but regardless, the number of people who could use intermediate dimension spells by the end of my sessions do not even number 10.

Many of the sons from the affluent families refused to listen when I told them that dimension magic couldn't be explained well with words, and they did nothing but complain, in the end, not getting much of any proper training done.

Someone like Ryouma-sama who obediently listens and earnestly trains is the best sort of student to teach. Even more so when he's talented too. I wonder if there was ever a time when I personally wanted to teach someone? Perhaps there was indeed

such a time, but I don't remember it anymore.

While I was thinking that, Ryouma-sama closed his eyes and focused.

He was as still as tranquil waters, almost as if he couldn't hear anything around him.

It is remarkable that he is able to concentrate this much at such a young age, but what sort of training did he undergo to reach this state?

When I think back to it, from the first time I met Ryouma-sama, he's always been an unbalanced young boy.

He did not have any parents and isolated himself in the forest, but despite all the time spent alone in the forest, his clothes were well kept.

He had difficulties speaking at first, but even then, he spoke with courtesy as he invited us to his house and offered us a most luxurious tea accompanied with an equally luxurious honey.

His house was simple in design but solid and pleasant. He even had a bath. He lived just like a noble.

But the strangest things about him are his knowledge and skill.

He researched slimes, which had long been abandoned by other researchers, and bettered his life by discovering cleaner slimes and scavenger slimes. He even invented a thread I'd never seen before and waterproof clothing.

Once, he said the salt from Gana Forest could be used so long as the poison was detoxified. Reinhart-sama showed interest there, wanting to sell the salt, but what did he say?

There's not enough to sell. The competition will just drown it out.

He must have been raised as a noble, if not, then at least a merchant, or else how could a child his age have such knowledge of business?

I still remember how he looked at his first town with empty eyes and how skillfully he protected the ojousama from crooks.

And though still young, he has already achieved something by preventing the outbreak of a plague.

Every one of these feats would have been impossible for a normal child, but he did them all.

From time to time, he seems like an adult, but after opening his heart a little, he's finally started to act his age.

Ryouma-sama is...

"Sebasu-san." [Ryouma]

Oh, dear... It seems I lost myself in my thoughts there.

"Yes? What is it?" [Sebasu]

"I think I can do it. I'll try it." [Ryouma]

"Show me." [Sebasu]

"...'Warp'" [Ryouma]

In the next moment, Ryouma-sama disappeared, and in the next moment, he appeared on top of the rock just as I've instructed him.

I warped to the same spot.

"Congratulations, Ryouma-sama. You've succeeded at invoking the intermediate dimension spell, Warp." [Sebasu]

"I did! I really did it! Thank you so much, Sebasu-san!" [Ryouma]

He he... So he acts his age when it comes to magic, I see.

"In that case, let us move on to Dimension Home. You will be opening a hole and imagining a big room inside just like you do for Item Box.

That's the usual process for Item Box, so I've omitted much of the details, but after that is where things change.

After going through the initial stages for Item Box, you will now have to imagine the space you're creating to have the same environment you have around you.

This is the reason why it's possible to live and raise monsters inside Dimension Home.

Without this step all you'll be casting is the elementary spell, Item Box." [Sebasu]

"I understand." [Ryouma]

As Ryouma-sama said that, he closed his eyes and focused once more.

It was a much more complicated spell than Warp, so it was only natural that Ryouma-sama seemed to be desperately grasping for the spell's feeling.

He chanted several times, but nothing more than a black hole appeared.

Again he chanted, again he failed.

He repeated that time and time again, one attempt after another followed by one failure after another, and eventually, sweat trickled down him.

But despite that, Ryouma-sama continued to concentrate. He would take a breather every now and then, but he continued to proactive even as the hours passed. And after 4 hours of training, Ryouma-sama chanted once more, and...

"...'Dimension Home'" [Ryouma]

In that instant, a white hole appeared before Ryouma-sama.

"Congratulations, Ryouma-sama. You've succeeded in casting Dimension Home." [Sebasu]

"Alright! Thank you so much! With this I can finally put my slimes in!" [Ryouma]

"I'm glad I was able to help. Should you find your Dimension Home too small, you can always cast it again with more mana to make it bigger. Just note that a black hole means failure, and a white hole means success." [Sebasu]

"I'll remember." [Ryouma]

“Now then, shall we go to where the others are? It’s already dark.” [Sebasu]

“Eh...? Ah!?! Wow, it’s this late already?” [Ryouma]

Looks like he didn’t notice.

If he didn’t succeed just now, he might have kept on going.

Normally, he’d have long run out of mana, but as expected of someone with a mana pool rivaling that of the ojousama’s, he’s still got plenty to spare.

“You were really into it. Well then, let us be on our way. ‘Warp’” [Sebasu]

There are some things I’m concerned about, but for now, let’s just quietly watch over him.

Chapter 26

Accepting an Invitation

~Side Ryouma~

I was so into the training that I lost track of time... Fortunately, Sebasu-san reminded me of the time and we went to where the others were through his Warp.

Apparently, the ojou-sama was training in an area a lot further from me than I'd thought.

"Welcome back, Ryouma-san." [Elialia]

"You sure took your time. How much did you learn today?" [Elize]

"Did you learn any new spells?" [Reinhart]

Ojou-sama and Co. immediately noticed us when we arrived.

"Yes, Camil-san and Sebasu-san taught me a lot." [Ryouma]

"That's good to hear. You look like you still have mana to spare. Won't you show us what you've learned?" [Reinbach]

I first showed the spells I learned from Camil-san, then I showed off my Dimension Home. Unfortunately, I needed 10 seconds just to invoke it. Looks like I still need lots of practice.

"Dimension Home." [Ryouma]

Fortunately, it was a success.

When the entrance to my Dimension Home opened, it occurred to me that everyone else except for Sebasu-san was frozen solid.

Oh, yeah... Using Item Box at my age is already an achievement. I forgot.

Oh, well. Sebasu-san knew anyway, so even if I hid it, they'd find out sooner or later. In fact, four of them are already pestering Sebasu-san.

They praised me almost immediately after, though.

I know it was an amazing feat, but having my head patted is so embarrassing.

Later.

The sun was already about to set, so we decided to go back.

Dimension Magic was best improved by repetition, so I went back with my Warp.

Just to be safe, though, Sebasu-san also accompanied me.

Along the way, Sebasu-san suddenly remembered something.

"Ryouma-sama, we plan to go to the abandoned mine tomorrow to give the ojou-sama a chance to fight a monster. How about it? Would you like to come too?" [Sebasu]

"As long as it's no trouble." [Ryouma]

"Of course, it's not. The ojou-sama will be delighted to have your company. Can you use weapons other than the bow? The abandoned mine is fairly small inside, so it's a difficult weapon to recommend. You should also wear some armor." [Sebasu]

"How about a short sword? I can fight with my martial arts and magic, but I don't have any armor." [Ryouma]

"That takes care of the weapons then, not that you would have any problems on that end, anyhow. After all, the monsters are weak, there will be guards accompanying you, and the main purpose is to give the ojou-sama experience, so..." [Sebasu]

"Right. Anyway, I'll go with the short sword. As for the armor..." [Ryouma]

I could make the weapons with earth magic to some extent, but a poorly made armor will hinder my movements.

...Oh, now that I think about it, didn't I have a letter of introduction from the guild master?

Let's use that then.

"I think I'll go shopping when we get back to town. I got a letter of introduction from the guild master of the adventurers guild, so I think I'll use it for our little trip tomorrow." [Ryouma]

"I see. That sounds wonderful." [Sebasu]

After that we arrived in town and went our separate ways at the gate. Sebasu-san went back to the inn while I looked for the weapon store.

When I found the store, I entered it, and a rough-looking man greeted me with a ghastly smile.

"Welcome, dear customer. Is there anything that interests you?" [Rough-Looking Man With a Ghastly Smile]

"E-Erm... I'm looking for a weapon to use in a confined area like the abandoned mines. I think a short sword will do. I also need some armor." [Ryouma]

"If you need a short sword, then please refer to this shelf here." [Rough-Looking Man With a Ghastly Smile]

"...Umm, not to be rude or anything, but aren't you forcing yourself?" [Ryouma]

".....You can tell?" [Rough-Looking Man With a Ghastly Smile]

"...It's obvious." [Ryouma]

The smile plastered on his face kept breaking every few seconds, resulting in a very weird face.

After I told him that, the man dropped the act and wore a completely unsociable face.

"ARGH! I give! I give! Sorry, kid, but an acquaintance of mine told me I'm unsociable, so I was trying to fix it, but it looks like it's just no good with my personality." [Rough-Looking Man]

“I see. By the way, is this Digger Arms Shop?” [Ryouma]

“Yep, that’s the place. What about it?” [Rough-Looking Man]

“I got a letter of introduction from the guild master of the adventurers guild. I was told to bring it here.” [Ryouma]

I handed the letter of introduction.

“From Wogan? Strange things do happen... You a new recruit? My store’s expensive, you know? I can guarantee the quality, but do you have coin on you?” [Rough-Looking Man]

“Yes. I don’t know the market price of weapons, but I can pay up to 30 small gold coins.” [Ryouma]

“That’s more than enough. What have you been using until now?” [Rough-Looking Man]

“I usually use a bow, but I’m going to the abandoned mines, so...” [Ryouma]

“I see... Then in that case, let’s go with that short sword you mentioned earlier. You can also go with a short spear or a one-handed sword if you’d like.” [Rough-Looking Man]

“Give me two short swords then. Oh, and would you happen to have throwing knives here?” [Ryouma]

I have the Throwing Weapons Mastery skill, but I’ve only thrown stones until now. Might as well use this chance to buy something.

“10 knives for one small gold coin. Pricey, yes, but I guarantee the quality. So long as you retrieve them after throwing, they’ll last you a long long time.” [Rough-Looking Man]

“Give me ten throwing knives and those two short sword from before then.” [Ryouma]

“It’s 2 small gold coins per short sword, so adding the 10 throwing knives on top, that’ll net you 5 small gold coins all in all. You’ll be needing armor too, right?” [Rough-Looking Man]

“Yes. I’d like something easy to move in. What do you have?” [Ryouma]

“Something easy to move in? Then you’ll want leather armor. Armor made with monster hide can be even stronger than metal, and if you enchant them with magic, you can keep your mobility even with a full-body leather armor. Unfortunately, the latter type isn’t in circulation. I don’t have any in my store.” [Rough-Looking Man]

“Let’s go with the monster hide then.” [Ryouma]

“Alright. I only have two sets that’ll fit your size, though. A day will be needed for adjustment if you want the other sets. Are you going to look through everything?” [Rough-Looking Man]

I need it for tomorrow, so I’ll just get what I can buy now.

“I’ll be going to the mines tomorrow, so just show me the ones I can buy now.” [Ryouma]

“Alright.” [Rough-Looking Man]

The man went inside, and when he came back, he had two armor sets with him.

“Both armor sets are made from monster hide. One is made with Grellfrog Hide, making it flexible and easy to move in. Ah, but don’t be fooled, it might be flexible, but it’s plenty tough. It costs 4 medium silver coins.” [Rough-Looking Man]

It’s like rubber. Frog hide, huh.

“The other one’s made from Hard Lizard Hide. This one’s more expensive, costing 5 small gold coins.” [Rough-Looking Man]

“That’s a pretty big difference, no?” [Ryouma]

“It’s because of the material. Hard lizards live in the wasteland, so it’s rare to find one. On top of that, they like to use the neutral magic, Harden, so hunting them is a pain.

Half-hearted attack can’t get through their skin, and using magic risks destroying their skin.

I know it’s expensive, but this is actually already cheaper than it would normally go

for.” [Rough-Looking Man]

Harden covers the body with a layer of mana. It’s a defensive spell that prevents the body from getting wounded. A monster that uses that would certainly be difficult to hunt.

“Taking one down takes luck and skill, but Hard Lizard Hide is not only light, it can also invoke the Harden spell when mana is passed through it.

Harden increases the defensive prowess of the armor while leaving it as flexible as it were. It’s already plenty tough without it, but after invocation, it gets even harder.

Because of that it’s a hit among people with no stamina like mages.

Unfortunately, this was made from the leftovers of another set. And because there weren’t enough materials left, only an armor big enough for a kid could be made. But then it’s not like there’s any kid adventurer out there who could purchase something this expensive. Can’t change the size either since there’s no material. In the end, it’s been left rotting in the shelves for these past 2 years.

If you can afford it, it’d really be a load off my back if you could purchase it. This one’s a lot better quality-wise too than the other armor.” [Desperate Salesman]

Just as he mentioned, this does seem better.

This store was recommended by the guild master, so I doubt he’s just trying to make extra coin.

“Alright, I’ll go with this then.” [Ryouma]

“Thanks, kid. That’ll be 10 small gold coins in total.” [Rough-Looking Man]

I took out a pouch of small gold coins from my Item Box and paid the man.

After confirming the payment, the man handed over the equipment, and I stored them into my Item Box.

“Thank you.

A bit late for introductions, but my name is Ryouma Takebayashi.

I'll come back if I need anything again." [Ryouma]

"Come back anytime. Name's Darson Digger. I own this store.

That armor should serve you well, so long as you don't push yourself too hard.

Come back and get a new set once you've grown out of it. I'll give you something nice then." [Darson]

I thanked him, left the store, and went back to my lodging.

The next day.

Today we rode the carriage to the abandoned mine. The road became worse as we traveled along, but the weather was great.

After 3 hours of traveling, I thought we'd finally reached our destination, but...

"..." [Elialia]

For some reason, the ojousama was acting weird beside me.

She didn't say much during breakfast either. I wonder if there's something on her mind.

"Ojousama? Are you alright?"

"Yes, I'm fine." [Elialia]

Well, at least she doesn't seem to be sick. Maybe she's nervous?

"Is this your first time hunting monsters?" [Ryouma]

"Not at all. I may not have a lot of experience, but..." [Elialia]

"Relax a bit more, Elia." [Reinbach]

"Grandfather." [Elialia]

“You won’t be convincing anyone like that.” [Elize]

“Mother too...” [Elialia]

“Ha ha ha, well at least you seem to be thinking straight today. We’ll be arriving soon, so let’s review our objectives.” [Reinhart]

Thinking it better than doing nothing, Reinhart-san started a topic to divert Elialia’s attention.

“The place we’re headed to is Gimuru’s Northern Mine. As the name implies, it’s located to the north. It’s already been declared abandoned, so why is that we’re going there?” [Reinhart]

“We need to investigate the mine before we can send a request to the adventurers guild to clean up the monsters that have taken root in the mines. We have to go anyway, so we’re taking this opportunity to let me gain some experience.” [Elialia]

“Exactly. Normally, we’d just refer to the regular reports given to the management, but after the investigation on the recent incident, it’s looking likely that the government office might have messed with the management of the northern mines too.

So we’re personally going to check the mines out and gather information on the beasts lurking in it. The request to the adventurers guild will depend on the contents of our investigation today.” [Reinhart]

It’s still unknown how many monsters are lurking within the mines, but it’s already been assumed that it would take at least several days to wipe everything out, so today we’re really just going to investigate the mine and train at the same time.

The reports of the government office aren’t exactly credible, but according to them, there haven’t been any sightings of high-ranked monsters, so it should the northern mines should be safe enough for a child to train at.

As the nervous ojousama watched the blue skies through the windows, I leisurely allowed myself to sway with the rocking of the carriage.

Chapter 27

Investigating the Abandoned Mine

“Is everyone ready?” [Jill]

“Yes!” [Elialia and Ryouma]

As soon as we got to the mines, we started our investigation.

We were currently standing before the entrance of one tunnel, but judging from how tall the weeds were – they were almost as tall as me! – and the unrestrained ivies that covered the rocks around the tunnel, it would appear that no one has visited this place in quite some time.

Accompanying me and the ojousama were Jill and Co. There were also other guards, but they went into a different tunnel to hunt monsters.

As for Reinhart-san and the madam, they went into a tunnel together, while Reinbach-sama went into one alone.

I asked if that was alright, and Jill-san and Co. said this in response.

“Don’t worry. The three of them all once traveled as adventurers. In fact, Reinbach-sama’s achievements were so great that the neighboring countries caught wind of them. People like them won’t get a scratch from the sort of monsters you’d expect from a mine like this.” [Hyuzu]

“Actually, they don’t really need us guards. They could just walk by themselves around town. They could take care of themselves, And so long as Sebasu-san is around, they’ll never lack anything.

We never showed our face when you were at town, right?” [Jill]

“Unlike the other nobles, the 4 members of the Jamil Household don’t enjoy the pompous lifestyle. They even told an uncouth guy like me to talk as I normally do.” [Hyuzu]

Looks like the three of them were quite renowned in the arts of magic and the sword.

I kinda thought that would be the case, but I guess it's fine, right? Letting them go like that. Yep, it's probably fine.

“Let's do our best too, Ryouma-san!”

The ojousama normally wore a simple dress made from high-quality cloth that was so high-quality even I could tell it with a glance, but today, she's wearing nothing more than a shirt and a pair of pants, on top of which was leather armor.

Huh, she sure is lively today, isn't she?

I guess this means she's gotten over her nerves then?

While we were talking like that, the madam waved goodbye to us from the entrance of another tunnel.

Did she hear the ojousama?

We waved back at her, and she waved back more forcefully for a moment before she finally turned around and entered the tunnel with Reinhart-san.

After they entered their tunnel, we entered ours. AT the lead were Zeff-san, Jill-san, and Hyuzu-san. In the middle were me and the ojousama. And behind were Camil-san and the slimes.

We walked orderly in a line, but the tunnel was dark. Just a few steps in and the light could barely reach us anymore.

“Tch, I guess there really aren't any lamps here.” [Hyuzu]

“Weren't they taken to the eastern mines?” [Ryouma]

“Well, the lamps should've still been maintained until it was officially declared as abandoned, but from how bad the tunnel looked outside, I'm guessing the management just didn't care. Besides, if they took the lamps from here and put them in the eastern mine ahead of steeled, then they would be able to reduce expenses temporarily.” [Hyuzu]

“They’re the sort who likes easy money, I guess.” [Ryouma]

“They certainly give the impression...” [Elialia]

“True or not, after what they’ve done, it’s hard to trust them anymore. That’s the curse that will follow those who’ve betrayed the trust of others. Please remember that, Ojousama. ‘Light’” [Jill]

As Jill wrapped our short conversation up, he casted the beginner light spell, Light, to shoot out a ball of light.

The ball of light floated above our heads and illuminated the surroundings.

The light couldn’t reach deeper into the passage, but it was enough to show us our surroundings.

“Ojousama, young master, please watch your step. People used to work in these tunnels, so there aren’t any traps, but if this were a labyrinth, there definitely would be.

Finding those is the job of a scout like me.

We’re just training today, but please do your best not to move ahead needlessly.” [Camil]

“Yes!” [Elialia]

“Alright.” [Ryouma]

We continued walking like that for some time when Zeff-san suddenly stopped.

When we looked up ahead...

“A bug?” [Ryouma]

For some reason there was a bug just like the praying mantis before us. Unlike the praying mantises I knew, however, this one was as big as me with scythes fit for its size. It’s definitely a monster.

...If not, then I feel sorry for all the bug-hating people. This world must be hell for them...

“Do you see that, young master? That’s a bug-type monster known as the Cave Mantis. It uses the scythes it has for hands to dig holes. It likes to live in caves or tunnels.” [Camil]

“Tch! Looks like an annoying one’s taken root here...” [Hyuzu]

“Is it strong?” [Ryouma]

“Not really. Its scythes aren’t sharp and its carapace is soft, so miners are actually able to deal with them with just their pickaxes.

The problem is that they reproduce really fast, so there’s a chance the more advanced variant, the blade mantis, might show up when they’re around. Unfortunately, blade mantises look just like their lesser variant, so it’s hard to tell them apart.” [Zeff]

“Unlike cave mantises, blade mantises actually have sharp scythes, so if you let your guard down, it could be fatal. Please be careful.” [Jill]

“How do you tell them apart?” [Ryouma]

“Blade mantises are just a little bigger, but the difference isn’t obvious, so some experience is needed to tell them apart. That one over there is cave mantis. I’ll lure it here, so make sure to get a good look.” [Zeff]

As Zeff-san said that, he approached the cave mantis alone and led it here.

Elia and I watched as he easily received the attacks of the cave mantis with his small buckler.

“That’s a cave mantis. Those scythes are pretty fast, so please be careful.” [Jill]

“Ojou, please take out the cave mantis while Zeff has its attention.” [Hyuzu]

“No fire magic, though. The smoke won’t have anywhere to go.” [Jill]

“Alright...” [Elialia]

“I’m ready whenever!” [Zeff]

“Then... ‘Ice Arrow’! Tsk! ‘Ice Arrow’!” [Elialia]

The first Ice Arrow the ojousama casted was dodged, but the second one she casted immediately successfully took down the cave mantis.

“There’s no problem with your casting speed, but you should aim more carefully.” [Jill]

“I understand.” [Elialia]

After that we continued walking for another two minutes before we happened onto another cave mantis. This time, however, there were 4 of them.

“Now what? The ojousama took care of the one before, so I thought we could let Ryouma have a go next, but 4 right out of the blue?” [Hyuzu]

When I heard that, I told them that I wanted to try.

“Be careful.” [Hyuzu]

Nodding to him, I drew the two short swords sheathed by my waist and invoked Body Reinforcement, then I ran for the cave mantises.

One of the cave mantises raised up its right scythe when it noticed me, but I sent a kick flying toward its right leg before it could attack.

As its left leg was broken under the might of my kick, the cave mantis lost its balance and fell to the ground, then as my right foot descended onto its head, a nice crunchy sound resounded.

At that, two more noticed me and headed my way.

Matching the timing of the second cave mantis as it lifted up its scythe, I turned my body counterclockwise 90 degrees, barely dodging its attack, as I cut off its joint with my short sword. Then as my body swung back into place, I lopped off its head with my left short sword that was held in a reverse grip.

Behind the second cave mantis was the third one.

Shifting grip on my left hand from a reverse grip to a proper grip, I turned my body counterclockwise and parried its attack, then I claimed its head with my left sword.

The fourth cave mantis swung its left scythe in hopes of claiming my neck, but I dodged

it, received its attack with my right sword, and cut its joint with my left.

It swung its right scythe next from the side, but I received it with my left and cut its joint with my right. With both arms gone, the cave mantis no longer had any cards left to play.

It could only helplessly watch as I lopped off its head.

...Doesn't look like I'll be having any problems here. My swords are doing well too, not a single crack on them.

"Good job. Looks like you can handle yourself in close combat too.

Ojousama, bug-type monsters are tough, so make sure you don't attempt what Ryouma did and try to lop their heads off." [Zeff]

"I understand." [Elialia]

"You played it smart invoking a hardening spell there. With that it wouldn't have mattered even if one of the cave mantis had landed a hit." [Hyuzu]

"As expected of Ryouma-san." [Elialia]

It's because I'm already used to bug-type monsters. After all those years living in Gana Forest and hunting those tenacious critters to feed to the slimes, it's only natural I'd get used to them.

As our first battle concluded, we continued along the tunnel.

10 minutes later, I was walking in front while the ojousama followed from behind. Somehow, it was decided that we would be taking care of the monsters we happened across.

There were nothing but cave mantises along the way, and the fights were really closer to pest cleaning than a fight, but their numbers were gradually increasing. At one point, we had to deal with 4 or 5 of them at the same time. What's worse was that the intervals between each battle was getting shorter and shorter.

Of course, that meant nothing to me.

“Heave... ho.” [Ryouma]

But not for the ojousama. She’s been casting one ice spell after another at the enemies we’ve encountered to weaken them and reduce their numbers.

I’m grateful to have her support, but all that casting has left her exhausted.

She’s also using more and more mana with every spell casted.

I know the four guards following us will step in when things turn for the worse, but...

“Playing Clay” [Ryouma]

“!?”

I caught the leg of an attacking cave mantis with earth magic and broke its balance, then I finished it off in a single hit.

“Why don’t we rest for a bit?” [Ryouma]

After that I suggested we take a breather.

“Here, dried meat. You’ll feel much better once you’ve eaten.” [Hyuzu]

“Thank you.” [Ryouma]

And so, a breather we took.

Although we were still deep inside the tunnel and couldn’t let our guard down, we sat ourselves on the ground and rested.

We had the Light spell for our light, so the area was well lit. There also seemed to be a vent connected somewhere, so it wasn’t hard to breathe.

“Are you alright, Ojousama?” [Jill]

“Thank you for worrying about me, but I still have strength to spare. Mana too. It’s just that for some reason, I feel like I get tired more easily.” [Elialia]

“That’s normal when fighting in a place you’re not used to. Especially, places like these where we can’t tell the passage of time. Anyway, there’s nothing else to it but to get used to it. It’s that sort of training after all.

How about you, Ryouma-kun? Are you alright?” [Camil]

Camil-san turned to me after advising Elialia, but unlike her, I’m actually used to places like these.

“It’s just like my house, so I’m ok.” [Ryouma]

“Ahh, right. Now that you mention it...” [Camil]

“Hey, Ryouma. What spell did you use on that cave mantis just now? I know it’s an earth spell, but I don’t recognize it.” [Hyuzu]

“You mean Playing Clay? It’s a spell that temporarily turns soil and stone into clay.” [Ryouma]

Like Create Rock, which I used back during the landslide, Playing Clay is also a spell made from the combination of Rock and Break Rock. It’s a spell that continuously uses Break Rock to break down the soil to keep the particles connected.

It’s also one of the games I used to play back when I had difficulties using magic. It’s literally playing clay.

“It’s a spell I created back when I had difficulties using Rock to help myself learn it. You get stones and stuff like this and use magic to knead them into clay. Eventually, you’ll get used to it and you’ll be able to use Rock.” [Ryouma]

The clay form will only last as long as there’s mana. Once the mana used to invoke the spell is exhausted, the spell will wear off, and the object will go back to its original form. If it used to be soil, then it’ll go back to being soil. If it used to be rock, then it’ll go back to being rock.

Because of that it can also be used to fill in gaps between walls or to fill cracks. It can also be used to repaint walls. Of course, I didn’t think all that when I first came up the spell.

After explaining the spell, the ojousama and the 4 guards looked at me, dumbfounded.

“Oi, Camil, Jill. What do you think? You’re the magic guys from our group.” [Hyuzu]

“Coming up with a new spell because you can’t use a beginner spell? Ryouma-kun, the things you do are really... different.” [Jill]

“I won’t say it’s impossible, but it’s definitely a hassle. I mean it’s one thing if someone else had taught you, but coming up with a new spell just to learn a beginner spell? Usually, it’d be a lot easier to just train normally.” [Camil]

Like that we chatted and relaxed.

While we were doing that, the slimes were behind us eating all the monsters we defeated.

We’re not doing anything out of the ordinary, but we’re making great progress in cleaning up the path.

Chapter 28

Real Alchemy

“Yup. Nothing beats the outside, alright.” [Hyuzu]

After completing our task in the mine without any incident, we went back outside.

Hyuzu-san was quite pleased to be out of the dark and dreary tunnel.

“We don’t have time to enjoy ourselves, Hyuzu. We have to go back and write a report.”
[Zeff]

“I know, but it’ll be afternoon by the time we finish, so just a little bit more and sweet rest will come.” [Hyuzu]

We were called too.

After that we all headed for an area near the entrance of the mine.

It’s a wide area that used to be the dropoff for mining tools and other luggages. Because of that it was clean unlike the other areas that were littered with stones.

Currently, we’re just using it as a rendezvous point as well as a parking area for our carriage, but in its heyday, it even had a rest area for the employees.

“Oh.” [Ryouma]

As I walked through the tall weeds that reached up my waist, from time to time, a cold gust would blow. It’s because a part of the road had become a cliff. Without anything to block it, the wind was free to blow a chill gust. It’s great since the sun’s rays are really hot.

Turning toward the direction the wind blew, I could see the road we used to get here, and consequently, the whole town of Gimuru.

Under the perfectly clear blue skies that was without a single cloud, the lone stretch

of road that extended out from the vast blankets of green painted a tranquil and relaxing sight.

“Young master, be careful. There’s a cliff that way.” [Zeff]

“Thanks for the warning.” [Ryouma]

I decided to heed Zeff-san’s warning.

He had a point. The weeds were tall and it was hard to see my feet, so it wasn’t far-fetched to say that I might lose my footing.

When I looked down I saw a great amount of earth and sand gathered under the cliff. That’s probably a slag heap. This is my first time seeing one.

It wasn’t exactly pretty, but seeing a mountain of red soil covered in weed strangely reminded of nature’s vitality. But still...

“It sure is a waste...” [Ryouma]

They said this mine doesn’t produce any iron anymore, but isn’t there actually a lot?

The red on that soil is the color of iron oxide... in other words, rust. If they used alchemy, they could probably continue to produce iron, but alchemists are ill-reputed around here, so they probably can’t.

We walked toward the wide-open area as I thought that. When we got to the place, for some reason, Reinhart-san and the madam seemed to be waiting by the entrance.

“Welcome home~” [Elize]

“How was it?” [Reinhart]

“Mother, father, I defeated lots of cave mantises!” [Elialia]

“Hmm, seems you did well.” [Reinhart]

“Ryouma-san started helping me along the way to keep the mantises away, so I was

able to cast my spells unhindered. Ryouma defeated even more mantises than me too!" [Elialia]

"So Ryouma-kun protected you, huh. Thank you, Ryouma-kun." [Reinhart]

"Still... Were there that many cave mantises?" [Elize]

"Apparently, the tunnel we entered was a nest of cave mantises. There were nothing but cave mantises inside." [Jill]

"I see, then how about going into another tunnel this afternoon, but this time with us? I want to see how you and Ryouma-kun fight too." [Reinhart]

"Really? I'll do my best!" [Elialia]

"Oh my, aren't we excited? But before that let's have our lunch first. The others will be returning shortly, so until then let's talk." [Elize]

Like that we ate and talked about the details of my adventures with Elialia in the tunnel of cave mantises. After that it was decided that we would be going into another tunnel after lunch.

"By the way, Ryouma-san. What was on your mind a while ago?" [Elialia]

"A while ago?" [Ryouma]

We ate with the 4 members of the duke's household, and for most of the time we were talking about either our reflection on the events this morning or Elia's way of fighting. When that topic was exhausted, however, the ojou-sama – Elialia – asked me something. Unfortunately, I had no idea what she was talking about.

"Didn't you say, 'what a waste,' when you saw the landscape around here?" [Elialia]

Ah, so that's what she was referring to. Unfortunately, while I understand what she's talking about now, the topic is a bit problematic for me.

"I-It wasn't anything important." [Ryouma]

I suck at lying. Really. I'm sure even a slime could tell from that last sentence that I'm just trying to pull the wool over her.

"Suspicious... Very suspicious." [Elialia]

"You sure are a poor liar." [Reinbach]

"Is it something you can't say?" [Reinhart]

"If you want to say something, you should just say it." [Elize]

Well, I guess if it's these people, it should be fine.

"Do you remember what I told you about along the way to Gimuru? About the salt?" [Ryouma]

"Ahh, I see, so that's what. Don't worry. There's no one here except for us, Sebasu, Arone, and Lilian. Arone and Lilian are good at keeping secrets, so you don't have to worry about word getting out." [Reinhart]

"Right. Anyway, you know I can use alchemy, right?" [Ryouma]

"I've heard of it." [Reinhart]

Although it was Reinhart-san who replied, I was focused on Arone-san and Lilian-san.

They looked surprised when they heard the word 'alchemy', but they didn't show any unpleasant feelings.

Heaving a sigh of relief, I continued.

"R-Right. And this mine is going to be abandoned, yes?" [Ryouma]

"That's right. We're done with the papers too." [Reinbach]

"What about it?" [Reinhart]

"It might still be possible to acquire iron from this mine... That is with the use of alchemy, anyway." [Ryouma]

When I said that everyone else except me stiffened.

“Is that true?” [Reinhart]

“Yes. Do you remember what I told you about detoxifying the salt from Gana Forest?”
[Ryouma]

“I do.” [Reinhart]

“It’s the same thing. All I need to do is to take the iron from the soil. I believe that red in the soil is actually the color of iron. Umm... when you put water on a sword and leave it like that, it’ll rust, right?” [Ryouma]

“Naturally.” [Reinhart]

“In the same way the iron of a sword can rust, so can the iron inside the soil. That’s why it’s colored red. So long as I use alchemy and extract only the iron from the soil, it should be possible to produce iron. That being said, it would probably be an issue if an abandoned mine suddenly started producing large amounts of iron, so that’s why I think it’s a waste.” [Ryouma]

“That’s true, but... Ryouma-kun, if you think you can do it, why not try? I’m interested in whether it would work or not, and I also have a way to sell them without causing trouble.” [Reinhart]

“Alright.” [Ryouma]

I nodded and decided to give it a shot.

If using alchemy won’t pose a problem, then there’s no reason to hide it. Gayn did say that he just randomly put something together to create alchemy and fulfill the request of an otherworlder, so it’s actually pretty easy to use. All you really need is an elementary understanding of the chemical elements and science, and you’ll be good to go. Unfortunately, it’s also because of that that alchemy hasn’t taken off in this world.

Frankly, if it’s just extracting iron, then...

What is iron oxide? That’s rusted iron, of course.

What about oxidation? That's the process when oxygen combines with an element. And in the case of iron oxide, that's obviously the combination of iron and oxygen.

What is oxygen? That's the air I'm breathing right now.

What occurs during alchemy? Oxygen is forcefully removed through the utilization of mana, leaving behind only iron.

If I teach them this much, then I'm sure even Reinhart-san and the ojousama will be able to do it.

If that's not enough, then I can teach them about the basic properties of oxygen too. I'm sure even that much won't take more than an hour to teach.

Although, to be honest, I don't really feel like teaching them that much unless they ask.

If they want to learn it or use it for the sake of reviving a dead enterprise, then by all means, go ahead.

Gayn and the others may have made alchemy because of an otherworlder's demands, but in the end, it's still something that belongs to this world.

After lunch.

"Ryouma-kun, will this do?" [Reinhart]

"Yes, thank you very much." [Ryouma]

I drew the basic magic formation required by alchemy – a simple square inside a circle – on the ground, then I took a stone bowl full of red soil and placed it on the formation.

"Let's begin. It's dangerous, so please make sure not to enter the formation." [Ryouma]

After warning them, I let my mana course into the formation, and then a bright light dazzled from the formation as a thin film of light was created.

None of the spectators uttered a word during this moment. They all watched with rapt attention.

Can't blame them, I had the same reaction on my first time. Nowadays, it feels no different from turning on a computer, though. Then again they'll probably make an even bigger fuss if they could see a computer turn on. Man, I sure miss computers.

Oops, lost myself in my thoughts there for a moment again. Let's continue...

Alchemy has different magic formations for different jobs. This formation is meant for separating. With it I'll be able to take the oxidized iron alone, and the rest of the soil will naturally float out of the formation.

When the light faded, only red-colored grains were left in the bowl. All the soil have already left through the thin layer of light.

When I used the neutral magic, Identify, on the red grains, I was able to confirm that they were indeed oxidized iron.

I need to do the separation process one more time, but this time, I'll be removing the oxygen from the iron. After going through the same process as before, all that was left was a sparkling and silvery sand.

Leaving it like that would make it too easy for the wind to blow, so I decided to draw another magic formation beside the separation formation. This time, what I drew was a pentagram and a circle, the alchemical formation meant for combining things.

One needs the ability to visualize, as well as have knowledge of the substance before and after combination to use this formation, but with it, one can combine things. I'm going to use it to turn this sand of iron into one lump... There.

I used Identify once more to confirm that I have indeed succeeded in making a lump of iron. It has a purity of 100%, so there's no mistaking it.

...Of course, the reason I don't have much of a reaction is because I'm already used to alchemy. When I first used alchemy, I became really excited and thought about a lot of things. The fact that I'm able to act unaffected like this really speaks volumes about how familiar I've gotten to alchemy.

"Reinhart-san, it's a success. Please take a look." [Ryouma]

While Reinhart-san stared at my lump of iron in my hands, I handed it to him.

When I did, he rubbed my lump, slapped it, turn it over and held it up to the light, and then used Identify on it.

“Yep, it’s iron, alright... You actually did it
.....Sorry, Ryouma-kun.” [Reinhart]

“Huh!? Why are you suddenly apologizing!? Please raise your head!” [Ryouma]

His sudden apology left me bewildered. Did something happen in the short time I was performing alchemy?

Reinhart-san raised up his head, but he still continued to apologize.

“Umm, you see, alchemists claiming they can make gold is so common it’s basically a stereotype, so when you said you could make iron – of course, I didn’t think you were trying to swindle us – I didn’t really believe it. I doubted you and your claims, for that I apologize.” [Reinhart]

Ahh, so that’s what he meant.



“The fact I asked you to show me your alchemy despite my doubts is...” [Reinhart]

“It’s fine, really. I mean it can’t be helped if it’s such a tall tale. Besides, it’s not like I was hurt or anything.” [Ryouma]

“Thank you. Still, real alchemy sure is impressive. I can’t believe you were actually able to produce iron from that soil.” [Reinhart]

“And it’s so pretty too. It’s like silver.” [Elialia]

“Indeed. Do all things made from alchemy turn out like this?” [Elize]

“Unfortunately, because of that we can’t sell it. It’s real iron, yes, and Ryouma-sama’s alchemy is indeed amazing, but...” [Sebasu]

Because of alchemy, or rather, because the purity was too high, the lump of iron couldn’t be sold. It was made by magically gathering all of the iron content from the soil into one lump, so of course, the purity is high.

Because of that, not only is it soft, it’s also flexible, has a sheen glow to it, and rusts harder than normal iron. Or at least, that’s what I remember from that one news segment back in my previous life that talked about pure iron. Although, even that didn’t discuss 100% pure iron.

Well, this one was made with magic, so using my previous life’s standards doesn’t really fit.

Anyway, putting that aside... Since I know what the issue is, I can solve it. If the purity is too high, then I’ll just lower it.

I drew a six-sided star with a circle around it on the ground, and placed the soil from before on top of it.

This six-sided star magic formation is meant for mixing. It can equally mix together various substances of different nature. It doesn’t have a lot of uses compared to other formations, but it can be used to lower the purity of my lump of soil, which I previously made via the previous alchemical formation.

Gradually, the color of the lump of soil faded, until eventually, it turned into a blackish hue, no different from your run-of-the-mill iron.

That being said, it was still different from iron produced through more normal means.

Although it looked just like iron, the impurities mixed into it was different from common iron, which had plenty of carbon at the cost of its viscosity, leading it to become more brittle.

Anyway, the point is that I don't know whether this could actually be used or not.

When I told Reinhart-san that, he laughed.

"Then I'll get a merchant I can trust to investigate it. If you want, I can introduce you too." [Reinhart]

"Really? Then please." [Ryouma]

"Of course, of course... Now, who to go with... Should I pick that guy? Or maybe the blacksmith would be better?" [Reinhart]

I'm curious about the quality of my iron, so I asked to be introduced, but...

After that Reinhart-san became a bit too overzealous in picking out who to bring my iron to that he even skipped out on our monster hunt in the afternoon. And now, the ojusama has her cheeks all puffed up... What to do?

Chapter 29

Afternoon Search and Present

Reinhart-san won't be able to join us in the afternoon training, so our group only consisted of me, the ojousama, the madam, and Reinbach-sama.

"Good grief, father always ends up like that when it concerns his work..." [Elialia]

"I can't believe he actually neglected Ryouma-kun and his own daughter." [Elize]

"I'm partly responsible for this too... But at least he's really devoted to his work, right? I mean wouldn't it be worse if it was the other way around?" [Ryouma]

"Maybe... We're here." [Elize]

As the 2 adults led us, before we knew it, we were right before the entrance.

"From here on, the two of you should be the ones to decide how to proceed. Me and grandpa will just quietly follow. We'll help out when things look bad, but don't expect us to provide any help other than that." [Elize]

"We're here to help Elia gather experience, after all. Ryouma-kun you already have plenty of experience, so I'll have to ask you to let Elia make her own decisions." [Reinbach]

All of the sudden, the ojousama has her work cut out for her.

"I'll do my best." [Elialia]

"I understand." [Ryouma]

Seeing how the ojousama wasn't perturbed in the slightest, it seems she's used to these two suddenly giving her an assignment.

We continued into the tunnels without a word of complaint from the ojousama.

The tunnel this time was a lot bigger than before, and parts of the walls were covered in moss.

We could slip if we're not careful, so we better watch our step.

"It's dark, so I can't see very far." [Elialia]

I've realized this since this morning, but it seems unlike me who's used to hunting in the night, the ojousama has a hard time seeing in dark places.

"Ryouma-san, you have experience hunting in the night, right? Do you use light magic then?" [Elialia]

"Only if I don't mind others noticing me. Otherwise, I use the neutral spell, Search. There's still a chance the target might notice me because of the flow of mana, but the odds are much lower." [Ryouma]

"I can't use Search very well. How do you do it? I know I'm supposed to spread my consciousness, but I don't really get it." [Elialia]

Search, huh. Well...

After thinking a little, I made a vessel out of stone using earth magic, and then filled it with water using water magic.

"Please look at this." [Ryouma]

"?" [Elialia]

I threw a stone into into the vessel, and ripples rose on the surface of the water.

"Think of the center as you and the ripples as the flow of mana. Make yourself the center of the mana flow while you spread it around you, and when a monster shows up—"

I threw several more pebbles into the vessel, calmed down the ripples with magic, then threw another stone into the center. When I did, ripples appeared again, but the small stones interfered with some of the ripples.

"Mana will crash into the monsters just like these ripples. You should treat that as the

reaction a monster or a human gives to Search.” [Ryouma]

“I see. That’s a lot easier to understand. Umm... ‘Search!’” [Elialia]

When the ojou-sama invoked the Search spell, a great amount of mana gathered around her. It was an amount I’ve never felt before from anyone else other than myself.

It’s amazing how I can feel the mana hitting against me even without focusing, but if there’s an enemy mage present, we’ll definitely be found out.

Sensing mana is the most basic of basics, so there’s no such thing as a mage that can’t sense mana.

“There’s a lot of something up ahead.” [Elialia]

“You succeeded. But you should rein in your mana a bit more. If an enemy mage were around, we’d definitely get found out like this.” [Ryouma]

“R-Really? It seems I really do need to practice some more.” [Elialia]

“For now, let me be in charge of the front and Search. You just focus on your spells just like you did this morning.” [Ryouma]

“Alright. I’ll be counting on you, Ryouma-san.” [Elialia]

I used Search to see what’s up ahead, and just like she said, there were indeed a lot of monsters. But it seemed to be a gathering of many small monsters.

“The road opens up ahead, but there seems to be a lot of something filling up the ceiling there. I think they might be cave bats.” [Ryouma]

“Those are probably cave bats, yes.” [Reinbach]

“Could Elia take them all out?” [Elize]

“That would provide some shooting practice, but if it’s a huge cloud of bats, then it wouldn’t matter if she aimed or not, she’s bound to hit something.” [Reinbach]

Cave bats are only about as big as an adult’s palms and mostly fed on insects. They don’t have a lot of options for attacking, but they do fly around, so they’re ranked F. Even

children could beat them, but they can get troublesome when they're all bunched up. The two adults didn't look like they wanted to deal with a cloud of cave bats either.

"Then how about we try an experiment?" [Ryouma]

"An experiment?" [Reinbach, Elize, Elialia]

"Yes. If it goes well, then we might be able to take out all the bats in one go." [Ryouma]

I double-checked on the ecology of the cave bats, and as expected, they're no different from earth bats. In that case, I should be able to knock them out if I cause powerful sound waves to erupt.

Stun grenades were a thing in my previous life, so as long as I use my magic, I should manage.

Silent, a spell that seizes the oscillations in the air to mute sound, and its opposite, a spell that amplifies the oscillations in the air to make the sound louder, Big Voice.

Voice Change, a spell that changes one's voice like when one sucks in helium, and Whisper, a spell that allows one's voice to reach greater distances.

And lastly, the resulting spell from the fusion of Big Voice and Whisper, Sound Bomb.

All of the above are spells I came up with after much experimentation in the forest.

I came up with Sound Bomb specifically for situations like these. It's pretty effective too considering it was able to rupture the eardrums of a black bear and knock it out.

I should be able to knock out the bats with it as long as the spell doesn't fail.

Speaking of Whisper, I practiced it a lot before by talking to myself in my room, but I haven't used it since.

Anyway, the possible problems I see with this method is one: the tunnel might collapse; two: there might be other people nearby; and three: cave bats might survive.

"You don't have to worry about the tunnel. This tunnel has been reinforced with earth

magic to prevent it from collapsing, so it's unlikely you'll cause it to collapse. As for the people, we'll check with Search to ensure there's no one in the area, and in the case you're not able to kill all the bats..." [Reinbach]

"...How about leaving it to my slimes?" [Ryouma]

"Alright. If that's still no good, I'll lend a hand." [Reinbach]

And with that our plan was decided.

I took out a big sticky slime from my Dimension Home.

"I'm counting on you." [Ryouma]

I ordered the big sticky slime to block the tunnel with its huge body while taking care not to alert the cave bats as it approached them.

With that my sticky net was ready.

Lastly, I erected a sound-muting barrier to cover us.

"I'm ready." [Ryouma]

"We're ready too." [Reinbach]

"Then... 'Sound Bomb'" [Ryouma]

In that instant, a terrifying explosion sounded from outside the barrier. We couldn't actually hear any of the sounds, but we could still see the shadows falling from the ceiling.

"Looks like a success. Let's go." [Ryouma]

After dispelling the barrier, we continued onwards with the slime net as our shield. Before long we came across a great number of cave bats laid out on the ground.

Almost all of the bats were knocked out.

Of those that did manage to fly away, they did not number even 10. And yet even then, some of those remaining bats flew in a daze, eventually crashing into a wall.

Some of the cave bats did manage to fly toward our direction, but they immediately found themselves within the sticky slime net.

“Ho, not bad...” [Reinbach]

“You really took them all down with one spell, huh.” [Elize]

“That’s amazing, Ryouma-san!” [Elialia]

“It’s been a while, but it looks like it’s a success. Cave bats have good ears, but that’s also their weak point. Ah, do you mind if I feed these to my slime?” [Ryouma]

“They’re your spoils. Do as you please.” [Reinbach]

“Cave bats don’t have any parts worth selling anyway.” [Elize]

I ordered the big sticky slime to break up and eat the sleeping cave bats. When I did, 364 sticky slimes treated themselves to an eat-all-you-can cave bat buffet.

Oh, it looks like the cave bats can now split again. I’ll have them do it back at the inn.

After that I continued to support the ojou-sama with both action and word of advice as she hunted the remaining monsters in the tunnel for the next hour.

“Hey, Ryouma-kun.” [Reinhart]

After cleaning up the second tunnel, Reinhart-san was waiting for us at the entrance.

“Did something happen?” [Ryouma]

“It’s about the iron. Can you make me a sample to show to a possible partner? It’d be best if you could make it rectangular like an ingot.” [Reinhart]

“Sure, no problem. Alchemy also has a formation for changing shapes.” [Ryouma]

“Really? Then if you could ready one soon, please.” [Reinhart]

Like that I exchanged places with Reinhart-san and went to work on the ingot.

He offered to help too, but it wasn't necessary, so I suggested he follow after the ojou-sama instead.

It's not difficult work, after all.

As proof of that, I was able to finish making the ingot almost immediately. It barely took longer than walking to that slag heap.

"Sebasu-san, the ingot is ready." [Ryouma]

"Thank you. What will you be doing now, Ryouma-sama?" [Sebasu]

"Hmm..." [Ryouma]

After completing the ingot and handing it over to Sebasu-san, I didn't have anything left to do, so I was thinking of following after the ojou-sama to help out with her monster hunting, but they've already entered for quite some time.

Should I just go ahead and enter a tunnel on my own? But the monsters around here are weak, so there's not much merit in fighting them, and it's also questionable whether that's a good idea considering how much time we have left... Moreover, our main purpose here is to scout out the place. A lot of adventurers are gonna be hired to take care of the monsters here, so there's no reason to rush. Huh, in that case, I think I'll just let the slimes split.

"I think I'll just let the slimes split for now. After that I'll contract them and do some training." [Ryouma]

"In that case, please use the corner over there. It's open and if something happens, we'll be able to hear you." [Sebasu]

And so, that's what I did. After the slimes split, I leisurely spent the remaining time training.

One hour later.

The ojou-sama and the others came back. They walked over to where me and the slimes were.

“Ryouma-san!” [Elialia]

“O-Ojousama. Are you done with your training?” [Ryouma]

“Yes. We’re done for today. Actually, I have a present for you.” [Elialia]

“Present?” [Ryouma]

“He he he... I think you’ll like it very much, Ryouma-kun.” [Elize]

As the ojousama and the madam said that, Reinhart-san came with a box of stone.

“Inside is a monster. It’s weak, but you should still be careful when you open it.” [Reinbach]

When I heard from Reinbach-sama that a monster was inside, I carefully opened the lid. In the next moment, I saw the monster inside.

“A slime?” [Ryouma]

Inside was a dark gray slime, a slime I’d never seen before. It wriggled about inside the stone box as if it were looking for the exit.

“It’s one of the many advanced slime variants, a metal slime. We stumbled onto it by coincidence and caught it.” [Elize]

“I can have this? Really? Thank you so much! I’m so happy! I have another slime variant I can add to my collection.” [Ryouma]

“It may be a slime, but you should still contract with it first.” [Reinbach]

Oh, right.

Just as Reinbach-sama reminded me, I went ahead and formed the contract. After that the metal slime started behaving within the box. When I lifted it up, it was indeed made of metal and was harder than any slime yet.

So this is a metal slime. I guess it must feed on metal then.

“Reinhart-san, could I get some of the iron soil around here to feed this slime?”

[Ryouma]

“You’re going to feed it with soil?” [Reinhart]

“That or the iron from it. I also want to run some experiments with the other slimes.”
[Ryouma]

“Take as much as you want. Originally, all this soil would have just been treated as trash. If not for you, we would have never looked at it again.” [Reinhart]

“Thank you so much!” [Ryouma]

It should be fine if I get just enough to fill a corner of the Dimension Home.

Will the slime eat iron? Will a slime turn into a metal slime after eating iron? Or will it turn into something else?... I can’t wait to find out.

“By the way, Ryouma-san. What were you doing?” [Elialia]

“Oh, I was letting the slimes split just a while ago, and then after that I thought I’d train them a little...” [Ryouma]

“Train? You mean the slimes?” [Elialia]

The ojousama could not comprehend.

Well, it’s not like I don’t understand.

She might understand how convenient slimes are, but I’m sure she still can’t see them as anything but useless in battle.

Slimes are weak, after all. I mean they’re G-Ranked monsters that even children can beat.

But the truth is that slimes possess a super flexible semi-liquid body that won’t die unless the nucleus is hurt.

Slimes can move their nucleus anywhere in their body, so if for example a slime is kicked somewhere, it could simply move its nucleus away to protect it while nullifying the damage with its semi-liquid body.

At first, that was just a theory of mine, but after spending a lot of time training with the wild slimes – and I mean a lot of time since at one point I even thought it was hopeless – the slimes became agile.

They learned to use basic martial arts, allowing them to dodge an incoming weapon while rushing into the enemy to secure his arm.

They learned how to use their semi-liquid body to parry attacks – My teachings focused mainly on defense and evasion – And today, there are even some among them who can extend a part of their body and use it to control a spear or a rod.

“That being said, they still can’t beat a goblin *one on one*. They just really lack the overall strength needed.” [Ryouma]

“Not at all! I think it’s plenty amazing that a slime’s actually learned to use weapons.” [Elize]

“Ryouma-kun, what do you think about attending a short course for beginners at the tamers guild? It might do you good to learn some common sense for once.” [Reinbach]

“Maybe he should be teaching them instead...” [Reinhart]

It looks like they’re starting to get that my slimes are amazing, but... That was uncalled for.

The expression on the three adults quickly changed to that of exhaustion as they listened to the crazy things my slimes can do.

Before long the ojousama came to ask for help and I went to get my red soil.

After that I spent some time until it was time to go back.

By the time we left, there was a mountain of red blocks at a corner of my Dimension Home.

Chapter 30

Morgan Company

“Are you alright, Ryouma-kun? You look tired.” [Reinhart]

Reinhart asked me on the way back from the mine.

“I was hoping we could drop by our partner for your three products, but...” [Reinhart]

“Don’t worry. I’m alright. I just used too much mana.” [Ryouma]

Creating all those red soil bricks with Create Block brought me near mana exhaustion. It’s been a long while since I last felt like this, but other than that, I’m alright. After all, I didn’t actually exhaust all of my mana. This much discomfort shouldn’t pose a problem.

One hour later, our carriage finally reached town. We stopped in front of a certain store. It was not lavish by any means. It was a simple store made out of wood and had a calm feeling to it.

I thought for sure we’d be going to a luxurious store considering this was the duke, but it seems that’s not the case. Because of that, however, the store was not intimidating.

As soon as we entered the store, we were brought to a huge guest room where paintings lined up the walls and a decorative vase could be seen at one corner. The store was much more luxurious inside than outside.

The sofa I sat on was soft, and my body sunk into it.

...It’s just a bit more lavish than the reception office for clients in my previous world, but I feel a little out of place... Anyway, let’s just sit and behave beside Sebasu-san for now.

As I behaved myself and quietly waited, before long, a well-built man came. He was the person responsible for the store.

“My, my, if it isn’t the people of the duke’s household. Welcome.” [Well-Built Man]

“It’s been a while, Serge.” [Reinhart]

“It’s been a while, indeed. It would be great if we could meet more frequently, but alas, it seems the opportunities just refuse to show themselves. Regardless, it is good to see that you are all well.

I do believe this is our first meeting. Greetings. I am Serge Morgan, president of the Morgan Company.” [Serge]



Oh, he's talking to me.

"I am Ryouma Takebayashi. I met the Jamil Household by some stroke of fate. It's a pleasure to make your acquaintance." [Ryouma]

He smiled back at me. I heard he's someone we can trust, but exactly what sort of person is he, I wonder.

"Alright, let's get to business..." [Reinhart]

"Did you bring something new today?" [Serge]

While I was thinking to myself, the two of them started talking business.

Wait? Today? I guess Reinhart-san must've brought several things here already.

"Before I show you the goods, I want you to promise me that not one word of this will make it out of this room. I trust you. But I want to be sure." [Reinhart]

"But of course... We value the information of our partners. We would never leak it. And in fact, if you so wish, we could work in such a way that not even the slightest trail would be left. Still, I must say this is unusual for you, Reinhart-sama. I never thought you would say something like this." [Serge]

"The goods this time come with some... circumstances. Mark my words, what I bring to you today will bring profits beyond anything I've brought you yet." [Reinhart]

Really? As far as I'm concerned, a raincoat is about as common as they come, but... Well, I don't really get it.

"Sebasu." [Reinhart]

At Reinhart-san's behest, Sebasu-san took out a waterproof cloth from his Item Box, as well as a slime thread, and the iron ingot I made.

"Oh, this cloth has good texture." [Serge]

"Texture isn't all it has going for it. It can also repel water." [Reinhart]

"...Is that true?" [Serge]

“Use Identify or wrap your hands with it and touch water, I don’t mind. That’s a test product, so feel free to experiment with it.” [Reinhart]

“Then I’ll do just that...” [Serge]

Serge-san summoned a servant and asked for a bowl of water. Until then he used Identify to examine the cloth.

As Serge-san’s eyes began to sparkle, the bowl of water came, and immediately, he wrapped his hand in cloth, and then soaked it into the bowl.

“Reinhart-sama, what a truly wonderful cloth this is!” [Serge]

“Right? So, do you think rain gear made from it would sell?” [Reinhart]

“But of course! It would definitely!” [Serge]

Wow, he really likes it!

“But that’s not all I brought. Take a look at this thread next.” [Reinhart]

“I shall examine it.” [Serge]

He took the spool of thread into his hands and examined it by touching it and pulling it.

“Was the same material used to make this thread and that cloth?” [Serge]

He could tell!? Without a single hint, just by touching, he was able to tell!?

Reinhart-san smiled and nodded.

“As expected of you, Serge. Although there were some slight changes to the process, the thread and the cloth were indeed made with the same material. What do you think? The thread has good quality, no?” [Reinhart]

“Yes, companies specializing in luxurious clothing probably won’t even blink before gobbling all of it up. It’s beautiful, yes, but what’s most remarkable about it is its durability.” [Serge]

“Actually, we have clothes made from that thread and that cloth.” [Reinhart]

This time what was taken out was the set of clothes I made for cleaning the latrine pits. Huh? Wait a moment. I have my set with me. When did they make that?

“These are clothes meant for working with water or dirty places. The design is a bit... original, but function-wise, it’s excellent.” [Reinhart]

“Yes, I’m sure laborers will love this. Once word gets out, it’ll sell like hotcakes.” [Serge]

“We’ll need to do something to make it popular first, but it definitely has a lot of potential. Now, as for the last one...” [Reinhart]

The last thing that was brought out was of course my iron ingot.

“Mind if I use Identify?” [Serge]

“Not at all.” [Reinhart]

Serge-san identified the ingot with Reinbach’s permission, but afterwards, he was visibly disappointed.

“It’s good material, yes, but... If I may be frank, there’s nothing special about it. It’s just an iron ingot.” [Serge]

“Then what about this one?” [Reinhart]

Sebasu-sama took out the other ingot (ultrahigh purity iron) and handed it to Serge-san.

“Is this silver? No, this weight...”

As he said that, he used Identify on it. In the next moment, he was visibly shocked. He tried to keep his composure, but he still couldn’t stop himself from sweating buckets.

“Reinhart-sama, this ingot is...” [Serge]

“Amazing, right? We’d probably cause a huge fuss if we sold this thing.” [Reinhart]

“Naturally. With a luster enough to be mistaken for silver, anyone would be able to tell

that it's different from the iron we know. People will definitely want to get their hands on the manufacturing method." [Serge]

"And because of that we'll have to settle for that previous ingot. Actually, that ingot used to be just like that, but it was made to be more like normal iron ingot." [Reinhart]

Serge-san nodded.

"That makes sense, but then it won't be different from any other ingot. It won't catch attention. Is that alright?" [Serge]

"It's fine. We just want to sell these ingots legally without anyone knowing. These ingots come from the abandoned mine, but we didn't find a new vein." [Reinhart]

"I see, so you wish to keep the manufacturing method a secret while still selling the ingots?" [Serge]

"Yes. To be more precise, I want to export these things to other countries. If we sold it locally, we'd have to indicate where it was made, but if we exported it, it would be enough to just mention our country." [Reinhart]

"I see. Yes. That shouldn't pose any problems." [Serge]

Seriously!? With just that!?

"Also, Serge, I want to introduce to you the secret manufacturer behind these ingots." [Reinhart]

"Thank you." [Serge]

"The manufacturer of these ingots is also the developer of all the three products I showed you." [Reinhart]

Oops, this isn't the time to be shocked. I'm being introduced.

"All three products are so amazing, and yet, you're telling me they were all made by one person?"

Reinhart-san smiled.

“Yes. The one who developed all these is none other than... Ryouma-kun.” [Reinhart]

The moment Reinhart-san spoke my name, Serge-san’s eyes turned into dots, and he looked back and forth between me and Reinhart-san.

“W-What did you just say?” [Serge]

“Ryouma-kun is the developer of all these things. I know it’s hard to believe, but it’s the truth.” [Reinhart]

“You really made all these, Takebayashi-sama?” [Serge]

“Yes.” [Ryouma]

“I told you it’s true, but please keep this a secret... It would cause problems if people were to find out how skilled a researcher he is despite his age. Moreover, he’s also an alchemist.” [Reinhart]

Serge-san became suspicious as soon as he heard the word ‘alchemist’.

Alchemists really have a bad reputation.

“I know, I know, it’s suspicious, but he made that ingot in front of me. It’s definitely not a scam.” [Reinhart]

“I see, so you did it right in front of Reinhart-sama. If you don’t mind, could you show it to me too?” [Serge]

Oh? He’s suspicious, but he’s willing to put aside his prejudice to see if it’s true. Well, the duke did bring me, so it’s not like he could just ignore me.

My mana isn’t in the best condition right now, but it looks like I’ll have to do this one more time.

“I’ve already used a lot of mana today. Do you mind if I just make something small?” [Ryouma]

“We have plenty of mana recovery potions in our store. Please feel free to use them. This much isn’t anything to speak of so long as you could truly show me alchemy.” [Serge]

Is it really ok if I accept this? Well, alright. In that case, I'll be able to do this properly.

"Then please prepare me a potion, two sheets of paper, and a pen. I need to draw a magic formation, you see." [Ryouma]

Serge-san summoned a servant once more and asked for the things I asked.

"Will this do?" [Serge]

"Yes. Thank you." [Ryouma]

After thanking him, I took the things I asked for and drew a magic formation, then I took out the red bricks from my Item Box.

"This is hardened soil from the mines. It will be used as ingredient for my alchemy. Please take a look." [Ryouma]

Serge-san used Identify.

"It's from the mines, indeed." [Serge]

"I'll be starting then. It's a bit dangerous, so please refrain from extending your hands into the formation." [Ryouma]

Mana coursed through the magic formation just like it did back at the mines. Light shone, and in the next instant, an iron ingot was quickly made.

I handed it to Serge-san.

"Please examine it." [Ryouma]

Serge-san was already wide-eyed from seeing the process, but when he took my iron ingot and used identify on it, in the next moment, he stood up from his sofa and bowed deeply to me.

"My deepest apologies!" [Serge]

"I-It's fine!! Really! Please. Lift your head. I know alchemists have a poor reputation, so it's only normal for you to be suspicious, Morgan-sama. If anything, I'd say you treated me well." [Ryouma]

The duke might have introduced me, but I'm not even a teenager, I'm a kid. If a person of such high standing were to suddenly apologize to me, I can't help but want to apologize too.

Even though my old boss gave me a stern talking to that it's better to just keep up relations instead of ignoring someone or acting suspicious...

"Thank you. I didn't think you'd actually be the real thing... Could it be you're not as young as you appear?" [Serge]

...Huh?... Eh? No way!... He found out!?

"W-What are you saying all of the sudden?" [Ryouma]

"I've heard real alchemists could make medicine that restored one's youth or gave eternal youth. I thought it was just a hoax because of all the scams, but if you're the real thing, then..." [Serge]

"I can't." [Ryouma]

So that's what it was. Sheesh, sure scared the life out of me.

I took out my status board and showed my age.

"I can't make a medicine that restores youth or gives perpetual youth. Perhaps there are people that could really make such a thing, but it's impossible for me. At most, all I can do is put this lump of soil inside a magic formation, and turn it into an ingot." [Ryouma]

"I see. I beg your pardon." [Serge]

Reinhart-san interjected here.

"Now then, since we've made it clear that Ryouma-kun is the real thing, let's continue. Just as Ryouma-kun has showed you, he came up with all these things with his exceptional abilities and knowledge.

But if others were to find out that he's an alchemist, they will surely think it's a scam. And even if they do acknowledge his abilities, an 11 year-old child is bound to garner much animosity. There will also be those who would want to pull him over to their

side.

So I want to propose a deal between you and Ryouma-kun, Serge. He'll sell his goods to you at a fair price, and in exchange, you'll keep quiet about his identity." [Reinhart]

"Very well. That much won't be a problem." [Serge]

"Ryouma-kun, Serge is a trustworthy merchant, so just drop by his store whenever you want to sell something. You can also buy things from here safely." [Reinhart]

"Thank you.

Serge-san, I look forward to working with you." [Ryouma]

"I look forward to working with you too, Ryouma-sama. Please come whenever you can, I will be here to receive you." [Serge]

"Ryouma-kun, feel free to use the soil from that mine as you please. You can feed them to the slimes or sell them as ingots, it's up to you." [Reinhart]

"Are you sure? But what about your profits?" [Ryouma]

"That's an abandoned mine. It's only natural not to make any off of it. Besides, we'll make some off the taxes when you sell your ingots to Serge. There's no loss for us.

Moreover, I expect a lot of profits to be made from the waterproof cloths.

You can sell them here or at any branch of the Morgan Company, right, Serge?" [Reinhart]

"Yes.

And Ryouma-sama, if you tell me your address, I can inform a nearby store to purchase from you. Of course, while keeping your secrets." [Serge]

I'm grateful, but aren't these people being too nice?

After that I told him I lived in the forest, and he was naturally shocked. I wasn't sure whether I would be going back to the forest or not, so I decided to just tell Serge-san my address after I make up my mind.

For the time being, I would be selling my goods here at the store, but if I do decide to come back, I can sell my goods at a branch store in Gaunago Town.

They spoil me so much, I don't know how to thank them anymore.

I think I'll just make some ingot and threads while I'm in this town. I should be able to make a lot if I use two days' worth of mana.

I got a lot of mana recovery potions from Serge-san as an apology for doubting me, so it shouldn't be a problem.

Still, I'm glad there's a place I can finally sell my stuff at.

Serge-san told me to drop by whenever.

If I sell to him, I won't have to fear getting ripped off.

After that, serge-san and a female servant saw us off, and we went back to our lodging.

Chapter 31

Large-Scale Subjugation Quest

The next day.

Today the ojou-sama is at the mines again, putting to practice the things she learned yesterday.

As for me, Reinbach-sama asked me to take the monster subjugation request that will be posted at the adventurers guild. I suggested taking the ojou-sama along, but Reinbach-sama and the madam were against it.

I just found out about this yesterday, but it seems there's actually a big gap in battle experience between me and the ojou-sama, which translates into an equally huge gap in battle prowess. If the ojou-sama were to partake in the subjugation quest, not only would she be inefficient, there's also a high probability that she'd end up relying on me too much.

I wouldn't exactly refuse her were she to ask me for help, so I guess there's some truth in that.

Anyway, because of that I went to the guild, but as soon as I got there, the guild master summoned me to his office.

"You've come, Ryouma." [Wogan]

"You called. Is something the matter?" [Ryouma]

"Oh, it's nothing special. The duke's butler just submitted the subjugation request for tomorrow, and there's something I'd like to confirm. Did you go to the abandoned mine yesterday?" [Wogan]

"Yes." [Ryouma]

"Tell me about the monsters you came across. The area too. I got the necessary info from the butler, but the more info the better." [Wogan]

“Alright. The monsters I fought were the cave mantis and the cave bat. I also fought against the small mouse. I hear the ojou-sama defeated some slimes too. Other than that, there was also a metal slime.

The place was overgrown with weeds and messy as if no one’s touched it for years. That being said, the tunnel I entered was firmly built, and I didn’t hear anything about the ground falling or a tunnel caving in from the others either.” [Ryouma]

“In that case, even a G Rank should be fine, but... You mentioned there was a metal slime.” [Wogan]

“Yes. But I was on my own at the time, and I only saw it when it was given to me as a present. I formed a contract with it right there and then.” [Ryouma]

“Oh, yeah. You’ve been gathering slimes, haven’t ya? I hear you have over a thousand of them already.” [Wogan]

“Yes, to be more precise, I currently have 728 sticky slimes, 323 poison slimes, 211 acid slimes, 11 cleaner slimes, 3,033 scavenger slimes, 2 heal slimes, 1 metal slime, 1 normal slime, which totals to 4,310 slimes all in all.” [Ryouma]

“That’s way too many.” [Wogan]

It seems the number was a few times bigger than he’d expected, as he ended up wryly smiling.

“The reason I have so many scavenger slimes is because of the previous case. Because of that they ended up surpassing 3,000 in such a short time.

Fortunately, slimes only need water to survive, but if these were any other monster, I’d be at my wits end trying to feed them.” [Ryouma]

“I see... Oh, right. A request to clean the latrine pits is out again. If you can, please take it.” [Wogan]

I haven’t decided what to do for today yet, so I don’t mind, but isn’t this a bit too fast?

“It’s only been a few days, though.” [Ryouma]

“It wasn’t cleaned for ages last time, so this time we’re posting the request early! Or at

least, there's a lot of guys who think like that. They even threatened, saying we're going to be buried in complaints if it's left for a long time.

In the end, the public office wasn't able to convince the slum people. Some of their people were able to clean the pits a little, but they're originally an arrogant bunch, so the quality of their work is different from yours." [Wogan]

"I see... Alright then. How many should I clean today?" [Ryouma]

"All 30 of them. Can you do it?" [Wogan]

"The slimes can deal with the waste a lot quicker now than before, so I think I could manage if I use the entire day. There should also be less waste this time around..." [Ryouma]

"Good, then I'll leave it to you. The people from town are really annoying." [Wogan]

"Sure, no problem. Ah, what about the monster subjugation request? I haven't registered for it yet." [Ryouma]

"Don't worry. You can just register for it when you return. There's no limit to the number of people who can take it, and I'll be dropping them a note about you too." [Wogan]

"Well, alright. In that case, I'll be on my... Ah!" [Ryouma]

It suddenly occurred to me that I might be able to purchase the monsters subjugated during the job as feed for the slimes. When I got permission from the guild master, I happily left his office and went to the receptionist girl to have the papers sorted.

During the process I found out that the receptionist girl's name was Maelyn. Also, because I cleaned all the latrine pits last time when one latrine pit equaled one job, I unknowingly fulfilled the 20 job requirement to promote from G Rank to F Rank. As such, from today onwards I will be treated as an F Ranker.

The requirements for E Rank is the completion of over 30 jobs and one subjugation job. So once I finish the monster subjugation job tomorrow, I should be an E Ranker.

Promoting in a day seemed too fast, so I asked Maelyn-san about it, and this is what she said.

“It’s fast, yes, but until E Rank, it’s mostly just the strong picking on the weak even during monster quests. I’m talking about adults, of course. And there’s a lot of jobs that almost anyone can do. Which is why this period is considered to be the observation period.

It’s when the guild looks through an adventurer’s records and thinks ‘oh, this one takes a lot of jobs, but he fails too much’ or ‘oh, this one doesn’t take many jobs, but he completes them every time.’

Honestly, the job you do doesn’t really matter as long as you take your job seriously. And in your case, Ryouma-kun, you haven’t failed a single job and all your clients were pleased, so you have nothing to worry about.” [Maelyn]

I heaved a sigh of relief at that. It’s good to know I have a good reputation.

As soon as I left the receptionist, she quietly muttered.

“Seriously, if they’re just going to take on a job and fail horribly, then they should just take on the miscellaneous jobs like you do instead... Novices are such a pain...” [Maelyn]

I guess the hotblooded youth prefer something more thrilling, huh.

I should do those miscellaneous jobs from time to time, so I don’t betray the trust I’ve built up till now.

As I decided that in my mind, I left the guild to do my work.

The next day.

Last night, I was able to successfully clean the latrine pits without any accidents and was able to sleep early. Because of that I woke up earlier than normal.

The time is currently 5 AM.

For the mean time, I think I’ll go ready my stuff.

Unfortunately, I still had a lot of time left over after that. Men generally don’t need long

to prepare. If I were a woman, I would have taken longer, but... alas.

I killed some time by feeding the slimes after that, and then left the lodging a little later.

I walked leisurely toward the adventurers guild, but when I got there, the place was packed with adventurers and several carriages could be seen coming and going.

“That’s way more than I expected...” [Ryouma]

All the carriages stopped in front of the guild were for the adventurers participating in the monster subjugation job.

The receptionist said I could ride a carriage for free if I show up before 8, but this is way more people than I’d expected.

If it’s that crowded, maybe I should just run to the abandoned mine. There’s time anyway. It would serve as my morning exercise, and they did say nothing really mattered as long as I got to the mines by 11...

While I was wondering what to do, a voice called out to me.

“Hey! Ryouma!” [Jeff]

“Huh? Ah! Jeff-san!” [Ryouma]

The person who called out to me was none other than Jeff-san.

Raypin-san and Cher-san were with him too.

“Good morning, Jeff-san, Raypin-san, Cher-kun.” [Ryouma]

“Mornin’.” [Jeff]

“Good morning, Ryouma-kun.” [Cher]

“Good morning, de aru. I see you’ve undertaken this quest as well.” [Raypin]

“Yes. I take it you are too?” [Ryouma]

“That old man nominated us, so yeah. We’ll be participating. It’s not just us. Miya and Asagi are coming too. They’ve gone ahead already though.” [Jeff]

“There’ve been large-scale jobs like this before, but there are a lot of new faces this time around...” [Jeff]

“That can’t be helped, de aru. Today’s job can be taken even by G Rankers. Not to mention, this is a request from the feudal lord himself, so there’s good money in it, on top of which, there’s also the person buying monster corpses.” [Raypin]

“I wonder who’s buying the corpses. I checked the list of confirmed monsters, but not one of them has anything worth selling. They’re all small fries, you know?” [Jeff]

“And there’s too many corpses even for research, de aru. I won’t complain since I’m benefiting here, but it does make one curious.” [Raypin]

“Oh, it’s nothing special. They’re just going to be used as feed.” [Ryouma]

“Do you know something, Ryouma-kun?” [Cher]

“But of course. After all, I’m the one buying the corpses.” [Ryouma]

“You’re the one buying the corpses? Ah, but if it’s to feed that massive ooze of slimes of yours, then I suppose it makes sense, de aru.” [Raypin]

“What do you feed those guys normally anyway?” [Jeff]

“I know they look like they eat a lot, but familiars are expected to cost a lot of money depending on the race anyway, so...” [Ryouma]

As we chatted idly like that, we rode the carriage.

We happened upon each other like this, so I figured I might as well ride with them.

A few hours later...

When we reached our destination, the coachman informed us that we would have to report to the reception desk that had been set up in front of the entrance of the mine,

so we did just that and waited until we could finish our report.

When the clock turned 11, we gathered in that spacious area from last time.

“There are 264 adventurers participating in today’s quest! For safety’s sake, you are to form parties of six! There will be no scrambling for spoils! Those without a party have been grouped beforehand, so come here and look for your name! Now, go out there and make as much as you can!”

Voices rose at the guild master’s simple speech, then the adventurers split and entered their respective tunnels.

...Huh? Is that it? I can’t dawdle like this, I have to find my group.

When I checked my group, I found out that my party’s members were Jeff-san, Miya-san, Wereanna-san, Mizelia-san, and Syria-san.

Every one of them was someone I knew.

Did the guild master do this?

Anyway, I should rendezvous with them.

As I looked around me, I noticed Wereanna-san leading the others toward me.

“Wereanna-san, it seems we’ll be working together today. It’s a pleasure. Everyone else too. It’s a pleasure to be working with you.” [Ryouma]

“Same here, Ryouma.” [Wereanna]

“Same, nyaa.” [Miya]

“Looking forward to working with you.” [Syria]

“I have to guide you properly as your senpai, after all.” [Mizelia]

“That might be too difficult for you, Mizelia.

It hasn’t been that long since we parted, but yeah, looking forward to working with ya.” [Jff]

“What did you say, Jeff!? That’s rude, you know!” [Mizelia]

“You might have some skill, but you’re still way too careless to be teaching someone.”
[Jeff]

“Excuse me!?” [Mizelia]

“The hell are you two doing? Sheesh.

Ryouma, just forget about these two. Anyway, what weapons do you use? The cave bat and the small rat [1] don’t really matter much, but what about the cave mantis? Have any experience with them?” [Wereanna]

“Yes. I normally use the bow, but I can also fight with my short sword. There’s my magic too.” [Ryouma]

“Then you take care of the flying ones with your magic. There’s no one else here who can use magic, so...” [Wereanna]

“It’s not that we can’t use magic, nyaa. It’s just that we beastmen don’t have a lot of mana, nyaa. So please don’t rely on us when it comes to wizardry and the arcane arts and stuff, nyaa. Ah, but Syria has a relatively big mana pool...” [Miya]

“But I can only use healing magic. Sorry.” [Syria]

“As for me and Mizelia, we suck at anything related to magic. We’ve abandoned everything but Body Reinforcement and Body Tempering [2]!” [Jeff]

“Don’t lump me with you! I actually specialize in those two spells!” [Mizelia]

“...It’s the same thing even if you use the word ‘specialize’, nyaa. Anyway, what attributes can you use, Ryouma, nyaa?” [Miya]

“I can use all of them, but mainly earth.” [Ryouma]

“All attributes, huh. That’s a rare one, nyaa.” [Miya]

“But with that we can have more variation when fighting. By earth, I guess you can use earth needle?” [Weeranna]

“Earth Needle and Rock Bullet. As for the other attributes, the only ones that seem useful in the cave are Ice Arrow and Stun Arrow.” [Ryouma]

“That’s more than enough. Alright, let’s go!” [Wereanna]

Like that our quest began.

Chapter 32

A Normal Adventurer

“Weak.” [Jeff]

We entered a new tunnel in high spirits, but the monsters that appeared were so weak, it was as if we were taking a stroll in the park. This tunnel was already our third.

“What did you think small rats and slimes were?” [Mizelia]

“It would be a huge problem if an enemy you didn’t consider weak actually appeared, nyaa. We’ll be fine, of course, but the G Rank and F Ranks will be in danger, nyaa.” [Miya]

“In the first place, the reason we’re here is to provide backup when needed.” [Syria]

“But we can’t sit around doing nothing either since that would leave a bad example to the low rankers.” [Wereanna]

The way they talk, the way they fight... They’re definitely a league above the bandits I fought. They must be fairly high ranked. Why am I with them?

“Hmm? Something the matter, Ryouma?” [Wereanna]

“I just thought everyone seems to be a high ranker, so I’m wondering why I was grouped with you guys when I’m only an F Rank. Did the guild master pull some strings? To make it easier since I’m already acquainted with you?” [Ryouma]

“That’s impossible. That old man is a busybody, alright, but he’ll always prioritize ability over everything when it comes to work.” [Jeff]

“Perhaps, he was worried we wouldn’t be able to defeat a monster that could only be defeated with magic if it were just as 5, though I’m sure he looks highly on your abilities and stamina too.” [Syria]

“Haven’t you realized, Ryouma-kun? We’ve actually been going at a pretty high pace,

you know. A normal F Rank adventurer would normally have a hard time keeping up.”
[Mizelia]

“At first, we were planning to slow down once you started getting tired, but you never did, so we just kept going.” [Wereanna]

Really? I didn’t notice at all.

“Ryouma, there’s absolutely no way your actual ability is just F Rank.” [Mizelia]

“What’s the strongest monster you’ve defeated until now?” [Jeff]

“Well, it’s not exactly a monster, but I have beaten a Black Bear back at the Forest of Gana.” [Ryouma]

When the 5 adventurers heard that, they made an ‘I knew it’ face.

“Black Bear isn’t something an F Rank could beat, nyaa. You’d need at least a group of D Rankers to safely hunt it, nyaa.” [Miya]

“If you can hunt a black bear alone, then your actual abilities must be at Rank C. The guild master must’ve known that.” [Syria]

Now that she mentions it...

“Well, he was the examiner during my registration.” [Ryouma]

“That’s it.” [Mizelia]

“No doubt about it. He’s had his eyes on you since then.” [Jeff]

“So that’s why you were grouped with us. Makes sense.” [Wereanna]

“If you have the skill, then rank means nothing. You’ll eventually rise up to where we are. It’s just a matter of time.” [Jeff]

“What is everyone’s rank? I forgot to ask.” [Ryouma]

“We didn’t mention it, nyaa?” [Miya]

“Everyone’s a B Ranker.” [Mizelia]

“It’s the entry point of a first-rate adventurer.” [Jeff]

“Speaking of which, nyaa. Of the people who worked with us before, Cher is a D ranker, while Gordon is a B Ranker, nyaa. Asagi and Raypin are both A Rankers, nyaa.” [Miya]

一流の冒険者たちと一緒に、
仲良く魔獣討伐の依頼を
遂行中——!!

ウエルアナ

ミゼリア

ミーヤ

たけばやし りょうま
竹林 竜馬

シリア

ジェフ



While we were walking and talking like that, Wereanna-san suddenly turned to the front and started sniffing.

“What’s up?” [Jeff]

“Judging from the smell, there should be a cloud of cave bats up ahead. There’s a lot of them. Way too many. Of course, they’re no threat to us, but with those numbers, some of them are bound to escape during the fight.” [Wereanna]

“What a pain, nyaa...” [Miya]

“Are there any people in the area?” [Ryouma]

“I don’t smell any. Do you know a spell that could cover the area by any chance?” [Wereanna]

“Nothing that would kill them outright, but I do know a convenient spell.” [Ryouma]

I explained to them the Sound Bomb spell I tested yesterday.

“Heh~ So you can do something like that.” [Wereanna]

“I’ve never heard of such a spell.” [Syria]

Well, yeah... I mean it’s a spell I came up with using Earth’s knowledge as a basis.

“That spell will only knock the cave bats, though. Can we finish them all off before they wake up?” [Jeff]

“Knocking them out makes our job a hell of a lot easier, but I still don’t think we’ll make it in time.” [Mizelia]

“Then how about getting help from the people behind us?” [Ryouma]

Everyone understood what I was talking about.

“You noticed too?” [Jeff]

“I lived in the forest for 3 years, so I’m sensitive to others’ presence.” [Ryouma]

“I see... Let’s wait here for a bit then.” [Wereanna]

6 people have been following us since we got here. They didn’t seem hostile, so we ignored them up till now, but according to my party, they’re probably E Rankers or lower with poor income who are following us to make money out of the corpses we leave behind.

According to Wereanna-san, E Rankers below have low income, so when you take into consideration the living costs and equipment maintenance, it only makes sense that there are many novice adventurers who have financial issues.

“Unless they have another source of income, D Rank is where stability starts for adventurers.” [Wereanna]

“Until then there are plenty of unexpected expenses due to injuries and other unforeseen circumstances, nyaa.” [Miya]

“A lot of people save, but the quality of one’s life before promotion depends on how they do their work. If they mess up a job they’re unsuited for, the odds of promotion become lower and they even have to pay a penalty. It happens a lot, actually.” [Jeff]

“On the other hand, if you can do D Rank work, then you’ll be making enough to support all living expenses. And once you reach C Rank, you’ll be able to live a comfortable life. That’s also why Miya was able to buy a house.

I personally think she was too hasty buying that house, but still... The fact that she was able to buy it in the first place speaks volumes of her income. There aren’t a lot of jobs out there that would allow us to save enough to buy a house at our age, after all. Dangerous work, big rewards... That’s adventurer work for you in a nutshell.” [Syria]

Now that she mentions it, Miya-san is still in her early twenties. I don’t know how long it’s been since she bought that house, but in Japan, she’d be about as old as your typical college student. Being able to buy her own house at that age is certainly amazing, now that I think about it. All I ever had was a small apartment too... All the way until I died...

“The risk shoots up from B Rank onwards, so there are less adventurers, but so do the rewards. From thereon, unless you have issues handling your money, you should never have any problems financially again.

On the other end of the spectrum, the ones who take the least risk and make the least

money are the G Rankers, the F Rankers, and the E Rankers. And adventurers like those following us from behind will never make it to D Rank.”

Adventurers keep what they kill, but they can't carry everything, so they throw away those they don't need. Throwing away something is the same thing as forfeiting their right to it, so there are adventurers like those following us from behind who try to pick those up and make money off of them.

It's not illegal, per se, but it's not praiseworthy either, as there's a chance it could cause trouble in the distant future, so you could say it's in the gray zone.

We rested until the adventurers came close enough to notice us. When they did, they stopped and Wereanna-san called out to them.

“Hey, the adventurers who've been following us all this time! We know you're there! Show yourselves!” [Wereanna]

The 6 adventurers panicked, but they still showed themselves in the end.



They had 4 humans and two beastmen, one man, one woman, in their group. I know this sounds rude, but they look shabby.

It seems everyone was right, they really were people having financial problems... Still, they sure are young. They're only a little older than me.

"Why were you following us?" [Wereanna]

"We were picking up the monsters you threw away..." [Adventurer 1]

"...Well, alright. First off, I want you to know that we didn't call you out to scold you." [Wereanna]

When the 6 adventurers heard that, they heaved a sigh of relief and their countenance turned for the better.

"But we do want to know why you're doing this." [Wereanna]

"O-Ok! Actually, we're just G and F Rankers, so... We've been having problems with money and..." [Adventurer 1]

"It wasn't so bad at the start, but after getting some equipment, we ran out of cash." [Adventurer 2]

"And I messed up on a job, so we had to pay the penalty fee..." [Adventurer 3]

"We were barely scraping by, and that's when the posting for this job came. We took it as soon as we saw it, thinking we could finally make some money.

The monsters are weak, and we make money by participating and by bringing back monster corpses, so we figured we'd make as much money as we could!" [Adventurer 4]

"But then we happened to see you, and..." [Adventurer 5]

Their reasons were all stuff Jeff and the others mentioned. Looks like it really is a common story.

I just quietly listened, but then one of the female human adventurers suddenly stopped.

Jeff-san urged her to continue.

“And what?” [Jeff]

“And...” [Adventurer 5]

“While we were following you, we saw that kid. So we figured if you were nice enough to take a kid like that along, then you probably wouldn’t mind if we take the corpses you left behind. I mean a group of adventurers nice enough to bring a kid who’d be nothing but a hindrance must surely be generous, right?” [Adventurer 6]

The other 5 adventurers made a sour face when they heard that last guy’s words.

I mean, yeah, I’m a kid, but still... I’m a member of this group, you know? Normally, you wouldn’t call the member of another group useless.

But regardless, whether they actually agreed with him or started following us because they thought so too, no one tried to reprimand the adventurer.

“You people really need to know your...” [Wereanna]

Wereanna-san wanted to rebuke them for looking down on me, but I stopped her.

There’s no point even if she got involved.

“It’s fine, Wereanna-san.” [Ryouma]

“Ryouma, you should tell people like this off firmly.” [Jeff]

“I don’t think this is something you can change even if you talk to them. Besides, it’s true I look weak on the outside.” [Ryouma]

“...Alright. But you know, you guys! If you’re going to do something like that, then don’t you think should ask permission first? Don’t just pick corpses up on your own like a group of bandits!” [Wereanna]

“Sorry!!” [6 Adventurers]

After apologizing, the six of them tried to give back the corpses they took and leave, but Syria-san and Mizelia-san stopped them.

“Wait! We may have reprimanded you for taking the corpses without permission, but

we didn't say we actually minded you gathering them." [Syria]

"If you're having trouble with cash, then just take them." [Mizelia]

When the 6 of them heard that, their countenance immediately brightened, and they thanked everyone except for me.

Wereanna-san wasn't happy, but Miya-san suggested to help them as planned.

"Actually, there's another reason we called you guys, nyaa. There's a huge cloud of cave bats up ahead, but it's going to take us a while to take them all down, nyaa. So, mind lending us a hand, nyaa? We'll give you the corpses, nyaa." [Miya]

The 6 of them immediately agreed.

While I made sure that no one was around with Search, Miya-san gave them a simple explanation.

"We'll go in after Ryouma takes them out with his spell, nyaa." [Miya]

"Won't that kid just alert them?" [One of the adventurers]

When the 6 adventurers visibly showed their anxiety, Wereanna-san yelled, "if you have a problem, then leave!" At that, they went quiet, but they continued to mumble among themselves after moving a bit from the group.

They're probably talking about their misgivings toward me, but will go along anyway since they want the money.

I ignored them and put up a sound concealing barrier.

"I'm ready." [Ryouma]

"Alright! Do it, Ryouma. You guys come too!" [Jeff]

"Let's go! 'Sound Bomb'!" [Ryouma]

After casting my spell, an explosion occurred within the tunnel, but because of the sound concealing barrier we couldn't hear it.

The 6 thought I'd failed.

"Nothing's happening, though?" [Adventurer 1]

"He screwed up, duh." [Adventurer 2]

"It's a success, actually. It's a wind spell, so you can't see it with your eyes." [Ryouma]

As I said that, I went with the group to where the bats were.

The 6 adventurers followed us despite their doubts.

When we got to where the cave bats were, they looked on in a daze... Because an innumerable number of cave bats were on the floor, fainted.

"With this, they've all been knocked down. Let's work together and kill everything as quickly as possible." [Ryouma]

After saying that, I went to work.

When all of the cave bats have been dealt with, we left the six adventurers and exited the tunnel. That was the deepest part of the tunnel, so there was nothing more for us to do.

We left the disposal to them since that's what they wanted in the first place.

But then Wereanna-san asked me this.

"Ryouma, was it really alright not to say anything?" [Wereanna]

"I showed them my skills in magic, so if they still can't understand with that, I don't think there's any point even if I talked to them." [Ryouma]

"Well, that's true, but..." [Wereanna]

As long as they're the understanding sort, there shouldn't be any more problems, but if they're the type that's just making up excuses to grumble, then it's hopeless even if you talk to them. And it doesn't matter even if they're the latter type since all I have to do is to ignore them.

There are two types of people. Ones you can change given enough time and effort, and ones that you can't change no matter what you do.

"They're going through some financial difficulties, so let's just put them off as a group of cheeky kids desperate to make a living." [Ryouma]

"Cheeky?... Is that something you should be saying when you're younger than them? I'm pretty sure they're already 15." [Syria]

"Are you really 11 years old, Ryouma-kun?" [Mizelia]

"Well, if that's what you think, then that's fine too, nyaa." [Miya]

I might look like a kid, but I'm already a 42 year-old uncle. I'm not about to pick a fight with a kid now. Besides, everyone already scolded them and I showed off my magic too. Any more than this will have to depend on their own self-reflection.

"Ah, by the way, there is something bothering me. Do I really look that weak?" [Ryouma]

I lived in the forest for three years alone and fought loads of times with bandits. It's a bit of a surprise that I actually look weak.

"You don't look like you could even harm a slime." [Jeff]

Really? Even though people at work have been gossiping behind my back about the 'pressure I exerted just by being present' even when I was still young? It must be the face.

"I know you're strong after seeing you fight, but normally, I wouldn't think you're someone strong at all." [Wereanna]

"This might be a bit rude, but, Ryouma-kun, you don't look strong at all... I knew from our previous job together that you have stamina and I've also heard of you being able to hunt, so at most I thought you wouldn't be a hindrance, but I would have never been able to predict that you're actually good at fighting..." [Syria]

"Even though part of getting stronger is being able to gauge other people's strength, nyaa." [Miya]

"Honestly, even I was shocked when I saw how strong you actually were." [Mizelia]

“Well, picking up a person’s aura has to do with a person’s senses, so some are more keen to gauging others. We beastmen are usually on the sharper side, but I gotta say, Ryouma-kun, your strength and aura don’t match at all... Could it be you’re actually intentionally hiding it?” [Wereanna]

“Not particularly.” [Ryouma]

I don’t have to take care like I had to in my previous life, so I’ve just been doing things at my own pace. If there’s any precautions I take, at most it’s just me trying not to be threatening, but that’s not really hiding, is it? That’s just common sense.

“Then maybe it’s just a trait of yours. People are like that, aren’t they?” [Wereanna]

“You think? Even the bandits I met in the forest looked down on me. They did it every time too. Of course, I killed them all, but...” [Ryouma]

“I see where you’re coming from, but... Those bandits sure had bad luck.” [Jeff]

“They probably thought they were fighting a slime, nyaa...” [Miya]

“Only to realize the slime’s actually stronger than a bear.” [Syria]

“Exactly... When you put it that way, isn’t Ryouma-kun a natural trap?” [Wereanna]

Before I knew it, I was being treated as bandit flypaper.

We continued to chat like that, until eventually, it was time to eat lunch, so I went back to that wide-open area.

Chapter 33

Monster Subjugation – Break Time

“Thank you for the food.” [Ryouma]

It was lunch break and I’d just finished eating my meal at a corner of that wide-open area. The other adventurers were still eating, however, and in fact, there were some who’d just started.

I tend to eat quickly when I’m by myself. Now what? Jeff-san and the others went to get information and eat with the other adventurers, so I can’t bother them.

With nothing to do, I figured I’d take care of the slimes first.

“Excuse me.” [Ryouma]

I called out to the receptionist responsible for handling jobs other than things regarding the subjugation.

“Ara, Ryouma-kun.” [Maelyn]

“Hi, Maelyn-san. Do you have some time?” [ryouma]

“Sure. What is it?” [Maelyn]

“I just want to inform the guild that I’ll be leaving the area to feed the slimes until break ends. Also, have you received any monster corpses yet?” [Ryouma]

“They have, so go ahead and get as much as you want. You’ve already paid in advance, so as long as you show the guild staff your guild card, they’ll hand them over to you.

I’ll note your leave, but be careful, alright? And make sure to come back once break ends.” [Maelyn]

“There’s a roll call per party, right?” [Ryouma]

“That’s right. In the instance, you’re late and are unable to make it to work, you have to report to the reception desk. We’re doing this to prevent people from stealthily leaving their post to commit robbery. If you fail to show up, you will be treated as someone who’s shirked his duties and will not receive pay. This is non-negotiable.”
[Maelyn]

“Got it. Thanks.” [Ryouma]

After heeding Maelyn-san’s warning, I left the reception desk, got four portions of monster corpses, and left the area.

“Here should be good... ‘Dimension Home’” [Ryouma]

After walking for a while and up a steep hill, I managed to find a place with no people.

If it’s here, I should be able to immediately tell when a monster or a person approaches.

Slimes came out one after another through a white hole and into the hill road, then I gave them the monster corpses to feed on.

First, I had the cleaner slimes eat the filth, then divided the remains into four. After that, I placed a giant vessel full of water beside the remains and gave the order for the slimes to eat. When I did, the big or huge variant of the poison, sticky, acid, and scavenger slimes appeared and they feasted on the mountain of food.

I had to prepare food for the metal slimes next, so I went to do just that, but while preparing its food, the metal slime started to dig a hole on the ground to eat the soil.

Can it eat the iron content within the soil?

...But it’s not making any progress digging.

Rather than digging, the metal slime actually looked like it was throwing a tantrum for being the only one without food.

I hurried myself and quickly put a bowl full of iron powder on the ground. At that, the metal slime stopped trying to dig and hurriedly went to its bowl. The only reason I could tell it was hurrying, however, was because of the contract, but if you just looked

at it, it was actually moving very slowly.

I guess that iron body must really be weighing it down.

As the metal slime sucked in the iron, I sat beside it and watched it eat.

It was in this way that I passed the time.

Speaking of which, the heal slimes didn't eat food and instead photosynthesized, so they basked in the sunlight behind me while everyone else ate.

After the slimes finished eating, there was something bothering me, so I brought them all back except a poison slime, a sticky slime, and an acid slime.

"Please." [Ryouma]

I placed a plate in front of each slime and asked them to spit on it. The poison slime spit poison, the sticky slime spit its sticky liquid, and the acid slime spit acid.

The metal slime's body was hard and it possessed the skill 'harden'.

I know it's strong against physical attacks, but I wonder if it can handle poison?

I don't know, so we're going to find that out now.

It's just me watching its reaction while it approaches the various plates, though.

First came poison.

"...Unaffected, huh." [Ryouma]

The metal slime didn't react even a little. A sticky slime would back off here, but the metal slime didn't care. It can stand perfectly fine beside the poison slime.

Next is the sticky liquid.

"...It's fine with this one too." [Ryouma]



The metal slime had no reaction to the first two, but when acid came, it finally showed a reaction.

When it approached the plate of acid, its body squirmed more than normal as if it were melting, and then it gradually backed away.

“So, it’s bad with acid... This sure reminds me of a science experiment.” [Ryouma]

There was an experiment in the past where we had to put hydrochloric acid on a metal foil... How nostalgic.

I didn’t want to scare it too much, so I put an end to the experiment there.

After I took away the plates and disposed of them, the metal slime calmed down. But because it ran away in a panic, its body was now dirty.

I should wipe it.

When I tried rubbing it with a towel, its shape contorted according to my touch. Rubbing it gave a mysterious feeling impossible for metal and was really fun.

“Good!... I think it’s about time we came back...?” [Ryouma]

After checking the time on the clock that I’d acquired previously, I realized I should be getting back soon, so I invoked Dimension Home to put the metal slime back in, but I dropped it.

The metal slime usually took on a warped shape, but the current metal slime was a ball. That ball just made contact with a steep hill.

“Dimension Ho— !?” [Ryouma]

Following the shrill sound with my eyes, I saw a ball rolling down the hill at a terrifying speed.

When I looked down to my legs, I saw that the metal slime was gone.

“Wait!”

I was about to chase after it by reflex, but then it occurred to me that there were still

3 slimes left outside.

If I leave them here, some other adventurer might come across them, and...

So, quickly, I picked up the three slimes and chased after the metal slime that had already rolled a long distance away after just a few seconds.

A person would die when hit in the wrong spot, but slimes didn't even need to be hit in the wrong spot to die. They were fragile creatures. Because of that I couldn't help but worry despite the iron slime's hardened body.

The metal slime eventually stopped rolling when it crashed into a thicket of weeds.

The metal slime was unmoving.

"Are you alright?" [Ryouma]

As I approached the metal slime to check its condition, it gradually stood back up, twisting and warping as it did. Apparently, it was just shocked, but was otherwise unharmed.

That sure gave me a scare.

When I have the time, I should check how much force the metal slime can take. It should be safe as long as we don't hit the nucleus... Or, no. I think I should put this off until after the metal slime reproduces.

After making up my mind, I picked up the metal slime.

".....!.....?" [???

".....!!" [???

"Hmm?" [Ryouma]

A voice?

I focused my attention to it and found that I wasn't hearing things. It was the voice of a person, several voices, in fact. It should be... somewhere near the wide area. It must be one of the adventurers who took on the job.

The voices seem to be quarreling, though? I don't know what they're talking about, but it sounds dangerous.

"It bothers me... Let's check it out." [Ryouma]

There's no point even if I go to the guild master and the reception desk now since I'm not even sure if they're actually arguing.

With a sticky slime on head, a poison slime and an acid slime on either shoulder, I walked toward the direction of those voices.

Found them!

After walking for a while in the direction of the quarreling voices, I found myself near the bottom of the mine, in a place where the light was dim due to all the trees, and there, by the corner, where the red soil was after being thrown from the cliff, were a group of adventurers in gear. There were over 10 of them. I couldn't see very well because of the shadow of the mountain, but I could tell that they were surrounding someone.

"Enough already!" [???

"You're just a buncha thieves only good for stealing other people's spoils!" [???

The surrounding men screamed jeers.

Their speech was rough perhaps because of anger or perhaps simply because they were lowbred, but either way, the current situation was grim.

Are they fighting?

"We're not thieves!! We got it from someone!!" [???

Huh? Haven't I heard this voice before?

Brats who steals other people's spoils... And a familiar voice.

I wrung out my hazy memory to try and recall.

...Could they be?

Paying careful attention to the direction of the wind as I usually did when hunting, I quietly moved through the trees and grasses and walked behind the men.

When I was about 50 meters away, my suspicions were confirmed.

On either side were slag heaps, and in front were two groups of men facing each other. Behind one group, which was made up of three young boys, were three young girls, who had their backs to a cliff. Although both the boys and the girls were frightened, they still tried to cover each other.

They struck a posture that suggested they were ready to fight the approaching men.

Yes, the young boys and girls were indeed the ones I met back at the cave just as I'd suspected.

...Huh? W-Which side started this mess?

“Don't look down on us, slum brats!!” [Older adventurer]

I have no idea how things ended up like this, but the situation looks bad. Fortunately, things haven't escalated yet, but I can't exactly just show myself and tell these bandit-like people to stop. Let's watch first and see how things develop.

At first glance, the 10 men look like the bad guys since they're surrounding a group of 6 kids, but it's them we're talking about, so I wonder.

Those kids did just wordlessly take our spoils without saying a word, so if they did the same thing to those men, it'd be hard to fault them. Taking unwanted spoils just barely falls outside of larceny, but if those men want an apology, they deserve one.

I don't think pushing the kids into a corner like this is a good idea, though.

In our case, everyone in my party but me called out to them and scolded them as a warning, but we didn't push them to a corner and shouted jeers at them. There's a big

difference between this and back then.

The kids aren't talking anymore. They're already at the point where they feel they have to make a move. They're literally one step away from a fight.

The best course of action is to call someone who can calm the situation down, but I can't make it back with a single Warp... Moreover, I'm not capable of taking another person with me when using Warp. Pushing myself and causing an accident is out of the question. And if I ask someone else, we'll end up taking unnecessary time when they ask for the location.

I don't want to leave those 6 for too long since the other group is made up of either guys who'd willingly lay a hand on them or guys who just flat out don't care.

Of course, I'm also one of the people just watching, but I'm confident I can put a stop to them with force should the need arise.

Sigh... What to do?

Considering what might happen, staying here might be for the best, but then I won't be able to call anyone. On one hand, I could call someone else to handle the situation, but the problem is that would put the kids in danger until I return.

...It's nice to be alone, but times like these are really inconvenient...

I've never been hurried by anyone back at the forest, so it's been a while since I was last inconvenienced by not having enough hands.

Hmm... The exact number of the men surrounding them is 12. They're all more or less 20 years-old, but there's one with a beard who looks like he's 30.

He's the only one who looks strong. The others aren't even worth mentioning. But even that bearded guy doesn't seem to have noticed me. At that level, the bandits I fought before were more dangerous.

It doesn't seem that dangerous, but those 12 are definitely stronger than the kids. Since they have the numerical advantage too, there's no hope for the kids winning. Self-defense is probably impossible too.

“Well, say something!” [Older adventurer]

...Well, if they stole something, then 10 or 20 punches is about right. Back in my days, corporal punishment was a given be it in school or at home. Of course, the current Japan would make a fuss now if such a thing were to be done, but this is another world. Here, this much is a given to discipline kids.

If they stole something, then normally they would have to be handed to the disciplinary office of the adventurers guild, so if anything, a few punches is getting off lightly.

It's true what they did doesn't completely fall under a crime, but it's still close enough. And Jeff-san and the others already warned them earlier. So since they refused to take their advice, then I wish they'd clean this mess up on their own. In the first place, there's not much point to me showing myself when we just met once.

Of course, I won't just sit still if they go overboard.

But all this is based on the premise that they did in fact do wrong. If they're not in the wrong, then there's no need to be hit.

So, is it the 6 at fault or not?

In the end, I just came back right where I started like a broken record or something. This isn't going anywhere.

...Yeah, let's just ask them.

I put down the relatively untrained metal slime on the ground and stood up.

“Excuse me!” [Ryouma]

“!?” [Everyone]

“Over there!” [Older Adventurer 1]

“A-A talking slime!?” [Older Adventurer 2]

“You fool! Look a little lower! There’s a head underneath the slime!” [Older Adventurer 3]

“Why the hell does that brat have three slimes on top of him!” [Older Adventurer 1]

“How long have you been there, you brat!?” [Older Adventurer 2]

“Sorry to intrude when you’re so busy.” [Ryouma]

When I left the thickets and revealed myself, the men turned to me with suspicion.

The group of kids also saw me, and when they did, one of the girls let out a voice.

“Ah, it’s you...” [Girl Adventurer 1]

When the men heard that, they smiled.

“What? So you’re one of them too?” [Older Adventurer 1]

“Not at all. I’m just passing by, actually.” [Ryouma]

The men weren’t buying it, however.

“From the looks of things, everyone here is an adventurer participating in the monster subjugation quest, yes? It’s almost the appointed time, so I was on the way back when I suddenly heard some people arguing.” [Ryouma]

“Really now? These guys seem to know you, though?” [Older Adventurer 1]

“Aren’t you just a thief too?” [Older Adventurer 2]

“I mean that’s a nice armor you’re wearing even though you’re just a kid.” [Older Adventurer 3]

The men started appraising me. Their eyes were all drawn to the armor I wore.

“I just happened to meet those 6 in the tunnel this morning. Did they steal something from you?” [Ryouma]

“That’s right. These twerps—” [Older Adventurer 4]

“We got the monster corpses from that kid’s group!” [Boy Adventurer 5]

“We didn’t steal your spoils!” [Girl Adventurer 6]

“Shut up!” [Older Adventurer 7]

“Do you have any proof!? You don’t!” [Older Adventurer 8]

“They’re telling the truth. My group agreed to give them the spoils. If you can’t trust me, then I can let you meet one of our members. Everyone else in my group is an accomplished adventurer, so I’m sure you’ll find their word trustworthy. Anyway, it’s almost time for our roll call. Do you mind?” [Ryouma]

When I spoke truthfully, the behavior of the adventurers changed.

“W-We wouldn’t want to trouble your group...” [Older Adventurer 9]

“This is our problem, after all.” [Older Adventurer 10]

“You better not just be trying to buy time to destroy evidence!” [Older Adventurer 11]

“You might be plotting to cry help from someone! We can’t trust you!” [Older Adventurer 1]

“We don’t want to cause a scene either, you know!” [Older Adventurer 2]

“If this turns into a huge scandal, those kids will have a hard time getting a job!” [Older Adventurer 3]

It’s not obvious from their words, but when you look at the way they’re acting, it’s no different from how youngsters act when they try to hide screwing up at work.

It seems they don’t want others to know about this.

Seeing how the men didn’t want to clarify things, the equal scale within my mind tipped toward the 6 adventurers.

After a while, the one adventurer who hadn’t said anything until now finally spoke.

“I agree that there’s no point in further talks.” [Older Adventurer 12]

“Sacchi-san!?” [Older Adventurer 1]

The man called Sacchi spoke to me.

So, he really was their leader.

The other men went quiet when he spoke.

Well, he does look like the toughest one.

“You’ve got guts, brat. Just how did you manage to approach us undetected anyway? You know, I was paying careful attention to our surroundings in case some monster were to approach.” [Sacchi]

“I may look like this, but I’m still a hunter, so I specialize in hunting.” [Ryouma]

“I see... You guys, any further talk is just a waste of time. Just as the kid says, it’s almost time for the roll call, so... Let’s put an end to this.” [Sacchi]

Sacchi said the same thing I said before. He said it so decidedly you wouldn’t think he was the leader of these men who were raising up a fuss just a while ago.

Those men didn’t look like they were about to defy him either.

The men blocking the 6 adventurers’ way snorted, then they *drew their weapons*.

Chapter 34

Bad Adventurers

“Earth Needle!” [Ryouma]

“What!?” [Adventurer 1]

“Tch!?” [Adventurer 2]

Suddenly, stone pickets the size of about two adults’ height erected from the ground. As the two groups of adventurers were suddenly separated, one of the men was pulled up along with a stone picket.

When the men saw the stone pickets suddenly appear out of nowhere, they went quiet and grew vigilant, then slowly, they backed away from the man who was pulled up.

I took that opportunity to walk into the now empty center.

It would be problematic if the young adventurers are taken hostage.

“W-What the hell happened!?” [Adventurer 1]

“It’s magic!” [Adventurer 2]

“Is this your doing!?” [Adventurer 1]

“Well, you drew your weapons, so... reflex. Ah, by the way, this spell is called Earth Fence. It’s a spell that branches out from the earth spell, Earth Needle, to create a fence. Unfortunately, because of that it’s a bit sharp. Fortunately, nothing that would make us throw up our lunch happened.” [Ryouma]

After giving a brief explanation of my spell, the man who was picked up by one of the pickets along with the rest of his comrades stiffened up a little as they imagined what could’ve happened.



「『アースフェイス』」

盗賊にも俺を子供と見るなり増長して
あんな事を言う奴らはいたけれど、
目の前の連中ほど気に障らなかつた。
おそらくこの世界に来てから比喩でなく
一番イラッとした瞬間だった。



Still... This really is a waste of time. It's almost time for the roll call. I have to put an end to this...

They say the same things I say, and yet they mean something completely different.

Words sure are difficult!

...Well, enough with the jokes. These guys seem used to this sort of thing. When they drew their weapons, they turned toward me, but there were 2 among them who approached the young adventurers. They probably wanted to make hostages out of them.

It didn't look like they arranged something right before Sacchi started talking, so they is either premeditated, or they've done this enough times that they know what to do.

That bandit-like manner of speech, that violent attitude... That's not something you learn from hunting monsters. These guys are definitely in the wrong here. Not only that, they're probably guilty of even more crimes.

"Don't make excuses, idiots." [Sacchi]

"Aniki..." [Adventurer 1]

"It's just a brat's spell. As long as you don't give him the time to cast it, it's useless. Are you guys really so weak that you'd run with your tail in between your legs from one little brat?... If so, then I don't need you. I don't need comrades like that." [Sacchi]

"Psst..." [Young Adventurer 1]

While Sacchi was rebuking his comrades, a small voice called out to me from behind. It was a young boy, the shortest one of the six. The way he grabbed the fence and bent his back reminded me of a prisoner behind bars.

I remember him. He's the boy who bluntly called me dead weight back at the mines.

"Run. These guys are serious. No matter how good you are with magic, you can't fight these many alone." [Young Adventurer 1]

So, he acknowledges my magic now, does he? But it seems he still thinks I'm weaker than this frail bunch.

“Then you better prepare to run too.” [Ryouma]

As I said that, I quietly told him using Whisper, ‘I’ll remove those bars when I see an opening.’

Unfortunately, you can’t really talk secretly when you’re right in front of the enemy. Especially, when the 6 of them react enough for Sacchi to notice.

“Hey, don’t just stand there. Lend us a hand too. That brat looks like he’s good at hiding.” [Sacchi]

“He he he, thank you, elder brother.” [Adventurer 2]

“Too bad, huh. If only you hadn’t come here, then you wouldn’t have gotten caught up in this mess.” [Sacchi]

“It’s a bit late to be saying this, but you know, we would have forgiven you if you just showed us some coin.” [Adventurer 1]

“So them stealing your spoils was a lie, after all?” [Ryouma]

“Nuh-uh, we actually did think they stole it. I mean they’re slum kids, you know? People troubled with money like that can’t help but find themselves reaching out for other people’s wallets.” [Sacchi]

“Of course, if you promise to show us some coin, we might be willing to let you go. I mean you look like you have more on ya than all those kids back there.” [Adventurer 1]

“With an armor like that, I’m sure you can pay up. Would you like an installment plan? How about getting some coin from your parents?” [Sacchi]

Sacchi ordered the rest of the men to draw their weapons, and... they did. But they did so with much hubris, sighing as if they were mere spectators.

..... Annoying.

There were bandits who treated me like a kid back then too, but none has pissed me off as much as these guys.

This is probably the most I've been pissed off since coming to this world.

I haven't the slightest clue why I'm so pissed, but are they asking to be killed?

My parents from my previous life passed a long time ago, and I have no parents in this world. In one sense, you could say Gayn and the others are my parents. There's also the parents they decided for me. So. that leaves me... a dead couple, a group of gods, and another dead couple.

If you told me, I could meet my parents, regardless of which couple or group it is, I still have to go to the afterlife. Great.

The Jamil Household will probably help me if I ask them, but I don't feel like giving these bastards even a single coin to these. Besides, we can't meet right now anyway, and I won't let them pay even if they wanted to.

Just as I was about to act against these guys who put too much faith in their strength and numbers—

“W-Wait!” [Adventurer 3]

—suddenly, one of the spectating adventurers cried out. The surrounding adventurers looked at him coldly, but he was so panicked he didn't even notice them.

...B-But I haven't done anything yet...

“That kid... I-Isn't he that rumored kid!? W-We can't touch him!” [Adventurer 3]

“...Ahh, you mean that rumor about a kid who frequently brings a slime to the guild?” [Adventurer 1]

“The kid who walks around town in a weird getup?” [Adventurer 2]

“What's wrong with touching him?” [Adventurer 4]

“Don't you just mean you don't have the guts to touch him yourself?” [Adventurer 5]

The other adventurers sneered as they drew their weapons, but the young man of an adventurer only paled more.

“That kid with a weird getup was seen entering a luxurious inn with the duke’s family! He might be related to them! Do you realize that!?” [Adventurer 3]

“A brat like this?” [Adventurer 4]

“You gotta be kiddin’ me. Why would a guy like that come to a place like this?” [Adventurer 5]

“...W-Wait. Wasn’t this a request from the... duke?” [Adventurer 1]

“You’re kidding!” [Adventurer 2]

“But it’s true that the duke is staying in Gimuru, and many from the government office was recently laid off...”

So, that’s what he was panicking for. The reason he wasn’t proactive with joining the others is because he was afraid of getting on the duke’s bad side. Unfortunately, it’s a bit too late for that...

This is a good opportunity, though.

There are 6 enemies on each flank. The appointed area for the roll call is to the left. The 6 young adventurers are... Ready!

” ‘Create Block’ ” [Ryouma]

“Hey!” [Sacchi]

I gathered the pickets into a single lump, then I strengthened it and my body.

Sacchi called out, but I ignored him, pulled out the picket-lump, and swept toward the left flank with it.

“Stop him!” [Sacchi]

“GAH!?” [Adventurer 1]

Like that I sent three men flying with the picket-lump as a dull weapon, then I told the young adventurers to make a run for it.

“Run!! Go there!” [Ryouma]

“Yeah!” [Young Adventurers]

“Don’t let the brats run!!!” [Sacchi]

“Wait, you brats!!” [Adventurer 1]

This time, a group of adventurers came at me from the right. In response, I swung down with my picket-lump.

“Hah!?” [Sacchi]

“Wai-!?” [Adventurer 1]

“.....” [Adventurer 2]

The five men that chased after me were squashed like flies before the might of my picket-lump.

The only survivor, Sacchi, brandished his axe, but I threw the slimes on my shoulders to the left.

“!?” [Adventurer 3]

The two men who were able to escape my earlier attack went and attacked the 6 young adventurers. My slimes were aimed at them. In response, they tried to fend for themselves with their swords, but without hitting the nucleus, all physical attacks were meaningless.

And in the next moment, the sound of something sticking resounded. The 2 slimes had stuck themselves to their swords. After that, a deafening scream filled the area.

“GEH! My! B-Body! Is... My... Legs...” [Adventurer 4]

“GYaAAAAH! My arms!! My arms!!” [Adventurer 5]

The two slimes I’d thrown were poison and acid, and they just released their juices on the men.

“This brat!!!” [Sacchi]

Sacchi swung his axe toward my head, but I dodged him and stepped back.

“You sure did us good, bitch!!” [Sacchi]

Now, where did all that composure go?

Sacchi’s face was beet red and popping with veins as he swung his axe.

“How long are you bastards planning to sleep!!? Chase after those brats!” [Sacchi]

The men who had been crushed under the picket lump crawled out and the men I’d sent flying earlier slowly stood up. The only exception was the man who’d been afflicted with poison.

“Don’t stop! Run!!” [Ryouma]

It would make my life easier if the young adventurers got away, so I told them to keep running.

They only glanced at me once before continuing to make a run for it.

“Damn it! Get those brats or I’ll get your heads for it!

As for that brat, he probably doesn’t have anything to do with the duke, but if he tells on us to the guild, we’ll be in trouble! Novices who abandon their missions are everywhere anyway, so catch him and teach him a lesson!” [Sacchi]

“B-But Sacchi-san... This is really bad!” [Adventurer 1]

I prioritized securing an escape route for the kids, so the bad adventurers shouldn’t have been hurt much, but for some reason, they weren’t very enthusiastic to follow Sacchi’s orders.

Are they the sort that can’t act if they don’t have the advantage?

“Fine. I’ll do it. I don’t know if it’s the duke backing you or whatever, but I’ll beat you so hard you won’t come crying back to your backing. You’ve practiced healing a lot, right?” [Sacchi]

“But.” [Adventurer 1]

“Shut up! Just do it! Follow me!” [Sacchi]

Sacchi bellowed out a war cry, then he raised his axe and closed in on me like a beast.

His aim is probably my shoulders.

He doesn't look like he wants to kill me, so he'll probably hit me with the back of the axe. Still, that's metal. It's more than enough to crush the human body.

I took a step forward and brushed Sacchi's right hand with my left arm, diverting the trajectory of his attack.

“!?” [Sacchi]

With his arm extended, I wrapped my right arm around the back of his right elbow, then I kicked him at the back of the knee to break his posture. The moment he fell to his knees, his arms stiffened.

In that moment, anger left his face as shock took its place, then a thick sound resounded from his right arm.

“GAH!? MMM!” [Sacchi]

When I let go of his right arm, it dangled about loosely, and his axe fell to the ground. He could not pick it back up.

Enduring the pain, Sacchi tried to hit me with the back of his left hand, but it had no power, and I was able to easily take his left arm and step on his yet knelt right foot, then like a twig being snapped, Sacchi's body shook as I broke his left arm with a karate chop.

“—!! —-!?!? GUuU...” [Sacchi]

“...Eh?” [Adventurer 1]

“Elder brother just...” [Adventurer 2]

“Instant kill...?” [Adventurer 3]

Sacchi groaned and squirmed as he prostrated himself on the ground. With two fractures and one dislocation, the pain should be unbearable, but he was somehow persisting.

They probably didn't expect things to turn out like this. Because when the men following from behind saw Sacchi taken out just like that, they suddenly stopped as their faces cramped.

"Who's next?" [Ryouma]

I said with a smile.

"W-We... Uh..." [Adventurer 1]

"!!" [Adventurer 2]

"Ahh!?" [Adventurer 3]

"Hey don't run off by yourself!" [Adventurer 5]

"Teleport" [Ryouma]

When one of the adventurers tried to run away, I immediately teleported in front of him.

"Where are you planning to go?" [Ryouma]

"Eek!?" [Adventurer 6]

"Dimension Magic!?" [Adventurer 1]

"What is with that kid!?" [Adventurer 2]

"Forgive us! We couldn't go against Sacchi!" [Adventurer 3]

"Save that kind of talk for the guild master. For the meantime, it would be really troubling if you were to chase the children, so you'll have to keep me company."
[Ryouma]

After that, I bound the now disorderly mob of men with my slimes. This surprisingly

took a long time.

As a result, I'm late for the roll call.

Chapter 35

Mine Monster Subjugation – End of the First Day

“That should do the trick.” [Ryouma]

After ensuring that the bad adventurers couldn't escape, I was about to go call someone, but before I could, two people had already arrived.

I was wary at first, thinking it might be a new enemy, but that was immediately proven to be a needless fear.

“You've already taken care of them, de gozaru?” [Asagi]

“Asagi-san! And Raypin-san too?” [Ryouma]

“A group of adventurers ran to us, saying there's an adventurer who was dealing with a group of bad adventurers on his own.” [Asagi]

So, the six of them called them.

“They said the adventurer had some slimes with him, so I thought it might be you. Looks like I was right. It's good to see you're safe, de aru. How about those guys, de aru?” [Raypin]

“They don't look dead, but they're not moving even a little.” [Asagi]

They said after seeing how tightly bound the bad adventurers were.

I couldn't leave the bad adventurers by themselves, so in order to both heal them and keep them from running, I attached a brace on them along with a cast made out of weeds and the hardening liquid of the sticky slime, then I gagged them with a ball gag with holes for breathing (made out of stone), and then lastly, paralyzed them with the paralyzing poison of the poison slime.

Also, it would be a problem if they were attacked by monsters while I was away, so I also had the slimes surround them completely. I admit there might be a bit too many

slimes.

“You’ve basically buried them, de aru...” [Raypin]

“Hmm... I’ll keep watch here, de gozaru. They can’t escape, so take your slimes with you and go to the receptionist desk. Jeff and the rest should be waiting already.” [Asagi]

“Ah, right! I have to hurry.” [Ryouma]

“I’ll go too. I can take you there with my magic, de aru.” [Raypin]

I took Raypin-san on his offer and hurriedly put my slimes back into my Dimension Home.

The both of them were a bit shocked at that, but we hurried back anyway.

I’m really late.

After explaining everything to the receptionist girl, I was told to go back to work.

Apparently, I’d already missed the guild master, so we’ll have to talk about my punishment later.

Since that was the case, I went ahead and did what needed to be done first.

“I’m sorry for being late!” [Ryouma]

I apologized to my party for making them wait.

Jeff-san and the others weren’t angry at all, however. At most, they just teased me for it.

After the job was done, when everyone else was going home, I was summoned by the guild master.

“You came... Well, take a seat.” [Wogan]

The guild master sat before the receptionist desk, looking visibly haggard.

No matter what kind of punishment I get, I brought this upon myself... I do hope the punishment isn't too severe, though.

"...First things first, you're not going to be punished, so quit it with that face." [Wogan]

"I'm acquitted?" [Ryouma]

"You couldn't call for help because you were worried about those six, right? Moreover, thanks to you, those 6 were safe. Your testimony matches theirs as well, and well... Sacchi and his gang is a bit complicated, but we apprehended them to be safe. I acknowledge you had a good reason to be late, so...

No punishment! I'm sure you're not fond of punishments either." [Wogan]

I see, but then why does he look so tired?

"Another reason is because of Sacchi and his gang. They're not particularly trusted, you see." [Wogan]

"Did they insist they were innocent?" [Ryouma]

"They've been on poor behavior until last year." [Wogan]

"Until last year?" [Ryouma]

The way he said that seemed odd.

"I know their leader Sacchi might not look it anymore, but he used to be a serious and skilled adventurer." [Wogan]

Yep, not one bit. But I didn't say that out loud and just quietly listened.

Apparently, Sacchi's behavior started to turn for the worse when he became a C Ranker.

"Promoting from a C to a B is one of the walls an adventurer has to overcome. That's the first major hurdle in an adventurer's career, and unfortunately, Sacchi lost his way after trying to break through that wall repeatedly." [Wogan]

Apparently, he grew more and more demanding of his comrades and he even started

drinking and getting into fights frequently.

“And then all of the sudden he started grouping up with novices, but those were all adventurers with poor behavior too. Only, they started acting more proper, so I thought things were going well, but then today happened.

Seeing the bad group clean themselves up and start getting some achievements, at first, I doubted my ears, but gradually, I thought maybe Sacchi finally got himself together and was going to be someone I could trust to raise the novices, but, well...

Looks like they just got better at hiding their crimes. That’s unfortunate.” [Wogan]

I see. He must be feeling down because a subordinate he trusted betrayed his trust.

He wouldn’t be feeling sad if he didn’t trust them, after all. Although, I guess one could also develop some attachment after monitoring someone for so long, even if it was originally because he didn’t trust them.

In the end, before he knew it, he’d already grown to trust them, only for that trust to be shattered. It’s not an uncommon story, so it’s bound to repeat itself. Unfortunately, it’s not something easy to get used to.

“...Why are you looking at me like that?” [Wogan]

One day, you’ll retire, and you’ll feel much better.

I didn’t say it out loud, but apparently, it showed on my eyes.

“You look like you’re trying to cheer me up, but you know, you’re also one of the reasons why I’m so tired right now...You got caught up in a mess in the middle of the work, so now I have to report to the duke. I’m not looking forward to this...” [Wogan]

Ah, so he’s also worrying about what he’s superiors are going to say.

Guild masters sure don’t have it easy. And the duke’s family are worried about me too.

I don’t think they’d get mad at him over something like this, but it’s understandable why he’s so worried.

“You’re not even an adult and yet you keep making that face. Did something happen to

you in the past?" [Wogan]

Apparently, he could clearly feel the pity coming out from my eyes.

"Anyway, even if we put the duke aside, I don't think you're guilty of anything. That's all. You're dismissed. If you're not happy with that, well... Just reflect on you own."
[Wogan]

"Thank you." [Ryouma]

After that I left.

I went to where the carriages where, and as it turns out, word of what happened this morning had already spread. Many of the adventurers praised me for my efforts, and there were even some who let me ride first, saying I must've been tired.

On the way back home, I thought back to what happened this afternoon.

I don't regret defeating Sacchi and his gang, but I was pissed off before I responded with violence. I know the situation called for a beating, but I wonder if the real reason I beat them was because I was pissed. I don't know, but I can't deny the possibility.

Am I a child? No. My body may be that of a child's, but I'm already a 42 year-old uncle. I'm an adult who's supposed to be able to think rationally.

Will I hit someone because I don't like them? Will I hit someone just because they picked a fight with me?... In that case, I'm no different from those delinquent adventurers.

My strength and my techniques are fine, but my mind isn't right.

...Since coming to this world, nothing's really changed. I isolated myself within the forest, avoiding humans because I didn't like them in my previous life, and from then on, I've always been alone... At least, until I met Reinhart-san and the others.

If I hadn't met them, I would've lived my whole life in the whole forest. They've been taking care of me since our meeting. They gave me a bed to sleep on, cooked food for me, and welcomed me warmly... Am I starting to be spoiled by them?

Looking back on what I've done since coming to this world, I've done nothing but run away from the things I hated and without toiling for anything just played around while being spoiled by the duke's family..... This can't continue. At this rate, I'll turn into a no good adult. After all, you can't call a person who's only good at using reckless violence a good person.

I'm grateful to the duke and his family, but I have to leave them. I'll start training myself again. I can't keep depending on them. I have to stand on my own feet.

I've thought countless times how I should thank them, but with how much they've given to me, the very thought alone is shameless.

I thought of such things until I got back to town.

Chapter 36

Report

After coming back to the inn, I visited the room of the duke's family.

Arone-san welcomed me and brought me to the 4 Jamil members' table.

"Welcome home, Ryouma-san." [Elialia]

"Welcome back." [Reinbach]

"Welcome home. Seems you had some trouble today." [Elize]

"Don't push yourself too much." [Reinhart]

Looks like they've already caught word of what happened this morning.

"Thank you, everyone... There's actually something I want to talk about." [Ryouma]

When I said those words, their faces stiffened.

"Well, go on. Don't be shy." [Reinhart]

"What is it all of the sudden, Ryouma-san?" [Elialia]

Reinhart spoke with a serious expression, while the Ojousama wore a worried expression.

"I've made up my mind. You've taken care of me all this time, but I think I should be independent from here on." [Ryouma]

As soon as I said that, the ojousama stood up from her chair and ran up to me. The other three remained on their chairs.

"Why!? Why all of the sudden!?" [Elialia]

"Everyone's spoiling me. At this rate, I think I'll end up into a no good person.

Everyone's shown me so much kindness these past few weeks, but I think I should leave for a while and retrain myself." [Ryouma]

"If you just want to retrain yourself, can't we do it together? There will be plenty of teachers too..." [Elialia]

"If I'm with everyone, I'll definitely end up spoiled. That's why I want to leave for now." [Ryouma]

It was here that the madam interjected.

"For now, you say. I take it you don't actually intend on never showing your face to us again, right?" [Elize]

"Yes. I'm not leaving because I'm mad or anything, I just want to train myself. Once I'm satisfied, if it's alright with everyone, then I'd like to come back." [Ryouma]

"Of course it's alright! In fact, there's nothing wrong with being spoiled. You're only 11, after all. That's a perfectly normal age to be living with your parents. We'll welcome you back whenever you want!" [Elize]

"Mother!? Are you not stopping him?" [Elialia]

"Elia, it's not as if you're going to be separated from Ryouma forever. In the same way that you'll be going to school, Ryouma-kun will be studying as well. Although, frankly, I don't really think it's necessary for you to be do so, Ryouma-kun. If anything, I'd say what you really need is to be a bit more spoiled." [Elize]

"Wait a moment, Elize. Haven't we already talked about this?" [Elize]

"I know. That's why I'm not refusing him. I'm just saying what I think." [Elize]

Talked about what?

"Umm... What do you mean you've talked about this already?" [Ryouma]

Reinbach-sama and Sebasu-san were the ones to answer that question.

"Actually, ever since arriving at this town, we've already predicted you would eventually bring that up. I've been living for a long time already, and I've met plenty of

people in this long life of mine. Peers, subordinates, enemies... all sorts. And I've seen plenty of children like you.

I won't stop you, but you shouldn't push yourself. Even if you put the work, it's all meaningless if you don't know how to rest." [Reinbach]

"Ryouma-sama, you might think you were being spoiled, but we don't think so at all. It's true we provided you lodging and food, but you registered to the guild in an unfamiliar town and have been working seriously all this time. It's almost as if such things were a given to you. Which is why, we figured you'd eventually bring this topic up. It's a bit earlier than expected, though.

Reinhart-san added.

"When I look at you, I'm sometimes reminded of a close friend of mine. He's the complete opposite of you. If you're diligent, then he's the opposite of diligent. He would always push all of his work onto his subordinates and onto other people.

That much is obviously bad, but I think you need to learn a little bit of that. Rest from time to time, rely on other people, just like what my dad and Sebasu always say. And of course, improve. My friend may be like that, but he's currently doing pretty good for himself." [Reinbach]

..... They're really good people. I never realized they were this concerned about me.

Before I knew, I was tearing up.

"Thank... you." [Ryouma]

"It's fine. But in exchange, you need to promise us some things. One, you may leave, but you must come back. This world is dangerous. All the more so for adventurers. I'm sure you know this already, but make sure not to die and be sure to show yourself once in a while. The more frequently, the better." [Reinhart]

"Second, you have to send us letters regularly. Basically, a report of what's happened. This way we can tell you when you're pushing yourself needlessly." [Reinbach]

"We could also use my dimension magic to meet you in person." [Sebasu]

“And third, you must rely on us! This is absolute! You’re smart, you’re good at magic, and you’re strong. In fact, if we were to hire, you could get a good position already, so if anything happens, remember that you can always work for us.” [Elize]

I don’t know what to say anymore. All I know is that I’m really grateful to these people. It’s a pity my vocabulary isn’t that great; otherwise, I might be able to express my gratitude better.

“Ryouma-san.” [Elialia]

When the ojousama called out to me, I turned to her. She looked me straight in the eye and said this.

“I haven’t had many opportunities to spend time with someone, so I’m a little disappointed, but if you’ve made up your mind, then I’ll respect your decision. However!” [Elialia]

The ojousama pointed her finger at me and declared.

“I will also add a condition!” [Elialia]

“...Condition?” [Ryouma]

“Father, grandfather, and mother have already given three, but I will add one more. We will meet again 3 years later and again 6 years later.” [Elialia]

“3 years and 6 years?” [Ryouma]

“I’m sure I’ve told you this before, but I will be going to the academy this year. It will take me 6 years to graduate, but there will be a long break halfway through, so at that time, let’s meet[1] again. Until then I’ll do my best in my studies and in my magic.” [Elialia]

I see... So that’s what she meant.

“I understand.” [Ryouma]

“Good, I won’t forgive you if you forget, ok?” [Elialia]

The ojousama said as she glared at me.

Now that she mentions it, I do tend to forget stuff when I'm caught up with something.

"I'll do my best not to forget." [Ryouma]

"At times like this, you're supposed to say you won't! Good grief..." [Elialia]

The ojou-sama made a fed up expression as she said that.

Reinhart-san interjected while chuckling.

"Ha ha ha, well, it should be fine. By the way, Ryouma, have you decided what you'll be doing from here on?" [Reinhart]

"I have my slimes, so I was thinking of living somewhere near this town. That way I could work as an adventurer here, continue developing my connections, and train myself." [Ryouma]

"I see, then in that case, there's a job I would like to entrust to you." [Reinbach]

"What is it? If it's something I could do, then by all means." [Ryouma]

"I want to leave the management of the mine you're hunting monsters at right now. A lot of monsters have taken root in it despite having been abandoned for only a year...

It's not good for there to be a monster nest so close to town, so I would like for you to check the mine from time to time and hunt down the monsters. If you need help, you can get some from the guild.

I considered just sealing the entrance, but cave mantises could dig their way in, so it's pointless." [Reinhart]

"If that's all, then sure. I'll do it." [Ryouma]

"Thank you. As thanks you can do whatever you want with the mine. If it's there, you should be able to train or practice your magic without trouble." [Reinhart]

"That's..." [Ryouma]

That would be the perfect place for me! There's enough room to build a house, it's far enough from other people, and it's unpopulated so I can train myself and let the slimes roam free. It's even more valuable than money.

"This is a contract. There are many dangerous monsters, and having them create a nest and multiply so close to the town is dangerous. You understand, right?"

Normally, the public office would send someone to check the mines once in a while, but it seems the public office of this town failed to do even that. So, all I'm doing is hiring someone I believe I can trust. That's all.

If not for you, we would have had to pay someone else, but with this we're able to get by just by handing the place to you. Not only do we cut down on labor, we also cut down on expenses." [Reinhart]

...That's true, but even I can tell he's just making excuses. After all, the old officials of the public office have already been fired, so the current administration should be a fresh and healthy batch.

While I was thinking that, Reinhart-san made a wry smile and said this.

"Good grief, you really are too honest... You care too much about petty things. Let's do this then. You'll make ingots there, and we'll profit off of that. You don't have to work too hard, though, just make them when you're available." [Reinhart]

"...I understand, I'll work as hard as I can!" [Ryouma]

I'll set a monthly quota and sell them wholesale to Serge-san. I have to do at least this much.

"No, like I said, you don't have to work that hard..." [Reinhart]

"Oh, one more thing. You should stay at the inn while we're here." [Elize]

"Umm, that's..." [Ryouma]

"I'm not hearing it. You know I thought we could travel together a little longer, but then you suddenly go and decide on your own. This is final! You're staying here!" [Elize]

"It's just about another month or two. It won't be too late to start your training then.

And this will do you good too since you work too hard.” [Reinbach]

...If I don't reject them here, I'll end up spoiled.

“You're not being spoiled, Ryouma-sama.” [Sebasu]

He read my mind!?

“Ryouma-kun, it's been showing on your face all this time, you know?” [Elize]

“A very easy to read face.” [Elialia]

Really?

“Anyway! You have to stay here at the inn while we're here! Alright?” [Elize]

“B-But...” [Ryouma]

“Alright!?” [Elize]

“But...” [Ryouma]

“It's alright, so it's alright!” [Elize]

The madam isn't go to take no for an answer is she?... Well, fine. Whatever...

I wonder if I've always been this weak willed... Anyhow, I can't thank them enough...

“I understand. I'll let myself be spoiled while everyone's in town.” [Ryouma]

“Glad to hear it~” [Elize]



In the end, I couldn't reject them, but having people like this who care about me so much makes me happy too.

After that I thanked everyone one more time, and then I went back to my room.

Chapter 37

Monster Hunting at the Mines – Day Two

We will be hunting monsters at the mine today too.

I made up my mind to become independent yesterday, so I should do what I can now.

First, I need to provide the basic necessities to live. If I don't have any clothes, I should buy some from the store. As for my house, I'll be living at the mines, so that won't be an issue. As for food, I could look for a new place to hunt, and then buy from town if I need more, but that'll cost money.

I currently have 700 small gold coins from the reward for taking out a bandit, and 40 medium gold coins from the bandits themselves. I also have plenty of coins from all the work I've done at the guild, so living expenses shouldn't pose a problem. In fact, I have enough to live luxuriously, but if I do that, I'll go poor before I know it.

That being said, I can make 30 medium silver coins or 3,000 suits just from cleaning the 30 latrine pits. That's enough to pay for a person's 30 days' worth of living expenses. On top of that, I can also make money selling iron ingots and waterproof cloths to Serge-san, so... yeah. Money won't be an issue, and if anything, matters regarding finances should be a smooth sail.

But as I thought about it, I couldn't help but be depressed. After all, it's not like I'm the one cleaning the latrine pits. It's the scavenger slimes who clean them. If I just live off their work like that, then what's the point in me leaving the duke's family?

I need another source of income. Something other than adventurer work. Not just for independence's sake, but also as a failsafe in case I'm unable to continue working as an adventurer for whatever reason.

It's a bit extreme considering I haven't spent a single suit since coming to this world and meeting the duke, but it should be enough so long as I make just enough to scrape by. As for the fortune I have now, I should only use it when it's really needed, so... A hundred suits a day. Yeah. That should do. If I make at least that much, I should be able to get by.

“Ryouma-kun. He~y, are you listening~?” [Mizelia]

Oops, I shouldn't be dozing off like this.

“Sorry, I was thinking about something. What is it?” [Ryouma]

“Your head shouldn't be up in the clouds during a battle —Is what i was about to say, but...” [Mizelia]

“Even though you're not focused, you can still take down the monsters easily, huh.” [Syria]

“We haven't been able to get even a single one, you know.” [Wereanna]

“Ah, sorry. My body just moved by itself.” [Ryouma]

“I don't really mind, nyaa, but please stop muttering to yourself while killing all the monsters nonchalantly. It's scary, nyaa.” [Miya]

“S-Sorry...” [Ryouma]

Was I talking out loud?

“Are you troubled by money? I think I heard you say something about living expenses.”

“Actually...” [Ryouma]

“A meeting's been called! Everyone is to gather at the mine entrance!!” [Male Adventurer]

I was about to talk about my circumstances, but suddenly, a male adventurer came out of nowhere, panicking.

Is there an emergency?

“Did something happen!?” [Wereanna]

“Apparently, a goblin town was spotted in one part of the tunnels. It's big too. Fortunately, no one died, but some of the G Ranks are wounded.” [Male Adventurer]

“A goblin village, huh. That's a pain. If we don't get rid of them now, they'll multiply.”

[Jeff]

“I have to call the others, so you guys go ahead and gather at the mine entrance!!”
[Male Adventurer]

After the man said that, he left.

We hurried back to the entrance of the mine just as we were told, and when we got there, there was already a huge crowd of adventurers.

We waited for a while, and then the guild master went up the stage the guild prepared.

“I think you’ve already been informed, but I’ll brief you on the situation anyway! Just a while ago, we found some goblins in a tunnel, and shortly after, a goblin village! As such, we will now be starting the operation to exterminate the goblins! It will be a medium-scale operation and there are at least 500 goblins predicted! To minimize casualties, only D Rankers and above will be able to join! Gather according to rank and follow your orders!!” [Wogan]

After that the guild master called for me.

“Also... Ryouma, you there?” [Wogan]

“Present.” [Ryouma]

“You’re currently an F Ranker, but your abilities are already above E Rank, so since you’ve already fulfilled the conditions for promotion with this job, you’re going to be promoted to E Rank ahead of schedule.” [Wogan]

“Understood.” [Ryouma]

“Anyone has a problem with that?” [Wogan]

No one answered the guild master’s question. It seems yesterday’s incident was quite effective.

“Good! Now, go and prepare! If you’re lacking any necessities, come to me! If it’s something we can give, we’ll give it to you! Once you’re ready, gather according to rank

and memorize your battle plans!" [Wogan]

Gather according to rank... Hmm, the leader for the E Rank adventurers should be a woman named Prolia.

After meeting my group, another meeting began with her as the facilitator.

"I'll explain the plan... Our job is to lead the F and G Rank adventurers to block the escape route of the goblins. There we will finish them off." [Prolia]

She started explaining the plan using a map.

"Rankers A to D will attack the tunnel and the village from both sides. Alone, they should be able to take out most of the goblins, but despite the encirclement, some of the goblins are still bound to escape due to their great numbers.

To remedy that, they will intentionally leave one side of the encirclement open. Naturally, the goblins will run toward the place of least resistance, but unfortunately for them, we will be waiting on the other side.

Because we will have the F and G Rankers with us, we need to ensure their safety. If anyone has any suggestions, please feel free to raise your hand." [Prolia]

Several people raised their hands and suggested various plans. I was one of them. My suggestion was a plan I often used in the forest.

"Ryouma-kun, right? Do you have any suggestions?" [Prolia]

"I have a method suited for fighting goblins en masse. We could dig a deep ditch with earth magic along the route the goblins are expected to take, then we could fill it with acid slimes. And then..." [Ryouma]

I took out a long rod with a knife attached to it from my item box. It looked just like a scythe.

"We could push any goblins that approached us to the acid ditch with weapons like this one. From there, we could bury the fallen goblins with arrows and magic.

With this method the goblins that fall will be immediately neutralized.

There shouldn't be a lot of goblins who could climb back up, and even if they try to, we could just push them back down with something like a spear.

As a result, only the goblin archers and mages will be left. With the goblin enemies drastically limited, even the inexperienced adventurers shouldn't have that much difficulties." [Ryouma]

"I see... Can you prepare the slimes?" [Prolia]

"Yes." [Ryouma]

Looks like she's considering it.

After that she asked me a couple of questions, and I responded to each and every one. In the end, it was decided that we will be going with my plan.

"Get ready to move." [Prolia]

After Prolia calmly said that, we all started moving.

My job was to take the earth mages among the adventurers and lead them to the designated place ahead of everyone else, where we would then dig a big hole.

"Seeing it in person, those cliffs sure are huge." [Ryouma]

"The goblins definitely won't be able to climb up those." [Adventurer Mage 1]

The designated location was like that of a ravine, sandwiched between two cliffs, so the number of goblins that could fit in a row would be limited.

The hole we dug was 4 meters long, 50 meters wide, and 3 meters deep.

" 'Create Block'!" [Ryouma]

"That spell is amazing." [Adventurer Mage 1]

"It's a combination of 'Rock' and 'Break Rock'! It's really efficient!" [Ryouma]

“Can I try it too?” [Adventurer Mage 1]

“Sure!” [Ryouma]

Working as fast as we could, from time to time teaching the other adventurers a new trick or two, we dug a hole along the route the goblins were expected to take.

To minimize the risks, I’m going to have the slimes hide their nucleus. All they need to release their acid is to form a tentacle with their body and extend it through the small holes we’ve prepared. Like this they’ll be able to safely melt the goblins.

After digging the hole, all that was left was to throw the acid slimes in. With that, our acid pool was complete.

“Can we throw this in as a test?” [Mage Adventurer 1]

“I want to see if it works.” [Mage Adventurer 2]

“Is that a small rat? Sure.” [Ryouma]

At that, the adventurer threw the corpse of the small rat into the acid pool, and in the blink of an eye, its skin melted and the white of its bones showed. Like that it quietly sunk into the bottom of the acid pool.

“...Gruesome.” [Mage Adventurer 1]

“Were acid slimes always this dangerous?” [Male Adventurer 2]

“Well, a little acid on the skin will at most leave burns. For the skin to melt enough to show the bones, you’d have to be sunk into a pool like this with no room to escape.

Also, the melted prey will serve as nutrients to the acid slimes, so they can release more acid as time passes, and the battle will progress much better for us as well.

The acid levels will just keep on rising because of that, but I’ll make sure to tell them to stop once the acid levels are high enough.” [Ryouma]

“I absolutely don’t want to fall...” [Mage Adventurer 1]

“Excuse me! Where should I put these?” [Adventurer]

Oh, it’s the adventurers from the detached force. Looks like the goods are here. After the meeting, the adventurers quickly went to make rods out of the nearby trees and gather the scythes from the cave mantises that were killed yesterday and today.

Cave mantis scythes aren’t very sharp, but because of that they’re durable enough to be used to push the goblins into the acid pool as planned. I ordered the sticky slimes to connect the rod and the scythes with their hardening liquid.

We also used the earth we’ve dug out to create some railings around the acid pool to keep us from falling in ourselves, then we made some platforms for the archers and mages to use. We took extra care to make them easy for the mages and archers to use.

With that, our preparations were complete.

The platform would stand out too much, though, so I also erected an anti-physical barrier. Anti-physical barriers only work on physical things, so the spells should still be able to pass through unhindered.

I reported all of our progress to the leader. My job was finally done. Well, for now, anyway.

“Let’s run through this again! F and G ranked adventurers are to stand near the acid pool and deal with the goblins using the scythes. E Rankers are to engage the goblins in close combat and drive them toward the acid pool. At the same time, you must also ensure that the F and G Rankers are unharmed. As for the archers and the mages, your job is to take out the goblin archers and mages as soon as you spot them.” [Prolia]

All of the adventurers voiced out words of understanding.

“Alright. All platoons are to rest until the commencement of the operation.” [Prolia]

Since all preparations were done, all that’s left was to wait. As such, the surrounding adventurers all relaxed and went about their own ways to rest.

As a result, I once again have nothing to do. This is just like yesterday. Maybe I should check on the slimes and the weapons again...

“Excuse me! D-Do you have time right now!?” [Young Adventurer]

“Huh?” [Ryouma]

I turned around when a voice called out to me, and what greeted me was...

“Ah, you’re from yesterday.” [Ryouma]

Behind me were the six young adventurers from yesterday.

Chapter 38

Interview

Ah, right. The F and G Rankers are with us, so of course they'd be here too.

“That’s right! Thank you for yesterday!” [Young Female Adventurer]

“Thank you for yesterday!” [The rest of the party]

After the young female adventurer thanked me, the rest of their party followed suit. With so many people bowing their heads like that, it was only natural that the curiosity of the surrounding adventurers would be piqued. They couldn't help it, and telling them not to look was pointless. After all, there were countless slimes occupying one corner of a nearby waiting place. Just that alone was enough to gather attention.

“Umm... What is this...” [Ryouma]

I can more or less tell what this is about, but their behavior is completely different compared to yesterday.

“We want to thank you for yesterday, as well as apologize for our behavior.” [Young Female Adventurer]

“You went out your way for that? You're welcome, and it's great that you're safe. I'm Ryouma Takebayashi, a human. And these here are my slimes.” [Ryouma]

This would be our third time meeting each other, but I don't even know their names. Since they went out of their way to thank me, I figured I might as well introduce myself. Because of that they too introduced themselves.

Surprisingly, I found out that they were all non-humans.

The boys were:

Small Monkeyman Tribe, Berk, 13 years old.

Dogman Tribe, Ruth, 12 years old.

Big Monkeyman Tribe, Wist, 11 years old.

The girls were:

Half-elf, Martha, 12 years old.

Half-dwarf, Finia, 12 years old.

Dog tribe, Rumil, 12 years old.

The two halves look just like a human. And big monkeyman tribe? Small monkeyman tribe? Talk about confusing!

Incidentally, the small monkeyman tribe member, Berk, was the smallest guy of the bunch who loved to talk. Because of his short stature and the way he talked, I'd assumed he was just a cheeky brat with a sharp tongue, but as it turns out, he was actually the oldest and was just trying to fulfill his role as the eldest.

On the other hand, the big monkey tribe member, Wist, was the biggest of the bunch, but he was actually the youngest. I thought for sure he was the oldest.

"T-The adults said it's because of my race that I'm so big..." [Wist]

On top of that, he's the very picture of timidity. Yesterday, he was standing so tall and proud, and now...

When I asked the others about that, it turns out that they have him do that to keep other adventurers from looking down on them. After all, he is relatively more intimidating compared to his age if he just quietly stands.

When I asked about the details surrounding the big monkeyman tribe and the small monkeyman tribe, I couldn't help but be reminded of the gorilla and the golden snub-nose monkey. The color of their hair matches perfectly too. Of course, it's rude so I won't say it, but after seeing it, I can't unsee it anymore.

Anyway, let's put that aside...

They may just be kids, but they each have their own racial specialties.

Ruth and Rumil were from the dog tribe, so they had their tribe's trademark sharpened senses and heightened physical faculties. The half-elf, Martha, specialized in magic. The small monkeyman, Berk, was agile and could easily climb trees, while the big monkeyman, Wist, and the half-dwarf, Finia, were surprisingly strong. They showed that strength via a handshake.

Comparing the various strengths of the tribes like this is interesting, but...

“That’s amazing. You definitely have superior physical abilities.” [Ryouma]

“It’s not amazing... sir.” [Finia]

“O-Onii-san, I actually lost in strength to a kid my age.” [Wist]

“I saw... When it comes to ‘strength’, we’re not any worse than the adult adventurers. That’s why we became adventurers. We figured we could make good money doing adventurer work, but no matter how much effort we put, even if we work harder than the adults, the adults still make more money than us. That’s why when we thought of how you’re younger than us, we ended up saying those stuff to you. Sorry. Really.” [Berk]

The stronger one is the better, but that alone doesn’t guarantee being able to finish a job. In hunting, for example, strength isn’t the only deciding factor. One also needs to know how to find the prey, what to aim at, which methods to use, and various other things. So, while they may have the strength, they still lack the techniques and experience.

“As I’ve said before, I don’t really mind being treated like a fool. That being said, there are some things bothering me.” [Ryouma]

“Feel free to ask. We won’t hide anything anymore.” [Berk]

Then I’ll ask as much as I want.

“I was feeding my slimes when my metal slime fell and rolled down the slope. It was when I went to pick it up that I heard some trouble happening nearby. What were you guys doing in a place like that?” [Ryouma]

They were probably brought by those guys there, but it was still lunch time then. Couldn’t they have called out for help?

Their expressions darkened.

“We couldn’t carry all of the spoils your party gave us in one go.” [Berk]

“We didn’t have enough bags... sir.” [Finia]

Now that they mention it, all those spoils may have been too much for them to carry. They probably can't use Item Box or space magic either.

"So you got caught up with them when you went to get the rest of the spoils back?" [Ryouma]

"They would still find trouble with us either way. It's the second time they found trouble with us, after all." [Rumil]

When I asked Rumil to explain, the six of them made difficult faces.

"One week ago, we took on a herb collection request and went to the forest, but 5 of those adventurers were also doing work there, and when we approached, they yelled at us, saying we scared the animals away. I think they've marked us since." [Rumil]

"Did anything happen?" [Ryouma]

"It was our fault, so we wanted to avoid a fight if possible. They also weren't asking for anything unreasonable, so we just paid them.

That guy, Sacchi, just happened to pass by. And he taught us how much the wasted bait cost, as well as how much breaking a contract would normally cost... We didn't know they were together.

Looking back at it now, the whole thing might have been a setup." [Berk]

So, they brew up trouble, and then he comes in to mediate and make their victims cough up some cash, huh.

"That meager sum shouldn't amount to much when divided among a group their size, though." [Ryouma]

"Yesterday they said that the small money we earned would at least be enough to pay for their liquor... sir." [Finia]

So, they didn't mind change, did they? Or maybe they had other victims? Regardless, the guild will investigate them. Rather than that...

"Next question... From what you've said, it seems you have some knowledge on hunting." [Ryouma]

Besides, I've seen them beat cave bats and small rats.

They nodded.

"So why steal other's spoils?" [Ryouma]

"...We figured we could make more money that way." [Berk]

"At first, we also hunted monsters normally, but hunting took too much time. And then, one day, while we were hunting, it suddenly occurred to us that there are some adventurers who find it too much of a pain to bother with some monsters and would just throw their corpses away, so... We're really sorry." [Martha] [1]

"Sorry, that was rude of me. I just want to know why you want money so badly. Are you having trouble getting by? Or is there some other reason?" [Ryouma]

"It's true we're having a hard time just getting by, but it's actually to pay the municipal tax." [Ruth]

Ruth said something unexpected.

"Municipal tax. That's the tax you pay to the town you're living at, right?" [Ryouma]

"Is there anything else? We have to pay it if we want to live in town." [Berk]

The municipal tax of this world covers the maintenance of the outer walls and the salary of the guards. It also covers various expenses. Paying it is what gives residents the right to be protected from monsters and bandits.

Of course, I've never paid it because I lived in the forest (outside town), but I'll probably have to pay it once I start living in town.

So they actually pay their taxes, huh. Oops, I shouldn't be thinking such things. Sorry, guys.

"Sorry about that, I'm not particular about the taxes in town. Is it that expensive? The tax in Gimuru?" [Ryouma]

"It's 400 suits per person. We've never lived in another town, so we don't know if that's expensive or not, but we have to pay it. Otherwise, we won't be able to live here

anymore.” [Berk]

400 per person, so with the six of them that would total to 2,400 suits. I could pay that anytime, but since they’re barely getting by, it must be a large sum.

“So how did you pay it up until now?” [Ryouma]

I don’t know if they have parents or not, but they must’ve had a way to pay that tax up until now.

“We cleaned toilets.” [Berk]

“You mean the latrine pits?” [Ryouma]

“Oh, you know about it? The government office used to pay well, but they’ve been gradually getting stingy, until eventually, the adults in the slum told us it’s not worth it anymore and we’ll just get sick cleaning, so we stopped. That was when we started doing adventurer work.” [Berk]

“Ahh, I see...” [ryouma]

What is with this lethargy? I was never mad at them in the first place, but the more I talk to them, the more I feel like I can’t get mad.

“...D-Did I say something bad?” [Berk]

“I-I don’t know, but maybe he’s angry...” [Wist]

Oops, I made them uneasy.

“Don’t worry, I’m not mad. Umm... Don’t they have tax relief in Gimuru?” [Ryouma]

I know that just because you can’t pay your taxes doesn’t mean you’ll immediately be exempted from them, but...

“I hear it’s also possible to pay by working at the mines.” [Ryouma]

“*Tax relief*[2]?... I have heard that we can just work for free to pay the taxes if we can’t pay up, but then we’ll be given work fitting for people who can’t pay up. We can’t rely on something like that. And besides, we’re not the only ones troubled by the loss of

the toilet jobs, so there are probably countless people working there right now.

Also, they won't hire children at the mines. Apparently, someone decided that a long time ago. And because of all the adults looking for a job, the employers won't care how much stamina we have. They'll just turn us away, saying they won't break custom."
[Berk]

So the problems with the latrine pits actually spread this far...

"Thanks. That answers most of my questions for now." [Ryouma]

"S-Sure..." [Berk]

All 6 of them wore a confused look, as they failed to understand why I was suddenly thanking them, so I told them that the adventurers guild was currently managing the latrine pits.

When I told them that they're paying properly now, they asked if I was sure.

Looks like they're planning on working seriously now.

But if people start cleaning the latrine pits, the scavenger slimes won't have enough to eat. Hmm... Well, in any case, that's a problem for way later.

Chapter 39

Group Fight

After seemingly reconciling with Berk and the others, I asked them to spread word about the latrine pits job as much as they could.

A few minutes later, it was time to begin our operation.

“Is everyone in position? The enemies will be coming soon! Please be careful!” [Prolia]

When Prolia-san said that, everyone became alert, and the air tensed.

I also readied my bow, paying careful attention to my surroundings.

10 minutes later the first goblins appeared.

“They’re here! Three goblins in front! But there are more coming!” [Berk]

“Understood!!!” [Adventurers]

As Berk reported from the top of a tall tree, the surrounding adventurers agreed.

The goblins also noticed us, but they went straight toward us anyway. Goblins were never really known to use their head.

Of the three goblins, one fell into the pit because he didn’t notice it. The second noticed it and was able to stop before falling, but an adventurer managed to pull him down with those scythe-rods we made. And as for the third, well, he tried to jump across, but that obviously wasn’t going to fly, so in the end, he fell [1].

The goblins cried out in pain, but their throes lasted only for a few seconds before the acid slimes silenced them. The innumerable goblins coming from behind met a similar fate.

From time to time, goblin archers and mages who refused to approach and instead attacked from a distance would be mixed in, but our archers and mages easily took

care of them.

Incidentally, all the arrows we're using have been treated with the poison of the poison slime, so even a shallow wound could stop our enemies. Because of that our archers and mages were completely unhurt.

It's also easy to tell goblin archers and mages from your usual goblins. After all, the archers have their bows and the goblin mages have traces of mana about them that could be picked up by the Mana Perception skill that all mages possessed. Moreover, the goblin archers and mages also fought slowly, most probably owing to their lack of skill.

The situation clearly favored us, but there was a lot more goblins than originally expected.

No one's been hurt yet, but there's really too many of them. If we combine the goblins we've killed so far with those still in their base, there's probably more than 500 of them already. Did something happen to the main force?

The acid slimes are also gradually failing to digest all the goblin bodies, so the pit is slowly being filled up. The pit is still a long way away from being filled, but at this rate...

The nearby adventurers are also starting to panic.

"Doesn't this seem weird!?" [Adventurer 1]

"Yeah, there's too many of them." [Adventurer 2]

"At this rate, we'll run out of arrows!" [Adventurer 3]

"We're almost out over here!" [Adventurer 4]

"Hey, you! Don't waste arrows!" [Adventurer 5]

"Haa... Haa... Why are there... so many... goblins!!?" [Adventurer 6]

Goblins aren't very strong since they're only about a human child's height, but they do know how to use a weapon, and there's also a lot of them because they reproduce so quickly. If you look down on them just because they're weak, sooner or later you'll eat

your words.

Goblins eat all meat, regardless of if its human meat or animal meat. They look like humans, but I don't think it's possible to get along.

Even if their skills aren't polished, a weapon is a weapon. Just swinging one around is plenty dangerous. Unless one's strong enough, it won't be possible to take on many goblins at the same time.

According to the information from the meeting, there's over 100 adventurers here, but majority of those are F and G Rankers. Adventurers like that can only really fight goblins if it's a one on one, so they can't be sent out to the chaotic frontlines.

That leaves only the E Rank adventurers, but there's not enough of them. In the first place, E Rankers are still novices. They're at the level where they're just barely strong enough to fight after having received some training.

Moreover, not all E Rankers can fight in close combat. Some are mages, some are archers, and some are healers. That leaves only about 28 people fighting in close combat.

For those 28 people to hold the lines against this endless wave of goblins, it's only natural that they've already started to show signs of exhaustion. In fact, some of those 28 have already returned to the frontlines after being brought back once from the brink of death with healing magic. At this rate, it won't be long before we reach our limits.

We thought we could deal with the goblins even if there were a lot of them, but unfortunately, we miscalculated just how many goblins would come. Fortunately, the goblins don't fight well together, and we're somehow holding— Or not. The frontline is finally starting to reach its limits.

“Prolia-san, could you send me and my slimes to the frontlines? This battle will probably drag on, so at the very least, we should give the frontliners a chance to rest.”
[Ryouma]

“Ryouma-kun... If I recall correctly, the guildmaster said your strength is already above E Rank... Alright, could you take care of it? You don't have to push yourself, just buy as some time.” [Prolia]

I suggested a substitution to our leader, and she immediately agreed.

“Alright.” [Ryouma]

“All frontliners! Ryouma and his slimes will take over for now! Take this opportunity to recover as much as you can!” [Prolia]

I called over the sticky slimes, poison slimes, and scavenger slimes, and ordered them to go to the frontlines. As for me, I jumped down from the high ground, then I jumped across the pit. At the same time, I ordered the slimes.

Use everything you've learned and show those goblins who's boss!

Immediately, the slimes started shaking as if they couldn't wait to give them a beating, then a part of their body turned into a tentacle that stretched out toward the goblins.

The sticky slimes picked up the rods the goblins wielded, and they used them to beat the goblins and trip them. They also used their sticky liquid to stop the goblins from pressing forward.

The poison slimes picked up the spears of the goblins, then they poisoned it with their own poison and then they attacked the goblins.

The scavenger slimes would trip the goblins by sliding toward their feet and wrapping their tentacles around them. Sometimes they would intentionally let the goblins step on them, so they could push them up and break their balance.

Although the slimes weren't strong enough to beat the goblins dead, they couldn't be killed even in a one on one.

Like that the slimes worked together to fight against the horde of goblins.

The poison of the poison slimes were particularly effective.

Looks like everything's going well.

As I thought that, I drew my two daggers.

The goblins probably saw me as their prey, but before they knew it, I'd lunged right into one goblin's chest and pierced his heart with my dagger, then as I pulled my

dagger out, I passed the goblins and cut the carotid artery of another.

“GUGli!?” [Goblin 1]

“GOGA!” [Goblin 2]

“GUeE!!” [Goblin 3]

The goblins ran toward me with swords brandished. But they were full of openings, so I went ahead and cut their wrists and kicked them about, then I let the slimes finish them off.

“GliIII!!!” [Goblin 4]

A goblin came at me from behind, but I dodged him, took his back, and promptly lodged my dagger into his medulla oblongata, then like a puppet whose strings have been cut, the goblin fell.

Goblins resembled humans not just externally but also internally. They're more durable than humans, but they'll still die when hit in a vital spot, and if you cut their wrists or carotid artery, they'll bleed to death.

Moreover, all the goblins I've fought so far have withdrawn from battle every time I managed to cut their carotid artery or their wrists. This time was no different, so there's currently no problems with dealing with the goblins.

The goblins screamed as their blood sprayed in the air, but I didn't stop and just kept on killing one goblin after another.



I got to say, though. There's really no end to them. Just where have these goblins been hiding?

Although the goblins kept coming, we were able to stand against them. We had the number advantage, so gradually, the battle started to become easier. With some leeway made, I ordered the slimes to pick up the arrows.

I can hear the frontliners talking, so from that I could infer that they're properly resting.

"Wait a... sec... Just what the hell... is that kid?... isn't he too... strong?... Even though we... were having... such a... hard time..." [Adventurer 1]

"We're saved..." [Adventurer 2]

"Regardless, we can leave things to him for the time being. Rest up while he's buying time!! And then go back to the front lines!!" [Berk]

"Right!!" [Frontliners]

"Are those really slimes?" [Adventurer 3]

"Those slimes sure know how to handle a spear. They're probably even better than me..." [Adventurer 4]

"Forget being better... Why are slimes using weapons!?" [Adventurer 5]

"It's weird, but at least, we're saved now... Hmm? Arrows?" [Adventurer 6]

"!? Archers! The slimes are retrieving the arrows! Hey, you guys move! Let those slimes pass!" [Berk]

I guess slimes that can use weapons really are weird... Or rather, they actually noticed that? Maybe they're not so tired after all.

As I was thinking that, I felt the mana stir.

Another goblin mage!

I sheathed my daggers, and threw a throwing knife toward the goblin mage.

Like that I fought with my slimes until the frontliners recovered their strength.

Chapter 40

The Ending Battle, the Continuing Battle

After taking turns fighting several times and healing the wounded, eventually the number of goblins that fell surpassed 2000.

Although no adventurers were left wounded thanks to the efforts of the heal slimes and the healers, the frontlines were so covered in corpses that there weren't any room left to step on.

It was then that 4 people suddenly appeared out of thin air. They were Raypin-san, Asagi-san, Gordon-san, and Cher-kun. Except for Raypin-san, everyone was covered in blood.

"Is everyone alright, de aru!?" [Raypin]

"Sorry we're late! How is the situation?" [Asagi]

"Everyone looks okay, though?... There sure are a lot of corpses." [Gordon]

"Raypin-san, Asagi-san, Gordon-san, Cher-kun! You came!" [Ryouma]

"Oh! Ryouma! You're safe, de aru!" [Raypin]

"Looks like you fought hard too. You're covered in blood." [Gordon]

"We're also covered in blood, though." [Cher]

"True. But still... What's with all the goblins? There's over 2,000 corpses just here, and from the way you guys look, I'm guessing you fought a lot too." [Ryouma]

"Yes, explanations are in order." [Asagi]

"Erm... Who's the person in charge here? We need to know what happened here." [Cher]

“It’s me!” [Prolia]

Prolia-san ran to the four to explain the situation.

“I see... So that’s what happened, de aru.” [Raypin]

“Yes, we managed to hold thanks to Ryouma-kun and his slimes, but if not for him, we would have surely been crushed.” [Prolia]

“It’s a miracle that everyone’s unhurt despite fighting so many goblins.” [Asagi]

“In any case, it’s good that everyone’s safe.” [Gordon]

“Umm... Is the main force alright?” [Prolia]

“The situation is under control for now, de aru, but...” [Raypin]

“No one died, but the main force suffered a lot. The number of goblins predicted was way off the mark, and there was even a goblin king. There were also plenty of goblin knights.” [Gordon]

“A goblin king was present!?” [Prolia]

The surrounding adventurers stirred when they heard Prolia-san shout that last sentence.

“The goblin king has already been killed, so don’t worry!” [Gordon]

Gordon immediately said that to calm everyone down, and what followed after was a wave of cheers.

Gordon ignored the cheers as he continued explaining.

“We based our strategy on the map of the mines, but the goblins dug their own tunnels and expanded their village, so the scouts weren’t able to completely scout everything out. As a result, there were paths not shown on the map.” [Gordon]

“The goblin village we attacked was only one part of their base. The real village and boss was deeper in, but it wasn’t until after some time the battle started that we figured that out.

During that time many of the goblins were able to escape through a different route, which is why so many goblins came to you, de gozaru. Our deepest apologies for our incompetence.” [Asagi]

“I see... In any case, no one was heavily wounded on our side, so we don’t really have any complaints, but still... I wonder why a village of that size wasn’t discovered until now?” [Prolia]

“We found a lot of small rat and cave bat bones in their nests, so They probably fed off the other monsters in the mine, and since they never appeared in town, no one knew about them. No one approached this mine in the last year either.” [Cher]

“In other words, this was brought by the negligence of the government office, de aru. I know a mine that produces nothing only wastes money, but still...” [Raypin]

As Raypin-san said that, he looked around, and then he said this.

“It is truly fortunate that no one was hurt despite so many goblins, de aru. Since everyone here is unhurt, would it be alright to take some of your healers with us? We would like to have some of our wounded healed, de aru.” [Raypin]

“Sure, no problem. All healers with mana to spare! Please assemble!” [Prolia]

The number of adventurers that answered Prolia-san’s call was 4 all in all, myself included.

“Unfortunately, I can only teleport 3 people with me, de aru. One of you will have to come by himself.” [Raypin]

“I can do that. I can use dimension magic too, so I’ll be able to catch up immediately.” [Ryouma]

“That would be great, de aru.” [Raypin]

“Ah, but would it be alright if you take some luggage with you?” [Ryouma]

“If it’s nothing heavy.” [Raypin]

At that, I called over my two heal slimes.

“Then please take these two with you. I still can’t take anyone with me when I teleport, so...” [Ryouma]

“I understand, de aru. What slimes are these, though?” [Raypin]

“They’re heal slimes, slimes that can use healing magic.” [Ryouma]

“Oh! So these are heal slimes, de aru! Despite my long years in monster research, this is my first time seeing one in the flesh, de aru. Rest assured. I shall take these two with me, de aru.” [Raypin]

“Thank you.” [Ryouma]

“Let us be off then. ‘Warp’” [Raypin]

As Raypin-san said that, he warped away with the three healers.

I too bid Prolia-san and the others goodbye.

“Prolia-san, I’ll leave the slimes here, so please watch over them. They can take care of themselves, so you don’t have to do anything in particular.” [Ryouma]

“Leave it to me. Please take care of the wounded over there.” [Prolia]

“Yes. I’m off... ‘Teleport’” [Ryouma]

After using a short-distanced teleport spell several times to get away from everyone, I used the intermediate spell, Warp.

After warping to where Raypin and the others were, I was greeted with many wounded adventurers.

“Ryouma! Over here, de aru!” [Raypin]

Raypin-san called out to me, and after giving me back my two heal slimes, he immediately led me to the person in charge of the healers, who then gave me my orders.

I and my slimes first went to heal the relatively less wounded adventurers, but because they were fully conscious, they were shocked every time they saw my slimes using healing magic.

After dealing with the less wounded adventurers, this time we dealt with the heavily wounded adventurers.

I was finally starting to run out of mana, so I used the MP recovery potions that I got from Serge-san a few days ago.

There weren't a lot of adventurers with heavy wounds, but those that did lost too much blood, so several healers had to use the intermediate healing spell, High Heal, several times to save their lives.

My and my slimes' low level heal was ineffective on heavy wounds like that, but after the adventurers recovered a little, we could finally be of use. I also shared some of my MP recovery potions to keep the healing going.

We had to stop the bleeding as soon as possible, so couldn't stop for a moment; otherwise, these people were sure to die.

We were almost as busy as the warriors fighting in the battlefield. We didn't have the leisure to think of any unnecessary things.

"Huh!?" [Healer 1]

As I quietly continued healing the adventurers, suddenly, one of the healers exclaimed.

"What's wrong!? Need help!?" [Healer 2]

In response, a male healer called out.

"N-no! That's not it!" [Healer 3]

"It's just that the slimes started using High Heal all of the sudden, so I was a little shocked!" [Healer 1]

Hah!? My slime did!? Weren't my slimes only capable of Heal? I'm pretty sure they never used anything other than Heal...

The male healer from before asked me if my slimes could use High Heal, and I immediately shook my head.

“If they did, then they probably picked it up just now because I’ve never seen them use it before.” [Ryouma]

“Well, the more help the better!” [Healer 2]

After that we went back to healing, and then a little later, another healer exclaimed. Apparently, the other heal slime also started to use High Heal. I didn’t expect them to grow up like this, but it’s not a bad thing.

In any case, with this we’re able to heal faster. After taking out a large number of MP recovery potions from my Item Box, we were somehow able to successfully heal everyone. It will still take some time before everyone can fight again, but at the very least, there’s no more threat to their lives.

I checked the skills of the heal slimes, and it turns out that their healing magic has already leveled up to 3. As for mine, it leveled up to 2.

While I was doing that, over 10 adventurers suddenly surrounded me and thanked me profusely. Apparently, among the people I healed were their comrades. If it weren’t for my heal slimes and MP recovery potions, they would have surely died, or so they said with tears in their eyes.

I had no idea how to deal with them, but fortunately, the guild master came and told me to tell the my platoon (the ambush platoon) to gather at the entrance of the mine with everyone.

You couldn’t have picked a better time to come! I thanked the guild master inwardly, and then I hurriedly went to deliver his message.

While the adventurers were gathering at the entrance of the mine...

“Good job, everyone! the job was a lot harder than expected, but because of that the reward will also be bigger!” [Wogan]

The guild master said that when he appeared, and immediately after, waves of cheers resounded.

“Everyone shall receive 1 big silver coin as payment!” [wogan]

The cheers grew even bigger at that. The cheers of the F and G Rankers were especially loud. 1 big silver coin is equivalent to 5,000 suits. That’s enough to pay for 50 days’ worth of living expenses. This is probably their first time receiving such a huge sum of cash...

“Any complaint? No? Good! The sun’s still high up, so you’ll be dismissed after disposing of the goblin corpses!” [Wogan]

After saying that, the guild master seemed to have recalled something, and he looked at me and said this.

“Oh, right! Ryouma!” [Wogan]

“Yes?” [Ryouma]

“I know you’re paying for the monster corpses, but you can have the goblin corpses for free.” [Wogan]

“I’ll take it if you’re offering it, but are you sure that’s alright?” [Ryouma]

“Goblins don’t have anything worth selling, so it’s fine. You’re all fine with that too, right?” [Wogan]

Many adventurers were surprised to hear that I was the one buying the monsters corpses, but no one had any issues with me taking the goblin corpses away. If anything, there were adventurers happy to hear that there would be less work. Apparently, they were originally planning on burning the corpses, but that would require the fire mages to use their spells even if it meant almost running out of mana, so of course the fire mages weren’t enthusiastic about taking on that role.

“In that case, I’ll gratefully accept. I’ll have the slimes eat their fill as a reward.” [Ryouma]

But I feel bad getting something without giving back, so I’ll offer the cleaner slimes’ services later.

After that the various adventurers went back to their respective posts, and I went back to where we ambushed the fleeing goblins.

There, I retrieved the acid slimes, then I filled the remaining space of the hole with goblin corpses, and then I had the sticky slimes and poison slimes eat their fill. With this the poison slimes will eat the poisoned goblin corpses, and the sticky slimes will eat everything else.

As for the scavenger slimes, I had them eat the blood and flesh bits on the ground. By the time they were done, not even a drop of blood was left.

I just realized this now, but aren't scavenger slimes actually perfect for destroying evidence? I'm definitely not giving a scavenger slime to a bad guy, not that I'm planning on giving one to anyone.

Alright, just a little bit more and we're done!

While the slimes were feeding off of the goblin corpses, I told the E, F, and G Rankers about the abilities of the cleaner slimes. When I showed it off to them, all of the filth on my body and equipment were washed away in an instant, and the adventurers were immediately hooked.

At that, I ordered my 11 cleaner slimes to clean the adventurers. When everyone was done bathing via the cleaner slimes, I waited for the slimes to finish eating, then I went to where the main force was.

I did the same thing there and had the cleaner slimes clean the adventurers and their equipment. I also ordered the scavenger slimes to eat the filth on the ground and in the goblins' nest.

Goblin blood, bodily liquids, and smell are really hard to get rid of, so the cleaner slime baths became very popular.

After cleaning the place up, we were immediately dismissed, and the adventurers all went back via the stagecoaches.

As I watched them leave, I rested somewhere slightly remote with the slimes.

Because of all the goblins the slimes ate, the poison slimes, acid slimes, and cleaner slimes have all become able to split. Unfortunately, I don't have enough mana right now, so I need to recover a bit to form the new contracts.

To recover mana as quickly as possible, I decided to ride home last and relax.

It feels like the time just went by since I started healing the adventurers... As expected, I'm a little tired...

Chapter 41

Going Home

“What are you doing at a place like this, Ryouma?” [Jeff]

While I was dozing off at a place some distance away from the carriages, Jeff-san called out to me. Behind him were the people who helped out with the latrine pit.

“Aren’t you going to go home, nyaa?” [Miya]

“Good job today, everyone. I don’t think I could get a ride right now even if I wanted to with how many adventurers there are, so I think I’ll ride last.” [Ryouma]

“You too?” [Jeff]

“You too? You mean you guys are going last too?” [Ryouma]

“Well yeah, with how exhausted everyone is, we don’t really wanna tussle with all those adventurers.” [Mizelia]

“You said it... I know we were hired precisely for situations like today’s, but it’s still tough.” [Gordon]

“Especially today. We even had to deal with a goblin king. And that’s a monster you deal with only after preparing for it. I couldn’t help but remember that story while fighting. You know that one about never letting down your guard even when fighting weak monsters.” [Mizelia]

“Ah, are you talking about the country that got wiped out by 10,000 goblins? I remember that too. It’s really a miracle no one died today.” [Cher]

Was there a story like that?

Gordon had his thick arms around his neck as he grumbled, while Mizelia-san echoed his statement.

Everyone sure looks tired... As I thought that to myself, I asked Cher-kun about that story Mizelia was talking about.

“Huh? Ryouma-kun, you don’t know about it? I thought for sure it was a popular story.”
[Cher]

“I don’t recall hearing it...” [Ryouma]

“Ah, you were probably that kid, weren’t you? The kid that didn’t read fairytales in his childhood and instead read nothing but complicated stuff.” [Jeff]

When Jeff-san said that, everyone nodded.

For some reason, my ignorance was taken in a strange light.

Do these people seriously see me as a swot?

“It’s a story about knights and adventurers who fought hard to protect a country, only for their efforts to go to waste, as the goblins overwhelmed them. We can laugh at it now, but without you and your slimes, we would have suffered the same fate.”
[Gordon]

Well, regardless how strong one is, if you can’t apply that strength, then it’s meaningless. ‘There is power in number’ is a common saying too.

“Oh, right!” [Raypin]

While ruminating to myself after what Gordon-san said, Raypin-san suddenly yelled.

“What is it all of the sudden, Raypin-ossan?” [Jeff]

“Ryouma, can you show me your heal slimes from before? I’ve never seen one in the flesh, de aru.” [Raypin]

“Sure.” [Ryouma]

I called the 2 heal slimes over and lifted them up so Raypin-san could get a better look.

“Here.” [Ryouma]



“Thank you, de aru. Hmm... They’re white... And they’re short, even for slimes... I saw them use healing magic in person. It seems the rumors are true. What do they eat? Is it the same as normal slimes, de aru.?” [Raypin]

“They only drink water, and they won’t eat meat unless you order them to. I think the meat thing is just preference, but when it comes to drinks, they really can’t drink anything but water. That part is a pretty big difference compared to normal slimes.” [Ryouma]

“Really?” [Raypin]

“How do they live with just water?” [Wereanna]

“They have a skill called Photosynthesis. With it they can get all the nutrients they need just by bathing in sunlight.” [Ryouma]

“There’s a skill like that, de aru!? Mu mu mu... How interesting... Ah, come to think of it, the encyclopedia did mention plant-type monsters having a skill like that, de aru.” [Raypin]

“Are those slimes strong, nyaa!?” [Miya]

As Raypin-san went off into his own world, Miya-san asked a question.

“They’re really weak. They’re so weak that if they were to fight a normal slime, they’d lose.” [Ryouma]

“That’s really weak, nyaa...” [Miya]

“That’s probably the reason why heal slimes are so rare. Since even if a heal slime manages to be born in the wild, it’ll just get killed right away.” [Ryouma]

“That makes sense, de aru. Weak critters can’t live in the wild. Do heal slimes have any methods of self-defense, de aru?” [Raypin]

Ah, Raypin-san heard us.

“They’re completely specialized in healing. They also have the Increased Vitality skill on top of healing magic, so they could heal while running away should they be attacked.” [Ryouma]

“So they have no choice but to take the hit while healing and running, de aru?” [Raypin]

“They’re surprisingly tough, actually, but of course, they can’t live long in the wild by themselves. And they seem to know that instinctually since even if you tell them to do as they please, they won’t separate from my other slimes.

They’re really useful, though, since they immediately heal my other slimes when they get hurt. They’re healers through and through, so they can’t be used to fight.” [Ryouma]

“I see... That was interesting. Thank you, de aru.” [Raypin]

“It’s rare to have someone who can understand slime research, so this much isn’t really worth mentioning.” [Ryouma]

“If you have any questions, feel free to ask me too. I’m confident I can answer it so long as it’s nothing too complicated. Talking with you is a joy since you always have so many discoveries. It’s unfortunate that you don’t get much recognition despite that.” [Raypin]

When Asagi-san heard that, he joined the conversation.

“I’m not that familiar with monster tamers, but I’ve heard that it’s harder to control monsters the more you have. With so many slimes tamed, surely you must have gotten some recognition at the tamer guild.” [Asagi]

“Unfortunately, I’m still just a neophyte with no achievements. Moreover the tamer guild judges a ranker’s skill according to the strength of his monsters, so slimes can’t get me much recognition. In fact, I’m more likely to be looked down on because of them. It’s also because of that that I didn’t bother publicizing my research results. I would just stand out in a bad way.” [Ryouma]

“There are a lot who think slimes are useless just because they’re slimes, de aru. Ryouma discovered two new variants, the cleaner slimes and the scavenger slimes. Either one is extremely useful. On top of that, there’s also his research results. Personally, I believe that’s more than enough to promote him a couple of ranks, de aru.

But as an individual monsters researcher, considering the position of slimes in the industry, it’s more than likely that others will unfairly look down on Ryouma. It’s perfectly understandable that Ryouma doesn’t want to publicize his research results.

Slimes are just looked down on that much, and it's not just the tamer guild who thinks that way, de aru." [Raypin]

"Really? Someone as unlearned as me recognizes just how useful those 2 slimes are, though. In fact, they're so useful that if I knew how to tame monsters I would immediately get some myself." [Wereanna]

"If more people were as open minded as you, then Ryouma would get the recognition he so rightfully deserves, de aru." [Raypin]

Everyone nodded at Wereanna-san's remarks.

Looks like the latrine pits job and the subjugation quest today convinced everyone how useful the cleaner and scavenger slimes are.

"I wonder if I could make money if I started a laundromat..." [Ryouma]

"A laundromat?" [Wereanna]

Ah, I seem to have said that out loud.

"Oh, I was just thinking. Couldn't I use the cleaner slimes to wash laundry for cheap? And if I tell other adventurers that even a goblin's filth could be cleaned, I might be able to make enough to live off of." [Ryouma]

"How cheap are we talking here?" [Wereanna]

"Hmm... Using a special bag I will be making myself, at the lowest end, one bag would be one copper coin, and at the higher end, one medium copper coin. Something like that?" [Ryouma]

"It's doable!" [Everyone]

When I said that, everyone responded affirmatively.

"I know full well just how clean cleaner slimes can make things. A bag's worth of laundry cleaned at that quality at the cost of just one medium copper coin is definitely cheap! Nyaa!" [Miya]

"Especially at times like today. Goblin blood and fat really aren't easy to wash off..."

[Gordon]

“Just thinking about it depresses me...” [Syria]

“Personally, I just throw away clothes when they get as dirty as they did today. Washing is pointless since they’ll still stink, so you still won’t be able to wear them.

Beast tribe members with a sharp nose and enough income would definitely want your service at one medium copper coin. That’s still cheaper than buying new clothes, after all.” [Wereanna]

“Because beast tribe members really have sharp noses,” said the four female beast tribe members as they gave their stamp of approval.

“At that price, people other than adventurers would also be interested. Considering how much time and effort laundry requires, enlisting your service is better.” [Jeff]

“I actually want to get mine done tomorrow. I have a lot piled up at home...” [Gordon]

“In my case, I’m bad at chores, and I have a bad habit of piling up laundry when researching, de aru. At times like that I would hire someone to do my laundry, but the fees aren’t anything to scoff at, de aru.” [Raypin]

“In Raypin’s case, leaving the laundry for too long makes them even dirtier, so he has to pay a premium too, but either way, hiring people to do your laundry is generally expensive. Normal families can’t afford it, but with your proposed prices, even commoners should be able to afford it, de gozaru.” [Asagi]

Are they single?

In any case, everyone seems to like my idea.

“Actually, I’ve been thinking a lot yesterday, and eventually decided to become independent.” [Ryouma]

“What’s this about?” [Jeff]

“I believe everyone knows this already, but I came to this town with the duke’s family. They’ve been taking care of me all this time, but at this rate, I realized I would end up too spoiled, so I talked to the duke’s family to turn down their support and live by

myself.” [Ryouma]

“You turned down their support!?” [Mizelia]

“What a waste...” [Jeff]

“Ah, but I’m still living with them at the inn... The thing is stuff like that has started to become a given, so it’s starting to feel like I’m being spoiled. So in order to focus my mind I decided to go independent after they leave...” [Ryouma]

“But still... That’s not something a person normally does, is it? But then again rejecting the duke’s support usually isn’t even possible since you normally won’t even have the opportunity in the first place.” [Gordon]

“But I believe your way of thinking is admirable, de gozaru.” [Asagi]

“Ha ha ha... Anyway, in the end, it was decided that I would do a job for them and have to contact them regularly. I’ve also decided to stay in this town, so I’ve been thinking of various ways to make a living.

Of course, I intend to continue being an adventurer, but because of the job from the duke and their request to keep in touch with them, I need to come back to this town. I’m planning to prepare various ways of making a living just in case I become unable to become an adventurer.” [Ryouma]

“I see, then that’s fine. Do your best.” [Wereanna]

“If you’re going to be staying here, then we’ll be seeing each other a lot. Let’s get along [1], de aru.” [Raypin]

“Same here. Let’s get along.” [Ryouma]

We continued talking about random stuff after that, and then when it was time for the last carriage, we rode last.

After that I went home and was summoned to the room of the duke’s family.

“Welcome home~.” [Elize]

“Good work out there, Ryouma-san.” [Elialia]

“Work ended early today, huh? How’s the abandoned mine?” [Reinbach]

“Huh? You haven’t been informed yet?” [Ryouma]

“We had some things to ask the government office... As expected, it seems they haven’t touched the mine in a while. Did something happen?” [Reinbach]

“We found a goblin village today and were able to destroy it, but it was pretty tough since even a goblin king came out.” [Ryouma]

As soon as I said that, the members of the duke’s family immediately panicked.

“A goblin king!?” [Reinbach]

“Are you alright!?” [Elialia]

“Fortunately, I only had to take care of the fleeing goblins, so I didn’t have a hard time. No one died too.” [Ryouma]

“I see. That’s good to hear...” [Reinhart]

“It was a big nest with a goblin king and some goblin knights, so there were still over 2,000 goblins that went our way. It was really a huge operation, so we were sent home right after disposing the corpses.” [Ryouma]

“It’s amazing no one died despite that.” [Reinbach]

“It’s because the high rankers dealt with the goblin king, and the low rankers used traps. Oh, there’s one more thing I’d like to talk about.” [Ryouma]

I told them what I heard from those 6 adventurers regarding their difficulties since the latrine pit jobs were stopped being an option.

When I did, the members of the duke’s family became a little dispirited.

“I see...” [Reinhart]

“What’s going on at the government office right now?” [Ryouma]

“They’re currently reorganizing. The people responsible for the original allegations have already been caught, and now, other crimes are currently being pursued.” [Reinhart]

“Today’s incident will probably be held against them too. Is the guild still posting those latrine pit jobs?” [Reinbach]

“Yes. I took one of those jobs just recently.” [Ryouma]

“Guilds don’t like leaving their customers waiting, after all.” [Reinbach]

“I’ve informed those 6 adventurers that they can do the latrine pit jobs again through the guild. They were dubious whether they would really be paid, but from the looks of things, they’re at least willing to do it.” [Ryouma]

“Sorry about that... We’ll get someone new to inform the slum residents.” [Reinbach]

After that we changed the topic.

“Now, now, let’s put the heavy topic to rest. I’m glad you’re safe, Ryouma.” [Elize]

“You must be hungry after working so hard. Is there anything you want to eat?” [Reinhart]

“Yes.” [Ryouma]

“The slimes also worked hard, didn’t they?” [Elialia]

“Yes, but don’t worry about them. They’ve already eaten their fill with the goblins. In fact, they can start splitting again later this evening.” [Ryouma]

“Really? Which slimes are going to multiply?” [Elialia]

“Acid, poison, cleaner, and the sticky slimes.” [Ryouma]

“You’re going to get more slimes again.” [Elialia]

“They ate a lot, after all. In any case, it’s not a bad thing since more slimes means I’m stronger, and the production of the waterproof cloths and threads will also increase, not to mention the slimes will also be useful in landscaping and construction. If there’s

any downside it's the mana cost of the familiar contract. It's no joke with so many slimes." [Ryouma]

"It can't be helped, there's just too many of them. Please don't push yourself, though." [Elize]

"Yes. If it's impossible to finish all the contracts today, I'll spread it over a couple of days." [Ryouma]

"That's a good idea." [Elize]

After that they asked me my plans while eating, so I told them that I plan to live as an adventurer while also looking for other avenues to make a living.

Speaking of which, I don't know how long they'll be staying here... I should ask.

"By the way, how long will you be staying here? I never got to ask, so..." [Ryouma]

"We haven't told you? We'll be staying here until the grell frog outbreak and until Elia needs to enroll." [Reinbach]

Grell frog? If I recall correctly that's...

"Isn't that the monster used in armor?" [Ryouma]

"Yes, its hide can be used to make armor, while its internal organs can be used to make medicine. There's usually an outbreak of grell frogs around this time of the year. We plan to take Elia there." [Reinbach]

"The area is somewhere in between the town and the mines in a forest with a red mud swamp." [Reinhart]

"Are you going to hunt grell frogs?" [Ryouma]

I thought they'd be training again, but it seems that's not the case. Although training is a part of it, Elialia will mostly be tagging along. Their real objective is apparently the flock of rimel birds that passes by at the same time as the grell frog outbreak.

"Rimel birds are beautiful blue-winged bird-type monsters. Moreover, they also have a beautiful voice. On top of that, they also fly quickly, making them popular among

monster tamers.

Unfortunately, taming one isn't easy and there's not a lot of people that could tame one, so it's not often that one gets to see a rimel bird. Yet those rare birds are going to come in droves during the grell outbreak. I suggest you come too, Ryouma-kun. Just the rimel birds alone are worth us staying here." [Elize]

So monsters aren't all scary, huh. But if they prey on grell frogs, then that means they're carnivorous. When I think of carnivorous birds, crows that fish for garbage bags come to mind, but considering their color, peacocks might be closer. I don't know. In any case, my curiosity has been piqued. I think I'll go see them too.

"I'd like to see them too." [Ryouma]

"You should come with us then." [Elialia]

"That would be great. Please let me come." [Ryouma]

"Sure! Let's go together!" [Elialia]

I promised the ojousama I'd see the rimel birds with her, then when I was done eating, I went back to my room.

I had the slimes split and formed contracts with them before sleeping, but I ran out of mana halfway through, so I had to put off the rest until tomorrow. I still have some MP Recovery potions with me, but it seemed wasteful to use them for this.

Chapter 42

Consultation on Opening a Business 1

Monster Subjugation: Third Day

The day before yesterday, I incapacitated some bad adventurers. Yesterday, a lot of adventurers suffered because of the goblin king. As a result, progress has been a lot slower than expected.

Moreover, the incident yesterday caused my group to split, as Jeff-san and the others now had to lead the low ranked adventurers to ensure their safety.

As for me, I didn't need guidance, but it hasn't been long since I got promoted, so I couldn't guide the other adventurers either. In the end, I just went and hunted in the abandoned mine with my slimes alone.

I got the sticky slimes to spit sticky liquid on their rod, then I had them wave it around, turning their sticky liquid into what was effectively birdlime. As a result, the cave bats and small rats were easily captured.

As for the cave mantises, the poison slimes were easily able to finish them off by attacking outside their range with spears. The poison slimes ate them afterwards.

It seems all that training has finally paid off. The slimes are finally starting to get stronger, not to mention they're also increasing in number. But when I see them fighting the cave mantises, I can't help but be reminded of that game from Earth. What was it called again? It was really popular at one point. Its theme song also had a happy tune, but for some reason, my memories tell me it was quite bloody.

Anyway, the fact I'm able to think of so many useless stuff like this just shows how easy the battles are.

After that, without anything interesting happening, my work for the morning ended. Then again it would be problematic if stuff like yesterday happened all the time.

I did happen upon 5 goblins once, but they didn't have anyone else with them. When I reported them to the guild, I was told that they're just remnants of the village we destroyed yesterday.

After lunch break, I continued hunting by myself, and along the way, I decided to try out some new stuff with the sticky slimes.

One thing I did was to have the sticky slimes stick to the ceiling and move by extending a part of its body and swinging that part forward. The cave bats were really annoying with how much they flew, so I figured I'd get the sticky slimes to act as some sort of moving flypaper. Result-wise, it was pretty effective, as cave bats easily found themselves stuck.

Another thing I tried was to order the most nimble sticky slime to jump and expand its body like a net. Interestingly enough, it was able to do just that.

Next, I took that slime and threw it at the cave bats. As soon as I did, that slime turned into a net, catching all the cave bats in its path before falling back down to the ground.

I tried the same thing with another slime, and then again, and again, and again... And it seems, I can catch about 4 to 5 cave bats on average with each throw.

This can be used! Damn, sticky slimes are really awesome! Not only can they be used in daily life, they can even be used effectively in battle.

Elated, I used the sticky slimes to catch the small monsters until work for the day ended.

And then evening came.

When I rode back to town on the carriage, the carriage's wheels suddenly broke just as we were about to enter town. Fortunately, no one was hurt, and the carriage just suddenly shook fiercely when the wheels broke. Continuing would be dangerous, so we had to walk the rest of the way back.

As the sun began to set, the delicious aroma of supper wafted out from somewhere. It's probably coming from a restaurant nearby. Some people have already started to drink, so from time to time, people making merry could be heard.

I walked quietly under that merry atmosphere, until eventually, I passed by Serge-san's Morgan Company.

...The Mp Recovery potions he gave me were a huge help yesterday and he might have some bags I could use as reference for my laundromat's special bags, so... let's drop by.

I casually walked into the store, and as soon as I did, I saw Serge-san.

He was talking to the female clerk behind the counter, but when he saw me, he smiled and invited me to the reception office.

If he was in the middle of work, we could have just talked while I browsed through the shop's products, but this works too.

"Welcome, Ryouma-sama. How may I be of service today?" [Serge]

"Your potions were a huge help yesterday, so I dropped by to say thanks. At the same time, there's also something I'm looking for, and since I didn't know any other store, I was wondering if you might have it." [Ryouma]

"It is a great joy to know that my store's product was able to be of service, Ryouma-sama. If there's anything you're looking for, then it's my store's honor to help. May I know what it is you have in mind?" [Serge]

"I'm looking for a robust bag. It's okay if the material used is cheap. As for the size, I haven't decided yet." [Ryouma]

"Oh? May I inquire as for what purpose these bags will serve?" [Serge]

"It's a long story. Actually..." [Ryouma]

I told Serge-san about my intentions to become independent, and he immediately made a shocked expression, after which he made an admiring expression. He seemed interested in my idea to open a laundromat.

"A second source of income on top of your adventurer work that also serves as a backup in case of an unfortunate accident that forces an early retirement... Wonderful foresight, Ryouma-sama. Although still young, it is amazing that you're able to think so far ahead." [Serge]

That's because I'm actually a 42 year-old uncle. I don't know how I compare to other similarly aged Japanese uncles, but at the very least, I'm aware enough to prepare for the worst case scenario when involved with something as dangerous as adventurer work. Especially since I've never heard of insurance or savings in this world. Well, even if there are such services, the conditions would probably be off the charts.

"Thank you. I don't think I'm that amazing, though." [Ryouma]

"You are a humble man, Ryouma-sama. But still... A laundromat, huh. At 1 small copper coin to 1 medium copper coin per bag, you'll certainly get the attention of the townspeople, but I don't think you'll be able to provide the quality to satisfy them. Even if you do alright at the start, as the customers start to increase, keeping up with all the requests will eventually prove difficult alone." [Serge]

Ah, I forgot to tell him about the cleaner slimes.

"I'm sorry, it seems I left out one important detail. Please give me a moment."

After that I took out a cleaner slime from my Dimension Home.

"This is my familiar. It's a slime variant known as cleaner slime." [Ryouma]

"First I've heard of that slime." [Serge]

"This is a new slime I discovered. I've submitted its information to the tamers guild, but I should currently be the only one with a cleaner slime contracted." [Ryouma]

Even the gods said it was a new variant, so there shouldn't be any other than the ones under me.

"Does that slime of yours have something to do with your laundromat?" [Serge]

"This slimes possesses the ability to clean things by eating filth. Naturally, when filth is eaten, the filth vanishes, and whatever that filth was sticking to will become clean." [Ryouma]

When Serge-san heard that, his jaws hit the floor.

I guess it really is hard to believe.

I decided to take out the loincloth of a goblin from my Item Box.

“It’s probably hard to believe just by listening, so let me give you a demonstration. First, please take a look at this. It’s a loincloth from one of the goblins we killed. Despite how dirty it is, the cleaner slime can eat the filth off of it and make it clean again.” [Ryouma]

When I said that, Serge-san gulped.

“Please.” [Serge]

“Would you like to use Identify on it first?” [Ryouma]

“Yes, that would be nice. I can tell just from the smell that it’s in fact goblin loincloth, but...” [Serge]

Chuckling, Serge-san used Identify on the loincloth and confirmed that it was in fact a goblin’s loincloth. After handing it back to the cleaner slime, the cleaner slime took the cloth into its body, and in the blink of an eye, the filth vanished. When the cleaner slime spit the loincloth onto the table in the reception office, only 30 seconds had passed.

Serge-san took the cloth that was clearly a different color than before and used Identify on it. When he did it, he was able to confirm that it was now in fact cleaned, then he took my hands and exclaimed, “Who would’ve thought that a goblin’s loincloth could be cleaned in such a short time!?”

My hands were dirty because I touched the goblin loincloth. But by the time he noticed it – most probably from my gaze – it was too late. Serge-san’s expression was dim. It’s a good opportunity, so let’s have him experience the cleaner slime bath himself. Just the hands.

After the hand washing, Serge-san turned into another storm of praise.

He’s a good guy. I know that. But when he’s like this, it’s really exhausting...

“I beg your pardon. I got a little overzealous there, but I say... This slime is really fascinating. With slimes like this, opening your laundromat shouldn’t be a problem. Price, speed, quality... I can see the coins already.” [Serge]

Ah, Serge-san’s off into his own world again...

“So, how big do you think the bags should be? Unfortunately, I don’t know much about the current market.” [Ryouma]

“Hmm... I’ll have a couple brought over.” [Serge]

Serge-san summoned the female servant and had her bring several bags.

“As you can see, the bags are arranged from smallest to biggest from left to right. The leftmost bag can fit one adult’s full set of clothes.” [Serge]

“A bigger one would be better, I think. A family is bound to have more than one set, and there are plenty of bachelors out there who make a habit of piling their laundry.

Moreover, it’s cheaper to pay 1 medium copper for 4 to 5 set of clothes than just for one, and it’s not like it makes any difference for me to wash 1 set or 5 sets, so might as well. I’m sure the customers will appreciate it. Besides, I’m only trying to make enough to get by, and I think there’ll be more returning customers if their first experience with the shop is affordable. That should help turn over a profit too.” [Ryouma]

Those affordable shops helped me a lot back in my previous world... Like those gyudon restaurants.

I also frequented the same shops over and over, such that in the end, I had no idea how much money I spent on the stores near my house. I’m not unhappy about it. If anything I’m grateful for their support.

From that perspective, I think it’s important to prioritize the acquisition of repeating customers. A low price would surely become a potent weapon in accomplishing that goal. Of course, provided that the service is satisfactory.

...While I was thinking that to myself, it suddenly occurred to me that Serge-san’s eyes were sparkling again.

“Wonderful. Ryouma-sama, what great foresight you possess. To think that at such a young age you already realize that immediate income shouldn’t be prioritized, and have even thought up excellent policies... I, Serge, admire you. Truly.” [Serge]

What is this feeling? I just talked a little about my personal experience in my past life, and yet for some reason, being praised so earnestly has me feeling itchy and guilty... I feel like I owe those economics majors an apology... But I think if I brainstorm a little...

“What about this bag then? It can accommodate 3 to 4 persons’ 2 days’ worth of clothes. That would be around the size of your average family.” [Serge]

“Let’s see... With that bag one person should be able to fit in an entire week’s portion. Let’s go with that. Could I also get a couple of bags double and 5x that size?” [Ryouma]

“I most certainly could provide such bags, but wouldn’t those be too big?” [Serge]

“The first bags are meant for personal use, while the double sized ones will be catered toward small parties, while the 5x ones will be for the adventurers guild, blacksmiths with many disciples, and construction workers... In other words, large groups of people.” [Ryouma]

For example...

“If we calculate one person’s 1 week portion to be one person each day, that totals to 7 people’s portion. Double that and we get 14, then quintuple the first value and we get 35 people’s worth of clothes.

If the first bag is 1 medium copper coin, that’s 10 suits. For the double I could charge 1 medium copper coin and 8 small copper coins; that’s 18 suits. For the 5x, I could charge 4 medium copper coins; that’s 40 suits. Like this I’ll be able to give a discount to bigger groups.

The discount will serve as an incentive to come in groups. If there’s not enough to form a group, then the customers will go out of their way to get more people. In the end, the laundromat will quickly gain renown.

On top of that, the more people enlist my laundromat’s services, the more frequently people will drop by. If the double size could accommodate a person’s 14 days’ worth of clothes, then it should be safe to say that he won’t be coming back for the next 14 days. But if it were a group of people getting their clothes done, then they would drop by sooner rather than later. In this way, I’ll be able to get a sustainable daily income. A group-focused policy like this should turn over more profit in the long run.” [Ryouma]

Brainstorming, the act of thinking through one proposal and seeing what happens without asserting its value right from the start.

It’s been a while since I last tried it, but it seems I still have my wits about me.

“Blacksmiths and construction workers also tend to get dirty, so they’ll definitely want to have their work clothes washed. Once they get word of how good the laundromat is, they’ll want to get their personal clothes washed too.

Blacksmiths and construction workers tend to be men. And men do have an inclination to be poor at laundry. Just today an adventurer told me if it were possible to put in a lot of laundry that he would enlist my service, so...” [Ryouma]

It was then that I finally realized Serge-san’s state.

...Oh no! I screwed up. Serge-san’s eyes have gone all big and stiff. I’ve always had a bad habit of going on and on by myself, and I’ve even lost a lot of relationships to it. I must’ve let my guard down because it’s been a while since I last talked about something work related.

Chapter 43

Consultation on Opening a Business 2

In any case, I have to do something about Serge-san...

“I’m sorry. I have a tendency to go on and on by myself... I meant no offense.” [Ryouma]

“Oh, no! Not at all! I was just a little bit surprised, Ryouma-sama. You’re only 11 years old and yet you keep coming up with one brilliant idea after another.” [Serge]

That’s what he’s surprised about!?!... Oh, right. I just remembered again that I currently look like I’m 11. A kid who could think up all this stuff would probably surprise anyone... After all, there are parents who would dance in joy just seeing their babies stand up, but there’s barely anyone who would praise an adult for doing the same thing. In the same vein, my actions probably seem a lot more amazing to this guy.

That being said, it’s not like I actually thought everything out carefully... I just did some simple calculations that are probably full of holes, and...

Wait a moment.

Do they have discounts in this world?

“Umm... Aren’t discounts a thing?” [Ryouma]

“Not normally, no... They’re mostly given to better one’s reputation to a certain customer or to quickly sell out one product. Extensive discounts would only bring losses, so it’s not really a thing.

Sometimes discounts are used to get rid of a customer, and then there are cases when deceitful stores raise the prices unreasonably high, and then cut them down and call that a discount, when in fact the price is still higher than the market price.” [Serge]

Erm... He seems to be telling the truth.

“I highly recommend that you join the merchants guild, Ryouma-sama.” [Serge]

“The merchants guild?” [Ryouma]

“Yes. There’s a branch in this town, so you’ll be able to register anytime. The merchants guild varies from country to country, but each and every one of them control all the peddlers, stalls, and carts within their country. If you’re going to be doing business, then you will have to pass through the guild.” [Serge]

Eh!? Then...

“Does that mean what I was planning was actually illegal?” [Ryouma]

“Oh, no. The merchant guilds might manage the businesses within their respective countries, but it’s not like they actually manage every single transaction. For example, they don’t manage the transactions when two border towns try to sell to each other, or when a traveler sells the herbs he picked up along the way to a drug store.

Another example is when children or adventurers take on odd jobs to make small change. If the amounts involved aren’t too big, then nothing illegal is going on, especially if both sides are willing.

Unfortunately, I don’t believe the business you intend will result in merely small change. Odds are that you’ll end up attracting the guild’s attention.” [Serge]

“That was close... Thank you, Serge-san.” [Ryouma]

“Not at all. If anything it seems I’ve still been looking down on you, Ryouma-sama. I never expected that you would have thought through your store’s management so thoroughly. I thought for sure you were only trying to make small change, so I forgot to mention about the registration too.” [Serge]

Actually, you got it right... I wasn’t really thinking all that deeply, but whatever... let’s just roll with it.

“So, it seems I’ll have to join the merchants guild, but I’ve already joined the adventurers guild and tamers guild. Will that be a problem?” [Ryouma]

“Please rest assured. I shall recommend you when you register, so there should be no problems. Being able to hold more than two guild positions will allow you more avenues to gather information as well, so if anything this is actually something to rejoice about. If you’re free, we could register as soon as tomorrow. I would be going

with you, of course.” [Serge]

“I still have adventurer work tomorrow, so when I come back it’ll be around this time.” [Ryouma]

“That’ll be fine. The merchants guild has several personnel, so we can go through the process anytime. After all, to a merchant, information is life. And that information must reach them before it expires lest lose its value.” [Serge]

They’re open 24 hours?

“In that case, if it’s no trouble with you, would you please accompany me?” [Ryouma]

“It would be my greatest pleasure!” [Serge]

Woah!?

“Ryouma-sama, the laundromat you came up with is truly amazing! Not only is it a new vein of income that no merchant has yet attempted, but your ideas are also new and unique, a new source of inspiration for the world of merchants! I, Serge Morgan, may not be the best, but I beseech you! Please allow me to aid you!” [Serge]

Wow! He’s really exaggerating this! Who would’ve thought things would turn out like this? At this rate, I wonder if it’s still going to be a small store...

“T-Thank you very much. It’s reassuring to have you with me.” [Ryouma]

“You praise me too much, Ryouma-sama. Oh, right. I suggest you consider the land you will be building your store at.” [Serge]

Store!? I’m not planning on doing something that big!

“Hmm... Judging from your reaction, I assume you did not intend for things to become this big, Ryouma-sama?” [Serge]

“Yes. My original intentions were to make just enough to get by, so I was thinking a stand in some corner of the town would be enough, and from there I could just go from door to door. A store would take too much of my time, after all, and I won’t be able to continue being an adventurer.” [Ryouma]

“I see. But there’s no need to worry about the management. I can simply lend you some of my own people.” [Serge]

That’s obviously no good.

“I don’t think it’s a good idea to be relying on others even if it’s for a store...” [Ryouma]

Serge-san wryly smiled.

“Hmm... I’m starting to understand what the members of the duke’s family meant. Ryouma-sama, there’s nothing strange about leaving the management of a store to someone else.” [Serge]

Huh?

“While it’s true that a store owner normally starts out managing his store himself, eventually he’ll find himself in a position similar to mine where he is in charge of many stores. In that case, managing all of the stores alone will prove impossible, and choosing and raising capable people to manage the store on his behalf will become necessary. Do you think that’s strange?” [Serge]

Now that he mentions it... The managers in the chain stores of Japan were also just hired by the owners.

“You’re right. It’s not weird at all.” [Ryouma]

“Yes. Moreover, in this world there are people suited for management and people who aren’t. For the latter type, it would be better to hire someone suited than to try and forcefully manage the store himself.” [Serge]

“That’s... true.” [Ryouma]

“Of course, we don’t know which type you are yet, Ryouma-sama. Although you have good ideas and policies, so it seems as if you have the skill for it, but I don’t think you’re particularly skilled in seeing through people’s motives. After all, your face is like an open book.” [Serge]

Am I that easy to read!?

“Although you’re able to hide your thoughts better than those of your age bracket, but

to an old merchant, you're still too green behind the ears." [Serge]

"I see..." [Ryouma]

And here I thought I had a good poker face back in my previous life... Was that just my imagination?

"Besides, it's not like I'm lending my people completely out of good will. One reason I've offered them is because Reinhart-sama asked me to be an adviser to you when he first introduced us. Another reason is because of your future prospects." [Serge]

"Future prospects?" [Ryouma]

"Yes. Ryouma-sama, despite your age you have already come up with various inventions. From the waterproof cloths and threads, to that iron ingot, and to various other goods. Even without Reinhart-sama's introduction, I would still not be able to take my eyes off of you.

Moreover, the contents of our conversation suggests a huge profit. I could not possibly ignore that as a merchant. I will also be selling bags wholesale to your store, so please let me help you in your endeavor. If needed, I can also invest to help with your capital." [Serge]

...If he's going that far, maybe it's alright? But, still...

"What happens when your investment doesn't pay off?" [Ryouma]

"No merchant would be able to expand his business if he feared failure. Any merchant with a big enough store more or less knows how to take risks.

Moreover, I personally believe that your laundromat will prove most profitable. If things don't work out, then you could just make it up to me by making ingots and waterproof cloths and threads. The costs of running the store are also significantly reduced thanks the slimes doing the laundry.

The odds of success are high, and in the case of failure, I can simply recoup my losses. I can't imagine that you're simply making stuff up too. So, with all that, this is quite possibly the best trade deal in history. Nary a merchant would turn down such a deal." [Serge]

I see... I could certainly make money if I make iron ingots...

“Alright. I’ll be in your care then.” [Ryouma]

“You’re willing to work with me?” {Serge]

“Yes, but please allow me to refuse the extra capital. I currently have enough thanks to the bandits I subjugated in the past.” [Ryouma]

“What about the personnel?” [Serge]

“I’ll leave that to you. Also, please allow me to purchase the bags that the store will be using. As for the ingots, I’ll bring them over later when I have the time. The abandoned mines were entrusted to me, so I was originally planning on making them anyway.” [Ryouma]

Like this my conversation with Serge concluded, and after purchasing the bags from a happy Serge-san, I exited the store.

Walking along the dark road, I returned to the inn, but for some reason, the ojousama was there waiting with an aura of wrath about her.

“Ojousama...?” [Ryouma]

“What were you doing out this late, Ryouma-san? I was so worried...” [Elialia]

When the ojousama suppressed her anger, she suddenly broke down in tears.

Apparently, the incident yesterday with a goblin king making an appearance caused the ojousama to worry grievously.

I’m sorry.

I knew I was in the wrong, so I just quietly received the ojousama’s scolding as she cried. After a while the ojousama finally got tired of scolding me, and just said she was going to sleep. I watched the ojousama leave as the maids took her away.

“My deepest apologies for causing you to worry.” [Ryouma]

“Enough of that. Elia scolded you plenty already.” [Elize]

“We really were worried, though.” [Reinhart]

“Be careful next time, alright?” [Reinbach]

“Yes. I’ll remember.” [Ryouma]

“So, what were you doing out this late?” [Elize]

I told them that the carriage broke down and I went to Serge-san’s store.

“You were at Serge’s store? I guess that means you’ve thought up a new job?” [Reinhart]

“I’ll probably be coming home late tomorrow too. I know I was just scolded, but...” [Ryouma]

“As long as you tell us beforehand it’s fine. So, what are you planning on doing tomorrow?” [Elize]

“I will be going with Serge-san to the merchant guild to register. My original plans ended up getting bigger while we were discussing, so we’re going tomorrow to the merchants guild to register me.” [Ryouma]

“What? Weren’t you planning on just making enough to get by?” [Reinhart]

“That is what I was planning, indeed, but Serge-san insisted it would be best for me to open a store.” [Ryouma]

“A store? Your discussion developed that far?” [Reinbach]

“Apparently, Serge-san thinks it’s that profitable. He even offered to provide the employees.” [Ryouma]

“Serge said that, did he? When is the opening?” [Reinhart]

He just nonchalantly asked about the opening day! And here I thought he’d be shocked.

“I don’t know much about stores yet, but aren’t you guys shocked? An 11 year-old kid just told you he’s opening a store, you know?” [Ryouma]

“There’s no age restrictions, and there are kids your age who have stalls of their own. There are some who tend to normal stores too.” [Reinhart]

“Of course, there aren’t actually any 11 year-olds with a store of their own, but it’s you we’re talking here, so...” [Reinbach]

“Ryouma-kun, you’re not like other kids. And since Serge gave his approval, it should be alright. But if anything happens, you have to rely on us, alright? And make sure you don’t forget to keep in touch with us.” [Elize]

Is this really alright?

“I understand.” [Ryouma]

I went back to my room like that, not wholly understanding what happened, then I had the remaining slimes from yesterday split, and formed contracts with them.

My slimes currently numbered as follows:

Sticky Slime x907

Poison Slime x666

Acid Slime x666

Cleaner Slime x22

Scavenger Slime x3033

Heal Slime x2

Metal Slime x1

Slime x1

The sticky slimes have broken through 900. They should be reaching 1000 soon.

The poison slimes and the acid slimes are numbered the same. 666 sure is an ominous number, though...

It’s good to see the cleaner slimes doubling their numbers. Moreover, perhaps because of yesterday’s incident, the slimes have gotten stronger too.

The slimes learning Physical Attack Resistance while in the big or huge forms is one thing, but I never thought the slimes would actually learn staff techniques, spear techniques, and taijutsu.

I did teach them various stuff, but I never thought they would actually be able to gain these skills. I should try teaching them various new stuff from now on...

Chapter 44

Immediate Decision Immediate Action

Monster Subjugation – 4th Day

After finishing my adventurer work at the abandoned mines for the day, I walked over to Serge-san's store.

“Good evening, Serge-san.” [Ryouma]

“I've been waiting Ryouma-sama. Shall we?” [Serge]

Riding on the carriage Serge prepared beforehand, we headed south of the town's center.

Before long we reached a plain building with a sincere and vigorous aura. Dim light leaked out from its entrance. There were few people inside, but according to the employee I talked to there were indeed other people present.

I went to the receptionist desk, but the woman in charge immediately let us in and then excused herself while bowing. It seems she's already used to Serge-san. And from the way she treats him, Serge-san seems to be quite valued.

But then again he is the president of his own company, so I guess it's expected?

After a few minutes, a slender man and a woman that was hunched over entered the room. Serge and I tried to stand up to greet them, but the old woman just waved and smiled, indicating for us not to bother.

The man was the first to speak.

“So, it's you, Serge. It's been a while, hasn't it? I haven't heard any rumors lately, so I was wondering what you were up too.” [Slender Man]

This guy's accent sort of sounds like a fake kansai dialect, but it still feels strangely nostalgic. I had a boss like this in the past too...

“Long time no see, Pioro.” [Serge]

“What did you come for? I doubt someone like you only shows his face during meetings would drop by just to say hi.” [Hunched Grandma]

As she said that she turned to me.

“Nice to meet you, boy. Name is Grisiera. As you can see, I’m a grandma, but I’m also the guild master of this merchants guild.” [Grisiera]

“My name is Ryouma Takebayashi. It’s a pleasure to make your acquaintance. I came here today to register myself. I know full well I’m still wet behind the ears, so please give me your guidance.” [Ryouma]

“Oh? You know your manners, don’t you, boy? Is he one of your new servants, Serge?” [Grisiera]

“You’re really well mannered. I’m Pioro Saionji. Happy to make your acquaintance. You don’t have to mind your manners when talking to me.” [Pioro]

“Ryouma Takebayashi. A pleasure to make your acquaintance.” [Ryouma]

Saionji? Sounds Japanese. Moreover, that black hair, those black eyes, and that aura about him... Is he another otherworlder descendant?

“Ryouma, was it? I’ll remember that. So, what did you come here for, Serge?” [Pioro]

“I came here to accompany Ryouma-sama in his registration. Today, I’m but a chaperon.” [Serge]

When the two heard that, they turned to me. The guild master took a good look at me.

“Hmm... Wait here.” [Grisiera]

As she said that, she whipped out her rod and poked it against Serge-san’s head.

“You idiot! What do you think you’re doing making a kid panic!?” [Grisiera]

Huh!? How did she know what I was thinking!? Does she have a skill that allows her to read minds!?

“Ryouma, right? I can’t read minds.” [Grisiera]

You’re reading it right now!

“The years might take my strength and my youth, but my merchant’s eyes remain strong. You look like an honest boy. I just picked up on the clues and made a smart guess.” [Grisiera]

“Scary, right~? She always says that, but I bet she can actually read minds.” [Pioro]

“I’m more impressed than scared, actually, since I can’t read people very well.” [Ryouma]

“It’s something you pick up over the years. As long as your environment permits it, it’s something you’ll pick up eventually. You still have many years ahead of you, boy... I don’t know what happened in the past, but you still have your future.” [Grisiera]

“Thank you, but are you sure you really can’t read minds?” [Ryouma]

“Of course, I can’t read minds. I could tell something was weighing on your mind because of that thousand-mile look that you made as soon as you said you couldn’t read people well.” [Griseria]

Seriously!?

“Was I really making that sort of look?” [Ryouma]

“They were the sort of eyes an old man would make when reminiscing.” [Grisiera]

She got it right!

“Now then, I know you’re surprised, but didn’t you come here to register? It’s getting late, so let’s get it over with.” [Griseria]

At that, I started filling out the guild registration form.

“Hmm... What is this ‘job’ here referring to? Isn’t the job merchant?” [Ryouma]

“Write there what business you want to do. For example, if you want to sell weapons, then write ‘arms dealer’. Feel free to write as much as you want. You can also add more later if you want, so you don’t have to think too hard about it now. There’s a list of the

basic jobs on the back of the paper, so refer to that.” [Pioro]

“Alright.” [Ryouma]

I hear some adventurers work as peddlers... Hmm... Anyway, let’s go with that and shopkeeper.

...Huh? A troubadour? Is that supposed to be a merchant too?

I filled up the form while thinking that to myself. When I submitted it, the guild master glanced at it, and then said this.

“Oh? You’re an adventurer? You better take care then. If you die, you’ll lose even your capital.

I see you want your own store too.” [Grishera]

“I have an odd business in my mind. Initially, I was just planning on making just enough to live off of, but Serge-san advised me to register to the guild and go all out.” [Ryouma]

“Serge did?” [Pioro]

“Well ain’t that interesting? What kind of business is it?” [Grishera]

“A laundromat.” [Ryouma]

“A laundromat? You mean the one where you get paid to wash other people’s laundry... Serge, what’s the point in making the boy register for that? It’s true registering doesn’t hurt, but with a small business like that, registering or not won’t make a difference.” [Grishera]

“That’s what I thought too at first. But after listening to Ryouma, I found myself thinking, ‘This could work!’ And then I realized it would be problematic if Ryouma made too much money while being unregistered.” [Ryouma]

“...You think it’s that profitable?” [Pioro]

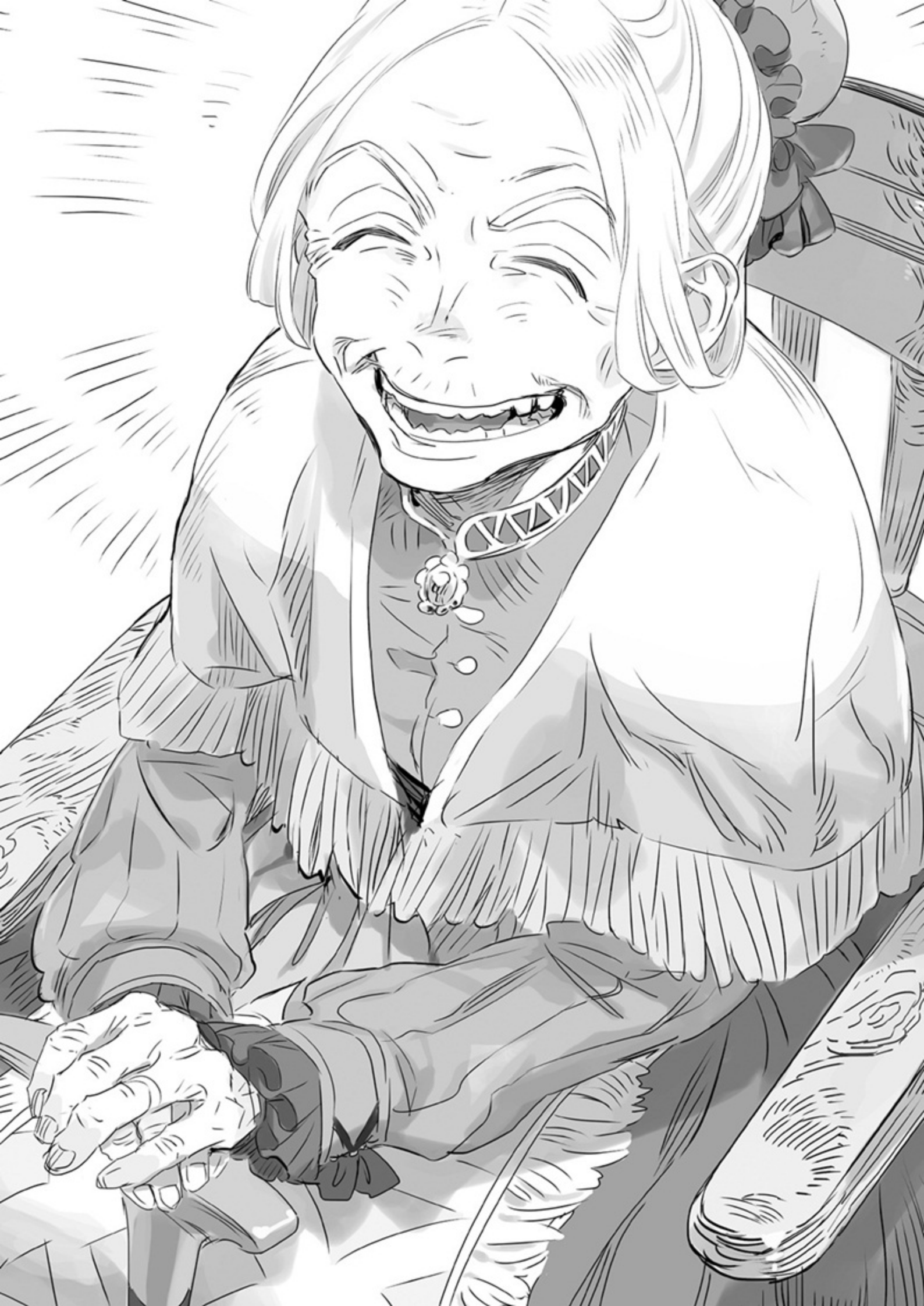
“If it’s so profitable that you might end up getting the guild’s attention, then you have my interest too. Mind letting this grandma know what you’re up to, boy?” [Grishera]

Serge-san smiled at me and winked.

It seems it'll be okay if it's these two.

To make sure I don't say anything wrong, I let Serge do most of the talking. As we explained my plans to them, the merchant guild master and Pioro gradually became more and more shocked, until eventually, they were groaning. By the time we finished, they were laughing.

“Hee Hee Hee! Living a long life, sometimes you get strange things like this. That's why life is so interesting. Who would've thought a new slime variant would turn out like this? You're luck is pretty good, boy.” [Grishera]



“After hearing that, it certainly does seem like this laundromat might just make a killing. If you were unregistered then, it would certainly cause a ruckus in the guild. It’s pretty impressive that you already have such good material for business despite your age. Let me worship you a little.” [Pioro]

Suddenly, Pioro-san starting praying to me.

What is he doing?

“It’s better not to think too deeply on his actions. He does that whenever he thinks up a good way to make profit or talks to someone with one.” [Grishera]

“Only God can manipulate luck, so isn’t it only human to want to share in a lucky person’s luck?” [Pioro]

Well, it’s not like I can’t understand.

“Still, today sure was surprising. This is probably the most I’ve been surprised in the past 8 years. Unfortunately, that sorta business is impossible for me. The methods aside, without those slimes it’s just not possible to turn over a profit. But you can make it work. Puff out your chest and do some good business, alright?” [Pioro]

“I like you, boy. I didn’t think something so trivial would surprise me at this age. You have a good future ahead of you, so show your face here from time to time. I’ll give you some tea and sweets, and I’ll hear out whatever concerns you have.” [Grishera]

“Thank you very much. I’ll do my best.” [Ryouma]

“Let’s decide on your store next. Guild master, if you will.” [Serge]

“Sheesh, you sure work these old bones hard, Serge. Pioro, on the upper row of the shelves to your left, there’s a bundle of documents two places from the right. Get that.” [Grishera]

“What working old bones? You’re not moving an inch!” [Pioro]

“Just get it already.” [Grishera]

“Yeah, yeah, I’m on i— What? Isn’t this just a bunch of rundown places? Should I invest too?” [Pioro]

“Idiot. According to Serge, the boy is unusually serious. He won’t accept your money even if you offered it.” [Grishera]

She sure figured me out so quickly. It’s true, though. People have called me stupid serious back in my previous life, and I do personally want to refrain from using other people’s money. Loans aren’t something to be taken lightly, after all. And I’m not so committed to the business that I’m willing to go that far.

Still, a merchant’s eye sure is scary... It’s scary in a different way from martial arts.

“Anyway, just as Pioro mentioned, this bundle of documents refer to buildings with problems. But because of those problems, they’re cheap. You’ll be fine as long as the place has a reception desk and a place for luggage, right?” [Grishera]

“Yes. Everything will be taken care of by the slimes, so not even water will be needed.” [Ryouma]

“Normally if a merchant opening a laundromat said he didn’t even need water, he’d get an ‘are you even trying!?’ in response... Anyway, how much can you afford?” [Grishera]

“700 small gold coins.” [Ryouma]

“Oh? You’re unexpectedly rich.” [Grishera]

“There were some bandits near my home in the past. I killed them with poison, and apparently, one of them had a huge bounty on his head.” [Ryouma]

“If you have that much... Guild master, there should be an available area near my store. What about there?” [Pioro]

“Hmm... There should be one indeed...” [Grishera]

As the guild master said that, she rolled up the bundle of documents.

“...Right, there is one. It’s a huge bar and inn. It also has a storage place for its furnishings. Moreover, its location is good. Unfortunately, it caught fire and over half was turned to cinders. There are still some structures standing, but they’re now overgrown with grass, so you can’t use them. It’s going to cost you time and money to bring the place back up to shape, but other than that it’s a good place. What do you

think?” [Grishera]

“I’ve heard that Ryouma-sama is an accomplished earth magician. With a place like that, you’ll be free to change it according to your liking.” [Serge]

A place I can make my own is indeed a very appealing proposal.

“Well? Can you make something out of it with your earth magic?” [Grishera]

“Hmm...” [Ryouma]

If I use Create Block or some other earth magic along with the sticky slime’s hardening liquid... Yeah, this should work.

“I think it’ll be fine. From what I’ve seen on the map, it should be near the residential area. That makes it a very good location, indeed.” [Ryouma]

Gimuru is a town surrounded by robust walls and is shaped like a circle. At the middle of the town is a main street that connects the northern gate to the southern gate. To the east is the residential district and to the west is the manufacturing industry such as ironworks.

There are plenty of inns around the southern gates. The inn I’m staying at is located there too.

The northern gate leads to the abandoned mines, so only miners used it, but even they stopped using it when the mine was declared abandoned.

The eastern gate also has a path leading to the mines (not abandoned), and it was actually to make the miners’ lives easier that the residential district was built in the eastern part of the town.

The area I was recommended was located almost directly east from the center of town, right between the residential district and the main street, making it near the adventurers guild and the residential district, consequently placing it relatively far from from the manufacturing industry to the west. It’s still easy to find, though. Really, I couldn’t have asked for a better location.

When I said those thoughts out loud, the guild master nodded.

“Exactly. And that’s why it used to be such a popular bar. Adventurers and townsmen alike would drop by after work, and a lot of people would make merry. A store opened in this location is still bound to get people’s attention, but it costs a lot of money.”
[Grishera]

“I’ll take it.” [Ryouma]

To be honest, I’m not that particular with lands, but I don’t think this land is bad. It’s near the residential district and the adventurers guild, and I can also do what I want with it. On top of that, Serge-san recommended it, and I think the guild master and Pioro are both good people. It should be alright to trust them.

“Are you sure?” [Grishera]

“Yes. The location is good, and I’m sure my slimes and my magic would be able to handle the reconstruction. Besides, I really fancy the idea of making my own store.”
[Ryouma]

“I mentioned this already, but it’s fairly expensive and will cost you 580 small gold coins. Moreover, the land is big, so you’ll be paying 10 small gold coins for the land tax. The business rights and the annual fee will cost 60 small gold coins. All in all, that’s 650 small gold coins. Are you really sure about this?” [Grishera]

“Yes. I have more than enough to live off of, after all.” [Ryouma]

“True, with 50 small gold coins, you could live like a noble for a year... Alright, I’ll sell this land to you.” [Grishera]

“Thank you very much.” [Ryouma]

They taught me a bunch of stuff after that. It turns out opening a store in this world isn’t that hard. You just have to go through the guild to buy land and the other necessary stuff, and you’ll be able to start your business right away. After that you have to write down your profits and expenses, and then pay your income tax and land tax once a year to the guild. As long as you can do that, age and gender doesn’t really matter.

It’s almost as if the only question is whether you can make money and pay up.

The first tax is also twice as expensive. Mainly because it’s essentially the equivalent

of the gratuity fee [1] back in earth. The fees for the business license changes depending on the scale. A street stall would go for about 5 medium copper coins, while the plot of land I bought after becoming a store will cost me two gold coins.

The last expense is the annual fee. It's sort of like a donation to the guild. Originally, just a small amount for the annual fees was fine, but because a limit was never set, it's become customary for people to pay as much as they can afford to show off their wealth. Naturally, the guild also treats higher paying members better, on top of the increased reputation. Yeah, they're merchants alright.

Like this I completed the lengthy process of buying a store, and after I thanked the three of them, I left.

Serge-san apparently had to show up in the next meeting of the merchants guild, and Pioro had something to discuss with him, so I parted with him at the guild.

I think I'll start building my store once I complete my last adventurer job... I won't be making just a cave this time, but a real building. I did work part time as a construction worker in my past life. It was hard, but being able to see your work amount to something so visibly really felt great.

I'm looking forward to it.

Chapter 45

Building a Store 1

5th day of the monster subjugation and 1st day of the store construction.

“Ryouma, help me, nyaa...” [Miya]

During lunch break, while I was resting after eating, Miya-san and the others came. Behind them were Jeff-san, Asagi-san, and Raypin-san. Everyone was drenched in blood.

“Can you get rid of all this blood? It stinks and I can’t stand it.” [Mizelia]

“Did you happen upon goblins again? You sure did things gaudily.” [Ryouma]

As I said that, I ordered the cleaner slime to clean all 7 of them.

“Wow, it’s all so clean now... Ryouma-kun, your cleaner slimes really are convenient.” [Mizelia]

“Thank you, de gozaru. Lunch would have been difficult in that state.” [Asagi]

“Good grief, if only Jeff didn’t work so sloppily, de aru.” [Raypin]

“I apologized already, didn’t I?” [Jeff]

I heard them out while they ate, and apparently, they found a new goblin nest and crushed it. From the looks of thins, they were probably Survivors of the goblin village we destroyed just recently. The problem started after the battle when they were about to dispose the corpses, as Jeff-san suddenly had a stroke of genius to penetrate the dead goblins with his spear and throw them to one corner.

“It was great and all that he was able to get rid of the corpses quickly, but we were worried that the pile of corpses might tumble over, so we came back to check on it. Unfortunately, just as we were talking to ourselves, the whole thing suddenly fell, de gozaru.” [Asagi]

Even if they could dodge the corpses, they couldn't dodge the blood. In the end, Raypin-san received a direct blow from the goblin corpses.

"Must have been tough..." [Ryouma]

"Indeed. If not for you, we would have had to eat while reeking of goblin blood." [Gordon]

"It's really amazing that your slimes could get rid of goblin filth so efficiently." [Syria]

"Thank you very much." [Ryouma]

It was then that it occurred to me that I haven't told them about the laundromat yet.

"Speaking of which, do you remember that laundromat we talked about 3 days ago?" [Ryouma]

"Yeah, what about it?" [Jeff]

"I decided to go through with it." [Ryouma]

"Seriously? When are you opening?" [Jeff]

"I still have to prepare the store, so it'll still be some time in the future. The price will be 1 medium copper coin just as we talked about before." [Ryouma]

"Store? You're going to have your own place, de aru?" [Asagi]

"Yes, a merchant I'm acquainted with advised me to get my own store. I've already registered at the guild and bought the land with the bounty from a bandit I killed some time back. I'll be getting employees from the guild and the merchant who advised me will also be helping me, so I'll still continue working as an adventurer." [Ryouma]

"I see. I'm surprised to hear that you'll be having a store at your age, but when you think about it, it only makes sense. We'll be enlisting your services, of course, but I'm sure the other adventurers who know how amazing your cleaner slimes are will also enlist your services. The odds of word spreading about a stranger store are also pretty high. Once word catches on, you'll probably have a hard time managing the store if you were just by yourself, de aru." [Asagi]

“I don’t think it’s completely impossible to handle alone, but it will definitely prevent you from working as an adventurer.” [Syria]

“Indeed. Everything ended up a lot bigger than I was expecting, but it’s good that I’ll still be able to continue working as an adventurer. I’ll inform you when the store will be opening, so please drop by. My store will also be providing discounts for bigger groups.” [Ryouma]

“Nyaa!?! Before I knew it Ryouma-kun’s already turned into a merchant, nyaa!” [Miya]

“He has always spoken politely, so it doesn’t feel out of place, de gozaru.” [Raypin]

We talked like that over meal, then we did in the remaining hours of the day.

“This will be your land.” [Serge]

“It really is big.” [Ryouma]

After adventurer work ended, I visited Serge and checked the land I purchased.

Before me was a 2-story broken building and a plot of land that was slightly smaller than the practice field for little league baseball.

I guess it’s about 20m x 100m? If it’s just the size were talking about, then it’s probably bigger than Serge-san’s store.

I thought it’d be a bit smaller from the map, but it seems that’s not the case.

“The bar here used to also serve as an inn, so it also has a guest room and a warehouse.” [Serge]

“I see... Is it really okay for me to do as I please with this land?” [Ryouma]

“As long as it’s within your premises, then by all means. Will you be starting construction today?” [Serge]

“Yes. I would like to cut the grass and demolish the remaining structures.” [Ryouma]

I took out my scavenger slimes from my Dimension Home and ordered them to eat the grass in an area slightly remote from the building. If I leave them like that, I'm sure they'll eventually deal with all the grasses.

After confirming that the scavenger slimes were doing their job, I erected a soundproofing barrier around the building to keep things quiet, then I carefully collapsed the ceiling of the second floor. By keeping the noise down and taking precautions, I was able to go about the demolition process without causing the neighbors any inconveniences.

After forcibly demolishing the ceiling, I used Break Rock on the walls to change them back into earth, then I ensured that the fragments from the ceiling, the broken furniture, and the walls that have now been turned into earth were safe, and then I threw them all outside and cleaned the interiors of the building.

After that I disassembled the remaining pillars one at a time with Wind Cutter.

My knowledge on construction was at most the little I picked up at my part-time and some things I heard here and there, but apparently, to this world, the 'little' knowledge I had was plenty. And from the looks of things, it seems I'll be able to make a simple building. Disassembling also makes it easy to tell if the building is going to collapse, so the whole demolition process went smoothly.

The construction skill sure is amazing. Not to mention the super convenient magic.

In just one hour, I was able to clear half the grasses and demolish half the building. It was getting late, though, so I decided to go home.

Incidentally, Serge-san was watching the entire time. Because of the slimes and my vast amounts of magic power, the whole thing went by really quickly, causing Serge-san to – once again – be surprised.

6th day of the monster subjugation and 2nd day of the store construction.

“The monster subjugation quest at the abandoned mine ends today. A lot of things happened, but with this, we'll finally be able to mark this job complete,” the guild master said.

After this I'll be in charge of it, so I'll have to make sure to do a good job no matter how busy I am. At the very least, I should do one round around the place until I start living in it.

As I thought that to myself, the guild master summoned me.

"Ryouma, can you come for a sec." [Wogan]

"Sure." [Ryouma]

"First, I want to congratulate you for a job well done today. The monster corpses are at the same place as usual. With the completion of this quest, you're officially an E Rank.

Anyway, I've heard from the butler of the duke's family that you'll be in charge of this abandoned mine. You're doing it, right?" [Wogan]

"Yes." [Ryouma]

"I think you'll be fine since it's you, but be careful, alright? Remember to call us whenever you need help. Reporting to us when trouble arises is part of your job too." [Wogan]

"Alright." [Ryouma]

"Still, refusing the support of the duke's family to live by yourself... You sure make some scary decisions." [Wogan]

"It was worrying how spoiled I was being, so I thought I should refocus my mind." [Ryouma]

"You're a kid. Don't push yourself. Anyways, the real reason I called you is to ask if you're serious about the cleaner slime laundromat." [Wogan]

"I am, but... How did you find out about it?" [Ryouma]

"Word has gotten around quite a bit among the adventurers here. It seems there are people waiting for your store's opening. It's no surprise, though. After all, most adventurers tend to get dirty easily, and there are many among them who just throw their dirty clothes away." [Wogan]

“That’s good to hear. I’ll hurry with the store’s construction then. Just wait a little a bit more.” [Ryouma]

“Sure. Speaking of which, I can enlist your store’s services too, right? What’s the price gonna be?” [Wogan]

“Of course, you can. Anyone may enlist my Laundromat’s services. The price is 1 medium copper coin for each personal bag. There are also options tailored for groups of people. If you get that instead, you’ll get a discount.” [Ryouma]

“Oh? In that case, I might have to gather a group... Bluntly asking, how much of a discount are we talking here?” [Wogan]

“If we were to compare a week’s pay for the personal option and the biggest group option, then the discount would be about 20% per person.” [Ryouma]

“That much?” [Wogan]

“I was originally planning to make just enough to get by when I’m not working as an adventurer, so the prices were set cheap. The discount also isn’t a one time thing. You’ll get the discount every time you select the big group option, so if you enlist my Laundromat’s services as a guild, you’ll be saving yourselves a good deal of money.” [Ryouma]

“Well, I guess I’ll really have to find myself enough people then.” [Wogan]

“I’ll be looking forward to making your patronage.” [Ryouma]

After that I went back to town and continued demolishing the building.

Adventurer work ended before noon, so I was able to completely demolish the building and remove the grass with time left over. This should be enough for the land. Next I should figure out what to do about the building...

As I was pondering that question, I uninterestedly looked toward the street in front of my lot, and there I noticed that a crowd of children had gathered and was watching me from afar.

“Is something the matter?” [Ryouma]

I asked them as gently as I could so as to not scare them. When I did, the youngest boy from the crowd answered.

“You’re not from around here! Who are you!?” [Youngest Boy]

“Hey, Rick! That’s rude!” [Young Girl]

When the girl standing beside the boy heard him say those words, she scolded him, and then the seemingly eldest boy of the crowd bowed his head.

“Sorry about that. Rick is a little mischievous. Also, sorry for disturbing you when you’re working.” [Eldest Boy]

“Don’t worry about it. I was so caught up in work I didn’t notice you until now. And besides, I’m already about finished.” [Ryouma]

I’m more concerned about their age, though.

They are kids, right? They won’t throw me a curve ball like that group of 6 adventurers did, where the smallest was actually the oldest, will they?

“Really? Well, thank you. You sure are amazing. You don’t look that much older than me, and yet you can actually use magic.” [Eldest Boy]

“Onii-chan, magician?” [Child 1]

“Adventurer?” [Child 2]

Questions came one after another from the children as they crowded onto me. Their questions were unreserved and full of innocence even as they started pushing against me. I was going to try and answer them, but then the voice of a woman resounded.

“Would you all calm down? If you ask your questions all at the same time, that kid obviously won’t be able to answer!” [???

When I turned around to the source of that voice, a woman with a good physique was standing there.

“Sorry about that. Seems our kids and the neighboring children caused you some problems.” [Woman]

“They weren’t causing me any trouble, actually. But regardless, thank you.” [Ryouma]

“Oh? It seems you know your manners despite your age. Would be great if my son could learn a thing or two from you. You an adventurer?” [Woman]

“Yes, but I registered just a few days ago.” [Ryouma]

“I see. Well, do your best. Are you here for a job? This lot is a lot cleaner than I last remember.” [Woman]

“Not a job. I’m here to prepare this place to open my laundromat... Ah, please excuse my belated introduction. I am Ryouma Takebayashi.” [Ryouma]

“I’m Poline. This mischievous brat of a son is Rick. And this tomboy here is my daughter, Leni.” [Poline]

“Name’s Rick. I wouldn’t mind making you my henchman!” [Rick]

“What stupid thing are you saying!?! Sorry about that. I’m Leni. It’s nice to meet you.” [Leni]

“I’m Tall. Nice meeting you.” [Tall]

“It’s a pleasure to meet you all. I am Ryouma Takebayashi. Does everyone live around here?” [Ryouma]

“Yes. We all live in the residential area over there. I also work as a florist at a nearby shop.” [Poline]

“We’ll be neighbors then. I’ll be sure to give you a proper greeting in the future.” [Ryouma]

“Don’t sweat it. Rather than that, you mentioned something about a laundromat, yeah? Is that the sort of business where you do laundry in exchange for money?” [Poline]

“Yes.” [Ryouma]

I took out a bag meant for personal use from my Item Box and gave her a brief explanation.

“This is a bag meant for home use. All the clothes you can fit into this bag will cost 1 medium copper coin.” [Ryouma]

When I said that, Poline-san became interested.

“This bag’s worth of clothes for 1 medium copper coin? That’s cheap, alright.” [Poline]

“If you’d like, I could even give you a free trial on our opening day. We are neighbors, after all.” [Ryouma]

“Really? Well, okay. I’ll take you up on that then.” [Poline]

After that I asked her about this neighborhood, then I thanked her and went home.

Chapter 46

Building a Store 2

3rd day of the store's construction.

After thinking things through last night, I realized that one story for the basement and two stories for the store itself is the limit for my Construction skill.

But using the whole lot for the store would be too big, so I decided to use just half for the building, and then turn one half of the remaining land for the servants' use and the other for the backyard.

I used Create Block at the construction site and started digging out the basement while making the stone blocks at the same time. The slimes transported the completed stone blocks.

I used my own earth spell 'Pavement' on the resulting giant hole to fortify and transform the hole into a durable foundation.

After fortifying the ground, it was perfectly flat without any cracks or holes. Like that I was able to complete the part of Japan's so-called leveling concrete and base concrete in one go.

If I recall correctly, in Japan the workers would add further reinforcement during the process between the leveling concrete and the base concrete, but this world doesn't have that sort of technology. Hmm... I wonder if it's okay like this? I'm worried it may not hold in case of earthquakes.

But considering how little knowledge I have regarding constructions – after all, I did just work in construction part time – and the fact that this world doesn't know anything about the reinforcement process, I guess I'll just have to end the construction of the foundation here. It would be bad if I experimented and ended up making things worse, after all.

Putting together the building stones I made using the sticky slimes' sticky liquid in place of the cement, I hardened the structure, and then further fortified it. Magic isn't

necessary during this process, so I had the slimes help out. Later on I added more pillars with magic. And like that I was able to complete the basement, the basement's walls, the floor of the first story, and the outer wall of the store.

Magic is really convenient. I didn't even need to use a single piece of wood or spend a single suit. Although the pillars were made simply – with the pillars just being placed into a box of stone – they should be plenty durable.

Everything proceeded so smoothly that for a moment I felt like messing around and turning the pillars into like those of the old temples I saw in the textbooks back when I was still a student, but in the end, I decided not to. There's no point in making the basement so extravagant.

I've used a lot of mana and we've already made plenty of progress, so... I think I'll end things here.

4th day of the store's construction.

I built the walls and partitioned the rooms of the first floor using the sticky slime's building stones. After that I built the 2nd story too. The day ended like that.

5th day of the store's construction.

I built the ceiling and prepared the interior. I cut down the trees near the abandoned mine to try out my Woodworking skill with my magic.

I dried the trees gradually using alchemy, then I created a new spell by applying the wind spell, Wind Cutter, like the circular saw that was used in woodworking back in my previous life, which I called the Circle Saw, then I used that to create a board.

I created another spell by combining earth magic with wind magic, and used the resulting spell, Polish Wheel, to make the surface of the board shiny.

Polish Wheel works by using Break Rock to create sand, and then move it at high speeds with Circle Saw, causing the sand particles to grind against the surface of the plank, thereby polishing it.

Also, while using alchemy to dry wood is convenient, the water content is removed so quickly that the resulting wood is prone to cracks. Fortunately, I'm not planning to use it as a pillar, so it should be fine.

I managed to create some boards and lumber, but I ended up using the whole day.

6th day of construction.

I built shelves and counters out of the lumber I gathered yesterday, then I used the sticky liquid in place of varnish to coat them. After drying I plastered them over the walls and floors of the store.

I did that because I felt a stony interior gives off a solemn atmosphere.

Fortunately, with the help of earth magic, I was able to change the interior into that of wood, but then it suddenly occurred to me that a cleaner slime was acting strange.

Huh? Is it eating the sawdust and trash? It's never done that on its own before... Well, the scavenger do, but... Hmm? Wait, it's not eating, it's gathering them, then throwing them in one place... It's sweeping the floor!?

Immediately, I used monster identify. On the skill column could be seen a new skill added: Garbage Collection Lv1. There was a skill like this? Or rather, slimes can actually learn skills on their own?... Ah, but I guess that's nothing new. After all, there are those eccentrics who even learned how to use a staff.

Curious, I checked the other slimes, and it seems the acid slimes learned Woodworking Lv 1. It's true that they helped out, but they only did simple stuff like dissolving the lumber of the demolished structures, used tools to shave some lumber, and dissolved some lumber (just normal ones, not from demolished structures)... Can you really learn the skills of this world just like that?

Well, regardless, with this the construction will go smoother.

After that when there weren't enough boards to go around, I had the acid slimes deal with the size and the shape of the new boards. The resulting product was a lot better than I'd expect from an acid slime.

7th day of construction.

The interior was all done, so all that was left was the outside. Technically, there was nothing wrong with leaving the store unpainted, but I think a laundromat should give off the image of being 'clean', so I decided to paint the walls white. If that's not possible, then at the very least something cleaner than mud-colored.

Earth magic wasn't enough by itself, so I decided to drop by Serge-san's place and ask him for advice.

"You want to make your walls... white?" [Serge]

"Is that not possible?" [Ryouma]

"It is, but most stores generally don't. Usually, it's only the aristocrats who make their walls white since it's expensive and dirties easily." [Serge]

"That's true, but I'd really like to do something about my laundromat's walls. White walls look a lot cleaner than mud-colored walls, no?" [Ryouma]

"You are most certainly correct. Unfortunately, there's just not a lot in stock." [Serge]

"I see..." [Ryouma]

But then again, I guess you would normally go to a contractor for constructions like this. Though I guess it's a bit too late to be saying that now.

Still, I wonder why he even has some in stock.

"My Morgan Company's strength lies in variety. Even if we don't have stock, given time, we will generally be able to acquire most items." [Serge]

So I guess that means he can procure them. But the thing is I've already spent quite a bit of sum purchasing that lot...

Hmm... Oh, isn't this a mining town with an iron mine?

"Serge-san, does this town have a shop that works with iron?" [Ryouma]

“There is, but... what about it?” [Serge]

“Do they use lime?” [Ryouma]

“You’re well informed. That they use indeed.” [Serge]

“Would it be possible to acquire those limes? Cheaply, if possible.” [Ryouma]

“Yes, my store can make it happen. Although it is originally cheap in the first place, so...” [Serge]

“That’s good to hear. With that I might be able to make some white stone blocks.” [Ryouma]

Lime is used as an ingredient in stucco back in Japan, so it should be safe to use in construction. It’s a pity I don’t know enough to actually make stucco, but I can definitely turn them into blocks through magic. And if I treat them with a sticky slime’s sticky liquid, it should be possible to make them easier to clean.

Serge-san also didn’t think anything would go wrong as he hastily procured me some quick lime, which I then transformed into slaked lime through the application of water and alchemy, and then blockified via compression.

Unfortunately, Serge-san’s eyes started to twinkle upon seeing the prospect of cheap white building blocks, so I filled a big bag with lime and promptly excused myself. He’s a good person, but I’d really like to focus on my store for the time being.

I went back to my store and quietly produced a large number of blocks, which I then quietly plastered on the outer walls. Before the sun started setting, the whole walls were already painted in white, and even the crevices were filled with lime and hardened with magic. When everything was done, I mobilized the sticky slimes and covered all of the outer walls in their sticky liquid coating.

I had a lot of spare quicklime, so I stored them into my Dimension Home for the time being.

“It’s finally starting to take shape.” [Ryouma]

We're progressing at breathtaking speed here, but if the store is white, the surrounding area around the store will look pale in comparison.

I'd like to prepare a lawn instead of the dirt currently in place, but... Oh! Wasn't my neighbor a florist? I might be able to buy a couple of seeds from her.

I immediately dropped by her store. As soon as I stood in front of her store, a voice called out to me.

"Welcome! Oh! Aren't you Ryouma-kun?" [Leni]

"Good afternoon... Leni-san." [Ryouma]

I forgot her name there for a moment.

"You don't need to affix 'San'. I'm younger, so Leni is fine. So, how may I help you?" [Leni]

"I'd like to buy some flowers and some seeds to make a lawn." [Ryouma]

"Seeds? We have a couple. Wait a moment. Mom!" [Leni]

Leni yelled and Paulin, who was talking to two other women, replied.

"What are you yelling so loudly for? That's rude, you know?" [Pauline]

"I can't help it! You were completely caught up in chatting with your friends! We have a customer!" [Leni]

"Oh, if it isn't Ryouma-kun. Did you come to buy something?" [Pauline]

"Oh, my. Is this child Ryouma-kun?" [Woman 1]

"So small, and yet so amazing." [Woman 2]

Oh, the two friends Pauline-san was chatting with also approached me.

Anyhow, I should greet them first.

"It's a pleasure to meet the two of you. I am Ryouma Takebayashi."

“Oh, dear. You really are well-mannered. It would be wonderful if my children could learn a thing or two from you. My name is Kiara. It’s nice to meet you too.” [Kiara]

“And I’m Mary. It’s a pleasure to meet you. I’ve heard the rumors.” [Mary]

“Rumors?”

What rumors?

Rumors? What rumors?

“You’ve been building a store in the neighborhood for a while now, right? It stands out quite a bit, so word of you being a great magician has already spread.” [Mary]

“I’m not that amazing. At most, I can just cast a spell or two that can be used in day-to-day life. It just so happens that I specialize at construction.” [Ryouma]

“If you can build something that sturdy, you’re plenty amazing. Rumor says you’re also raising a lot of slimes.” [Mary]

“That part is true.” [Ryouma]

“We know... We saw them with my own eyes, after all.” [Mary]

“We saw a great ooze of slimes carrying Ryouma’s stones.” [Kiara]

“You saw that?” [Ryouma]

“It’s a first seeing slimes act like that, so we ended up watching.” [Mary]

“Monster tamers aren’t rare in Gimuru, but they all prefer scary-looking monsters. Oh, yeah. You came here to buy something, yeah? What do you want?” [Pauline]

“I’m looking for some flower seeds and lawn grass seeds. Do you have them?” [Ryouma]

“We do. The price of the flower seeds will depend on the variety, but the lawn grass seeds go for 130 suits a bag. How many do you need?” [Pauline]

While I was wondering how much I would be needing, Pauline-san offered to help out.

“How about showing me the store? I could advise you then.” [Pauline]

“Thank you.” [Ryouma]

After saying that I led Pauline-san to the store. Leni, Kiara-san, and Mary-san followed us from behind.

Is everyone coming?

But as soon as they saw my store, they all froze.

“Is something the matter?” [Ryouma]

“Just a little surprised. This store wasn’t this color this morning, was it?” [Pauline]

“I painted it just a while ago. The color of dirt doesn’t exactly give the impression of cleanliness, so I thought it ill-matched for a laundromat. As such, I bought some lime and cooked something up with my slimes and a little magic.” [Ryouma]

“Haa~ You really work fast, don’t you?” [Pauline]

“It certainly looks cleaner like this, though.” [Kiara]

“So this is a laundromat. Maybe I should try getting my laundries washed too. It would be a load off my back if I could cut down some time doing laundry.” [Mary]

“By all means, please do. And since we’ve already been acquainted with each other, I’d like to offer you a free trial good for one bag worth of laundry.” [Ryouma]

I took out two bags of from my Item Box and distributed it to Mary and Pauline. You gotta get customers at times like this!

After that I let Pauline-san pick the seeds. In the end, I ended up purchasing 15 bags of lawn grass seeds and 2 bags each of 4 different flower seeds.

Speaking of which, didn’t someone mention that you can advertise on the guild’s bulletin board?

I need to the scavengers to make some fertilizers too, so I guess I'll drop by the guild tomorrow.

Upon deciding that, I went back home and thought of what to write in the advertisement.

Chapter 47

Building a Store 3

“Uu~...” [Ryouma]

I went back to the inn and started racking my heads on what to write for the advertisement, but I just couldn't seem to come to a conclusion on one thing: The name of the store.

I can't think of anything but simple stuff.

While I was racking my brains like that, Sebasu-san came.

“Ryouma-sama, you've returned?” [Sebasu]

“Yes. I'm here.” [Ryouma]

As I said that, I opened the door.

“Ryouma-sama, how about joining the ojou-sama and the others for tea?” [Sebasu]

“Sure. I've hit a roadblock, so I might as well. Thank you.” [Ryouma]

Like that I went to the duke's family's room.

“We've been waiting, Ryouma-san.” [Elialia]

“Come, take a seat.” [Elize]

“Thank you very much.” [Ryouma]

After being given tea, I took a sip. It was then that Reinhart-san spoke.

“You've been working hard lately. You're not pushing yourself, are you?” [Reinhart]

“Not at all. I'm quite alright.” [Ryouma]

“How’s your store’s construction doing?” [Reinhart]

“The store’s done. All that’s left is to plant the flowers and the lawn seeds, and grow them with wood magic. And then there’s the sign board and the opening. If I could just take care of that, I should be good to start.” [Ryouma]

“Ehh!? You’ve progressed that much already!?” [Elialia]

“So, you are pushing yourself, Ryouma-kun.” [Reinhart]

“I’m not, really.” [Ryouma]

“Ryouma-sama, I’ve heard that you could construct buildings with wood magic, but just how much mana do you use every day, I wonder.” [Sebasu]

“I stop just a little before the symptoms for mana overconsumption start showing, at which point, I then start manual labor.” [Ryouma]

When everyone heard that, they all sighed.

“That is working too much...” [Reinhart]

“Ryouma-sama, with how much mana you have, stopping just before you run out of mana is enough to make a normal magician collapse. You’re definitely doing too much work for one person.” [Sebasu]

Oh, yeah... I have an abnormally big mana pool.

“You look like you just realized it.” [Reinbach]

“For some reason, I’m suddenly worried. I wonder if it’s really a good idea to leave you alone.” [Elize]

“Please rest assured. This is nothing compared to my previous workplace.” [Ryouma]

“What did they make you do?” [Elialia]

“...Huh?” [Ryouma]

Oops, let that slip. Well, even if I tell them I was a programmer, they probably won’t

understand. Hmm... I guess I can talk to them about my part time instead.

“Various stuff... There were times when I just carried stuff normally, but there were also times when I made dolls.” [Ryouma]

“I see... Ryouma-san, you don’t think work is difficult?” [Elialia]

“Well, of course, there are times when I think it’s difficult. But if I don’t work, I can’t live... And besides, it’s not like everything is difficult. That job I told you where I carried stuff, well, it’s actually a job where I carried the materials to be used for construction. I thought it was pretty interesting seeing the building gradually being built. And when it was completed, I felt a sense of satisfaction.

As for the doll-making job, I had to paint the doll where designated, but whenever I saw my client elated at my work, I felt glad.” [Ryouma]

“I see. I hope in the future I too can find something I think is worth doing.” [Elialia]

Huh? Is she going to work? Even though she’s the ojou-sama of the duke’s family?

While I was thinking that to myself, the ojou-sama showed interest in my doll-making job.

Yep, she’s a girl, alright.

“If you’d like, I can make a doll for you next time.” [Ryouma]

After saying that excitedly without thinking, it suddenly hit me that the dolls I made were mainly geared toward little boys.

“Really!? If you have time, then by all means, please!” [Elialia]

This is bad!! This is very bad! I made various dolls as a hobby and as a sideline, but this people definitely won’t get it. Besides, the ojou-sama is still young. She shouldn’t be seeing those things meant for big children.

“Is something the matter?” [Elialia]

“Oh, it’s just... I don’t exactly have the models... My job was mainly to paint them, so without a foundation to work with...” [Ryouma]

“Oh? But aren’t you skilled in earth magic?” [Elialia]

...Damn it. The convenience of earth magic is biting me back, now?

Forget it. I did offer it, so I might as well try my hand at making something inoffensive.

“Alright, I’ll make one if I have time.” [Ryouma]

“Thank you.” [Elialia]

“Sebasu-san, would you happen to know where I could purchase some references and tools?” [Ryouma]

“I could prepare some tomorrow if you’d like.” [Sebasu]

“Thank you. I want to use them for the store’s signboard too, so please prepare plenty of drawing tools. I’ll pay you later.” [Ryouma]

“Very well.” [Sebasu]

After that I talked idly with the duke’s family, then I went back to my room. When I went back, the duke’s family strongly reminded me not to push myself.

...I should take care.

Oh, come to think of it, what of the store’s name?..... Something simple should do. Yes, something easy to remember.

It was then that my store’s name and tag line was decided.

Even a goblin’s filth can be washed for cheap! Laundry Service, Bamboo Forest! [1]

8th day of construction.

After receiving references and drawing tools from Sebasu-san, I thanked him, and then headed for the guild.

When I entered the guild, the receptionist, Maelyn-san, called out to me.

“Oh! Ryouma-kun! We were quite worried since you never showed up again after the guild quest at the abandoned mine.” [Maelyn]

“Sorry about that. I was a little busy.” [Ryouma]

“I know. You were building a store, right? I heard from the guild master. That’s pretty amazing considering how young you are.” [Maelyn]

“Thank you. By the way, there was something I wanted to ask you.” [Ryouma]

“What is it?” [Maelyn]

“I heard it was possible to advertise somewhere on the guild’s bulletin board. Is that true?” [Ryouma]

“Advertise? Hmm... The guild doesn’t have that sort of service, though. Oh, I know. You probably heard that service.” [Maelyn]

As Maelyn-san said that, she pointed toward the small bulletin board in one corner of the guild.

“That’s the bulletin board for recruiting parties. People write their when they’re looking for allies. We don’t have a bulletin board for advertisements.” [Maelyn]

“I see. Thank you very much.” [Ryouma]

I guess I’ll just have to announce the store’s opening myself and rely on word of mouth then. Leaflets and posters are another option, but paper is really expensive here...

The one exception is toilet paper because apparently there was a man – most probably an otherworlder – who invented a magic tool that created toothbrushes and toilet paper, but... I couldn’t possibly use toilet paper as leaflets, could I?

Those things are too fragile. They’ll probably just get thrown away. Anyway, let’s put the announcement of the store aside and get back to work.

“Maelyn-san, are there any jobs for cleaning trash today?” [Ryouma]

“You should drop by the guild master first. He said to bring you to his room the next time you showed up. He probably has work for you.” [Maelyn]

“Alright. I’ll go then.” [Ryouma]

When I went to the guild master’s room, he greeted me with a smile.

[1] – From the name, Ryouma Takebayashi; Take = bamboo, bayashi = forest.

“Ryouma! You finally showed up!” [Wogan]

“Good day. It’s been a week, hasn’t it? I’ve been quite busy with my store.” [Ryouma]

“I’ll get straight to the point. I’m hoping you can take the latrine pit job again.” [Wogan]

Huh? Didn’t those six adventurers from the slum take that job?

“About that... There were indeed a bunch of people who showed up interested, including those 6 adventurers, but we still don’t have enough people. I had the less guilty of Sacchi’s henchmen do this job too, but even with that we still don’t have enough. On top of that, they can’t clean them as well as you do.

I’d love to give jobs to those who need them, but it’s really not good for the guild to make the clients wait.

Moreover, the 5 months before you came was really hard.

Just once of that stinky nightmare is enough! And since you’ve already cleaned it so nicely once, won’t you clean it again?... Or at least that’s what some hasty guys are saying.

But really, I’m begging you, help us out. We really don’t have enough people.” [Wogan]

Did I clean the pits a little too well? So much so that now they find it difficult to go back to the way they were before?

Well, it is true that the situation five months ago was pretty bad.

“It’s not like I can’t understand. I mean it was really bad before..... Fine. I’ll do it.” [Ryouma]

“Thanks. That’s a load off my back.” [Wogan]

I immediately accepted the job and went to the latrine pits.

When I used the scavenger slimes to their utmost, I was able to clean the place in the blink of an eye.

After that I went back to report the mission's success and receive my reward, then I went back to my store, where I ordered the scavenger slimes to use their Produce Fertilizer skill to turn the nutrients they got into fertilizer.

I used that fertilizer to nurture the soil, so I could plant my flower and lawn grass seeds. After planting the seeds, I watered them.

"It's dark already..." [Ryouma]

Cleaning the pits took a lot of time, so the sun was already starting to set.

I did get scolded yesterday about working too hard, so I should probably end the day here.

9th day of the store's construction.

Right from the morning, I watered the ground that had been planted with flower and lawn grass seeds, then I used the earth magic, Grow, to accelerate their growth. After three hours of casting my spells, a carpet of verdant grass accompanied by beautiful flowers could be seen around the store.

'Grow' is a convenient spell, but without enough nutrients and water in the soil, the mana cost will increase and there's a high chance that the soil will be left dry of nutrients.

But it worked this time around, so that's that... Next, I should trim the grass that grew a bit too much.

I let the scavenger slimes eat the excess part of the grass, and with that, the surroundings of the store was finally complete.

With the place finally looking like a store, I went ahead and made the signboard.

I painted the wooden board in white, then I wrote the words, Laundry Service Bamboo Forest, on it. Then on its two sides, I drew the image of some forests, while at the bottom, I drew a slime sticking close to the name of the store.

Next, I have to dry this, then give it the waterproof treatment and some garnishing.

While it's drying, I should work on the miscellaneous stuff, such as the price list of the laundry and some other finishing checks.

After that... I guess all that's really left is the service and to check on the flow of operations.

Maybe I should invite Jeff-san and the others for the preopening, so we can give the store a test run. Hmm...

Oh, I know! We should do the preopening with the opening party too!

After deciding that, I gathered the bare necessities for opening the store, then I dropped by Serge-san's before going home.

"Welcome, Ryouma-sama." [Serge]

"Good evening, Serge-san. The store was finally completed today." [Ryouma]

"Really!? That's quite fast..." [Serge]

"Some people I knew at the adventurers guild told me that they were looking forward to it, so I put a lot of effort in making the store.

The store's looking like a proper store now, so I was thinking of gathering my acquaintances for its debut opening. It's also going to be a test run of sort to make sure that the store can function properly." [Ryouma]

"The last check, in other words." [Serge]

"Yes. The real opening will be the day after, so I was thinking of having a party too after the test run. If it's no trouble, I'd like to extend an invitation to you, Serge-san. Are you available?" [Ryouma]

“Thank you for the invitation, Ryouma-sama. I have some errands to run tomorrow, but I should be free for the next two weeks the day after tomorrow. I’ll be available whenever you’re free then.” [Serge]

“Thank you. I’ll check with the others first.” [Ryouma]

“Ryouma-sama, do you mind if I take two friends with me.” [Serge]

“Please go ahead. Are you referring to Pioro-san and the guild master?” [Ryouma]

“No, they’re from my company. I did promise to introduce you to some people who can make your job easier. I believe it would be best for you to meet them sooner than later, so they can get used to the job as soon as possible.” [Serge]

“Thank you for your help.” [Ryouma]

Oh, right. We did discuss that. I went and built lodging for the workers, but I actually forgot about them. I can’t tend to the store while working as an adventurer at the same time, so it’s actually really important. I’m really grateful.

After thanking Serge-san again, I left the store.

Next up was the guild master and Maelyn-san. I told them the same thing and invited them. Apparently, they would be free three days later. I called out to Jeff-san’s group and the others who participated in the disease prevention mission, and it seems they’ll be able to make it. I’ll drop by the guild again tomorrow.

I went to the merchants guild next. When I requested to send a message to the guild master, I was brought to the guest room.

“You came. It’s been a week, hasn’t it? How are things?” [Grisiera]

“Thanks to your help, the store has finally taken shape.” [Ryouma]

“You’ve built it already? Although I’ve yet to check the quality of the construction, wouldn’t this mean you’re capable of carpentry too?” [Grisiera]

“I can only build simple stuff, though.” [Ryouma]

“That’s more than enough since only nobles would go out of their way to design elaborate houses.” [Grisiera]

Oh, right.

“Did you come here to report your store’s completion?” [Grisiera]

“I’m planning to gather my acquaintances to give my store a test run, and then hold a party to celebrate the completion of the store afterwards. Guildmaster, I’ve already been in your care, so if it’s not too much trouble...” [Ryouma]

“You’re inviting me?” [Grisiera]

“It’ll just be a small party, though there will be some people you know attending. If you’re alright with that, then by all means, please come.” [Ryouma]

“Hee hee hee, a lighthearted party is good. In fact, it’s best for parties to be that way. I rarely get asked to such gatherings because of my standings, and even when they pretend to be lighthearted, they’re all stiff, it’s boring. Since your adventurer friends will be coming too, it should be a really lighthearted party, right?” [Grisiera]

“Yes. I’m not good with formal stuff. Even my polite language is shallow.” [Ryouma]

“Alright. So, when is the party?” [Grisiera]

“I’m currently planning on holding it 3 days later, but it might still change depending on others’ schedule, so I need to confirm with everyone first. I’ll pass a message tomorrow. By the way, could you tell me Pioro-san’s contact information. I’d like to invite him too if possible.” [Ryouma]

“That guy already left 3 days ago. His store’s main branch is in another city, but he should be dropping by here tomorrow under the pretense of attending the meeting, though his real purpose is actually to play hooky. I’ll invite him for you.” [Grisiera]

I tanked the guild master and left the merchant guild.

After that I dropped by the tamer guild, and then went home. I told the ojou-sama and the others about the preopening of my store and invited them. When I did, they were elated, and it was decided that the four members of the duke’s family, Sebasu-san, Arone-san, Lilian-san, and the four guards, Jill-san and the others, would be coming.

With this we have 11 people from the ojousama's side + 11 from the adventurers guild + 5 from the merchants guild, totaling to 27 people all in all. If you include me, that's 28.

I don't have any achievements to speak of, so I couldn't meet with the head of Gimuru's tamer guild, Taylor. I left a message, but I've yet to receive his reply. If e comes, that'll bring our numbers up to 29.

...I'll hold the party at the servants' break room. That way we'll have enough room.

I should also drop by the adventurers guild tomorrow to confirm the schedule of the adventurers and contact some other people.

10th day.

The adventurers all agreed to come. I also got a response from the tamer guild through the receptionist, saying that the tamer guild branch head would be making an appearance.

With that, I left a message at Serge-san's store and at the guild that the test run of the store will be on the morning the day after tomorrow, while the party will be held in the afternoon of the same day.

After that I went back to the abandoned mine that I hadn't visited in a week and did some rounds, then I went back home. After informing the ojousama and the others of the plans the day after tomorrow, the day ended.

Chapter 48

Building a Store 4

11th day.

Early in the morning, I went out to buy lots of food ingredients and started making preparations for the food I'll be cooking tomorrow.

Tomorrow's menu includes a salad, a meat sauce spaghetti, and steak. For dessert we'll be having apple pie.

I wasn't sure what to cook, but this world has pasta and steaks too, so I figured I should be safe if I make those. Not exactly the kind of food you normally see in parties, though.

When I think of parties, the first thing that comes to mind is pizza, but there doesn't seem to be any pizza in this world, so I refrained from serving it.

For drinks, I decided to go with water and a fruit juice with alcohol.

Alcohol has always been meant for parties, so I decided to splurge a bit and spend 3 small gold coins to purchase 30 persons' worth of the storekeeper's recommended liquor. The juice I'll be making myself.

Alchemy was surprisingly useful for the cooking. For example, I was able to turn the noodles of the spaghetti into dried noodles by removing its water content after beating it. Thanks to that all I'll need to do tomorrow is to boil it. Another example is with the juice, as I was easily able to extract the fruit's juice by crushing it and then using alchemy to separate the juice from the other parts, allowing me to extract a 100% fruit juice.

I wonder if it's okay to use alchemy like this.

Next was the meat sauce, but making one usually requires condomme, which could be bought from the market, but unfortunately, those aren't sold here, so I decided to make a chicken and vegetable soup. If I add tomato and fried minced meat to it tomorrow, I should be able to make something close to it.

I stored the food I'd prepared into a wooden box coated in the sticky slime's hardening liquid and protected by the inverse version of the barrier normally meant for blocking the cold to keep the cold from leaving, then I stored everything in a cold storeroom to preserve it.

Speaking of which, when using Identify on the cold storage, explanations for each food item show up, including the contents, freshness... etc. It's pretty amazing. Though I guess it's Identify that's amazing rather than the cold storage

By the time I finished preparing, it was already dusk.

It's a bit late to be going to the guild now, but I think it's also too early to be going home.

In the end, I decided to go around the town first. As a result, I happened upon the church and realized that I haven't come to pray in a while.

When I went to the church, a girl not yet twenty welcomed me.

"Welcome. How may I help you today?" [Nun]

"I have some time, so I was thinking of praying." [Ryouma]

"In that case, please follow me." [Nun]

The room she led me to was a wide room with many chairs and an altar at the front. Apparently, I could pray as I pleased here.

The girl told me to take my time, then she left.

A few seconds later...

A sensation that felt like I was losing touch with my body filled me.

It wasn't a bad feeling, and true enough, when I opened my eyes next, that pure white room appeared before me again.

"I'm here again?" [Ryouma]

“Yep, you’re back.” [???

When I turned around, Kufo was there standing.

“We met again, Kufo.” [Ryouma]

“It hasn’t been that long. At least not long enough to say ‘it’s been a while’. It’s only been a month, right?” [Kufo]

“Are Gayn and Rurutia out?” [Ryouma]

“Yeah, they stepped out for a bit.” [Kufo]

“Huh? Gods go out too?” [Ryouma]

“It’s a pretty rare, actually.” [Kufo]

“Huh. So, where did they go?” [Ryouma]

When I said that, Kufo made an ‘I screwed up!’ face.

“Erm, umm... Actually, they went to your old world.” [Kufo]

“To Earth!? Why? Are they summoning someone again?” [Ryouma]

“No, no! That’s not it. Actually, they’re...” [Kufo]

Kufo hesitate to speak.

“If it’s hard to say, you don’t have to.” [Ryouma]

“Hmm..... If it’s you, maybe it’s okay. Right. They went sightseeing.” [Kufo]

“Hah?” [Ryouma]

Sightseeing?

“Rurutia is going around eating the sweets of your world, while Gayn has taken to the songs of Japan’s idol groups.” [Kufo]



“The heck!? I mean there’s nothing wrong with that, but... Can you really go into another world for such shallow reasons?” [Ryouma]

“Normally, gods don’t really interfere with each other, but we have always been sending earthlings and mana over from Earth, so... And besides, our world doesn’t have much in the way of entertainment. Even the sweets that Rurutia has grown so fond of are relatively rare over here. And the sweets that we do have can’t compare to the ones in your world.” [Kufo]

“Well, that’s true, I suppose.” [Ryouma]

“I also explored the secluded areas of earth just recently, actually. As the god of life, I went to see the organisms that could survive even in harsh conditions. Like the Amazons, the Sahara desert, the Atlantis, or the deep sea.” [Kufo]

“I’m pretty sure one of those isn’t like the others!” [Ryouma]

“Keep this a secret, okay? It would be a huge hit to our reputation if people were to find out.” [Kufo]

“Hey, don’t ignore me. Anyway, even if I told others, they wouldn’t believe me.” [Ryouma]

“Well, that’s true.” [Ryouma]

Kufo cackled in a way that suited his appearance.

...If not for the scale of our conversation, I would have forgotten that he’s a god.

“I don’t know about Gayn’s idol groups, but couldn’t Rurutia just make sweets more popular in this world? There are a lot of otherworlders here, right?” [Ryouma]

“Right, but it’s not easy to spread recipes. We don’t have internet here like you do on Earth, after all. You’re aware that food loaded with spice here are a luxury, right?” [Kufo]

“Yes.” [Ryouma]

“A couple have been passed down among aristocrats and the royal family as luxury goods, but commoners could never procure the ingredients to make them. That’s why

even if otherworlders try to cook their hometown's food here, the number of people that could emulate them is limited, and the recipe is unlikely to be handed down. And even if it does get handed down, odds are that it'll eventually be forgotten. For example, just recently, you've met a person known as Pioro Saionji, right?" [Kufo]

"Yes. So, he really is an otherworlder's descendant. I figured he might be after hearing his last name." [Ryouma]

"That otherworlder was the son of an okonomiyaki shop owner and was studying at a cooking school.

When he came to this world, he tried making okonomiyaki, but he couldn't make the sauce because he couldn't procure the seafood needed. So in order to gather the ingredients, he traveled the whole world, working as a peddler to cover the expenses. As a result, he managed to make the okonomiyaki he so wanted, but unfortunately, it didn't spread.

So he used the connections he made and knowledge of ingredients he learned along his journey to put up a company. That company is none other than the current Saionji Company.

Another way of putting it is that he was born at a period where unless one travelled the whole world to gather the ingredients, it wouldn't be possible to make okonomiyaki. Nowadays, there are other people trying to copy the Saionji company, so those ingredients are a lot easier to get." [Kufo]

Something like that happened, huh...

"There are other things too other than food. Like technology or knowledge. But not all otherworlders are as passionate as him. Some were eager but lacked the ability or knowledge, some had bad luck and failed, and then there were those who failed to hand down their knowledge because of war or other otherworlders."

"Makes sense... But what do you mean by other otherworlders being the reason they failed? Did they hand down something even better?" [Ryouma]

"...I can only blame it on bad luck, but there was a medical student who came to this world in the past and spread his knowledge on medicine and diseases. But now there's no such knowledge right?" [Kufo]

“Yeah. The guild master didn’t even know about infectious diseases.” [Ryouma]

“Actually, there was a girl who once wanted to become a saint. She was the person before your predecessor.” [Kufo]

“A saint? You mean that stuff that holds a high position in the church or something?” [Ryouma]

“Right, that one. Someone who uses the divine to heal people. She wanted to live like that and be spoiled. Oh, but she wasn’t a bad kid by any means. She loved to go, “I want to be spoiled!” But she genuinely wanted to save others.

That’s why Rurutia, Gayn, and I gave her our divine protection, so that she might be able to heal other people. Her power wasn’t strong enough to revive the dead, but it was enough for her to heal anyone as long as they had a sliver or breath left. Along with that we also gave her a power that rendered her completely immune to all poison, diseases, and injuries. At the same time, she also could not be bound by anyone.

Like that she lived as a saint, but...” [Kufo]

“But?” [Ryouma]

Did something happen?

“She could heal any sickness, but others could only use normal healing magic and couldn’t heal sickness like she did. From time to time, there were also diseases that this world’s medical science couldn’t treat. When such people failed to receive treatment from her, there was only one option for them: death.

When she saw that she realized that there would be more people like that after she died, so... At the end of her life, she used the power of god and prayed, “Please make all the diseases vanish from this world.” [Kufo]

“She wanted to erase all diseases!?! Is such a thing even possible?” [Ryouma]

“Normally, no, but we gave her her power directly, and she had also gathered plenty of faith from her achievements, so after adding the wishes of the people, her powers were greatly amplified and she was able to have her prayer answered. In other words, she used a trick.

But that trick was also only possible because she used literally everything she had, including her soul. Normally, the soul would enter the cycle of reincarnation after death, but in her case, it simply perished. That was the price for using so much of her power.” [Kufo]

“What an amazing person...” [Ryouma]

“Although she started living like a saint because she admired them, she was really troubled at the start. Still, in the end, she found her purpose and became a true saint.

Using the power of faith as energy may be obvious to us, but that’s not true for humans. And yet she came up with such a method... Although she wasn’t able to completely remove all diseases, the people who died due to disease in the past 400 years dropped sharply. Wounds were still a thing, though, so healing magic remained, but because of what she did, all knowledge on treating diseases stopped being passed on, bringing us to where we are today.

Although the effects of her power have already vanished, the knowledge lost won’t come back.” [Kufo]

“I see...” [Ryouma]

Still, it’s really hard to believe that one person was able to do such a grand thing, even with cheats...

“Actually, as long as you’re resolved to sacrifice your soul, you can do something similar. The effect won’t be as strong as hers, though.” [Kufo]

“Seriously!?” [Ryouma]

“When the soul of man is fused with the power of god, a great power can be born. Which is also why we use the souls of humans such as yourself to transfer mana from another world to this world.

Well, even if you attempt it, at most you can only stop diseases from appearing for a few years. In her case, a lot of people believed in her and she also specialized in healing, so she was able to stop diseases for 400 years, but in your case, not only do you not have other people’s religious faith, you also don’t specialize in healing. In fact, you’re an all-rounder.

Thanks to that though, you basically have no limits. You grow fast too, so given time, you'll probably gain a power greater than just a mere cheat. But that's fine since we enjoy watching you." [Kufo]

"So in the end it comes down to that?" [Ryouma]

"That's because it's really boring here in the divine realm. There's nothing to do at all~" [Kufo]

When Kufo said that, light began to glow.

Ah, this must be that.

"Time's up, huh." [Ryouma]

"Huh? Already?... Oh, right! Gayn and Rurutia aren't around, so I can only keep it up this long! Ryouma-kun!" [Kufo]

"What is it all of the sudden?" [Ryouma]

"I summoned you here because I have something to tell you! Unfortunately, I wasted time talking about unrelated stuff! Anyway, I'll just tell you the gist of it! We forgot to mention this, but as a consequence of making you young again, your mind is going to faintly regress into a child!

This happened to the other otherworlders too!

You are Ryouma Takebayashi [1], the man who lived and died on Earth after 30 years. But at the same time, you are also Ryouma Takebayashi [2], an 11 year-old boy living in this world! The reason you couldn't keep your poker face was because of that! That's why while it's okay to train yourself, don't push yourself too much!" [Kufo]

After Kufo hastily said that, light filled my vision and I was back in the room.

What did he say? My mind is being affected by my body? I don't really get it, but isn't this really important?

And I feel like I can somewhat understand what he means by regressing to a child's mind...

When I was working at the company in my past life, I had a poker face that was so stiff no one should've been able to tell what I was thinking, but now people keep telling me that I'm like an open book. I was told something similar when I was a kid too...

In any case, nothing's changed. I will still train myself. Still, Kufo did go out of his way to tell me, so I should keep it in mind.

I quietly thanked Kufo in my mind, then after leaving a donation, I left the church.

It was already getting dark, so I went back to the inn.

Tomorrow's the day! Everyone's going to be coming to my store! Let's go to bed early and do our best!

[1][2] – The former is written in kanji, the latter is written in katakana.



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